

## U3A Network NSW

### **Report on Network Forum held at the Belmont 16 Foot Sailing Club, on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April, 2016 commencing at 9:35 am**

The Forum was declared open at 9:35 am with Ainslie Lamb (Network President) in the chair.

Ainslie advised those present that the Network has been working to secure Donor Gift Recipient status for both the Network and its members. After examining the conditions for such status to be granted and consulting with the Hon. Stephen Jones (the Federal Minister for the area encompassing Bowral), it was decided to apply to the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC) to have the sub-type “health promotion charity” added to our charity’s description. The submission was registered in early March this year.

In order to better reflect this category and also to fulfil requirements, should this status be granted, it is proposed that the constitution be amended.

1 - **Discussion of proposed constitutional amendments** for feedback, pending a future postal vote.

2. **Getting Volunteers:** The topic of the difficulty in getting people in U3A to volunteer their services arose at the Regional Representatives meeting. Sandy Freeman, the Regional Representative of the Hunter/Central Coast Region, mentioned that NewsLink from April 2009 (which is in the Newsletter Archives on the Network Site) contains a report from the Orange Network Conference in 2009 on this topic. She suggested that a reading of these archives might prove to be most useful for U3As.

3 **Travel Insurance:** - Suggestion of the Network investigating Travel Insurance for members referred to the committee. It was suggested that COTA might have such a product.

4. **Grants:** Frances Tarbox (Kempsey-Macleay Valley) requested whether it might be possible for the Network to develop a Grants Calendar which gave the closing dates for Grants that are applicable to U3A. Various members spoke about Grants they had received and Mel Davies (Lake Macquarie U3A) suggested that if individual U3As were willing to notify the Network when they were successful in obtaining a grant, a list of those grants, (or the bodies from which they were obtained e.g. Council. Local member etc.), could be posted on the Network site.

5. **The role of the Model Constitution:** Allan Haggarty (Griffith U3A) informed the meeting that if a U3A prepares its own constitution there is a list of perhaps 18 or 19 topics that must be covered in that constitution (e.g. dispute resolution). If one of those items is *not* covered then (and only then) the model constitution applies in that matter. (Pages 33 and 33A in the *Blue Book* covers Constitutions)

6. Allan Turner-Morris (Northern Beaches, Sydney U3A) recommended that a summary of the Conference – with thanks to the Belmont 16’s Club - be sent to the local newspaper. He was assured that this was being attended to.

7. Elsie Mutton the President of the Victorian Network thanked the Network for the invitation to the Conference and said that she had received great information that can be made available to U3As throughout the country. She commented that a number of U3As in Victoria have been granted primary access to community hubs owned by local

councils. She asked whether a similar situation occurred in NSW. A quick poll was taken from among delegates: *one* U3A (Armidale) owns its premises, a few others have permanent access to a rented premise but the majority must source accommodation from a variety of halls, clubs etc.

Allan Haggarty (Griffith U3A) spoke about the Senior Citizens Centre at Griffith, which is the premise used by Griffith U3A (as well as other similar groups.) Council built the Centre in collaboration with local tradespeople. Council provided the materials and the tradespeople denoted their time and labour free of cost. Rent is very reasonable – mainly to cover cost of electricity etc. Allan suggested that this model might be suggested to councils as a means of U3As obtaining similar premises.

8. Ainslie invited both Elsie Mutton (Victorian Network) and Julie Porteous (Queensland Network) to speak about their respective Network's relationship with Government and Councils.

Elsie spoke first and reminded the forum that Victoria receives annual funding from the Victorian Government. The Government's attitude is that it needs U3A more than U3A needs the Government. By that it means that U3A can survive without U3A BUT if the Government had to provide the services given by U3A it would find it almost impossible. Government funding means that the Network has 2.5 paid employees and has an office in Melbourne. Grants for items, other than accommodation and travel, may also – on a needs basis – be made to U3As in Victoria. Currently there are over 100 U3As in Victoria with membership in excess of 35000.

In addition to being president of Network Queensland (20 000 members), Julie Porteous is also president of Redlands City U3A. Redlands has 1750 members, so Julie knows what is involved in being the president of a large, regular U3A. Community Hubs are also being developed in Queensland and Julie is on the board for the local one at Redlands where there will be four major stakeholders – one of whom is U3A. Queensland Network has just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Local Government Authority of Queensland. It means that there is a piece of paper which states that your local council is going to work with you and collaborate with you on providing the sort of services that your community wants. For U3A that means community education etc. U3A is looking forward to using this memorandum in isolated areas in particular. Queensland covers a huge area and hence a regional meeting in Cairns means one must fly there. For grants, there are a number of avenues including the gambling industry. The Network has taken the attitude that a few members of U3A have probably contributed to their profits. Hence it is lovely when U3A can benefit from these grants that go up to about \$35000. Julie agrees with our promoting U3A just not just as a seniors or educational organization but also as promoting health and well-being. Governments around Australia are using phrases such as "age friendly", "ageing positively", "ageing well" so we need to learn and use those buzz words when possible.

Ainslie thanked both Elsie and Julie for their contributions and those present showed their appreciation by acclamation.

Ainslie drew the Forum to a close. She thanked everyone for their contributions and suggested that we work on our members of Parliament and Councillors in terms of what it is we do and what **they** would be missing out on if we were *not* available to do it.

The Forum closed at 10:28 a.m.