

## **President's Report - U3A Brisbane 2017 AGM**

It is probably unnecessary to say that the 2016/2017 year has been successful as we stand in these rooms which epitomise that success but there have been many others as well.

U3A has been well represented this year by an excellent committee, the members of which have carried out their duties vigorously which is why so much has been achieved. I have been honoured to serve with them and congratulate all of them on their great work ethic and dedication to this organisation.

This time last year we faced the final hurdle of finishing these rooms and having them ready for use by Winter School. Committee members Rod Hill and Peter O'Loughlin had given inordinate amounts of time to this project. Rob's experience as a lawyer in property matters, especially leasing, assisted us enormously in acquiring and fitting out Adelaide St. Peter's, as a builder, meant he undertook the role of project manager on our behalf and dealt with all the complicated aspects of the fit out. He also installed the new equipment. We are very grateful to them both.

Deciding on, purchasing and installing all the computer and AV equipment and furniture were also enormous tasks. While I looked after the furnishing, Greg Taylor did the AV and IT with wonderful results. We are proud to now have such state of the art facilities to offer our tutors and members. Yvonne McGann established the new office and trained additional volunteers. Greg and Deslyn Taylor trained the tutors in the use of the AV and IT and continue to do so each term break, and, needless to say, when the time came to move from Queen St, it was all hands on deck for the committee.

Because of the high standard achieved at Adelaide St, it was decided to also improve Creek St. This was done during the September break. New carpet, the enlargement of Room 4 and fresh paint improved this campus.

With these additional facilities came an unprecedented increase in participation in our classes. We commenced Term 2 2016 with 234 classes. Due to the wonderful job done by our Tutor Liaison, Gail Hawkins, we will start Term 2 this year with 280. Our net membership rates are not rising greatly but members are choosing to participate in more classes. In Term One this year participation was up by 26 % on Term One last year and this reflects very positively financially.

Treasurer, Greg Williamson, managed the budgets superbly this year, not only for our general administration, but also for the acquisition and fitout of Adelaide St. It is a credit to him that he managed the finances of an expensive commercial fitout and we emerged in such a healthy financial position. He continues to make improvements. Greg applied for, and received charity status for U3A which will save us from the considerable costs of land tax. By taking over the administration of the U3A Noteholders where money was borrowed to purchase Creek St, there will be a saving to U3A Brisbane of around \$11 000.00 annually. Greg has also amalgamated bank accounts within U3A to reduce bank charges. He continues to provide the management Committee with detailed monthly, yearly and ten yearly data to ensure we are at all times aware of our financial status.

It is worth pointing out that, despite leasing Adelaide St, membership fees have not changed since 2010 when they went from \$35.00 to \$40.00 annually and class fees last rose in 2013 when they went from \$4.00 to \$5.00 per class. Prudent financial management and the support from our members for classes means that no change is contemplated at this stage.

In our all important front offices, managed so competently by Yvonne with the assistance of the daily managers, more changes have been introduced. Pay Pal is now available for online registrations, extended membership is offered from 1 September each year and the \$50.00 per term photocopying allowance for tutors has just been introduced. Investa, the company that manages this building, has many more compliance issues in place and several of the office volunteers have undergone various aspects of emergency training. Several also undertook first aid training. Yvonne continues to train office staff as needed and spends many hours ensuring that the administration runs smoothly and competently.

Our secretary, Simon Wood is just the kind of secretary every organisation needs. He is meticulous with the fine detail, very familiar with the constitution, enjoys the written word and volunteers readily to attend sub- committee meetings and write procedures and protocols on our behalf and in a timely fashion.

There is no doubt that our computer system which was devised and is constantly upgraded and improved on by Greg Taylor is at the core of all our administration. We could not have made the enormous advances that we have without this system providing us with the data we need. Additions this year include a method of sending personalised automated emails to unfinancial members. More than 850 were sent out in January and within 2 weeks 450 of these people had registered online. A new facility was added to allow tutors to attach up to 10 files to emails to their students sent via our website. Greg migrated our website during the Christmas break to provide a better service to members and he has just now instigated an SMS alert service to allow us to notify members of last minute changes.

Greg Doolan continues to manage the area of publicity with flair. U3A has received considerable coverage this year. A Network initiative provide coverage as did newspaper ads particularly concentrating on the growth of Brisbane. Flyers were placed in 33 council libraries. Greg conducted radio interviews, spoke himself or organised speakers for other organisations and continues to run our Facebook page which is gaining in popularity, proving quite an effective marketing tool. Greg, along with other members and District people, also organised and participated in several exhibitions and expos during the year.

During my time as president, big changes have occurred in the management of the Districts. Mary Calder manages this area and has capably organised them so that the vast majority are now compliant. Record keeping and membership requirements are being met with the help of District Coordinators in Logan – Monika Picton, Northside – Rod McLary, Southside – Alan Wishart, Westside and City (not Creek or Adelaide Sts.) – Anna Blake and Wynnum – Chris Hobbs. Besides classes and venues, they have organised displays and manned expos to publicise U3A in their area. They are doing a mighty job and their efforts are appreciated. Logan, in particular, is very proactive and the team led by Monika works hard to increase

the number of classes and venues. Class numbers continue to grow but finding free or low cost venues continues to be the most difficult challenge especially in Logan and Northside.

Peter O'Loughlin keeps a low profile but reacts to any building problems or defects with alacrity. He attends body corporate meeting on our behalf and has a lot of knowledge of the workings of both buildings. He attends to any repairs or defects quickly and efficiently and his valuable work saves us considerable expenditure. Ken Chandler is happy to assist him when asked.

The items I've mentioned have come under individual's portfolios but much more has happened. We hosted 14 Qld U3As to a Good Governance Workshop run by the Network, filmed a video, thanks to David Hain's group, as an introduction to Adelaide St, held an Open Week to enable members to see the Adelaide St rooms before the opening, hosted 40 Chinese seniors from Jinling University on their visit to Australia, screened Marty Gellender's Science Week films, hosted the Governor at the book launch, and held Rosemarie Schukraft's and Lizz Robinson's art shows. As we become larger and more sophisticated, the number of activities will continue to grow in Brisbane and the Districts.

But of course, none of this could happen without all the dedicated volunteers who work so hard. We couldn't offer all our classes without our many wonderfully hardworking tutors. We couldn't manage the large administration without all the office volunteers. Others of you step up to take on more responsibility which is of great assistance and much appreciated. Eg Day Managers – Mary Calder, Yvonne McGann, Helen Davis, June Morris and Angela Holmes.

Helen Dubois continues to collate the e-news monthly and she and her committee arrange the many popular excursions and outings held each year by the Social Committee. David Gemmell also participates in the production of the enews.

The Winter School Committee is new this year but, with Anne Douglass showing us the ropes, is enthusiastically planning this year's event. A heartfelt thank you to all of you for the work you do for this organisation.

Then there was the writing and publication of ***Forever Learning***. This was a massive undertaking for many, especially the authors, Ian Lipke and June Morris, the many other contributors and the Management Committee. Some wrote, some edited, some proof read endlessly. Many members did all of these things. It was a huge task, successfully completed on time and with distinction. It was a very fitting tribute to Brisbane's 30 years of existence and most timely to record our history to date while some original members are still with us.

So when I tell you it was a big year, a successful year, you can see that it really was! I have enjoyed my term in office, particularly this last year when so much was achieved. I would like to pay tribute to my husband, Mark. I have been on the committee for the 4.5 years I've known him and president for 3 of those years. His success in business made him a great sounding board for ideas and his calm nature often restrained my more volatile reactions. Thank you, Mark for your love and support.

Again, my thanks to a brilliant committee with whom it has been a pleasure to work. Fortunately this team will be part of the new committee so you can look forward to U3A continuing its successful journey.

Finally, my thanks to you, the members of U3A who love to participate in what we offer and appreciate the changes we've been able to make. I value your friendships as well as your contributions and look forward to another year working with all of you.

Marilyn Wagland

12 April 2017