



PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020

The annual U3A report has never recorded global events such as that experienced this past year. The Covid-19 virus radically altered our lives including disruption to our lectures and Special Interest Group activities. With the move to Level 1 we have enjoyed our freedom with a return to The Embassy and resumption of the interest groups.

Lecture Programme

Each year it seems hard to believe that the lectures and presenters could be as thought-provoking and captivating as the previous year but again, we have had outstanding lectures both electronically and face-to-face. We had planned a total of 57 lectures and despite Covid-19, by 6 November 51 lectures will have been delivered. Programme Coordinators Robin Halliday, Rae Julian and Doug Helps coped magnificently in procuring replacement lecturers willing to present via Zoom and reorganising lectures for the Embassy. Now that our 2020 programme is finalised they are thinking of 2021. They appreciate the 300 or so suggestions you provided from the survey and plan to fit many of these into next year's programme. Additional suggestions of topics and presenters continue to be welcomed.

Dougal Congalton has noted increased attendance numbers this year, averaging 230 before we went into lockdown, and since returning to the Embassy 224 (low 121, high 290). This is 15% up on the 2019 average. The numbers of devices connecting to our Zoom sessions averaged 252 with a record high of over 400 on the first talk, but trending down during lockdown. Dougal's chart showing comparative lecture attendance figures for 2019 & 2020 appears on Page 8.

We are indebted and thank Roger Chapman for researching the emailing of Zoom lecture invitation links to our very large membership and continuing with the weekly emailed lecture reminders.

The Embassy

The Embassy provides us with not only a wonderful screen and sound experience for our lectures but a supportive Manager, Caleb Button, and technician Darryl Burnard. We will shortly negotiate a contract for 2021.

The support provided by Darryl Burnard in setting up the sound and projection facilities is very much appreciated. We are fortunate to have a sound/media expert in Ian Goodwin who ensures slide and sound for presenters are always professionally taken care of and in his absence Alan Wright and Anthony Fletcher have done a great job. The roving microphone 'runners' that variously include Ian Goodwin, Alan Wright, Bruce Levick, Doug Helps and Anthony Fletcher ensure questions are heard by everyone - thank you.

Volunteers and Front Desk

Dougal Congalton ably coordinates the “front of house” volunteers, and assists when required. He will be checking availability for 2021 of this year’s volunteers and is always interested in hearing from new helpers. This is an important role as they are the first point of contact at The Embassy lectures and set up the scanning equipment. For members who are not presently volunteers but who are willing to make themselves available in 2021 there is a Volunteer form available from Dougal. dc.congalton@xtra.co.nz This can be given or sent to Dougal, one of the committee members or left with the people on the desk when scanning in.

Finances

The financial statement for the year ending 30 June 2020 is available on our U3A website. Tony Thomson, our wonderful Treasurer, provides the Committee with regular financial reports and is delighted to report a surplus for the year ending 30 June 2020 of \$8,873.90. The surplus is one of the few beneficial consequences of the Covid-19 lockdown and resulted primarily from the suspension of lectures at the Embassy Theatre. Our Income and Expenditure figures for Functions were also affected by the lockdown. (Functions and events, including the mid-winter lunch, which was cancelled this year, are all self-funding except for the Volunteers' November social function, which is funded by U3A). Debbie Mickell, the independent reviewer, is undertaking her review of our annual accounts and will be completing her report prior to the Annual General Meeting. A return will be provided, as required, to Charities Services once the Financial Statements have been presented at the AGM.

Tony has been a superb Treasurer and guardian of our finances and so it is with deep regret that he is retiring this year as his five years' service is completed.

Membership

June and July are very busy months for Gwen Levick who deals with subscription renewals - around 1,000 - as well as updates to the database. At the last AGM we indicated that the fees for this current year would increase to \$40 to address the financial deficit. This is no longer necessary as the savings we made during the 'lock down' period by not having the Embassy rental has remedied our finances - to the delight of our Treasurer. This financial year's annual membership fee therefore remains at \$35. Many thanks, Gwen, for your calm and super-efficient handling of a very big job.

Visits and Events

We are kept informed of upcoming Holiday Events organised by enthusiastic and capable Aidan Kay. Our mid-winter lunch at the James Cook Hotel was a casualty of the virus but Aidan managed to arrange a July holiday programme that many members enjoyed. The popularity of the Victoria University Art Walk meant it was 'sold out' and additional art walks have been arranged for the October holidays.

Newsletter

Heather Nelson, our Newsletter Editor has done a marvellous job with the three informative newsletters circulated each year to our members. Over the five years of Heather's service the number of posted copies has dramatically reduced; an indication of the digital world. Regretfully she is retiring from her U3A committee role. We very

much appreciate the timely and thoughtful communication and contribution to the committee overall. We wish you well and thank you Heather.

Special Interest Groups

Much appreciation and thanks go to the leaders of our 18 interest groups (two new ones) who organise interesting activities. New group members are welcome and should contact the leader of the group. If a group is full you can always start another one. Alan Wright, the committee member who has been the Special Interest Groups Coordinator this past year is resigning. Thank you Alan for your year's service.

Victoria University U3A Award

Gillian Marie received this year's award and will present her PhD work at a lecture in Term 4. Our award, worth \$2,000, has not attracted many applicants since it was established in 2013 and after a review the Committee decided we would no longer fund the award.

Website

The new website is appreciated by many members, especially the calendar showing both lectures for each month and holiday events. We now receive regular Google Analytics reports showing numbers accessing the various pages by members and New Members categories, Page Views and the length of time spent on the website. We very much appreciate the work of Alison Dixie, with backup from George Sutton, in keeping the site updated and current with news and lecture slide presentations.

Archiving

U3A hard copy records have grown over many years creating storage problems. The committee agreed that a central, official repository would be a suitable place for the pre 2013 records. After enquiring from The National Library and Archives New Zealand, Wellington City Archives has welcomed our records and an agreement signed that allows access by interested researchers.

Committee

We are fortunate in having so many capable, thoughtful and active committee members who contribute so much of their time and expertise. Tricia Walbridge, our innovative and efficient Secretary joined the committee after the last AGM and has been a great asset. There are three nominations for the roles of Treasurer, Newsletter Coordinator and Special Interest Groups' Coordinator. The remaining committee members have agreed to re-election for the coming year.

Barbara Crump
President