

## From the President: Off to a flying start



*Bruce Levick (above left) “failed musician and moderately successful maths teacher” welcomes members arriving to be highly entertained by Dave Armstrong (above right) who described his progress from “successful musician and failed maths teacher” to playwright and satirist. Photos: Peter Kennedy.*

### **2025 has got off to a flying start at U3A Wellington City.**

Our current membership is 1,404, an increase of close to 30% on this time last year. We have been treated to a wonderfully stimulating series of lectures this term. The programme has got people talking, laughing, and taking sides about e-scooters on the footpath. For Term 2, the programme team has again put together a tempting selection of challenging speakers and topics.

No indications of concern or dissatisfaction, only support for continuing what is currently going well were expressed in the 2024 survey. Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, the Committee started the year with a planning meeting. It was a chance to step outside routine business matters and focus on what we are doing and why we are doing it, to explore new opportunities and identify areas that could be improved.

While we want to maintain the special character of the U3A community as membership numbers grow, we also need to acknowledge some change is inevitable. Areas highlighted in the planning meeting included the \$40 annual subscriptions, the question whether our dedicated volunteers should have paid assistance, and the need to replace long-serving Committee members about to step down. If you would like to become involved, please register your interest with me.

U3A Wellington City is indeed off to a flying start. The recent flood at the Embassy Theatre, which necessitated the sudden cancellation of a lecture, has in no way dampened our enthusiasm. Enjoy the rest of what the year’s programme has to offer. A variety of events is being planned for the holiday break between Term 1 and Term 2.

**Bruce Levick, President,** [president@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:president@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz).

# Points from the Planning Day

## Sharing knowledge, enjoying activities

Confirming our aims:

- To provide opportunities for people in the “Third Age” to share knowledge and continue their education free from the pressures of more formal education systems.
- To provide stimulating activities to enhance social, mental and physical wellbeing.
- To encourage members to form interactive groups to share knowledge and develop interest in new fields.

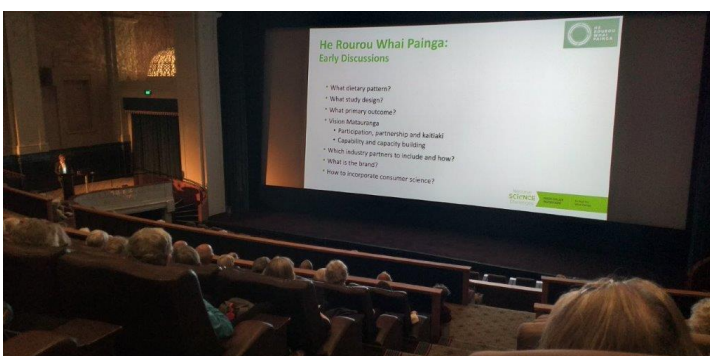


*At the planning meeting, at back from left facilitator Dennis McKinlay, Janet Tyson, Simon Louisson, Gill Sutherland, Bruce Levick, John Rutherford. In front: Malcolm Wheeler, Demetra Kennedy, Faith Atkins. Photo: Roger Urlwin.*

## Raising awareness

Despite the ongoing growth in membership, there was still agreement of the need to raise awareness of U3A Wellington City.

Hence the start of a modest marketing campaign that depends heavily on people talking to people. 70 visitors attended our “Bring a Friend for Free” lectures. We plan to repeat this at the start of the new financial year.



*“Friends for free” were among the audience of 336 when Jeremy Krebs (pictured) presented some surprising findings about the Mediterranean Diet. Photo: Janet Tyson.*

## Subscriptions and other resources

Discussions highlighted how much is being achieved with minimal resources and a high level of time and energy commitment from volunteers. In 2024, we significantly upgraded equipment for general and Special Interest Group use. All this was done with annual subscriptions that have remained static for four years at \$40, a rate that astounded the meeting facilitator. At the same time, the rent for the Embassy has increased by about 5% year on year and the cost of venues used by SIGs has increased by a similar amount.

President Bruce Levick says that subscriptions will need to be raised this year to cover operating expenses, but the amount will not be excessive and will be notified by the end of May.

## What happens next?

A number of “blue sky” suggestions emerged from the discussions and in March the Committee met to decide what could and should be implemented, to set up subcommittees to explore and cost others further; and what to put on hold at this stage.

One still open question is whether it is time to consider engaging a paid administrator to replace some of the operations now conducted entirely by volunteers.

## Lectures to look forward to

Dates and subjects are correct at the first week of April. As both the order of events and the titles of the talks can change, go to [the Lecture Programme on the website](#) and check the weekly email for the latest information. An updated list will be in Newsletter 132 at the beginning of June.

**Tuesday 1 April**      **Cosmo Jeffrey**  
Throwing away the key won't work – Cosmo Jeffrey talks about prisons in Aotearoa

**Friday 4 April**      **Helene Ritchie**  
Saving the City to Sea Bridge

**Tuesday 8 April**      **Susan Ackroyd**  
Rhyme and Reason – the real historic facts behind the political satire we know as nursery rhymes

**Friday 11 April**      **Craig Renney**  
The cost of everything and the value of nothing



*Matthijs Siljee*

**Saturday 12 April – Monday 28 April: Mid-term break**  
Check the [Events page on our website](#)

**Tuesday 29 April**      **Matthijs Siljee**  
The need for Commemoration – the Anne Frank Memorial on Mt Victoria



*Nigel Roberts*

**Friday 2 May**      **Nigel Roberts**  
Hitchhiking through Africa 1959 to 1961

**Tuesday 6 May**      **Dr Nikki Turner**  
The place of vaccines and immunisation – the scientific basis and the fear factor



*Nikki Turner*

**Friday 9 May**      **Tbc**

**Tuesday 13 May**      **Professor Sean Phelan**  
Culture wars

**Friday 16 May**      **Professors Karyn Paringatai and Parry Guilford**  
Tread softly for you tread on our lives: the identification and management of a stomach cancer syndrome



*Ganesh Nana*

**Tuesday 20 May**      **Ganesh Nana**  
The Budget

**Friday 23 May**      **Trevor Fitzjohn**  
The Royal Society - the origins, a cider club and other fascinating facts



*Nick Bollinger*

**Tuesday 27 May**      **Tbc**

**Friday 30 May**      **Nick Bollinger**  
Jumping Sundays



## “Mana mania” and other holiday events

Planning for the April holidays is well underway, reports events coordinator Sue Dale, [events@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:events@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz).

It kicks off with a visit to *Blithe Spirit* at Circa and other activities will include another bus odyssey, a visit to the Niko Ngeru cat cafe in Lower Hutt, a tour of the historic Stansborough woollen mill in Petone and a trip to a notable historic house.

Trips to Mana Island proved to be the standout attraction in the summer holiday programme, says Sue, pictured at right alighting on the island. “Interest was overwhelming and even though four trips were organised - taking a total of 140 members to the island- it still didn't satisfy demand!” More are planned for the April holidays.



Another popular event was a trip to Pātaka in late February to see the beautiful exhibition Boro: ancient textiles of Japan. Pip Steel, the curator, gave an excellent talk and tour, which was followed by lunch at a popular cafe.

Sunday roasts continue to be popular and attract a loyal following. This is an excellent way for members to get to know each other in an informal setting.

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## Welcome to new members

We welcome the following U3A members who have joined between 1 January and 23 March 2025:

<b>A</b>	Bridie Foster	Christine Lepper	Bridget Porter
Bridget Allan	Reimer Freitag	Marilyn Little	<b>R</b>
Jo Allan	Terry Friel	Chris Livesey	Mary Redmayne
<b>B</b>	<b>G</b>	Michele Lloyd	Bernardine Reid
Paul Baker	Jane Gibbons	Monica Luxford	Mary-Jane Rivers
Brian Bellett	Harry Gibbons	<b>M</b>	Vicki Robinson
Janice Brown	Glenys Goddard	Paul Mabey	<b>S</b>
<b>C</b>	Philip Gregg	Susan Mabey	Lynne Silcock
Sambrene Chandler	<b>H</b>	Barry Mahon	Fiona Smillie
Anne Cheetham	Trish Hall	Diane Mallard	<b>T</b>
Katherine Close	Chris Harrington	Lyn Marment	Dorothy Thompson
Nikki Cone	Lawry Hinton	Fay McAlpine	Wilma Tielemans
Mark Cubey	Kim Holden	Patrick McCombs	Beatrix Treuren
<b>D</b>	Kerry Hoskin	Dennis McKinlay	Joyce Troughton
Rayleen de Haas	Robyn Hoskin	Kaye McKinlay	Stuart Tounson
Valerie Duthie	<b>I</b>	Pamela McKirdy	<b>V</b>
Birnie Duthie	Helen Ives	Heather Mordaunt	Melanie Vivian
<b>E</b>	<b>J</b>	Jean Morgan	<b>W</b>
Pauline Edwards	Krystina Johnstone	Anita Moshenrose	Kerrie Waterworth
Robert Egginson	<b>K</b>	<b>N</b>	Andrew Waterworth
<b>F</b>	Jo Kennington	Joss Nacey	Joan Wells
Jill Ferrall	Lilly King	Marilyn Northcote	Jill Wild
Jon Field	<b>L</b>	<b>P</b>	
Sarndra Flay	Janice Lambe	Maria Phelan	

## Come and join the Committee

Several of the Committee members who have played a major part in maintaining our much admired and appreciated programme and activities will finish their term at the AGM in September.

You are invited to take their place and join a motivated and supportive team. All the current office holders are happy to talk about what their role involves.

- Four formal committee meetings each year, with regular informal updates from the President.
- Roles are well documented, with a dedicated email address.
- Efforts are being made to streamline and simplify all processes.

**Vice President:** Currently vacant, this role is to deputise for the President, mainly at lectures.

**Membership Secretary** [membership@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:membership@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz). **Faith Atkins** says: This role requires someone who is not fazed by database management, payment platforms and spreadsheets, who is a friendly voice at the end of a phone or email and enjoys a bit of problem-solving. With membership numbers now over 1400, it takes around 3-4 hours a week and up to 10 hours during the subs renewal period of June/July.

**Treasurer** [treasurer@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:treasurer@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz). **John Rutherford** will reach the five year limit for holding this office. Financial reporting is now on Xero.

**Programme Coordinators (two)** [programme.leader@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:programme.leader@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz). Due to ill health there is an immediate vacancy for one new team member, while a second coordinator is stepping down at the AGM. Programme Coordinators have responsibility for finding engaging speakers, taking into account diversity of gender and topic. The term of office can be from one year to five years. If you are interested, please contact **Gill Sutherland**.

**Front of House Coordinator** [frontofhouse@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:frontofhouse@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz). **Jeannie Buxton's** responsibilities include the teams who welcome and check in members.

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## Walking the Skyline



Great views rewarded members of U3A Walking Group 3 who walked a section of the Skyline Walkway in February. As the walk leader Barbara Crump explains:, “We met at Awarua Station, on the Johnsonville Line, walked (slowly) to the top of Awarua Street, on to Bells Track to climb to the skyline, then to Mt Kau Kau. After a short break we went around and down to the Khandallah Pool and café. Photos: Wren Green.

## SIG information update

Special Interest Group coordinators are currently checking and updating the information published on the website about their group. The new information, to be available on the [Interest Groups page](#) on our website by April 10, will show if there is a waiting list to join.

Waiting list management was a topic for discussion when the SIG coordinators met on 4 March. With the addition of Theatre Appreciation and Hiking there are now 28 groups operating. Each has a distinct character, and its members are loyal and very engaged, facilitator Demetra Kennedy says. Because of this, there can sometimes be long waiting lists before any existing member steps down from a group.

Demetra notes that SIG membership is highly valued as part of U3A membership. U3A is actively working to increase membership and the expectation of joining a SIG in reasonable time is high. To be fair to all members and balance the expectations of new and existing members with an interest in a SIG, addressing how to manage the waiting lists is important.

This might include asking longstanding members who find themselves unable to attend a group for a significant period to step down and make way for someone who has been waiting.

It was agreed at the SIG coordinators meeting that a sensitive and fair approach is needed, so an annual review of SIG members to establish if they wish to continue in the SIG or step down to let someone else join in will be undertaken.

It is not the intention of this review to force anyone currently participating in a SIG to step down, she emphasised.



## No problem...

*Doug Helps (second from left) and Bruce Levick (third from left) tell members that the Embassy Theatre has been closed for health and safety reasons, after flooding from a burst pipe.*

*Thanks to superb and immediate teamwork, news of the emergency closure got out quickly. Very few turned up to be turned away, and rather than grumble, those who did told Bruce and Doug how much they appreciate the lecture programme and other activities. Photo: Peter Kennedy.*

## A polite request

If you will have to leave the Embassy before Q&A has finished, the programme teams asks you kindly to sit on the opposite side from the speaker, and close to the front. This is to minimise distraction for the speaker – who is our guest – and for the members around you. **Thank you.**

U3A Wellington City – [www.u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](http://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@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz](mailto:info@u3awellingtoncity.org.nz)