

## Bayside U3A President's Annual Report for 2023

As I write this farewell Annual Report, I cannot help remembering George Washington who wrote a famous Farewell Address to the American people when he retired from the Presidency after two terms. My two terms were not continuous, nor have I been President for 8 years but like Washington I have been your foundation President and like Washington's this final report will be read to you, as I am attending a Rotary Conference.

It has been a continual delight to me to see how fast we have grown and how well we have survived the challenge of Covid. This has been due to us having an extraordinarily strong and active Committee of Management which has a good balance of continuing experience and new blood. We set ourselves the goal of always having at least three new members join the COM each year and I think we have done so. Certainly, we did so in 2023 and will do so again in 2024. We have also managed to establish and run two offices, so ably coordinated by Chris Logan who must take a lot of credit for our success.

As I depart, like Washington, I want to say something about our future. He told the USA to have no entangling alliances. What I want to say is to be very wary of having a paid staff member in the U3A because the core value of our U3A is its reliance on volunteers to run everything. The other core values are to not take ourselves too seriously and to always remember we are here to enjoy ourselves. The U3A is not a work place but a holiday camp! Or, as I often say, this is not BHP.

We were able, once again, to start the year with an official opening by the Bayside Mayor Hanna el Mouallem. We had not been able to do this for two years because of Covid. This useful tradition was established to keep alive and well the wonderful partnership we have with the Bayside Council, and it certainly does this.

Our U3A had a great 2023 with 1599 members, 163 Courses run by our stable of wonderful Tutors. In addition, John Nurse and Richard Potter put together a strong Speaker Programme full of variety and large audiences. We once again had a vibrant and **united** Marketing, Membership and Events subcommittee, chaired by Warwick Harding. They, amongst many initiatives, organized the purchase of a mobile sound system so that when we have functions in large halls, we can all hear what is said. They helped Cheryl Threadgold run the Synergy Book Launch event which was the outcome of Cheryl's innovative Synergy collaborative book project. Indeed, the MME created a calendar of key social events including a monthly happy hour at the Hampton RSL, coordinated by Karen Hall, and Let's Do Dinner as a great social introduction for new members.

Many of these events, along with the Pre-Grand Final BBQ, were held in the Beaumaris Community Centre where our new sound system has greatly helped. This Centre was used because we needed to accommodate over 100 people at each of these events. Its use has highlighted the need to have this Centre refurbished as it is an excellent space that could seat comfortably over 150 people for major presentations and events.

The introduction of U-MAS for the 2023 Year was covered in detail in 2022 Annual Report. But all the hard work to introduce this new system has made enrolments less work and made running the U3A easier for the Office, the Course Coordinator and the Tutors. Hopefully, it is making enrolments and course selection easy for our members.

2023 saw some substantial improvements to the blinds, air-conditioning and men's toilets of the Brighton Court House, ably organized by Tony Aplin. Work was also undertaken by the Council on the roof leaks. However, the water damaged carpet has not yet been replaced. It is worth noting that the Council charge us peppercorn rent for the Court House and part of the deal is we are responsible for maintenance within the building. We also purchased a new photocopier for the BSC Office and undertook upgrades of the Wi-Fi and TV projection. Because of our strong financial position, we were able to undertake these necessary but expensive works, without delay and any financial concerns.

2023 also saw Chris Birch take on the role of Secretary. He carried out this role most efficiently, making life very easy for me. We re-introduced the position of Minutes Secretary as the role of Secretary is quite demanding. Chris was our Minute Secretary before becoming the Secretary and we found this worked very well. Dee De George volunteered to take on this role and it is once again proving to be an efficient arrangement. Chris has been largely responsible for the completion of our Policies and Procedures manuals, now on the website, our Consumer Affairs update and the reissue of our Model Rules and adoption thereof.

2023 saw successful introduction of a succession planning subcommittee, chaired by Sandra Groves, for the nomination of 2024 Officers and Committee. This has proved to be significant improvement on leaving it all up to the President and Secretary, as we did in the past.

During the year Vlad Metter decided to resign from the Committee of Management after more than 10 years of service to Bayside U3A. Vlad was a foundation committee member and our first Property Officer, who was responsible for purchasing or finding the various bits of equipment or furniture we needed. He did a wonderful job ensuring we had superior quality equipment at a very good price. On a number of occasions, he and I used his SUV to collect filing cabinets and chairs. It is sad to reflect that he and I could not now do this, as age is catching up with both of us. I am happy to say that Vlad remains an active member of our U3A.

Another quiet achiever has been our Treasurer, Robin Douglas, who has managed our finances for the last seven years. He also has decided to retire from the COM and the role of Treasurer. Robin has quietly kept us fully informed of our financial position each month and each year.

A U3A is made by its Tutors and 2023 was no different to any other. We had our usual group of remarkable Tutors running a wide range of courses. They were all capably managed by our Course Coordinator, Sue Steele, who has decided she has not enough to do and has agreed to be nominated as our President for 2024.