North Eastern Region 23rd June 2016 - Report

By Gail Peters (Cobram & Dist. U3A) Regional Representative

Members from the following U3As attended:

 Albury/Wodonga, Alpine, Benalla, Bright, Cobram, Euroa, Goulburn Valley, Indigo, Murrindindi, Nathalia, Seymour, Wangaratta.

**Terry Case, President, Benalla**, opened the meeting and welcomed everybody, from the regions U3As, also visitors from Network, being President Elsie Mutton, Treasurer Tom and Development Officer Harry Dobson.

Terry explained that Benalla had this year been through crisis, basically being removed from their regular accommodation, they are using temporary accommodation at the moment. However there is good news on the horizon, negotiations with local council hope to see them being able to utilise sections of the Senior Citizens buildings, and all going well with government elections on the 2nd of July, they hope to move in during the second half of this year.

Elsie introduced Tom who is the new treasurer with Network, Tom comes from the Nunawading U3A.

**Elsie also spoke on:**

* Lack of communication from Government lately, and all clubs need to lobby their local councils and write to state and federal government.
* There is a move for councils to take back control of their Senior Citizens buildings, to be assured that they are utilised to the full capacity.
* Opportunities could be available with Men’s Sheds, as they usually only use their sheds 2 days a week.
* Government is concerned with isolation, loneliness and elder abuse, with the ageing in our community. There could be opportunities for U3A to help lessen this with this group of people.
* ACFE monies will be distributed as soon as Network receives the funds.
* The management online system for individual U3As will soon be available, with clubs being able to monitor and change their own records/information.
* The Network website is being updated.
* Policy and Planning committee are working on accommodation issues, as this is a concern for a lot of U3As.
* Any interesting articles within your U3A, good news stories, or achievements, ‘things that work at your U3A’, please send them into Network, we can often use these articles in our newsletters.
* Education Matters has been produced by the Network Educational Committee, after realising there is a need for more communication between Network and U3As.
* Senior Festival Celebration Day is 2nd October, in Federation Square Melbourne.
* Course Co-ordinator’s annual forum, will be 9th December

Bev from Benalla congratulated Network on the content and running of the conference in 2015.

**Reports from U3As**

**Goodwin Ried, President, AlburyWodonga**, Said Alburywodonga is celebrating 25 years

* Accommodation at the A/W College Campus is secure, and membership is growing quickly with 320 members.
* Some courses have waiting lists.
* They are working on a new website and installing the Network UMAS system.

**David Wood, President, Alpine,** 168 members all members are members of the Senior Citizens and both groups work well together.

* Their 25 activities include language, walking, games, discussion groups and theatre; being members of the Victorian Film Society they have evening presentations with great speakers.
* They have installed computers and wi-fi into the C S buildings.
* Members present from their own experiences, and the rapport and friendship is great.
* David congratulated Network on the quality of a recent Melbourne meeting at the Rendezvous held 2015; and invited any U3A members to visit Alpine U3A.

**Bev from Benalla**, said they had introduced 3 new groups,

* Play Reading Group (after hearing about the success that Deniliquin U3A was having with this group), Collectors which is a ‘show and tell’ and Bird Watching,
* ‘Tech Savvy’ Groups - 3 levels, in different stages of knowledge, are all proving to be extremely popular, participants bring along their own tablets and phones.
* Tech Savvy video from Network has proved helpful, and this class is bringing some U3A members in their 80’s in to learn.

**Roy, President, Bright,** 210 members who are all active, 19 activities,

* Quarterly coffee sessions with excellent speakers, entry into the Autumn Festival parade.
* Looking at three new programs, Philosophy, Health Discussion and Italian.
* They are having discussions with Senior Citizens, working with groups in the area,

eg Historical, Men’s Sheds.

**Marjorie Coulter, Past President, Cobram.**  65 members,

* 10 activities, excellent speakers at our monthly coffee mornings followed by lunch,
* Educational day trips, visiting Nathalia later in the year
* Have sourced DvDs for courses from Sale U3A as our tutor has a good rapport with them.

**Erwin Weiman, President, Euroa**. 10 - 12 courses

* New courses,Storytelling and philosophy, asking members to take one session, planning and presenting just one session and this gives the individual more confidence to become more active.
* Euroa Community Education closed down; Euroa U3A was using this for computers, so having to use a variety of places now.

**Greg Barnes, President, Goulburn Valley (Shepparton).** 330 members, 32 courses.

* A great facility, 4 rooms and only $172PA to local council,
* This year they took a trip to Broken Hill - 42 people.
* Regular speakers; including Men’s Shed, Local Mayor, Police, CALD. Extra social events, trivia, art show, Melbourne Cup Day evening.
* Greg is currently having talks with Latrobe University, re U3A members sitting in on lectures.

**John Meyer, Indigo (Beechworth)** 50 members,

* Using EDX on line courses with great success, Ancient History, China, Buddhism. CEO of Shire recently talked on ageing in their area, at one of their monthly coffee mornings.
* Accommodation problems occurred two years ago, short notice and had to vacate. Now sharing Beechworth Centre with Youth Association.
* Looking at UMAS, thank you to the Melbourne team for their help and what a wonderful system.

**Ian McKaskill, President, Murrindindi.** 53 members,

* Conversation hour, where members take a topic, and present as a one off session, this gives individual member’s confidence to them think about taking on a tutoring role.
* Recently completed a 4 day bus trip to Canberra, educational and lots of fun.
* Accommodation, they are using the old hospital building, rented from local gov. at $500pa.

**Robin Fairman,** **Nathalia.** 75 members

* Accommodation, Senior Citizens buildings, or Heritage Centre (no fees)
* Cooking, craft, tours, travel, film, photography, art, writing groups, speakers,
* AGM included a High Tea
* Speakers and working with Men’s Shed

**Jill Fidler, President, Seymour. 27 courses**

* Accommodation via local council MOA paying $6.50 per hour
* They have surveyed their members and found do not want presentations on aging.
* Working in with Men’s Shed

**Elaine Jacobson, President, Wangaratta.** 90 members

* Recent elections found that they had too many members wanting to stand.
* Have recently updated their website
* Accommodation at Racecourse, there have been changes with racecourse organisers, and they may need to prepare for changes.

Harry Dobson explained the regional grant for this year; discussion took place on travel expenses, a motion was passed that grant money be used for the running of regional meetings, if travel money was required, this would be handled at U3A local level. Gail Peters was voted in as Regional Representative; Harry spoke on the theme of the next regional meeting on 8th of September at Cobram.

Which includes a presentation from the Aspire Group; presenting results of their completed survey - ‘Wellbeing amongst Older Australians’. We are also hoping to have Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Victorian Seniors, speaking at this meeting, an invitation has been sent to him.

* Harry distributed information on Centrelink, with contact details, could U3As contact them with the intention of promoting U3A to new retirees.
* Other opportunities for promoting a] Telelink

b] Men’s Sheds

Harry stressed the importance of keeping a regional calendar, e.g. meeting dates for the year ahead.

Bev from Benalla reported on the North Eastern Regional Digital Information Day “Enhance your courses with Digital Technology’, held at Shepparton last year.

Garth Blackman, assisted by Bev gave us an in-depth talk on how Indigo U3A has developed their website with links to UMAS. Then showed how UMAS works for them. If you would like to talk to a very satisfied user of the UMAS system, and find out how it could work for you, contact Garth indigo.u3a@gmail.com or contact the Network office, they will pass the information on to the IT team who in turn will contact you.

Terry President Benalla, requested we select two dates for meetings in 2017, suggested April and September, Shepparton and Benalla both offered venues, to be finalised at Cobram Meeting in September.