



**In this issue:**

- P1. President's report
- P2. Staying in touch
- P2. Survey results
- P2. Convenor Vacancies
- P3. Secretary's report
- P3. Current Affairs
- P4. Footy tipping
- P4. Cards
- P4. Meet Ian Barclay
- P5. Irene Tanock finds sunshine
- P6. Birdwatching online
- P6. Meet Marianne Lessels
- P7. Online adventures
- P8. Photos from term 3

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PO Box 140  
Williamstown, Vic 3016  
<https://U3ahbwilli.org.au>  
[info@hbwilli.org.au](mailto:info@hbwilli.org.au)

**A good year for our membership despite COVID**

It is a pleasure to write to you all again and I hope that you are coping in these difficult times. We have definitely shown how resilient we are but this latest lockdown is sorely testing our resolve. The U3A Network recorded a drop of 11% in membership across the State and 2 clubs have closed in 2021. I am delighted that although 25 members did not re-enrol for 2021 we had a 37% increase and now have 188 members. Definitely worth celebrating so thanks for hanging in there and supporting us!

**COVID Update**

It seems that COVID will be with us for some time and the latest roadmap suggests we will not be able to have face to face activities until we reach the 80% fully vaccinated milestone for everyone aged 16 and over which is expected by 5<sup>th</sup> November. We will of course keep you in the loop about a return. I know we are all keen to meet again and I encourage all members to get vaccinated to protect ourselves and fellow members so we can relax and enjoy each other's company feeling safe and supported.

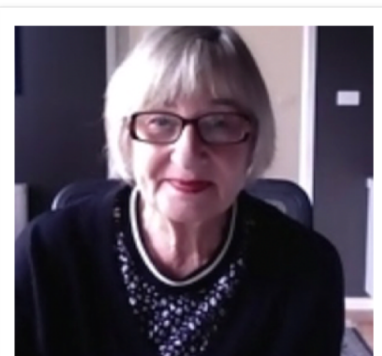
**Dennis Reserve, Williamstown**

There are long term plans to redevelop Dennis Reserve in Williamstown (cnr Williamstown Road and Ferguson Street). Most of the landscaping and outdoor work is complete. The next stage is the development of a new Community Hub on the site of the current Senior Citizens building. COVID has delayed the consultative process with representatives of the current tenants and community representatives.

Ian Barclay (Member) and myself will represent the club at the first of these sessions on 20<sup>th</sup> September by Zoom. The most recent update is that the existing building will be available to us until September 2022. We will schedule activities there until we need to relocate. Be confident we will have plenty of notice and Hobsons Bay Council has given an undertaking they will assist in finding alternative local venues until the new Community Hub building is complete.

Hang in there! In fellowship.

**Joan Thompson**  
**President**



## Staying in touch, despite COVID and lockdown

Many classes have been cancelled due to COVID but it would be a shame to lose the connection between class members.

A lot of members have made friends from their classes and have regular contact, but the newer members might not have had that opportunity yet. Have you thought about staying in touch in other ways, for example, sending an email newsletter within your class or organising a coffee catch-up on Zoom? With restrictions easing a bit, perhaps a stroll and chat could be a lovely activity to do.

If convenors would like to use Zoom I can book a Zoom session for you on our Zoom licence. Send an email to [info@u3ahbwilli.org.au](mailto:info@u3ahbwilli.org.au)

If you would like to learn to use Zoom, simply enrol in the course, **Help With Digital Connectivity, 213DIG04**, on our website. It is listed as Wednesday, but a mutually agreeable time can be arranged once you have enrolled. You will be zooming with confidence in no time.

Do you have ideas for activities that could be run remotely, or over Zoom, while we are in lockdown?

Please send them to [info@u3ahbwilli.org.au](mailto:info@u3ahbwilli.org.au). In the past we have run short courses on Zoom, for example, *The US Presidential Election System* and *Local Real Estate Overview*.

## Survey Results and Planning for 2022

Thank you to all the members who participated in the survey in August, and the convenors for collating the responses. The overwhelming message from you is that you are enjoying your activities (when they run) and appreciate the work of the Committee.

As a result of the survey, suggestions for new activities and members' willingness to become convenors, we will have an exciting array of new activities to add to our 2022 program. Watch out for the full publication in November, but as a teaser: Pickleball, Poetry, Bush Walks, Intermediate Italian Conversation and Fine Dining are just a few.



*Are you ready to give pickleball a go?*

Planning for 2022 is underway. Thanks to current convenors for doing the administration tasks required. Most current courses will continue in 2022, although some will have minor changes. Thanks also to the members who will convene new activities next year, especially those doing it for the first time.

## Convenor Vacancies

Convenors are still needed for our most popular activities that have waiting lists

- A second Explore Melbourne Walking group
- A second Cycling group.

You don't have to do it alone. Most courses also have a co-Convenor to share the load. Current convenors are happy to explain how they work and I will also provide support. In addition, members wanting to know more about convening are most welcome to attend the inductions, workshops, and training sessions when we are once again able to hold such events.

Convening is a great way to meet new people, make new friends and along the way give your life another strand of structure, mental stimulation and fun.

If you would like to know what is involved in being a Convenor please contact me at [info@u3ahbwilli.org.au](mailto:info@u3ahbwilli.org.au).

**Ruth Patching**  
Course  
Coordinator



## Secretary's report

### Next year's enrolments opening first week of Dec



The Committee at its September meeting started planning for 2022 including reviewing continuing and new activities, confirming the availability of venues and facilities, and

considering health requirements and messaging.

More work is underway in preparing for next year particularly given the complex external environment. Through regular Newsflashes we will keep you posted of further activities for this year and the timetable for 2022. At this stage we are planning to open enrolments for 2022 in the first week of December.

### Collaboration with other U3As

Our Club has received tremendous feedback from the U3A Network about the success of U3A Hobsons Bay/Williamstown in re-energising the club with an interesting and diverse range of classes and one-off activities, a convenor engagement strategy and Committee succession planning.

We are one of a very few U3As that have been able to grow membership during the pandemic with a 31% growth from 2020 to 2021. 37% of members are new this year (see chart ).

The word has got around and the Committee has been invited to make presentations at the Network AGM and at U3A Dandenong AGM. Dandenong is a club of similar size to HBW and there is interest in collaborating over a range of activities and organisational items.

**Sue  
Dawkins –  
Secretary**

## Current Affairs

What an incredible time to be discussing current affairs with a global pandemic, shifts in the engagement of nations (like the withdrawal from Afghanistan) and now the new AUKUS alliance.

There's been some great sessions in our Current Affairs group led by various members including a session on Tasmanian salmon farming, imagery in the media, slugs on the floor – controversy at the Dandenong Council, China and a session titled Our Children Their Future.

We have had the privilege to have expert Allan Patience lead a nine-week discussion group on Challenges in Australian Foreign Policy covering Australia's status as a "middle power" in regional and global forums. Topics covered included the ANZUS alliance, stand-off between Beijing and Canberra, and Australia's "laggard state" reputation in international climate change forums

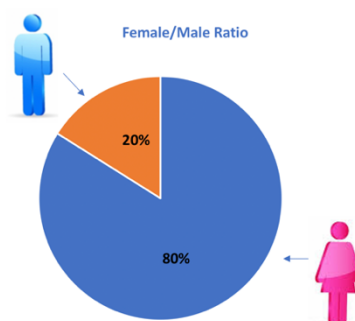
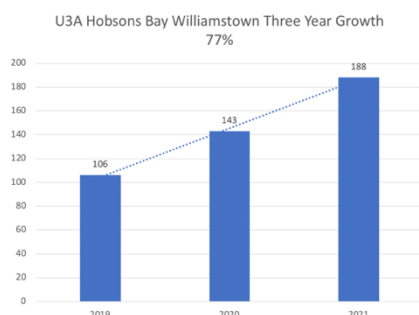


*Current Affairs on Zoom*

We are currently enjoying two zoom sessions on international relations in the 2020s lead by Peter Dawkins, emeritus professor of economics and public policy expert. The sessions explored the implications for the new world order for Australia's international relations especially with China and the announcement of AUKUS.



### MEMBERSHIP





## Footy Tipping

At the time of writing, the 2021 football season is due to reach its conclusion on Saturday 25th September with the Melbourne Demons and the Western Bulldogs set to fight out the Grand Final.

Our small group of tipsters are delighted to have these two teams in the Grand Final as the majority barrack for the Bulldogs and we have one Demons supporter as well.



*The Steam Packet Hotel, Williamstown*

The home and away tipping competition was taken out by Ian (Redlegs) Barclay who led the way for most of the season, finishing with 134 points. His score was bolstered by his mighty Demons winning the majority of their games. Ian won fairly comfortably in the finish, but the rest of the group were very competitive with only a few points separating them at the end of the season.

Yours truly finished a long way back, languishing in last place for most of the season. Peter Dawkins is leading the finals tipping by one point with only the one game left to play. Our group enjoyed a few meetings together at the Steam Packet hotel (in between COVID lockdowns) over the season, discussing all things football.

I would like to have more people join the Footy Tipping next year. You do not have to be a mad keen football follower to participate as it is just a fun competition and another social experience.

**Max Elliott - Co-Convenor**

## Cards Group

The Cards group has proved rather successful this year. The group started out with four members and has now grown to nine. We have played the games 500, Canasta and a new introduction called May I? We have based ourselves at the Steam Packet hotel and play on Tuesday every week, although this has been affected by the COVID lockdowns. Everyone will be keen to get back to playing and enjoying a convivial sip of beer or wine.

Beginners are welcome and assisted by our "experts". This is another great social outlet.

**Max Elliott - Co-Convenor with Keith Seddon**

## Ian Barclay

I joined U3A almost 12 months ago. I was looking to share my passion for painting whilst also meeting other like-minded people. I jumped in the deep end and signed up as a convenor, but what a year with COVID and so many lockdowns. Despite these hurdles, I am still just as determined to continue. I have changed my original ideas a little bit too – just concentrate more on painting.

Prior to starting with U3A I didn't realise there was so much on offer in the way of different and diverse groups. It is fantastic, and you should never be bored. Since joining I signed up for the Footy Tipping Group, where Max has done a great job using a footy tipping app to make it easy for everyone to join and feel included.

I also have another little project with U3A; helping Ruth Patching update the IT equipment at the Cottage.

After we received a small grant from the Hobsons Bay Council, we were able to purchase some new replacement IT equipment. All I need to do now is connect it all up and develop clear and straight forward instructions on how to use it all!

I have lived in Williamstown for over 35 years, still a blow-in according to my wife who was born and bred here.





Besides my family, my other passion is being near the sea. Consequently my interests/hobbies include sailing from RYCV, being an active member at WSLSC and an all-year-round cold-water swimmer down at the beach, plus of course painting, in particular botanical using watercolour.

Before settling in Williamstown, I was a bit of a nomad, born in Hastings (Vic), moved to Perth, came back to Boronia, moved to Brisbane, over 12 months working holiday in the UK and then back to Melbourne, where I am now.

During my professional career I also did a bit of moving around, starting off in hospitality in Queensland and UK, then I got into more commercial catering (Monday to Friday) so I could sail more, this led me into healthcare in a national catering role with a 12-month stint in NZ.

After 20 years of hospitality in various forms I did a career change and moved into procurement, both in healthcare and utilities industry, this then led me into the automotive industry as the Corporate Services Manager at Honda. I have now been retired for about 18 months.

After I retired, we had great plans to do what everyone else wants to do at this stage of their life TRAVEL, but this has not happened with COVID, but we are still dreaming!! On the positive side, being in lockdown has meant that I can do a lot more of my hobby things with far less pressure to have things done quickly.

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## Irene Tanock finds the sunshine

In late June after a delayed departure, I headed off to Cairns for my winter sojourn.

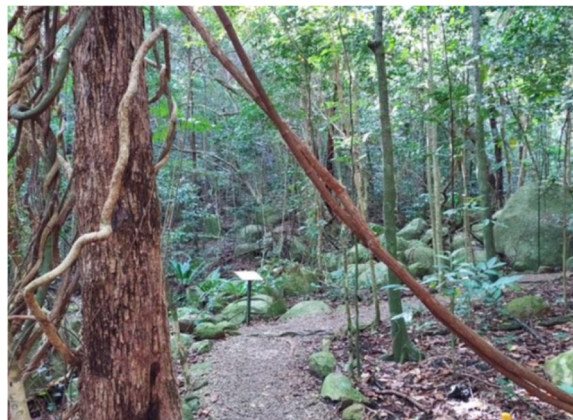
My accommodation at the backpackers on The Esplanade was interesting; sometimes it is called Caravallas Hilton, at other times the zoo. I enjoyed my ten weeks there enormously. During my time in Cairns I went outback to



Chillagoe Caves, to the Botanical Gardens, and snorkelling several times; once to Agincourt Reef on the Outer Reef.

I didn't see any coral bleaching or crown of thorns starfish. I stayed overnight at beautiful Fitzroy Island with its graded walks, and wildlife including resident turtles.

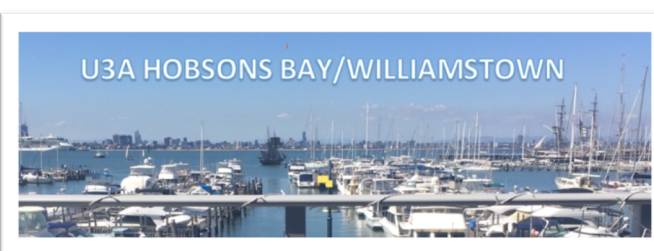
On my tours I saw humpback whales, a crocodile, turtles, reef shark, lots of beautiful reef fish and a goanna.



Drat, time to come home, but Jetstar determined otherwise. I had to make the most of another two weeks in Cairns. Luckily the Cairns Festival was taking place. There was a street parade, a nightly light show, exhibitions and shows. I went to most exhibitions and to see an ELO and Traveling Willburys tribute band. But all good things have to come to an end and I'm now back in COVID reality: but you know there really is no place like home.

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## Facebook



Have you joined the U3A Hobsons/Bay Facebook page?

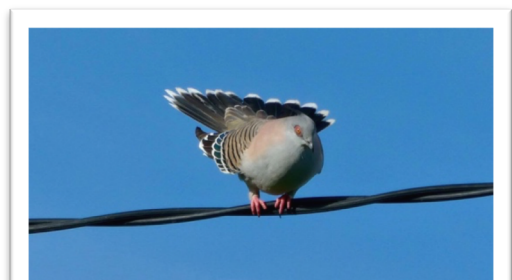
It is a private group, so only members can see your posts or photos. It is a great way to keep up to date and keep in touch with your U3A HBW friends and see what fun things they are up to.

We have 69 members currently. Let's get it up to at least 70!



**Ann Banham**  
Communications Officer

## Birdwatching online



*Photograph courtesy of Fiona Williams*

A conservation group dedicated to the protection of indigenous flora and fauna in Anglesea and Airey's Inlet, has a wonderful website.

<https://angairnatureshow.org.au/>

If you look at the theme page 'Protect' on the right hand side you'll find a six minute presentation on the Hooded Plover. The video and information explains why the species is threatened as well as good footage of these vulnerable shore birds.

<https://angairnatureshow.org.au/themes/protect/>

Under the theme 'Wonder' you'll find the local photographer Margaret Lacey's photos of small birds in the area. This presentation shows clear photos of the small birds, great to help with identification. In addition she has accompanied each bird with a recording of it's call. It's a simple presentation yet so informative and you can appreciate each species in their habitat. Margaret has produced a couple of books on the local birds.

<https://angairnatureshow.org.au/themes/wonder/the-little-birds-of-anglesea-and-aireys-inlet/>

## Sue Myers – Convenor, Birdwatching Group

### Marianne Lessels loves all things Indonesian

**M**y husband Lance and I each (independently) backpacked in Indonesia in the 70s and have been involved in/following Indonesian interests since then. We've travelled there frequently and from 2006-2016 went annually to Surakarta (Central Java) as volunteers in the English language program at an Islamic Junior High School.

These days I have a weekly 2 hour conversation lesson (in Indonesian) with a teacher who lives in Java, belong to an Indonesian book group, and regularly go to/zoom talks, lectures, discussions on anything to do with Indonesia, especially music events.

## Gamelan

I've played gamelan since 1993. The term gamelan refers to the entire set of instruments as well as to the music played on them or the group who plays them. We play Central Javanese style gamelan (from Yogyakarta and Surakarta) which is associated with the cultural traditions of the royal courts. The music is played in formal ceremonies, as popular entertainment and for important occasions such as weddings.

There are about 12 players in our group and we play on the set at the University of Melbourne. There aren't many sets in Melbourne as they're expensive and take up a lot of space. Players sit cross-legged on the floor to play (as we get older we're using small stools).

It's percussive music. We use beaters and play different rhythms and melodies that all come together/ interlock. We learn how to play all the instruments which helps us understand how it works.

Our teacher, who sadly passed away last year, came from Java and was passionate and enthusiastic about his culture. He drummed, played, danced, sang, was a puppeteer and taught almost all gamelan players in Melbourne.



We perform with dancers and singers and do Wayang Kulit (shadow puppet shows). In Java they go all night but we play for 2-3 hours to suit local audiences and

ourselves!

We've played at Indonesian events, Multicultural Arts events, schools, weddings, gallery openings... and they're nearly always accompanied by delicious Indonesian food. Weekly rehearsals are great fun as most of us have been together since early days. We're now waiting to see when we'll be allowed back into the uni building to play.

Why do I play? I just love the music, the culture, the atmosphere, performing, the connections.

Marianne is an active member of U3A – and currently participates in Explore Writing, Friday Cryptic Crossword Group, Thursday Book Group, Arts Happening and Explore Melbourne Walks.

## ONLINE ADVENTURES

Tired of Marie Kondoing your kitchen cupboards? Can't face baking any more sourdough bread? Looking for activities to keep you occupied while lockdown continues? Well dust off your virtual bushwalking boots and fasten your seatbelt for a bird's eye view of different countries: here is a selection of online classes and virtual happenings that will keep you entertained.

Classes	<a href="http://www.lanewaylearning.com">www.lanewaylearning.com</a>	Low cost activities online
Bushwalking	<a href="http://www.travelandleisure.com">www.travelandleisure.com</a>  <a href="http://www.visitnsw.com/activities/national-parks">www.visitnsw.com/activities/national-parks</a>	Online virtual bushwalks around the world  Walks in NSW National Parks
Museum tours	<a href="http://www.timeout.com/travel/virtual-museum-tours">www.timeout.com/travel/virtual-museum-tours</a>	Virtual tours of museums around the world
Languages	<a href="http://www.duolingo.com">www.duolingo.com</a>	Free access to online learning for a variety of languages
Opera from Metropolitan Opera USA	<a href="https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/">https://www.metopera.org/user-information/nightly-met-opera-streams/</a>	Online downloads of operas. Donation requested but not mandatory.
Stand-up comedy	<a href="https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/online/free--events/stand-up-comedy/">https://www.eventbrite.com.au/d/online/free--events/stand-up-comedy/</a>	Free shows of stand-up comedy
Computer skills	<a href="https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/computers/">https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/topics/computers/</a>	Tuition in various computer skills free.
Dante	<a href="https://100daysofdante.com">https://100daysofdante.com</a>	Join a reading group working through Dante's Divine Comedy
Games	Type into your search engine whatever game you want to play – for example, bridge online, and you will find options for playing games online.	May involve a cost.
Musical tours	<a href="https://youtu.be/qHvHEuYbJT8">https://youtu.be/qHvHEuYbJT8</a>	Do an aerial tour of different countries accompanied by a delightful musical score.
Melbourne Digital Concert Hall	<a href="https://melbournedigitalconcerthall.com/about/concept/">https://melbournedigitalconcerthall.com/about/concept/</a>	Subscription required for access to the concerts

*Thanks to Phil Quinn for putting this selection together.*



## Term Three

Such a confusing time this Term. We were in lockdown, - then out - then what do you know, back into lockdown again.

But we did manage to squeeze in some face-to-face activities at the beginning of term.

Speed Scrabble at the cottage was a fun afternoon. This was a series of quick-fire two-person scrabble games lasting ten minutes each.

The bike group also managed to get in a ride to Altona - and what a colourful group they were!

So now back to Zoom again. The Friday cryptic crossword group had a congratulatory glass of bubbles to celebrate Robyn's birthday and had fun with the Zoom filters.

Current Affairs successfully met via Zoom on a weekly basis and covered a myriad of topics.

Now what?

Back to baking and doing jigsaws for the time being.

At the time of writing (end of Term 3) the future is unsure when we will be able to meet in person again.

Fingers crossed that we can get together again soon.

