



# **U3A BAW BAW INC. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**13 March 2020**

**REPORT ON 2019/20**

**Because your brain doesn't want to retire.**



## **AGENDA**

- \* Meeting declared open by retiring President Mary Howlett.**
- \* Welcome members & guests, Guest Speaker & Returning Officer**
- \* Apologies**
- \* Minutes of last Annual General Meeting**
- \* President's Annual Report**
- \* Treasurer's Annual Report**
- \* Courses Report: Kaye Dennis**
- \* Resolution under the terms of CAV Model Rules, Rule 53 (1) -  
That the number of ordinary members of the committee for the  
coming year be nine.**
- \* Introduction of Returning Officer Mr Rob Hutchinson,  
Manager Bendigo Bank, for the election**
- \* Election of office bearers and ordinary committee members  
The Officers of the Association shall be President, Vice-President,  
Past President, Secretary and Treasurer and ordinary members as  
decided.**
- \*Vote of thanks to the Returning Officer**
- \*Close of AGM**
- \*Introduction of Guest Speaker – Mr Bill Westhead,  
President, RSL Warragul**
- \* Guest Speaker's Address**
- \* Vote of thanks to the Guest Speaker**
- \* Close of general meeting**
- \* Refreshments**

# U3A Baw Baw Inc.

## Minutes: Annual General Meeting 8 March 2019

### Venue: RSL Drouin Sub-Branch hall, Drouin

**Present:** 31 members as listed in the Attendance record, and 7 visitors; total attendees: 38, and 13 apologies were received.

\* Meeting was declared open by retiring President Mary Howlett at 2:00 pm.

\* Mary welcomed members and guests including the guest speaker:

#### Distinguished Guests:

Cr Mikaela Power, Mayor of Baw Baw Shire, our Returning Officer and Guest Speaker for the occasion,  
Cr Keith Cook, Baw Baw Shire  
Cr Tricia Jones, Baw Baw Shire  
Cr Jessica O'Donnell, Baw Baw Shire  
Ms Lynne Hall-Cavanagh, U3A Network, Victoria  
Mr Rob Hutchinson, Manager, Drouin Community Bank  
Mr Rod McNab, President, RSL Drouin

#### \* Apologies

Russell Broadbent, Member for McMillan  
Gary Blackwood, Member for Narracan  
Harriet Shing, Member for Eastern Victoria  
Mark Dupe, Baw Baw Shire  
Susan Webster, President, U3A Network Vic.  
Members of LatrobeValley U3A, meeting date clash  
Janny van Leeuwen, Virginia Rowley,  
Pamela Longmuir, Mary Anglin,  
Andy & Kaye Dennis, Barbara & Russell Brown,  
Ellen & Graeme Fredrickson.

\* **Minutes of last Annual General Meeting** were included in the Annual Report copy distributed on arrival, and it was assumed that those interested would have read them. There were no requests to alter or add to the printed report.  
**Moved to accept** the previous minutes as a true and complete record: **Ruth Renouf; seconded by Nigel Beresford. Motion carried.**

#### \* **President's Annual Report:**

***"The best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft agley" (go often awry)***

Robbie Burns could well have been talking about U3A Baw Baw when he penned these lines. Our President, Gordon, was set to lead us into 2018 but delays in finishing his PhD meant that he took leave of absence and then gave his resignation as President and from Committee. We look forward to seeing **Dr** Gordon Dadswell return to our group later this year.

It is a strength of our group that many stepped up to fill the gap. I particularly commend Geoff Clynes for the meticulous care he has given to his secretarial duties and made my role as acting President much easier. John Parker and Russell Brown took on acting roles as Vice Presidents and Russell relieved Geoff of some of his workload.

Regardless of all the behind the scenes, this has been a successful year for U3A Baw Baw. The Literary Lunch with our own author Jim Connelly as guest speaker was a resounding

success, both numerically and socially. Similarly Open Day which showcased our club, as well as the Christmas Break up were occasions of good will and enjoyment of each other's company.

I would like to thank and congratulate the Committee on the great contribution they have made to ensure that the courses run smoothly, that the rent is paid, that the finances are managed and that membership records and welcome to new members are administered, that the Chat Sheet keeps us informed and the Website is maintained, that grants are sought and gained, that we are represented at Network and in the community, that maintenance concerns are addressed and that there are guest speakers invited to our Gatherings, that there are refreshments available and that the above mentioned events are organised. In this I would also like, through you, Cr Power and Cr Cook to thank our ever obliging landlord, the Baw Baw Shire, and to thank, as always, Rod McNab, and the RSL for sharing with us so co-operatively.

I want to acknowledge members of the committee who are not re-nominating as well as thanking those who live on to fight another day.

Ruth Tinney has been on the Committee for the past two years and spent her first year as the Membership Secretary. Thank you, Ruth.

Russell Brown has served as President and Secretary for many years. He is still an active member of U3A but will not be re-nominating for Committee. Thank you, Russ for your long standing contribution.

Another person who is not re-nominating this year is John Parker. John has served as President as well as Secretary, has gained many grants and given U3A a profile in the wider organisation. Both John and Russell played a key part in securing our current premises and outfitting them so well. Thank you.

And last but certainly not least are our tutors and course co-ordinators who take responsibility for all that we offer you. I feel very strongly that the Courses are our core business so had asked our Course Co-ordinator, Kaye Dennis to give a report. Kaye has to attend a funeral today but has given me her notes that she was going to present.

Let's look forward to our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year in anticipation of celebrations, learning and enjoying our membership of U3A Baw Baw.

In closing, the President publicised developing plans to celebrate our 20th Anniversary of service to the Baw Baw community later in the year.

#### **\* Courses Report:**

Coordinator Kaye Dennis could not attend, and the President presented her report on her behalf. Kaye noted the quality and motivation of presenters, the enthusiasm of craft, art and all groups. Her special thanks went to planners and presenters of all the new courses in the year: Melting pot, Writers' Group, Local Ancestors, Surviving the 21st Century, Walking, Play Reading of 'Julius Caesar', the close look at Melbourne, those eclectic sessions from History's Bottom Drawer, and France – more than just Paris. In just Terms 3 and 4, Kaye pointed to the contributions of 29 presenters.

**\* Treasurer's Annual Report** is detailed in the last page of this handout, a summary of income & expenses for the year 2018.

There were no questions on the report, and **Treasurer Di Potter moved its acceptance; this was seconded by John Parker. The motion was passed.**

#### **\*Notice of Resolution:**

As required under Rule 53 (1) of the Rules of Association it is recommended (as last year) that the number of ordinary members of the committee for 2019/20 be nine (9).

**Motion was moved by Margaret Theile, seconded by Esther Martin. Passed.**

**\* Introduction of Returning Officer Ms Mikaela Power:**

The President was pleased to present a brief introduction to Ms Power, our Mayor. Although surprisingly young, she began a strong career of achievement with qualifications in arts, education and business, going on to work in public and private sectors here in Gippsland, Melbourne and overseas, including as company director and Board chairman. Mary was especially impressed by her poise in a recent televised interview on the recent (and still current) West Gippsland fires.

The Mayor began by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land here, the Gunaikurnai peoples.

Ms Power announced that the Officers of the Association shall be President, Vice-President, Past President, Secretary and Treasurer and nine ordinary members as decided earlier. All positions were then declared vacant.

**The following members had been nominated for Committee positions:**

One nomination was received for **President: Mary Howlett**, nominated by Nigel Beresford and seconded by Margaret Theile. Ms Power invited other nominations but none were made.

One nomination has been received for **Vice President: Robert Dunlop**, nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Kaye Dennis. No further nominations were made.

One nomination has been received for **Secretary: Geoff Clynes**, nominated by Patricia Clynes and seconded by Roy Wilson. No further nominations were made.

One nomination has been received for **Treasurer: Dianne Potter**, nominated by Margaret Theile and seconded by Geoff Clynes. No further nominations were made.

No nomination has been received for Past President; Ms Power noted that this was logical since the past President was being re-elected.

The following nominations have been received for ordinary committee members:

Margaret Theile was nominated by Mary Gibson and seconded by Patricia Clynes.

Graeme Fredrickson, Nominated by Dianne Potter and seconded by Geoff Clynes.

Ruth Renouf, Nominated by Dianne Potter and seconded by Geoff Clynes.

Kaye Dennis, Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Jim Connelly.

Nigel Beresford, Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Geoff Clynes

Stephanie Wellard Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Anne Connelly.

Virginia Rowley, Nominated by Donna D'Arcy and seconded by Kaye Dennis.

As the number of nominations does not exceed the number of vacancies Ms Power declared those members duly elected, and offered her congratulations.

She then ceded the chair to re-elected President Mary Howlett.

**\*President's response**

President Mary thanked Ms Power for her service as Returning Officer, and those elected members for their generous commitment to the future of U3A Baw Baw.

**The Annual General Meeting for 2019 of U3A Baw Baw closed at 2:25pm.**

The President then invited our **Guest Speaker, Ms Mikaela Power**, Mayor of Baw Baw Shire Council, to address the meeting.

**\* Guest Speaker's Address**

Ms Power began on a strong base for her audience, professing a love she shares with us of lifelong learning. Her time, including her delayed arrival today, was shared with others at the funerals this week of two friends, and the time spent with others there was a reminder of the value of people she called “connectors” in our lives.

Her friend Jenny was a connector in her family, a resource that kept the family in touch. She sees us in U3A as connectors, expanders of our knowledge, people always seeking, keeping at a supremely hard job.

From an earlier funeral, that of familiar TV personality Michael Willesee, she drew out the anomalous contrast between an articulate public persona of the confident broadcaster and the quieter almost shy private person. Mike was a great linker or connector, but how? He asked questions. He connected with people by proving his interest in them and their stories.

Relating to her upbringing, Mikaela described a dairy farm in bad times, as milk prices collapsed. She was a surrogate mother for three siblings, saw the rainwater tanks go dry, managed with outside showers, learnt from encyclopedias without a TV, and was a pioneer pupil in a Philip Island school. That demanded learning how to “get along”. And when her career dream of a vet’s life was out of reach, she settled for science and has clearly gone far on that path. As to persuading her children into STEM or whatever, her focus is much broader: we need to encourage and support our children simply to have a go, she believes. For Mikaela, that is why we are all here today. We will not sit on sidelines, wherever possible we will get involved! It’s understood there are competitors in our world, but in her world and ours, we have a team! We can agree to disagree, but then find ways to work, and be seen to work together, well. In teams, we progress by working together. Mikaela highlights this thought at budget time. There is never enough wealth to give all callers all they want. Maybe not this year, but...

#### **\* Vote of thanks to the Guest Speaker**

Margaret Theile thanked Mikaela for her thoughts, noting that as Mikaela has pointed out, with so many learning opportunities, we can all learn from most of our daily experiences, inside and out of U3A.

#### **\* U3A Network Victoria Contribution**

Lynne Hall-Cavanagh visited us from Network Victoria, and fortuitously built on the themes of commitment and initiative. As we age, she “discovered”, there’s a trend for others to regard us as more philosophical, less practical, towards irrelevant, silently thinking “Just go away!” Lynne described a few years ago her suggesting and organizing an adventurous Grampians gathering for U3As statewide that triumphed over expectations, but her central point seemed to be that in a broad group like U3A, ideas are seeds: some of them work, some fall flat, but they’re all experience. It takes all sorts, and some outlandish ideas need thought – but we need to get on with expanding our minds, meeting people, travelling elsewhere, and opening new doors.

A final note on commitment: Lynne came by train today from Ararat.

#### **Upcoming Trip:**

Roy Wilson drew our attention to an exciting excursion he is planning to Melbourne’s Synchrotron on 15 May. He invited all interested to contact him.

#### **\* Annual General Meeting 2019 Closed 2:50pm**



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One of our successful courses this year was "Ladies with Pen and Brush." As we celebrated and learnt about the talented artistic women in nineteenth and early twentieth century, I realised that so many of them lived rich and fulfilling lives well into their eighties and nineties in a period when life expectancy was much lower than today. This was surely in part due to their inquiring minds. Membership of U3A may not guarantee a Miles Franklin or Patrick White Award but members have enjoyed learning and friendship throughout 2019. Sir Walter Scott wrote "All men (sic) (or women) who have turned out worth anything have had the chief hand in their own education." *Letters of Sir Walter Scott Vol 11*

Whether it is group discussion at What's the Matter, learning from a lecture or enjoying playing games such as Scrabble and MahJong, we have kept those little grey cells, as Hercule Poirot would say, active.

A highlight of the past year was the celebration of our twentieth birthday. A very dedicated committee planned for this for months and the day was a credit to their efforts. Ninety members past and present as well as invited guests shared lunch, friendship and reminiscences at the Anglican Hall in August. Talented members provided entertainment. A feature of this event was the launch of the book "Our Home in Our Words", a compilation of memoirs based on the topic "My Home."

The Literary Lunch was moved to October to coincide with Seniors' Week. It was well attended and all present enjoyed the entertaining and interesting talk by Graeme Johnstone, a former journalist and foreign correspondent.

The Christmas Break-up was held at the Railway Goods Shed in Warragul, good food, great entertainment and friendly people added up to a very successful gathering. We were fortunate to enjoy entertainment by Joan Evans (cello), Alan Tatnell (guitar and singing), Roy Wilson (saxophone) and Jim Connelly (poetry).

This year three excursions were offered - the Synchrotron at Monash University was well attended and attendees found it very interesting. Two Art-based visits, one to the Hans and Nora Heysen Exhibition at the Ian Potter Gallery in Melbourne and the other to Fish Creek where we met the world renowned artist, Celia Rosser at her Gallery, were enjoyable and informative.

As always, I would like to thank the dedicated Committee without whom we could not function. At the risk of repeating myself, I will insert here the tribute I paid to them last year, it is very relevant. The committee is responsible for co-ordinating, supporting and publicizing Courses, paying the rent, managing the finances, keeping membership records and welcoming new members, producing the Chat Sheet, maintaining the Website, inviting guest speakers for the Gatherings, publicizing U3A in the wider community and ensuring that tea, coffee and biscuits are available.

We are indebted to our landlord, the BawBaw Shire and the officers who are always helpful if we have maintenance requests, ranging from a door handle to a new roof for the building! We continue to have a co-operative relationship with the RSL. Courses finished early in Term four to enable the RSL to have access to their rooms in preparation for the celebration of their centenary year in 2020.

Three Committee members will not be continuing in their roles. Kaye Dennis has been a dedicated leader of the Course Committee for the past three years. She has passed

the baton to Steph Wellard. The Courses are our "raison d'être" and we thank Kaye for all she has brought to the role. Geoff Clynes and Di Potter have both been the backbone of the Committee, Geoff as Secretary and Di as Treasurer. They have been hard working and professional in these demanding roles - we are grateful for their contribution. It is a measure of the spirit of U3A Baw Baw that Rod MacLeod stepped up as acting Treasurer when Di had to undergo surgery and that an email calling for ongoing volunteers elicited many replies from members with good wishes and two volunteers for the role. Thank you to Rod and Ann Corcoran for stepping in.

In ophthalmological terms 2020 is perfect; a good start to the year augurs well for another great year of living, learning and enjoyment.

Report moved for adoption by Mary Howlett      Seconded:

**Treasurers Report for 2019**

**U3A Baw Baw Inc**

**RECEIPTS & EXPENSES for 2019 calendar year (1 Jan – 31 Dec)**

**Account 1 – main account**

RECEIPTS	\$	EXPENSES	\$
2019 membership	5,035.00	20 <sup>th</sup> birthday celebration	2,249.92
2020 membership	90.00	Advertising & promotion	811.30
Badge	310.00	Badge	272.00
Christmas function	580.00	Catering	1,910.03
Donation	20.00	Equipment purchase	91.35
Excursions	264.00	Excursions	264.00
Grant Be Connected	2,000.00	Gifts	47.05
Grant U3A regional meeting	350.00	Guest speaker	160.00
Literary lunch	1,540.00	Internet	130.00
		Office supplies	249.72
		Postage	240.30
		Printing & copying	615.18
		Refreshments	461.13
		Repairs & consumables	16.50
		Room rental	1,290.00
		Telephone	90.15
		Travel	497.00
		U3A affiliation	266.00
<b>TOTAL RECEIPTS</b>	<b>10,189.00</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>9661.63</b>

**Bendigo Bank account 1 – main account**

Opening balance, 1 January 2019	\$8,443.65
plus receipts	\$10,189.00
less expenses	\$9,661.63
Closing balance, 31 December 2019	\$8,971.02

**Bendigo Bank account 2 – term deposit investment 1**

Opening balance, 1 January 2019	\$16,640.75
Bank interest	\$336.71
Closing balance, 31 December 2019	\$16,977.46

**Bendigo Bank account 3 – term deposit investment 2**

Opening balance, 1 January 2019	\$5,050.34
Bank interest	\$57.92
Closing balance, 31 December 2014	\$5,108.26

**Auditors statement**

I, Graeme Fredrickson, confirm I have examined the financial records and the above report is a true and correct position at 31 December 2019.

Signed 

Date 24/2/2020

Report moved for adoption -

Seconded -

**\*Courses Report 2019** - presented by Kaye Dennis

Report moved for adoption by Kaye Dennis

Seconded -

**\*Resolution under the terms of CAV Rule 53(1):**

That the number of ordinary members of the committee for the year 2020 - 2021 will be nine.

Moved - G. Clynes      Seconded - R. Dunlop      **Vote required.**

**\*Introduction of Returning Officer Mr Rob Hutchinson, Manager Bendigo Bank, for the election**

**\*Election of office bearers and ordinary committee members.**

The Officers of the Association shall be:

President, Vice-President, Past President, Secretary and Treasurer as Executive, and ordinary members as decided.

**The following nomination has been received for President.**

**Mary Howlett** - Nominated by Christine Vitale and seconded by Margaret Theile [pron. TYLER].

**No nomination has been received for Vice President.**

**No nomination has been received for Past President.**

**The following nomination has been received for Secretary.**

**Sally Alsop** - Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Gerhard Theile.

**The following nomination has been received for Treasurer.**

**Ann Corcoran** - Nominated by Margaret Theile [TYLER] and seconded by Mary Howlett.

**The following nominations have been received for Ordinary Committee members:**

**Virginia Rowley** - Nominated by Sally Alsop, seconded by Gerhard Theile.

**Geoff Clynes** - Nominated by Patricia Clynes, seconded by Mary Howlett.

**Robert Dunlop** - Nominated by Roy Wilson and seconded by Donna D'Arcy.

**Margaret Theile** - Nominated by Ann Corcoran, seconded by Mary Howlett.

**Donna D'Arcy** - Nominated by Ann Corcoran, seconded by Geoff Clynes.

**Kaye Dennis** - Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Jim Connelly.

**Nigel Beresford** - Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Geoff Clynes

**Stephanie Wellard** - Nominated by Mary Howlett and seconded by Anne Connelly.

**Note: eight nominations to fill nine authorised vacancies.**

**\*Vote of thanks to the Returning Officer**

**\*Introduction of Guest Speaker – Mr Bill Westhead, President,  
RSL Warragul**

**\*Guest Speaker's Address**

**\* Vote of thanks to the Guest Speaker**

**\* Close**

**\* Refreshments**



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## **U3A Baw Baw Tutors' Course Reports for the 2020 AGM**

### **COMPUTER USERS' GROUP**

The Group's activities are still rather quiet, hopefully indicating a smarter U3A user base, but continuing their availability is part of their public profile, and outside interest is a source of new members. The offer consists of help with computer user problems, desk and laptop, on a mutually convenient (time and location) basis. This may include some training. It's not realistic to bring equipment (especially desktops with a raft of peripherals) into the hall. Often a visit to the member's home/ installation will deal with issues in a shorter time.

Geoff Clynes

### **FINE FILM GROUP**

The U3A film group is the brainchild of U3A member Rosalie Woolcock. Approximately 15 years ago Rosalie asked Peninsular Cinemas in Warragul to consider including arthouse films into their collection for our U3A members to enjoy - and our 'U3A Fine Film Group' was born.

On Rosalie's retirement from U3A, Brian Kemp became our leader and guided us in recent years.

U3A film group consists of members who attend the showcase films at the Warragul Theatre on either Mondays at 7pm or Wednesdays at 11am, as regularly as suits.

On the last Friday of each month at 11.30am we meet at the Courthouse Restaurant to enjoy a lunch and fun time together as we critique the films we have viewed and gain enormous insight into each other's comprehension of these films, as we discuss our many and varied opinions. We are each methodically given time to speak individually as we take turns around the table to air our views.

At the end of each year, votes are taken to establish the 10 best films for that year from each person's point of view. The results of these votes are revealed at our 1st meeting in the following year.

Barbara Brown

### **HOOKED ON MUSIC**

This was run in Term Three 2019 and consisted of 5 fortnightly 2 hour sessions.

From Bach to Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen), Miles Davis to Mussorgsky, Stravinsky to Sinatra the course covered a wide range of different music. It provided an opportunity for participants to bring along their favourite recorded music to share with the group and discuss why they liked the music, the feelings and emotions that the music evoked and the performances of the musicians involved. Members sat around a circle and there was a great deal of enjoyable discussion of the music on the CDs and Videos which were brought along.

Many of the participants shared the music they loved and all who attended were very appreciative of the opportunity the course provided to do so.

Rod Wellard

### **HUMOUR: SERIOUSLY! NO JOKING!**

This was conducted in Term One 2019 consisting of 8 weekly 2 hour sessions.

The course explored the nature and attributes of humour, differences between cultures, its historical evolution, and genres of humour. The course was interactive and participants had many opportunities to contribute. There were numerous examples used during the course illustrate and promote discussion about the elements of humour. Topics covered included what makes us smile and laugh and what doesn't; historical aspects such as pranks, practical jokes, trickery and conjurers, buffoons, jesters and clowns; humour as therapy; satire and social commentary; humour in language and literature; humour in music and theatre; slapstick and stand-up comedy.

Thanks to the efforts of those who presented parts of the course, participants thoroughly enjoyed themselves and gained many different insights and perspectives into the importance of humour in society.

Rod Wellard

### **THE KITCHENS OF OUR CHILDHOOD - Term 3, 2019**

This was indeed an interesting course in which participants remembered the kitchens of their childhoods. Given that a proportion of the participants were of migrant background, particularly Europe, we were treated to wide variety of experiences. There have been many changes in the production, packaging, supply and delivery of food.

Many of the participants had experienced food rationing and food coupons just after the Second World War. Milk was contained and delivered in (glass) bottles, sometimes drawn by horse and cart and delivered to the front door. Eggs were popped singly into paper bags and vegetables sourced from greengrocers, not supermarkets, which did not exist then.

In some households the kitchens were small and lacked many of the modern conveniences that we take for granted like refrigerators and dishwashers; a stove and sink would have sufficed back then. The classes were well attended and it was felt that it had been a worthwhile exercise.

Robert Dunlop

## **SCRABBLE**

Scrabble stimulates the brain and certainly makes you think. We gather each fortnight to challenge each other in a friendly atmosphere. If our numbers are too large we split into two groups.

Some of the words that are allowed nowadays one wouldn't believe. You are now permitted to use people's names e.g. Paul Hogan, Ginger Rogers, Mel Gibson and other unusual words e.g. FIQH (philosophy of Islamic law), AE (Scottish for 1) VAVS (no definition found but allowed as a word) and Q doesn't always have that U following it. We often learn new words from one another. Whether we remember these words is another matter. If we're not sure of the spelling of a word we consult a Scrabble dictionary.

Some players are very cluey in finding ways to extend words in unusual ways. We often get annoyed if someone goes where we want to go and then have to find another place for our word or have to think of a new word so therefore a new place for that word.

We're not there to win but to enjoy each other's company and to hear what has been happening in our lives during the past fortnight. As one of our Scrabble players said "It is always a pleasure to attend".

Margaret Theile

## **SIGNIFICANT WOMEN ARTISTS AND WRITERS OF THE 20TH CENTURY**

This Term 4 Course portrayed and examined the lives and works of some of our famous women Artists and Writers.

The social pressures of Australian Society during the 19th and early 20th century suppressed the value of women's Art and Literature, where women were often relegated to duties within the domestic sphere.

Works by Artists - Margaret Preston, Grace Cossington Smith, Nora Heyson and Writers - Mary Gilmore, Judith Wright and Henry Handel Richardson, broke down some of the preconceived ideas of the past and initiated change to the idea of gender equality in the Arts in Australia

This Course culminated in an excursion to the internationally renowned Botanical Artist Celia Rosser at her Gallery in Fish Creek. The Course was well attended and stimulated lively discussion and interest.

Steph Wellard and Mary Howlett

## **SOAPBOX**

Surprise continues into its fourth year with the strong popularity of Soapbox. Its points of difference: contributions can be as short as 30 minutes, and simple scheduling (and rescheduling when trouble strikes) enable many more members to pitch in with an interest, hobby, or discovered treasure.

Visiting a few highlights:

Mary's research into the true story of Waltzing Matilda splashed real outback colour into the shared and sometimes disputed history of Australia's popular/populist choice of anthem and probably best-known lyrics.

John made sense and raised wonder at the planning behind and continual maintenance of our electoral boundaries. His rich understanding of the political, geographic, social and demographic conundra made for high drama in a field we thought required no more than simple maths.

Geoff explored the poetic style variations in Banjo Paterson's works, showing how mechanical choices like rhyme and metre controlled the hearer's perception, then a few weeks later he subjected Henry Lawson's poetry to similar scrutiny. As a bonus, we then compared the methods and markets of these two literary giants of ours.

Perhaps most meaty of the series, as part of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, Russell conducted us on a tour through the treasures among the courses we enjoyed over the two decades of our work in mutual development. Far too numerous to mention, they peaked with series on Philosophy, Humanity and the Brain, several blockbusters on Climate Change, Religion and notably Islam.

Kaye Dennis.

## **TABLETS AND SMARTPHONES Mondays 2pm**

The first thing you become aware of when you buy a tablet or smartphone is there is no manual to explain the operation. You are expected to miraculously know how the little devil works – sadly this isn't always the case.

The informal sessions provide an opportunity to meet with other device users, share ideas, and enjoy learning some of the intricacies of these devices.

The aim is to encourage users to experiment with, learn ways to research and solve problems, and further develop an understanding of their mobile device. There are no entry level requirements, and both Android and Apple users are welcome.

Rod MacLeod

## **WALKING GROUP**

Unfortunately, we were able to enjoy only three walks in 2019.

First up was a meander through the Edmund Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve, at Moe. We met in the McDonald's car park at the west end of the town. There we organised a carpool and were soon underway. Because of the lack of rain, it was quite dry

underfoot, which also rendered the woodland like tinder. We did manage to climb up the Heart Starter Circuit, and on the way back watched some wood ducks as well as some introduced birds frolicking in a lake that seems to be fed from a small creek, if there is water in it.

Next was the Toorong Falls at Noojee.

We met at the Noojee Hotel Car Park this time. Again, we first organised a carpool and drove three kilometres to the forest area which enshrines the falls. This time both the terrain and the conditions were quite different. After deciding which option of ways to select, the way up, and up, and up was not that strenuous but difficult because it was quite slippery under foot. Most pleasant during the way up was the accompanying sound of the rushing water. There it was! One's anticipation of gushing water making its way noisily downhill was not disappointed. Mention of Handel's Water-music entered the discussions. On the way down we had more time to marvel at the abundance of now sprouting varying shades of green after the recent rains. To round off the morning we called in at the 'Little Red Duck' in Noojee.

Mt Worth - another experience.

The long-range weather forecast was not looking too good for this last walk for the term. The pre-walk 'recky' saw me almost feeling my way along the road to the park. I had not experienced thick fog like this for years; and was hoping it would clear up for the actual walk. The fog cleared, the rain did not. So, come the day of the walk only one other intrepid walker joined me for the excursion. We enjoyed the area with no one else around and finished up at the Tea shop at Darnum.

Gerhard Theile

## **WHAT'S THE MATTER - Alternate Mondays**

There we come, each second Monday morning, our heads full of the weekend's news. We pull some tables together, sit down, and start talking. That's 'What's the Matter'.

Twenty or more of us each session. It's a simple formula, but tried and tested. The rules are unwritten: speak your mind but don't offend; accept everything that's said politely and humbly; laugh at the Chairperson's jokes.

We don't sign petitions; we don't write collective letters to the editor; but we do believe we have, as a group, the answers to the world's problems. If only they'd listen to us!

Our motto: *De Sapientia Veterum* (the Wisdom of the Ancients).

Jim Connelly