



New Year Greetings

Nau mai, hoki mai! Welcome back to Term 1 for our 2024 U3A Wellington City Members, with a special greeting for the 32 people who have joined us over the Christmas break.

Mark Twain once said ***Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter.*** It is good to remind ourselves that retirement is that latter part of one's life, in fact our third, and hopefully productive, age.

While U3A can't formally describe itself as a university, our business is continuing education for the wellbeing of people in full or part-time retirement, and U3AWC offers a range of options for members to choose.

The lecture programme (page 2) starts on Friday 16 February, the interest groups are well under way (page 4) and the summer events programme (page 6) is about to conclude. My thanks and appreciation to the members who volunteer to make it all happen, sign you up and sign you in, and keep essential information coming.

As you can see, we invite more members to share their expertise and experience to add to what we can offer. You might say, 'Ask not what U3AWC can do for you – ask what you can do for U3AWC'. We are looking for advice and direction – including useful contacts – and only as much time as you are happy to give.

May I wish you all an enduringly happy U3A Wellington City (Inc) year.

Philip Harrison

president@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz

Share your knowledge

Please contact president@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz if you have a background in any of the following:

- **Accountancy/Book-keeping:** To advise whether we should continue with spreadsheets or move to online accounting software such as Xero.
- **Marketing/advertising/editorial:** To help us spread the word about U3AWC in effective ways.
- **IT including database and website development, and statistical knowledge:** For the urgent need to learn more about our membership to better target what we can offer them, and to maximise the value of our communication tools.
- **Legal expertise (lawyers or legal assistants):** To ensure our ideas are legal!

Let us know, too, if you can be a **spare pair of hands** to help with any of our general operations.

Term 1 Lectures

Term 1 2024 runs from Friday 16 February to Friday 12 April, with a break on Friday 23 February to make way for the International Arts Festival, and again for Easter (Friday 29 March).

This newsletter gives details of the first three lectures that Gill Sutherland's programmes team have organised. Our weekly emails will remind you of upcoming speakers and topics, which can also be found at www.u3awellingtoncity.org.nz/programmes/

Friday 16 February: Asa Cox - AI: past, present, and future

Asa is the founder of Arcanum AI, a Wellington-based startup on a mission to eliminate the mundanity from business operations and free humans from the drudgery of robotic tasks.

Asa will present a concise history of AI, explaining the reasons behind the recent surge in interest and exploring potential future developments. He will also provide hands-on examples of using ChatGPT in ways that are inspiring and exciting. This will keep you a step ahead of your family in understanding and utilising this innovative technology.

Tuesday 20 February: Angela Green - Aotearoa New Zealand Festival of the Arts Programme 2024

Angela Green is Executive Director, Tāwhiri Festivals and Experiences. She is a highly experienced festival producer and arts leader with over 20 years working in the Aotearoa New Zealand arts sector.

Tāwhiri welcomes members of U3A Wellington City to discover the world of Aotearoa NZ Festival of the Arts. From 23 February - 17 March, Pōneke will come alive with all things theatre, dance and music.

The WRITERS programme will be taking over the Embassy from 22 - 25 February. Local and international authors will talk about books, poetry, fiction and fantasy. The website <https://www.festival.nz/events/writers/> has the full weekend lineup.



Aotearoa Festival of the Arts Festival Programmes will be available at the lecture.

Note: No lecture on Friday 23 February as the Embassy Theatre will be used for a festival event.

Tuesday 27 February: Mike Styles - Dyslexia: a difference, not a disability. Our current attitude is both an inequity and a missed opportunity

Mike Styles is a consultant, trainer and researcher in dyslexia and neurodiversity. He has led national research projects about dyslexia in New Zealand and has presented the results at international conferences in the UK, Europe, Canada, and Australia.

New Zealand has a sad history with respect to the way we treat people with dyslexia. The Ministry of Education denied the existence of dyslexia until 2007. Children with dyslexia are still short-changed in our education system and therefore often side lined in the workplace. Most people do not get their dyslexia identified – because assessment is very expensive. We do not gather statistics about it, and having no legislative status, dyslexia does not appear in government policies or budgets.

However, there are positive signs in the future. The exciting part of the dyslexia story is that it comes with as many positive features as challenges. This presentation looks at what can be done to improve the future for the 500,000 Kiwis with dyslexia.

Still to come in Term 1

- **1 March:** Why the Predator-free 2050 goal will be good for human health too.
- **5 March:** The Climate is Changing Fast – but are we?
- **8 March:** 62 years of Volunteer Service Abroad
- **15 March:** A history of prisoners and produce on Mataimoana/Mt Crawford.
- **19 March:** Wastewater – a window into the soul of a community.
- **2 April:** Evolving hearts and minds: theatre as education.
- **5 April:** Walking the length of Aotearoa/New Zealand
- **9 April:** Intensive care: a two-part talk

12 March, 22 March, 26 March and 12 April: speakers confirmed but content to be advised.

For updated details check www.u3awellingtoncity.org.nz/programmes/

Bring a friend along

You can always bring a friend or two if the lecture topic is something they would be interested in.

It costs \$5 – paid in cash please – to the front of house at the Embassy.

Then remind them that, as members, for \$40 a year, they access at least 56 lectures.

At less than a \$1 per lecture, this is fantastic value.

www.u3awellingtoncity.org.nz/membership

or email

membershipsecretary@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz

Keep COVID at bay

There have rightly been concerns in our community about the safety of attending group events like lectures at the Embassy Theatre, with reports of an upswing in Covid cases.

Most recent data suggests the peak has passed, but the infection is still with us.

We are monitoring the situation and will make sure members are immediately aware of any change that might require additional precautions such as mask-wearing.

In the meantime, individuals should make their own decisions as to the risks of attending and how this is best managed. Public Health experts are minded towards caution, particularly 6-monthly boosters, mask-wearing and social distancing.

President's challenge

Take a chance on a lecture topic well outside your usual areas of interest!

I often find the most interesting talks are the ones I know almost nothing about.

I learn even more when our members ask relevant questions. It impresses me and makes a great experience for our lecturers – who rarely have audiences of 200 or more.

February 2024 Interest Groups Newsletter

Linda Beckett

With Wellington emptying out and many U3Aers either using the summer break to travel or take it easier, our Interest Group section of the Newsletter reflects this. Many groups do carry on as usual, ...well more or less (see below), but between the November 2023 and this February edition, there are few updates to report. That said, we offer: 2 Interest Group promotions; updated information from the Film groups; a brief message from the Convener of the Te Reo Beginners Group and 3 evocative photos from a member of the Smart Phone Photography group.

As always, I would like to pay tribute to all of our 25 Conveners for the tremendous work they do.



Members of U3A Five Senses Walking Group caught toasting the New Year at Titahi Bay by a Post photographer, Champers, ice, bucket and all.

Book Group 1

‘Our book group was established in 1997 and one of the founding members was with us until her “retirement” from active membership in 2022. Several other continuing members have been part of the group for a very long time too. We restrict membership to 10 because we meet for 10 months of the year, from February to November. This allows each group member to select one book of her choice to present and discuss. In December we enjoy a festive lunch together.

A list of books for the following year is compiled towards the end of the year to enable everyone plenty of time to read the selected books before we meet. While the book’s presenter leads the discussion, we always find stimulating conversation with all of us joining in, and often much laughter as differing opinions on the merits or otherwise of the book emerge.

We meet on the first Wednesday of the month and currently have a vacancy. We would love a fellow book lover to join us. Anyone interested can contact me at: jane.ireland06@gmail.com for further information.

Canasta Group

The Canasta group has hit the ground running since its September 2023 commencement. The group has grown quickly to now have 11 members who continue to meet fortnightly on Tuesdays at 1300 in modern well-equipped Garden Rooms behind St Peter’s Church.

The Interest Groups Newsletter continues on the next page.

From Margaret:

'It's going really well, new people coming every session and everyone having lots of fun and enjoyment. New members are welcome'.

Please contact: margaret.morrell60@gmail.com for more details about joining the group.

Te Reo Beginners' Group

This group has been very well subscribed, but a firm date has yet to be set for another group in 2024. Libby advises: 'We do have some prospective names on the list, but we need a few more takers if we are to run again.'

If you are interested in finding out more about the group or joining it, please see the website or contact Libby for further information: libbyclark3@gmail.com

Weekday Film Groups

The success of the U3A mid-week film group has led to the formation of a second group. The original mid-week Film Group will in future be known as the Tuesday Film Group and will continue to meet on the first and third Tuesday of the month, led by Keitha Booth and Suzanne Blumhardt.

The new group, the Wednesday Film Group, led by Aidan Kay and Sue Dale will meet on the second and fourth Wednesdays with Aidan selecting the films on the second Wednesday and Sue selecting the fourth Wednesday film.

Meetings of the Tuesday group will be held in the afternoon, while the Wednesday group, not needing to accommodate regular U3A meetings, will be able to meet in either the morning or afternoon depending on the availability of suitable films.

There is a short waiting list for the Tuesday group, while the Wednesday Group is open to new members.

Contact details for the two groups are shown on the website under Special Interest Groups.

Smart Phone Photography

Thanks so much to Richard Scales from this group who sent 3 of his photographs shown on the right.



Man feels the heat - Moriara, Spain



Nelly in Mellie - From Mandy Miller's song "Nelly the Elephant". Photo of one of a small family herd of elephants - taken at the Melbourne zoo



Tres con destino, Santiago

Out and about with summer events

Traditionally summer has been a fallow period for events in the U3AWC calendar, but as it is such a long break, and so many members are in town for some or most of it, I have decided to introduce a programme. And it has been very successful, with many members participating, Sue Dale reports.

Lunch at the White Swan



Visits to Cobblestones Museum in Greytown,

Government House, a typewriter museum and workshop, a bus odyssey on a spectacular

Wellington route and a bowling session at Island Bay Bowling club have been organised, most with meals attached. The Circa outing - a revue starring the legendary Ali Harper – was well-subscribed.



We trialled a Sunday roast lunch in the courtyard of Chapman Taylor's restaurant in Thorndon. Fourteen members attended and really enjoyed the experience. There was a real buzz, so we will try to make a weekend restaurant get-together a regular occurrence.

Visit to Cobblestones Museum

U3AWC in the news

Let us know if any U3AWC members make the news – even if it's not for celebrating the new year like the walking group pictured on the next page.

Contact newsletter@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz



U3A Wellington City – www.u3awellingtoncity.org.nz

“Providing opportunities for continuing education that promotes the ongoing development and wellbeing of our members”.

Lectures on Tuesday and Friday at the Embassy Theatre from 10.30-11.45.

Enquiries and feedback: info@u3awellington.org.nz