

**2018 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Presidents Briefing  
Minutes and Notes from the Break Out Groups  
Multicultural Hub  
16 May 2018**

Meeting opened at 1030am by President Susan Webster (SW).

**1. Welcome and Network Activities – Susan Webster**

SW conducted a Welcome to Country followed by a presentation to Nino Mautone and Jan Mock of U3A Myrtleford of their U3A Network Membership Certificate.

SW advised that Elsie Mutton, a past President, was an apology because she was attending a funeral.

SW acknowledged that this year is the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U3A Network Victoria. She asked those present to sign a form to indicate that they were comfortable with having their photo taken today – or that they could indicate that they were opting out of having their photo taken.

SW highlighted a photo that she took while participating in a Zoom online meeting with the Grampians Region. She said the technology made it possible for her to contribute to the meeting, which she otherwise would not have been able to do.

She summarised the agenda for the meeting, highlighting the afternoon sessions and how that element of the program will work: that everyone will be able to go to each of the sessions in turn.

She provided a summary of Network's major activities in 2018 to date. These include:

- The grants process
- The political campaign, 'Accommodate U3A!'
- The marketing campaign, 'Because your brain doesn't want to retire' – which will be re-run later in the year because of the Seniors Festival
- Strategic planning: a tool for all of us

SW provided some information about the political campaign, which is being conducted in conjunction with U3A Port Phillip. All U3As will receive the material developed for the campaign in the coming months.

She also highlighted some of the major community activities that Network is engaging in in 2018, including the Strengthening Seniors Inclusion Program (SSIP) which plays a role in community connectedness.

She also advised that some Network activities have been set aside due to lack of people resources to complete them. This includes the U3A Matters newsletter, the redevelopment of the website.

SW provided information about what she sees are the challenges for Network and for Member U3As such as the changing funding environment – and that, in some ways, there are too many opportunities to pursue.

## **2. Presentation and Discussion: Network Communications and Major Grants – Del Stitz (DS)**

DS introduced herself, she has been the Secretary at U3A Glen Eira for the last 18 months, and before that she was a member, and is now a committee member with U3A Network Victoria as well. She said she wanted to join Network because she thinks U3As deserve more funding and more recognition. She stated that 109 Member U3As and 36,000 individual members is a powerful argument for more funding from State Government. She also told us that other, lesser organisations get more funding and more recognition that we do. She said her working life was at State Government and that she given away a lot of funding in that time. She sees U3As as infrastructure for U3As in the community.

DS also advised that Senior Citizens Clubs are often run down and underutilised, and that U3As tell her that accommodation and funding are the things we need to get better equipped to pursue more opportunities in the future.

She said a lot of our data is not up to date and some of it is based on estimation: getting data right is essential.

She also spoke about Member Councils, saying that 11 Committee Members at Network level have to deliver a lot for the four meetings each year, that it's a lot to communicate when we need improved communication flows from Member U3As if we want more funding and recognition. She said we need a strategic shift to compete for more funds.

She said that we need the NMDB (Network Member Database) to collect data at the moment but we need to get better data in future.

She advised us that we need to think like bureaucrats and do things that turn bureaucrats on. She said this would be achieved when we move from inputs to outputs, and outcomes. She recognised that U3As are on a pathway and that U3As are not all at the same point.

She advised those present that the Members section of the website will be updated shortly to include more information such as upcoming funding opportunities.

DS provided an overview of how income comes in and out of Network to U3As. She feels that we don't receive the funding from Government that we deserve and that the gaps in funding relate to capital funds, funds for equipment, and operating costs.

She highlighted that a number of other organisations have been much more successful than U3As in gaining funding. She advised that they had been successful because their campaigns were supported by quality data, research on outcomes and evaluation of a governance model.

One example is Men's Sheds which have received \$43 million to assist new and existing sheds.

Another example was Neighbourhood Houses, which has received \$46.4 million to deliver programs and services, with another \$25.09 million for the Neighbourhood House Coordination Program. She said that Neighbourhood Houses had recently conducted a very successful campaign which resulted in them getting this level of funding.

Her message to Presidents is to help Network get better data, document and promote your good practices, encourage improved governance practices, strengthen local community connections, help Network market to other stakeholders and explore local funding opportunities.

Geoff Sheldon (Manningham U3A) said that DS was correct, that we need scientifically based data from peer reviewed sources and that we need to link our work into alignment with best practice. He said he agreed with DS about her comments on Men's Sheds, that they used data from a controlled study and compared what benefits people obtained from participating in a Men's Shed compared to the rest of the population. He also said he would like to see how we could produce something similar. He then suggested we all read the Men's Sheds report. SW agreed to distribute the Men's Sheds report to our Member U3As.

Bob Ryan (U3A Hobsons Bay-Williamstown) asked how the female dominated U3A movement compared to the male dominated Men's Sheds. He asked if the hands on aspects of Men's Sheds delivered a different outcome to the more cerebral aspects of the U3A movement.

DS agreed that we need to commission some very good research to support us in this approach. She said we need to be able to improve what we count and how we count it.

Jenny Higgins (Croydon U3A) asked if Network was aware of any reports that used control groups in U3As. DS advised that she is not aware of there being anything like that but said that should not stop us. Anne Grigg (AG), Development and Support Officer, said that she had been collecting success stories from U3As.

Nino Mautone (U3A Myrtleford) said we should approach politicians and say we will recommend our individual members vote in a particular way in the upcoming election. DS disagreed with this, saying that we should provide an argument to politicians about us providing benefits to the Seniors community that are worth funding.

SW thanked DS for her presentation and introduced Glen Will and his presentation.

### **3. Presentation and Discussion: U3A Whittlesea Community Inclusion ACFE Project – Glen Wall (GW)**

GW spoke about how he had sat on the other side of the desk from public servants like DS asking for funding to make an impact.

He introduced Whittlesea U3A's ACFE funded project, the Community Inclusion Project. He advised that it is now a model focused on community inclusion, linking a cross-section of community organisations to help Seniors organisations improve the education and training outcomes for this cohort. He said the project's outcomes to date include membership growth and a successful collaborative approach across a number of sectors, as well as a richer learning experience for participants.

He outlined the objectives of the project and provided an overview of Whittlesea U3A's vision for its members. He highlighted a change from 300 individual members and 55 tutors in 2011 compared with 720 individual members and 70 tutors in 2018.

He stated that his U3A was not focused on competition with other community organisations, but was focused on forming collaborative partnerships.

He then outlined a definition of what being inclusive means and showed an image of Whittlesea U3A being listed in the Community Support section of the City of Whittlesea's website alongside aged care providers and other organisations.

He then showed an image of the Whittlesea Senior Linkup site which came out of the Strengthening Seniors Inclusion Program (SSIP) funding and how it links with LEAP activities and Men's Shed.

He then highlighted the Waling Football Collaboration which came about through working with the Victorian Seniors Festival, Melbourne City Football Club, the City of Whittlesea and his U3A.

GW then gave a brief overview of Whittlesea U3A's new campus at Peter Lalor Vocational College, within the Community Learning Hub with other members of the Hub including the community garden, community kitchen and an international school.

He said the outcome of the project was a tool kit resource which will be shared by all U3As. He provided an overview of the toolkit which includes a guide to identifying

connections U3As have in their local communities, and how to build collaborative partnerships successfully.

Pat Buoncristiani (U3A Emerald) said that the outcomes of U3As looked to be inwardly looking like overcoming loneliness and isolation, or in increased physical activity. She said there is a lot of expertise within U3As in looking at outward looking outcomes including sources of thinking about benefits to the community, being a resource for the community.

GW replied that during the last six months that Tennis Victoria, Bowls Victoria, the Primary Health Care Network for Eastern Melbourne and RMOT have come to GW because of the success of this project. He said this means that they are now being approached, whereas before his U3A was doing the approaching.

Chap B Chow (U3A Chinese in Yarra) said that he was very impressed with GW's presentation. He said that one of the aims of the U3A movement is to foster social cohesion and harmony. GW said he supported that comment and that the project has resulted in greater inclusion of new and emerging communities in that area.

SW thanked GW and then introduced the next topic which she was presenting on the role of Member Council.

#### **4. Presentation and Discussion: Role of the Member Council – Susan Webster**

SW said that there was an opportunity for others to make comment and suggestions on the role of Network.

She also advised that she would not be going through the elements of the U3A Geelong motion at the AGM in terms of which statements were true and which were not true, but that she would be happy to answer any questions about that from those present.

She said she is more focused on the future than on the past.

She then provided an overview of the role of Member Council as state in the Rules of Network Victorian's constitution. She provided her vision for the Council and the U3A Movement as offering Seniors and retired people a stimulating environment for social and educational opportunities; to connect Seniors to the community, promoting wellbeing through participation in its activities and to reduce isolation, and that U3As reaffirm volunteering.

She provided her view on how to build a stronger, more effective U3A Movement by having stronger financial, resourced U3As with clear goals, procedures and tools to make their job easier; that U3As would co-operate to share knowledge and ideas, and that communication would be back and forth, in all directions.

She then said how should we respond to the issues raised by U3A Geelong and U3A Moreland She gave credit to those U3As because they had contributed members to the Network Committee. She said we should not ignore these issues – and that we should not accept only support and affirmations as valid inputs. She wants people to put ideas and challenges in the area for U3As to debate.

SW said that everything she hears when she is interacting with U3As helps her understanding. She encourages people to have those sorts of meetings in the future, not on the fringes.

She then provided an overview of what Network needs at the moment, including a Secretary and a Treasurer, as well as people with expertise in technology, in editing or publicising and participants in committees and working groups such as Education, Planning, Finance and the Regions Group.

She said we just received our budget for the year, and that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) had not given us the funding until January this year – but now we have a budget as of yesterday. She advised that we would not be able to produce much in the way of financial information at the June Council Meeting because we do not have a Treasurer.

She also said we need four U3As to participate in the strategic planning day in June. She advised that if U3As do not nominate themselves then she will approach U3As.

Chap B Chow (U3A Chinese in Yarra) said he was surprised that multiculturalism is not a part of Susan's presentation. He said is an Ambassador for Multiculturalism and that 27 per cent of new migrants including family reunions, have language as a major barrier.

SW said thank you to Chap B Chow for his comments and for continuing to raise this important issue. Chap B Chow said the multicultural Seniors are much more isolated than other Seniors.

Eon Macaulay (U3A Geelong) said there has to be a lot more discussion on the topic of the Constitution. He said being active participants in the process changed with the introduction of the new Constitution, and that representatives can vote but that Network Committee does not have to follow the outcome of the vote. He said there is no link to Member U3As outside of the Council and he suggests we put back more participation into the Constitution.

SW thanked him for his comments.

Pauline O'Brien (U3A Moreland and Network Committee Member) said she had agreed to stop talking about the past but the Members Council is the name of this group in the Constitution and she asked that we stop calling it Network Council.

SW thanked her and said that there is a break out group this afternoon that will concentrate on the role of Council.

Mal Bowmaker (U3A Emerald) suggested we should think what are the likely outcomes of having discussions and if we can point to something positive then he would support a discussion but did not want to listen to negatives.

Janice Kelly (U3A Banyule) said she endorsed what Pauline had said about it being a Member Council. She said that Network Committee is short of members and it has a lot of work to achieve. She said she would like SW to consider that the actual members play a greater role in assisting in the work and in the decision making.

SW said perhaps someone would volunteer to join Network Committee at some stage later in the day.

SW thanked everyone for their comments and introduced Loretta Winstanley as the next speaker.

#### **5. Presentation and Discussion: Education Pilots – Loretta Winstanley (LW)**

Loretta said that, although the Network Education Committee (NEC) is a small group, they have a big task to achieve. She said there is space for more people in the NEC who can think big and outside the box.

LW gave an overview of who is involved with the NEC and provided a summary of their goals, including supporting Course Coordinators. She provided an update about the Tutor Handbook being revised and is due to be re-released in June. She said the new Course Coordinator Handbook was written for an individual Course Coordinator, but that some U3As were lucky enough to have a Course Coordination Committee.

LW then introduced Anne Thompson, previous Convener of the NEC. Anne said that she found DS's presentation to be absolutely visionary and that it had given us a framework to use for the future.

She then provided an overview of the Tutor Bank and said that she felt it fits into DS's framework.

She said the Tutor Bank highlights wonderful experience and how to share it across all U3As. She said it is about breaking down silos, but that she thinks we need more resources such as an Education Office to make things happen.

LW wanted to recommend that U3As working together in a local cluster will be a great approach.

She then mentioned Adult Learning Australia (ALA) and said she had found out they have lots of money and that the NEC will be meeting with them next week to discuss how we can work with them.

She said with relation to universities that there are opportunities to work with them such as providing special guest speakers. She then mentioned that the NEC was organising a special guest speaker linked to Network's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

She said that the NEC's newsletter, Education Matters, should be ready for publication soon.

Chap B Chow (U3A Chinese in Yarra) asked if the Tutor Handbook was online. LW said yes it is, and that the new version will be online soon, as well as the Course Coordinators Handbook/

Renate Mattiske (U3A Port Phillip) said that they talk to their members about the full gambit of activities, not education on its own. She asked if the public knew about that?

LW said those sorts of activities are education, including physical activities.

SW said many U3As are approached by people interested in social activities and that the U3A Movement started out as an education movement.

Ian Shaw (U3A Port Phillip) said he agreed with what Renate had said, and that he reflected on DS's inputs as being education and outcomes as being various, including social inclusion.

Lyn Osborne (U3A Mount Dandenong) said with regard to the Tutor Bank, that no one was prepared to travel to her area when she approached them, which might be a bit of a problem in her opinion.

Anne Thompson agreed but said that it only a start and that cluster groups could exchange Tutors.

Michael Allison (Colac Otway) said in reference to Lyn's comments that in country and regional areas, they already have to share resources across distances, but that they discovered that mentoring was a great strategy – with a recent example being a science workshop which was run by the President of U3A Hamilton at U3A Colac Otway. He also said that if anyone is a member of one of the three U3As in their area, then you are a member of all of the three U3As there, and that you can participate in any of the course offered by other U3As there.

Pat Buoncristiani (U3A Emerald) said she thinks there are lots of opportunities to participate through video conferencing, if we only had the technology.

LW pointed out that Neil Shaw's presentation at the March Council meeting used Zoom and that he is running coffee chats via zoom. She said Network should be building expertise in these sorts of technologies.

AG said many people have been part of regional meetings when Zoom has been used and that it's a wonderful tool.

SW said there is funding available for technicians to help U3As put these things in place.

SW then gave an overview of how the afternoon session will work following the lunch break.

## **Notes from the scribes at the four break out groups held during the afternoon session**

### **Topic A - What role would you and your U3A like to see taken by Member Council?**

**Facilitator: Glen Wall**

Council should have input into setting priorities.

Committees to oversee implementation.

Agreed that U3As have a responsibility to provide evidential support to Network advocacy work.

The relevance of current Committees is questioned. Suggested that the scope of the NEC in particular be reviewed.

There was a comment on the work that the NEC had done to set up the Tutor Bank – it is a good idea but has had a low take up

**Topic B - What communications by Network Victoria would be most useful to your U3A? How can your U3A best communicate with the Network? With other U3As?**

**Facilitator: Pauline O'Brien**

They said:

- Not many of their membership read communications
- People cannot be made to read communications
- Some things they need to know but not everything
- Non email users need to be looked after, too
- We are in a transition period for people to use emails
- Are newsletters still relevant?
- Numbers of newsletters are being cut down, the number of pages are being decreased
- Hard copies need to be provided from a central spot
- Need to include an index on the front page of the eBulletin
- Only need two – one around the strategic plan and one around good practice, no need to cover everything that is coming up
- Too many emails
- Only send important information
- Send U3A Matters quarterly with photos, Facebook information
- Grampians region uses Zoom following a \$1,000 grant
- Eastern Region was considered very effective in terms of communication, and sharing of intellectual property
- Geelong and Warrnambool do not communicate due to distance. Geelong is on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Participants asked for more time at Members Council to speak to Network about issues. Not wanting only event reports. They want reports to be assumed as read so there is time for more discussion. U3As should be asked to send in issues to be discussed.

There was a request to minute Council Meetings and a request to distribute Network Council Meeting minutes to Presidents or Delegates. They feel that would help to demystify things.

Other suggestions or comments:

Someone suggested putting a link on the website instead of emails.

Some people said they do not want to receive abusive types of communication.

Some asked for communications to go to all the people on a Member U3As Committee, including Course Coordinators.

One person asked if all the emails could go to all of the membership at U3As. Another person said it would be a privacy issues is Network communicated directly with individual members.

There was a suggestion to use Facebook as part of a strategy. Some liked the idea that communication is filtered through a President or Secretary or Delegate of a Member U3A.

Someone requested a database of all U3A activities across the State.

An internet forum was suggested.

Someone requests a list of grants and courses that other U3As are offering be on the website.

There was a suggestion for Guest Lecture Days with Network Committee Members speaking on behalf of Network to U3As. See an actual face, more personal.

## Topic C: How does your U3A fund itself? Membership, subs, grants, fundraising, other?

### Facilitator: Del Stitz

- Membership fees vary enormously from \$25 to \$75 per year
  - Some have a different fee for new members, above the fee for renewing members
  - Some have a different fee for a couple.
- Many no longer have a category of associate with a lower fee, usually because of heavy demand for courses
  - One only allowed associates to enrol later than members, which led to many joining as full members.
- Some also charge activity fees, usually to cover room hire.
- Some have introduced \$5 charges for insurance.
- All U3As are negotiating or trying to negotiate with their Local Governments
  - Local Government practices vary substantially from free to high rents (such as \$23,000 per annum)
  - There are different practices with payment of utilities
  - Some LGAs cannot assist because local government facilities are now managed by private providers.
- The quality of accommodation from local government is generally not considered to be high.
- Some U3As do not yet have access to an office.
- Many U3As make use of a range of community facilities such as sports clubs, local school premises.
- Some U3As have formed partnerships with a neighbouring group of U3As and allow other members to join their activities.
- Most have a large number of venues from which they provide courses.
- Some U3As fundraise such as Bunnings BBQ, supervising exams.
- One U3A asks for donations as part of their online payment of subscriptions.
- A number of U3As have received funding from the Bendigo Community Bank.
- Many U3As are disappointed by the change to the ACFE capitation grant and feel unable to put effort into development and delivery of projects.

**Topic D - What are the chief challenges to your U3A's operation? Funding, Tutors, accommodation, inertia, ageing membership, LGA support and or charges, other? How do you overcome these challenges?**

**Facilitator: Lynne Hall-Cavanagh**

**Funding:**

- U3As have their own unique situation – no one size fits all solution
- Some are large and receive a lot of funding
- Grants are not viable for operational purposes
- Some U3As have surplus cash and some are operating in deficit
- Need more money to pay for accommodation
- Not knowing where to get the money from
- Invite politicians to attend groups.

**Tutors:**

- Not enough good Tutors. An idea would be to encourage Tutors to share/mentor other people to set up a new group. Liaise with Universities to get Tutors through offering teaching practice for student teachers
- Full classes and not enough Tutors
- Get the idea across that you do not have to be an expert in something to be a Tutor
- Tutors do not necessarily have to be 60 year or older. They can be drawn from a younger group
- Make Tutors Honorary Members and do not charge them.

**Accommodation:**

- Some U3As pay more or less for accommodation
- Sometimes there's a battle with welfare groups for accommodation
- Need for purpose built accommodation.

**Inertia:**

- Aging membership can result in inertia.

**Ageing membership:**

- People aging and younger members not joining. Need to find courses that will appeal to a younger generation
- Members with Dementia. Bring a carer but need to advise the Tutor first. Tick a box to identify health problems on enrolment
- Need to find courses that will appeal to a younger generation
- In one U3A a Tutor had Dementia.

LGA support and / or charges:

- Lack of close relationship with the local Council. Invite Council members to U3A. Meet regularly with Council, invite Councillors or Liaison Officers to lunches and coffee
- Invisibility of older people to the Council in general.

Other:

- How to get multicultural members. Offer a special day for each community. Use Seniors Festival to advertise. Use music groups to bring in other cultures through learning about their community's music or dancing. Offer ESL classes
- Decreasing number of men involved. Liaise with Men's Sheds. Invite men to demonstrate something men specifically enjoy
- Finding volunteers. A solution may be to give all new individual members a volunteering from on joining. A local Council runs volunteer training so source possible volunteers from there
- Too few people doing too much. Identify single tasks which can then be allocated to other Committee Members
- Make committees an opportunity for professional or personal development
- One U3A has a membership that wants to stay small
- Another U3A has problems with heating their premises which is a disincentive to attend
- Need people on Committees who are doers and not talkers. Give Committee Members a job once a year in the hope they will be more useful on an ongoing basis
- Lack of numbers: based in a very small community. Start to advertise and work with other community organisations locally to build up membership. Have a free month of classes – come and try/bring a friend
- What is Network doing about 45 Member U3As attending Council Meetings out of 109 Member U3As?