

(Reg. No. A0035750D)
Box U3A, 42 Capital Avenue
Glen Waverley 3150

Enquiries: Secretary: 9803 8592 10am-2pm weekdays
Email: enquiries@u3ahighvale.com.au
Website: <http://www.u3ahighvale.com.au>

TERM 4: 7th October – 30th November 2020

COVID-19 UPDATE

Congratulations, Melbourne!

We have obtained our “get-out-of-jail” ticket. However social distancing, the use of face masks when leaving home and other restrictions continue to be mandatory throughout Victoria. See this website for current details (at time of printing of this Newsletter) <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

With the continued uncertainty regarding opening up of venues, face-to-face classes will not be possible. U3A Members will be notified when this restriction changes.

U3A HIGHVALE END-OF-YEAR FUNCTION

This will be a VIRTUAL event on Friday 27 November 2020 at 2pm via Zoom. Invites and details have been sent out on email. It will be an entertaining event with fun cooking and ikebana demonstrations. Lucky members will win giveaway prizes.

RSVP by 20th Nov 2020 with your name and guest(s) name(s) to enquiries@u3ahighvale.com.au.

A reminder to mute your microphone when you are not speaking during presentations, so as to keep background noise to a minimum.

U3A HIGHVALE 2021 ENROLMENT

Enrolment (normally held in November) is postponed to 11 January 2021.

Where to find more information on COVID-19

The Victorian Department of Health is the most reliable source of advice on Coronavirus and the best way to reduce risk of infection. Information on the most recent measures in place can be monitored on the following link: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19>

A Message from Your Committee

The Virus and Us

The virus has been cause for us to be apart and that will continue for the rest of the year. But hopefully we can come together again sometime in 2021.

While Australia (with 7,692 square kilometres), has one of the sixth largest land area in the world, its population density is one of the lowest, which at this time is a distinct advantage. Overall Australia is doing well. In October, approximately 58 tests per 1,000 people were conducted, more than US, Canada, South Korea and this has been highly praised around the world.

Since January 2020, Australia has had 27,554 cases, 25,067 recovered cases and sadly 907 deaths. This a testament to our well trained medical staff who have coped so well with this virus that was so new to us all in its spread, treatment, and infectious nature.

Victorians have had to endure some hiccups. The peak of our infection was at the end of July and has gone down in October, thus lifting restrictions. We are in good hands. Extensive contact tracing, enhanced testing, community engagement, door knocking and providing information in a range of languages, community meetings and information stalls are now showing their benefits.

Zooming During Lockdown

Never did we expect when we were arranging our breakup for 2019 that our 2020 breakup would be done on Zoom, a venue that has become so familiar to most of us, because of the coronavirus.

Zoom has enabled several classes, suited to this connectivity, to continue online and have members meet and delight in remote learning. Venue size is no longer an issue.

Hardly anyone is late for class, there is no travelling required so you save heaps on petrol costs. And whatever the weather there is no excuse because you don't have to go out in the rain, cold or heat. All classes can be enjoyed in the comfort of your home.

Understandably there are members who prefer socialising face-to-face and some may be afraid to use Zoom. Your committee is happy to assist anyone who needs help. Once you know how Zoom works, with a good device, strong and stable Internet connection, there are endless

possibilities. Advantages of Zoom outweigh the disadvantages. Life is zooming wonderful!

Network and Regional Meetings

U3A Network Victoria and Eastern Metropolitan Region (EMR) have used Zoom efficiently during lockdown to present many forums and special events for U3A groups.

One of the highlights was the Governor's Virtual Reception on 1 October. This is covered separately on page 3.

The Network Council meeting in September included participants from all over Victoria. It also served as the AGM for Network.

Workshops on data privacy and security, website template and maintenance, marketing, Facebook, and planning for 2021 were held to discuss a range of issues from IT to ways of publicising classes and activities and increasing enrolments. U3As that use Facebook to advertise on social media find it a valuable tool, particularly at this time.

The EMR meeting on 21 September examined discounted fees and hybrid classes (incorporating Zoom and in-class attendance). Co-ordinators' monthly meetings with the Network Education Officer will continue to look into different courses using Zoom and assisting tutors as they resume in-person classes.

Planning for 2021

2020 has certainly been a very busy year for your committee whilst missing your company and smiling faces. Having embraced new technology in particular Zoom, one of our endeavours is to possibly offer "hybrid" classes in 2021.

We are exploring venue opportunities ensuring we are providing good air circulation and are complying with all DHHS requirements. We can assure members that when we do spring back into U3A life, we will have a COVIDSafe Plan to enable us to get back to what we have safely. The plan will follow health regulations and protocols set by Highvale Retirement Village and Monash Council.

Well done to everyone for travelling the exceptional and at times lonely journey of 2020. All we ask of you is to get back into training for Term 1 2021 and move towards "COVID normal". We look forward to seeing you in the New Year.

Your Committee of 2020

Governor Hosts U3A Virtual Reception



The Governor of Victoria, Her Excellency the Honourable Linda Dessau AC, and her husband, Mr Anthony Howard, hosted her first Virtual Reception to mark International Day of Older Persons on 1 October, hosting the U3A movement in Victoria. Over 100 U3A members were able to log on to hear the Governor's address and a response by U3A Network President Susan Webster.

Susan noted that the challenges of this year have also given us the opportunity to take up new skills and use them for the benefit of others – a wonderful example of the contributions to the community made by those in the third age. She said that, even during this term break, U3As like Deepdene were offering up to 20 video-based classes and activities a day; U3As like Port Phillip were extending their reach beyond the State to introduce our movement to newcomers, and U3As like Port Fairy were introducing video as a new medium for seniors in that area for coming together and interacting.

June Kinsella, President of U3A Mallacoota, spoke of her U3A's isolation after the bushfires, and how donations from sister U3As had given

them the means to work with other of the town's community groups for the well-being of the whole town.

Pat Buoncristiani, President of U3A Emerald, regularly rang those in her U3A without any digital skills. She spoke of members with no other outside contact and their pleasure at hearing from U3A friends.

Benjamin Chan, Vice President of U3A Melbourne Chinese, talked about the impact of the pandemic on his many older migrant Chinese members and the importance of his teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) in making people feel part of the community.

The reception itself finished on schedule but many U3A attendees stayed behind to chat with friends unseen for several months.

A fuller description of the virtual reception appears on the Governor's website here: <https://www.governor.vic.gov.au/all-news/virtual-reception-u3a-network-victoria>

Image: Government House.

Shock of the New

This title is unashamedly borrowed from a 1980 television series and book (published in 1981) by Robert Hughes on modern art. His book analyses the revolutions in modern art and as pointed out by Simon Elmes (once Creator Director of BBC's Radio Documentary Unit), "the new can indeed be shocking to the beholder".

In the current context it is certainly an appropriate description of what we are experiencing. COVID-19 has given rise to an explosion of new words and phrases and caused a seismic disturbance in society. We are forced to encounter something called:



Prior to the pandemic the term was used following the financial crisis of 2007-2008 and the aftermath of the 2008–2012 global recession largely in the context of industrial economies. Now it refers to changes in human behaviour: daily life, person-to-person contact and social distancing.

But is there an accepted definition of "new normal"? The term is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as "A previously unfamiliar or atypical situation that has become standard, usual, or expected."

This definition assumes a consensus on what is normal. If there is no such consensus then maybe there is no normal to return to, only a new future to advance towards. Here are some key considerations for U3A members to ponder.

What to Retain

Members are good at socialising as a community with shared interests and goals. So staying connected is a feature we cannot leave behind.

When "connectedness" is mentioned these days the ubiquitous use of social media comes to mind. Perhaps there should be a paradigm shift whereby people stay connected by disconnecting from social media.

What Not to Resist

In post-pandemic times U3A members should continue their life-long learning pursuits. Undoubtedly there will be more and more courses offered online if person-to-person contact is discouraged.

Members may require additional computer skills to take on Zoom classes and such like. A good start would be to enrol in one of U3A Highvale's Computer Class. All classes now combine to run online sessions on Mondays from 12.-2.00pm.

What is Re-imagined Resilience

Given the uncertainties caused by COVID-19, future-proofing the existence of U3As is critical. A new level of resilience is called for. Members need to rethink what this means.

Personal resilience may not be just about making lemonade when one is given lemons. It requires individuals to pursue a range of exciting opportunities to meet new challenges. It is about bouncing back and moving on: learning, thriving and living a re-imagined life.

Organisational resilience involves resourcefulness and strategic thinking. But it is no longer thinking outside the box, rather thinking like there is no box. This innovative approach has to be maintained for the long term to overcome the SHOCK OF THE NEW--the COVID normal!

Siew Kennedy
Secretary/Treasurer

Art Appreciation Class Report

What a topsy-turvy year we have had in 2020; made doubly memorable for how we have been able to pursue our interest in Art virtually. We were so lucky that we managed to attend and enjoy what we thought would be the highlight of our year, a visit to Hamer Hall to witness the Beethoven 9/Circa performance. What a spectacle this was and MSO has made it available on YouTube since, so we hope many have been able to revisit what was indeed a remarkable occasion. Who was to know this would be the sum total of our outings.

But we have been fortunate that galleries far and wide have made their collections available to us

online as our fingers have taken us on a wander through collections from around the world from Musée d'Orsay in Paris to MoMA in New York, Van Gough Museum in Amsterdam to Uffizi Gallery in Florence and many more.

Back to our own galleries in Australia, we have enjoyed the Johnson Collection, the John Leslie Art Prize 2020 for landscape painting from Gippsland Art Gallery, Keith Haring | Jean-Michel Basquiat: Crossing Lines and Japanese Modernism from NGV (as illustrated below), the TarraWarra "Making Her Mark" exhibition and Archibald finalists to name a few.



JAPANESE MODERNISM

Additionally ABC and SBS have taken us to Life Drawing and History of Nudes in Western Art and YouTube has presented us with some thought-provoking offerings.

All in all, we have not been starved for inspiration, just the physical joy of travelling and standing in front of interesting and provocative artistic offerings. We look forward to 2021 and once again piling into the Highvale bus to venture into the real world of Art.

Pat Tinsley

Zumba Gold Class Report

Maya Hirai, our Zumba Gold tutor jumped on the Zoom bandwagon quick as a flash. She started her weekly classes for U3A Highvale from mid-April 2020, soon after lockdown. The online class attracts about half of the members who would normally attend classes in-person. This seems rather counter-intuitive as venue size is no longer an issue. Virtual classes can accommodate more members than 'physical' classes and impose no limit on enrolment numbers. And yet not all members are participating in Zoom meetings.

With Zoom, each member has a front-row seat and can see the tutor clearly. However, audio quality is not perfect. The dance music sometimes drops out, gets delayed or comes across as 'robotic-sounding'. There may be a range of causes. The common ones being incorrect audio settings, poor bandwidth, high CPU usage or low computer memory.



But on the whole, members who have embraced Zoom overlook these shortcomings. They still enjoy the exercise and workout. Just look at the happy smiling faces in the photo above of some participants after a recent Zumba Gold class. The proof of the pudding is in the eating?

Siew Kennedy

Computer Class Report

As Term 4 ends and 2020 closes we can reflect upon the changes that have occurred with our U3A Computer class and see how both the class and the individuals have changed. Initially it was thought that the class would have to halt because we were not able to gather together in the Computer Room at Highvale and therefore not have access to the computers therein.

But a lot has changed over the past few years with most people not only having their own computers at home but also other pieces of computing technology such as tablets and smart phones. What was once a class to introduce people to computing has become a class in educating and assisting students to use the technology that they already own or have access to through their community.

Thus adapting to online learning has been much less traumatic than expected and often a thrilling and enjoyable experience. By learning online with

3 Tutors, classes have been able to cater for a wider variety of topics and given students easy access to their wide experience. Many topics have been covered in Term 4 and learning documents added to our U3A Document Library hosted by Tutor Ron for easy access by students who wish to refresh their memory.

Online classes have now become a great way to learn with some advantages over the traditional class environment. Although we hope that 2021 will allow us to include our traditional classes at Highvale, we may also be able to include remote learning at the same time as a result of our 2020 experiences. Join with us as we explore computing through U3A.

Like the well-known phrase, the only thing constant in life is change.

David Jewell

Intermediate Mandarin Class Report

I have enjoyed tutoring this class for the optimistic and sharing spirit and the ready learning attitude. The class' rich life experiences have inspired and encouraged me, as a migrant, to belong to an inclusive learning community, a journey I get great joy in travelling together.

June Wang (Tutor)

The COVID19 pandemic lockdowns did not stop us from continuing to learn Mandarin. Through ZOOM & up skilling on technology, students readily returned to class. Tutor June's dedication fostered a light-hearted and conducive learning atmosphere, enabling experience-sharing by all. Opportunities abound for individual contributions based on the text book and 'Show & Tell' oral presentations. With Mandarin's 4-tone system, mispronunciations lead to different meanings. So our oral presentations often turned out to be more like comedy sessions.

The opportunity and hunger to learn and speak unite the class as June continues to navigate us. Thank you, June.

*Nelson Koh and Kim Yong
(Students)*

U3A Network Victoria Network News & Avenues

Network held a COVID Innovations Group workshop on 5 October 2020 to address the three topics of class development and scheduling, fees, and enrolment procedures. One clear message was to stay close to tutors/leaders, to members, and to local partners like the Council. Keep talking to all of them, share problems, and ask for help.

At the regional meeting in September with Susan Webster (President), several U3As attended and talked about growing their membership with the opportunities of other seniors organisations closing down and of attracting new interest to online classes.

More topics on: <https://www.u3avictoria.com.au/>
<https://mailchi.mp/188a26efb595/u3a-network-victorias-news-bulletin-for-member-u3as-4211653#mctoc1victorias-news-bulletin-for-member-u3as-4211653#mctoc1>

GEMS for Enquiring Minds

4 SCAMS TARGETING RETIREES RIGHT NOW

2020 has been a year of immense change. Unfortunately, as we all try to pivot and adjust to the new normal, scammers are on hand to take advantage of the uncertainty. Some scams discussed are:

Rental scams

"Scammers are offering reduced rents due to COVID-19 and using the government restrictions to trick people into transferring money without inspecting the property," ACCC Deputy Commissioner Delia Rickard said.

Scammers post ads on real estate or classified websites, and social media, advertising a room for rent. After the victim responds, the scammers request an upfront deposit to secure the property or "[phish](#)" for personal information via a fake tenant application form.

Keys are promised after the payment or info is received, but of course, there are no keys forthcoming. At this point, the scammers either cut off contact or, if they feel they can push things

further, come up with excuses to obtain further payments or information.

“Try to view a property in person before paying any bond or rent money to landlords or real estate agents,” Ms Rickard says. Where COVID-19 Level 4 restrictions apply, you should do an online search to confirm the property exists and, if dealing with an agent, checking that the agent you are dealing with is licensed.” Also an independent search for a phone number and speak to the property manager over the phone or arrange a meeting in person.”

Puppy scams

Another outcome of COVID-19 and the resulting increase in time spent at home is that more people are seeking out furry friends. Scammers have recognised this trend and are doing what they can to profit at the expense of others.

In a typical puppy scam, the scammer sets up a fake website, ad or online classified/social media post pretending to sell sought-after dog breeds. They may look to take advantage of restrictions (as in Victoria), of the fact that you can't travel to meet the puppy in person; or they may simply say they are in a location that is many hours from any major city and ask for money to be sent in advance.

“The safest option is to only buy or adopt a pet you can meet in person,” Ms Rickard said.

Inheritance scams

Here, the scammer offers you the false promise of an inheritance to trick you into parting with your money or sharing your financial details. Scamwatch reports that, as of August 2020, over \$600,000 has been lost to these types of scams in Australia. Retirees in particular are often targeted.

The scammer usually poses as a lawyer, banker or other foreign official and claims that the deceased has left no other beneficiaries. Sometimes the scammer will say you are legally entitled to claim the inheritance. However, they will usually add that the inheritance is difficult to access, and that you'll need to pay money and provide personal details to claim it, the real basis of the scam.

As always, protect yourself by never sending money or giving credit card, online account details or copies of personal documents to anyone you don't know or trust.

If you are in doubt, seek advice from an independent professional such as a lawyer or accountant.

Dating and romance scams

One of the most unscrupulous scams going around are those that look to take advantage of people who are lonely. These dating and romance scams are frustratingly common.

Due to the relatively new phenomenon of dating apps and websites, dating and romance scams are easier than ever to pull off. Scammers generally create online profiles designed to lure you in. They may also create fake profiles on social media websites such as Facebook and contact you via those channels. They may use a fictional name, or falsely take on the identities of real, trusted people.

The scammers tend to express strong emotions for you in a short period of time and will suggest you move the relationship away from the website to a more private area such as phone, email or instant messaging. Now they are beyond the jurisdiction of the app or website, which can ban the profiles once it becomes apparent they are fakes.

Having gained your trust many things can happen, but as always it usually involves asking (subtly or directly) for money or credit card details.

As always, never send money to someone you haven't met in person. Always consider the possibility that the approach may be a scam. If you agree to meet a prospective partner in person, tell family and friends where you are going.

This type of scam can be very complex, so [click here for more in-depth information](#).

And for more information about all types of scams, visit the Australian Government's [Scamwatch](#) website.

