

Course Coordinator Report for AGM, Wed 16/3/2022, written version

In 2021 U3A HBW hosted 61 activities, compared to 22 activities in 2020 – almost a three-fold increase!

This amazing increase occurred despite the prevalence of Covid and the restrictions

For a second year Covid had a huge impact on our activities. Various levels of restrictions at different times impacted all courses. Outdoor activities continued when possible, some indoor activities returned to Zoom as needed and some activities occurred, in person, intermittently.

Many of the long-running activities continued, and some old favourites returned in a new format, such as Craft Circle (was Scrapbooking) and Social Bridge (was Bridge). They are the bedrock upon which our U3A has grown.

Other activities have been running for less time but are equally important for the variety of interests they cater for.

Of the 61 activities hosted in 2021, 9 were held monthly, 6 were fortnightly, 24 were weekly, 20 were one-off and 2 were held fully via Zoom.

Many of the one-off activities were developed to try to cater for the large number of members on waiting lists. People who joined later were naturally disappointed that they couldn't get into their desired activities and the Committee wanted to be able to offer them some alternatives.

Waiting lists grew for a number of reasons – increasing membership, the small size and configuration of our venues, and simply because some activities function best with limited numbers.

Of the 61 activities in 2021, 31 were new activities

The categories of activities expanded as did the number of activities in those categories.

See Appendix 1 for list of new activities in 2021 and Appendix 2 for list of activities continuing from previous years

Number of activities per convenor

Such expansion of activities is only possible because members volunteer to run them. In 2021 35 convenors ran those 61 activities.

Last year we had 14 members take on a Convenor role for the first time, making approximately half of those new activities possible.

Some of our Convenors ran more than one activity, either singly or as a Co-convenor

15 convenors ran one activity, 12 convenors ran two activities each, four convenors ran 3, 2 convenors ran 4, 1 convenor ran 6, and 1 Convenor ran 8

VENUES

More activities meant we needed more venues and we were fortunate in negotiating access to the Senior Citizens Centre for two days per week.

In total we used seven venues: Cottage, Senior Citizens Centre, Yacht Club, Cirino Café, Sun Cinema, Steampacket Hotel, private homes and Zoom.

In addition there were five activities held outdoors.

IT equipment in cottage

One of the great innovations was the installation of new IT equipment in the cottage. This provides all sorts of possibilities for how activities operate:

- the Smart TV large screen allows access to documentaries, You-tube and a host of digital information and programs
- the camera enables hybrid Zoom and face-to-face sessions
- the new laptop increases the range of apps available

Many thanks are due to Ian Barclay for the scoping, purchase and installation of the equipment and providing training sessions for convenors in using the equipment.

Convenors are supported in a number of ways by the Committee and the wider network.

As Course Coordinator my role has been to help convenors at all stages along the journey, from incubation of an idea, through the planning and approval process to getting started and dealing with any issues along the way. I have developed a number of tools to assist with the process including a proposal form, regular bulletins to inform convenors of committee plans, upcoming events and other issues and a survey process. Along with the Committee, I have also held some induction, information and feedback sessions which have been useful for promoting collegiality among convenors and an exchange of ideas.

I have also acted as a conduit when the Network has offered relevant support sessions for convenors.

Planning for 2022

In September 2021 planning for the 2022 program began. The vast majority of convenors committed to continuing running their activities and some even offered to run more.

As of December 2021 62 activities had been approved for 2022.

11 completely new activities have been planned for 2022 with another two in the pipeline.

6 members have stepped up to become convenors for the first time in 2022.

More Convenors are always needed.

As our membership grows we need to be able to offer more activities, so if you have an idea to suggest and/or would like to become a Convenor please contact the Committee.

Quite a few of our activities now operate with Co-Convenors to share the load.

Convenors find that hosting an activity is a very rewarding thing to do and is a great way to enhance current skills or develop new ones. It can also provide a structure for busy life in retirement, contribute to feelings of belonging to a community and is a great way to meet new people.

Thanks

I wish to thank all Convenors, past and present, new and long-term, for giving their time, energy and expertise so generously, and for being so wonderful to work with.

Unfortunately, two convenors had to retire during the year. I'd like to acknowledge the years of commitment to our U3A by Helene Richards and Ed Marshall.

Finally, I wish to thank Phil Quinn, who did much of the foundation work in convincing people to become convenors. He has been a great support to me during 2021, along with the rest of the Committee.

List of 2021 Convenors

John Adams	Ian Barclay	Ann Banham
Sarah Berry	Clara Brack	Carmen Cohen
Michael Collins	Peter Dawkins	Sue Dawkins
Sue Duff	Sue Egan	Max Elliot
Jennie Fraine	Ken Gratton	Sandy Guest
Darby Higgs	Liz Holland	Ena Holt
Ralph Humphries	Kerry Lewis	Barbara Maher
Ed Marshall	Tony McCosker	Susan Myer
Jan Norman	Carol Neumann	Mary O'Donoghue
Ruth Patching	Allan Patience	Phil Quinn
Helene Richards	Francois Muller-Robbie	Annette Signorini
Keith Seddon	Sue Sturup	Joan Thompson

APPENDIX 1 List of *new* activities hosted in 2021

ARTS

Archie 100 Exhibition	Arts Happenings
Art time	Craft Circle
Drawing Basics	Mary Quant Exhibition
Thank a Health Care Worker	Ukulele for Beginners

DISCUSSION

Australian Foreign Policy Challenges	International Relations
Melbourne Circle book discussion	Superannuation

EXERCISE

Birdwatching	Explore Melbourne Walking
Cycling	Historical Williamstown Walks
Local Walking group	

GAMES

Board Games	Cards
Footy Tipping and Chat	Speed Scrabble
Trivial Pursuit	

INFOTECH:

Digital Connectedness

LANGUAGE

Introduction to Linguistics	Spanish
-----------------------------	---------

OTHER

About India	Camera Basics
First Aid and CPR	Rose Pruning

WRITING

Life Writing	Poetry Writing
--------------	----------------

APPENDIX 2 List of activities from previous years continued in 2021

ARTS

Art	Drawing and Sketching
Film Group	National Theatre and Opera at the Sun
Scrapbooking and Jewellery Making	

DISCSSION

Book Group 1	Book Group 2
--------------	--------------

GAMES

Cryptic Crosswords 1	Cryptic Crosswords 2
Bridge	Mah Jong

LANGUAGE

French Conversation	Italian
---------------------	---------

WRITING

Creative Writing	Explore Writing
------------------	-----------------

Ruth Patching, Course Coordinator

7/3/2022