



Introduction

U3As are voluntary, self-help learning co-operatives, providing low cost learning and leisure programs for people in the post retirement, “third age” phase of their lives. The term “university” meaning, “a community of scholars” describes well the nature of each U3A branch which derives its effectiveness from the sharing of its members’ capabilities. By mining this rich vein of knowledge, skills and experience, the autonomous branches of this UNESCO recognised national and international education provider, endow the community with an invaluable asset.

At the branch level the skills and interests of volunteer tutors and their students determine the nature and length of programs offered. Whilst the backgrounds of tutors vary greatly all enjoy sharing their passions with others.

Supporting the tutors at each Member U3A is a management committee of volunteers who establish and keep operating the various administrative areas needed.

There is a peak body, U3A Network Victoria which was established in 1988 to offer support to member U3As, set up new U3As, organize conferences, workshops organize group benefits such as VMIA insurance for volunteers and copyright compliance as well as liaise with Government and other relevant peer organisations.

The self-help nature of the organisation enables annual membership subscriptions to be kept as low as possible. Contributing to the maintenance of low fees has been U3A Network Vic’s successful negotiation of grants from the Victorian State Government.

More detailed information about the history of the international U3A movement (established in France in 1972) in general and the Victorian organisation in particular is available on the Network Victoria website.

.U3A in Victoria

- U3A in Australia began in Victoria in 1985 with the setting up of U3A Melbourne City, Monash, Hawthorn and Ringwood.
- More than 35,000 Victorians are members of over 100 Member U3As. There are approximately equal numbers of regional and metropolitan U3As.

RURAL REGIONS	
Region 1 South West Victoria (9)	Region 2 Grampians (9)
U3A Apollo Bay U3A Colac Otway U3A Corangamite U3A Corio Bay (Northern Geelong) U3A Geelong Hamilton U3A Portland District U3A U3A Surfcoast (Torquay, Anglesea, Winchelsea) U3A Warrnambool	U3A Ararat & District U3A Avoca U3A Ballarat Creswick & District U3A Dunmunkle U3A (Minyip, Murtoa, Rupanyup) U3A Hepburn Shire (Daylesford) Horsham & District U3A U3A Maryborough Stawell & District U3A
Region 3 Loddon Mallee (9)	Region 4 North East Victoria (15)
U3A Bendigo U3A Castlemaine U3A Cohuna U3A Echuca Heathcote U3A U3A Kerang & District U3A Kyneton Macedon Ranges U3A U3A Sunraysia	U3A Albury-Wodonga Alpine U3A U3A Benalla & District Bright District U3A U3A Cobram & District U3A Euroa & District U3A Goulburn Valley Indigo U3A (Beechworth) U3A Kilmore & District U3A Mansfield Murrindindi East U3A (Alexandra, Eildon) Nathalia U3A Seymour & District U3A Wangaratta U3A U3A Yea
Region 5 Gippsland (7)	Region 6 South Gippsland (6)
U3A Bairnsdale & District U3A Baw Baw (Warragul, Drouin) U3A Lakes Entrance La Trobe Valley U3A Mallacoota & District U3A U3A Sale U3A of Yarram	U3A Bass Valley Cardinia U3A (Pakenham) Cranbourne U3A U3A Phillip Island U3A Prom Coast (Foster, Leongatha) U3A Wonthaggi

METROPOLITAN REGIONS	
Region 7 Western (8)	Region 8 Northern Metro (10)
<p>U3A Altona Bacchus Marsh U3A Brimbank U3A (St Albans, Sunshine) U3A Footscray U3A Hobsons Bay-Williamstown U3a Melton Campus U3A Moonee Valley U3A Werribee Region</p>	<p>U3A Banyule (Ivanhoe) U3A Chinese in Yarra U3A Darebin (Fairfield, Northcote, Preston) Hume U3A (Broadmeadows) U3A Moreland (Brunswick, Coburg, Glenroy, Faulkner) U3A Nillumbik (Eltham, Hurstbridge) Sunbury U3A Wallan & District U3A Whittlesea U3A (Epping, Thomastown, S.Morang) U3A Yarra City (Abbotsford, Collingwood, Carlton, Richmond)</p>
Region 9 Outer Eastern (7)	Region 10 Eastern (13)
<p>Emerald U3A Healesville & District U3A Mt Dandenong & District U3A (Kalorama) Sherbrooke U3A (Upwey) U3A Upper Yarra (Yarra Junc., Warburton) Walmsley Village U3A (Kilsyth) U3A Yarra Ranges (Lilydale)</p>	<p>U3A Box Hill U3A Croydon U3A Deepdene (Kew, Balwyn) U3A Hawthorn U3A Highvale (Waverley) U3A Knox (Ferntree Gully) U3A Kooyong Manningham U3A (Doncaster, Bulleen) Melbourne Chinese U3A (Box Hill, Doncaster) U3A Nunawading U3A Ringwood U3A Waverley (Mt Waverley, Chadstone) U3A Wheelers Hill</p>
Region 11 Outer South East Metro & Mornington Peninsula (6)	Region 12 Central & Southern Metro (7)
<p>Casey U3A U3A Dandenong U3A Frankston Hastings U3A U3A Mornington U3A Southern Peninsula (Dromana)</p>	<p>Bayside U3A Glen Eira U3A Kingston U3A U3A Melbourne City U3A Moorleigh U3A Port Phillip U3A Stonnington</p>



2. Advantages of having a U3A in your community

- U3A provides a voluntary service to the local community
- It is a low cost, affordable educational opportunity, as tutors and class leaders are volunteers, and meeting places are provided at no/low cost, due to the support of Council and Community agencies. Each U3A sets its own membership fee, linked to the cost of managing the organisation.
- A U3A group can complement the local Neighbourhood or Community House, as volunteer U3A tutors can increase the range of learning activities available to older people. This mutually advantageous relationship is evident in several LGAs, where the U3A is housed in the local Neighbourhood House.
- U3As assist positive ageing and social connection. They provide older people with the opportunity to meet with other like-minded seniors in their local community
- U3As give retired people a chance to share their skills, talents and experiences with others. They become valued members and resources within their own community
- U3As enable enhanced acceptance / status / community recognition of seniors and assist in the development of community spirit
- Country communities provide opportunities for involvement in recreation and sporting clubs, service organizations, and social groups. Adding a U3A creates an additional dimension based on education, learning and skill sharing
- Research has shown that those who remain mentally, physically and socially active avoid becoming isolated and depressed
- Demographics show the percentage of Victorians aged 60 years and over will continue to rise. By 2014 there were more than 900,000 people in Victoria over 60 years old. This represents about 1 person in every 6. This will rise to about 1 in 4 Victorians by 2020.

3. U3As in practice

- Each Committee of Management organizes its own programs, by drawing on members' skills, and the community resources available
- Annual membership fees, plus some state and local government support covers running costs.

- Support for Member U3As is also available from U3A Network Victoria, neighbouring U3As and the Regional U3A Network.

4. The courses offered are limited only by the skill set of each U3As members:

- **Creative arts** - Jewellery making, card making, pottery, patchwork & quilting, calligraphy, scrapbooking, lead-lighting, furniture restoration, wood-turning, sketching & painting, music making (e.g. recorder, piano) creative writing, etc
- **Performing Arts** – dancing (e.g. line, folk, ballroom), singing, choir, film making, drama production, introduction to Opera
- **Information Technologies** – computers, ipads, emailing, internet, mobile phones, digital photography, skype
- **Cultural studies** – literature, poetry, play reading, book club, early texts/ civilizations
- **Languages** – French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, Non-European
- **Humanities** – history, genealogy, geography, politics, current affairs, philosophy
- **Sciences** – psychology, environmental sustainability, astronomy, biology
- **Business** – stock market investing, financial management
- **Current Affairs** – international, national, regional and local
- **Games** – chess, bridge, other cards (e.g. five hundred, canasta), crosswords, scrabble, mahjong, table tennis, pool/billiards, bocce, carpet bowls, life ball (based on net-ball)
- **Exercise** – walking, bush-walking, tai-chi, bicycling, relaxation therapies, meditation, strength training, chair aerobics, yoga, feldenkrais, swimming, hydrotherapy
- **Leisure & fun** – film appreciation, music appreciation, coffee and chat mornings, winemaking and appreciation, beer making and appreciation, gardening, cookery, sharing a meal, armchair travel, train trips, trivia nights

For individual U3As offerings check out their websites directly or via the Network Website. The Seniors Online portal also lists classes and activities by U3A. ([see website](#))



5. **Sources of funding**

5.1 Annual Membership Subscriptions – are determined by the Committee of Management / AGM of the establishing U3A

5.2 The Department of Health & Human Services

No funding is available for ongoing costs, such as rental, paid staff, or ongoing transport costs

Local Council: Councilors and Council Officers can be approached by the U3A Committee of Management for support available in local grants, office accommodation and venues

Victorian Health Promotion Foundation (www.vichealth.gov.au)

Community Support Fund (CSF) has gambling taxes to allocate via Local Government

Volunteer Small Equipment Grants (VSEG) – Federal Department of Social Services has grants up to \$3000. (www.dss.gov.au)

Foundation for Rural and Regional Australians' (FRRR) Caring for Ageing Rural Australians (CARA) Program (www.frrr.org.au)
Council Community Funds
Private Enterprise Community Funds eg. Bendigo Bank.