

**Report based on notes taken at
U3A Network Victoria Biennial Conference
Rendezvous Hotel, Flinders St Melbourne
17th and 18th August 2015**

Beverley Lee, U3A Benalla

The 2015 Biennial Conference of U3A Network Victoria, '30 years and still growing', celebrated the first thirty years of U3A's Network Victoria and considered the challenges to come in the next thirty years. I found it to be enormously valuable – so have written up what has turned out to be a rather lengthy report! I hope it will be interesting to read and perhaps feed into future thinking/programs at U3A Benalla and District.

Day 1 – 17th August

In her welcome to the conference, U3A Network Victoria's President Elsie Mutton related the Paul Kelly song "From little things big things grow" to the four U3A groups which began to network 30 years ago and the 106+ groups and 35,000 people involved in the network today and spoke of U3A providing a rich celebration of the third stage of life.

Recognition Certificates were presented to the four U3A's who began the U3A's Network Victoria journey 30 years ago – Melbourne, Hawthorn, Ringwood and Waverley/Monash.

The conference was formally opened by the Patron of U3A, Her Excellency The Governor of Victoria The Honourable Linda Dessau AM, who began her presentation describing the change in attitude in the judiciary over the past thirty years to lifelong learning. Thirty years ago, the judiciary largely denied the need for lifelong learning, appearing to regard it as a threat to the independence of the judiciary. Now members of the judiciary welcome it, regarding it as a privilege, not a threat. Throughout her presentation, Linda spoke warmly of U3A, expressing that all benefit from the intellectual stimulation of U3A and the way in which it provides a celebration of the third stage of life. While recognising throughout the importance of what U3A does, Linda used herself as an example of a challenge facing the U3A. In moving into her office in her new role as Governor, Linda described taking in her PC, iPad, iPhone and more, much to the amazement of the staff. Linda used this as a reminder to us that to ensure we keep growing, we need to promote the contemporary world.

Throughout the two days of the conference, speakers developed a range of challenges for U3A's in Victoria to consider over the next thirty years. Conference themes related to the changing face of ageing; developing the interface between U3A and universities as communities of learning; responding to changes in the digital world; and the rich possibilities for intergenerational learning.

Day 1's Key note speaker, Gerard Mansour, Commissioner for Senior Victorians, spoke of **'The Changing Face of Ageing'** and of a journey of changing attitudes to ageing, with the World Health Organization again rethinking ageing, longevity and the life course.

For so long now the retirement date – currently 65 – has been regarded as a 'Cold Turkey' experience; however there is a move towards viewing the retirement process as a more gradual experience. With increasing wellbeing he suggests the new generation of retirees will plan and prepare differently and will see the challenge that of thinking of retirement as a new period of life – an opportunity to be involved in work and activity in different ways.

While recognising that the general community is disconnected from this experience because it is dominated by its own life challenges, Gerard emphasized that there is a clear need to work to increase respect and understanding for older people, as seniors are major contributors to our society.

Active Ageing is a life stage process – to stay above the disability line for as long as possible, i.e. Health, spirituality, intellectual/cognition above the disability threshold.

To do this there is importance in having a role, a purpose, a value on ageing.

From 'the retirement age' of 65, Gerard described the general pattern perceived now as being on average of 9 years without disability and major ailment followed by 9 years in which a number of illness and other challenges to participating in society emerge.

The things which work in keeping people above the disability threshold?

- Active involvement and engagement
- Expectations– the 'visual look' of older people being out and about, not out of sight, out of mind
- Planning not limited to financial planning, or renovating or travelling, but 'how am I going to have a purpose in living' over the next 30 years; what communities of interest will I belong to, my' life is for living'.

One of the levers to engagement is clearly the role of digital literacy and ways of engaging older people in this part of the process –Gerard then introduced us to a short trailer then for a documentary on a 'Cyber Seniors' You Tube video competition! You can view it at

<https://youtu.be/bemDf6wuHJ0>

Gerard then reported on a 'listening tour' he recently undertook on the impact of loneliness, which found loneliness to be associated with

- Lesser quality of life
- MH issues, especially depression
- Cognitive decline
- Lesser health and wellness
- Loss of self-worth, confidence
- For some, the adoption of risk taking behaviour
- Risk of elder abuse

“These separately and in combination can move on to a more disempowered way of life. Clearly for some older people, their sense of confidence was at times was shaken to the core.”

Up to 10% of seniors could be experiencing chronic isolation and loneliness. Disconnection is gradual – experience children moving to international, urban settings; partners and friends die. There appears to be a gradual, slow period of disconnection over a period of time.

Older people aren't always aware of what is available

Risk factors – access to community services and support, knowing what is available locally, mobility and transport, personal life experiences e.g. caring responsibilities; living arrangements.

What is it about resilience that means some people bounce back more easily? Challenge for community to face the third age challenge – someone needs to take responsibility.

Told of a man who spoke of going to U3A twice, but not returning as no body spoke to him. Gerard emphasised the need for communities, including U3A's, to have a 'spirit of inclusion'

Where to from here for U3A?– 'Spirit of Inclusion'

Groups have a dynamic – some grow and prosper, while others decline. Mansour speculated about some for example Senior Citizens groups being unintentionally exclusive and out of step with changing needs of the new generation of older people.

People can be episodically involved in groups – moving in and out – but will stay where they feel more socially connected.

As with all groups, the challenges around 'forming', 'storming', 'norming', 'performing' and 'mourning' are to be faced.

How does U3A remain inclusive and strong? Do we need to move towards outreach? Innovation? U3A's need to strive for relevance and to respond to opportunities to grow. The experience of being involved and connected is central, whatever the mode.

Mansour concluded by emphasizing the enormous contribution U3A has made to the quality of life of older people in Victoria.

Discussion:

- Need to consider the parameter of NESB inclusion, inclusion of those with English as an additional language.
- Need to consider those over 85 – how do we meet the educational and social needs of our very old members.
- Need to consider carers – carers are often the most isolated older people and may gradually becoming incapacitated themselves.
- Need to consider how to access isolated people – people who have just moved into area; who have just lost partners; etc.
- Need to think laterally in identifying referral sources of people who may be isolated – suggestions made of doctors, nurse practitioners, home help services and libraries.

Panel – Our Thirty Year Journey

The Four U3A's which established the U3A Network Victoria 30 years ago

Introduction

U3A's are diverse – they reflect differences in their communities. The numbers of U3A's and U3a members are increasing and have been successful – very few have collapsed. Growing numbers are putting pressure on to do things more professionally. The 'Post Retirement Market' is growing and as are options available to older people.

The challenge is therefore for U3A is to remain relevant. We need to:

- Listen to members' suggestions for change and do something about them
- Involve younger members in decision making and increase their 'ownership'
- Keep doors open – not always 'we've always done it like this'.
- Be prepared for change to take time – e.g. 12 months – aiming for evolution, not revolution.
- Bear in mind that most join a class to begin, then gradually take up social activities.
- Monitor the churn of new members and ask 'why do they drop out'.

U3A Melbourne's Jill Thompson spoke of the way in which change has impacted upon their delivery of courses over time; U3A Ringwood's Natasha Timms spoke passionately about the friendship and connectedness and achieved by members over the 30 years; U3A Hawthorn's Meg Adams spoke of their journey and the challenging and ongoing quest for a 'home' – 'after 30 years we now have the accommodation we deserves'. The theme of the importance in having a 'home' came through in other stories of the early U3A's over time. Bill Burns, from U3A Waverley (Monash), spoke of their quest for suitable long term accommodation. Monash University was involved at the inception, with over 350 people attending the initial information/expression of interest meeting. Periods of accommodation stability then instability impacted over time, with locations changing across the drawing zone as 'changes in the needs of landlords led to adjustment and moves'. Finally in 2011 purpose built long term accommodation at the 'Batesford Hub' in Chadstone has led to stability – meeting needs of 600 members in 65 classes, with perhaps the only problem being when the lift isn't working.

The importance of adjusting to members needs was reflected in the panel discussion through mention of the need to adapt by offering of more short courses and one offs, not long term only, course delivery.

The panellists all mentioned 'ups and downs', especially in relation to accommodation, but exhibited through their talks evidence of robustness and resilience in the face of change which has allowed them to continue and thrive.

Dr Patricia Edgar: Author “In Praise of Ageing”

Dr Patricia Edgar – a lively 78 year old social researcher – began with anecdotes about older people, including herself, describing being perceived as ‘invisible’ and ‘not dangerous any more’. ‘Age seems to ambush us – it’s clear that we are treated differently’. Patricia described her own experience of being marginalised by doctors and suggested that ‘after 70 medical systems see us as expendable’; that at the same time older people are at the mercy of the health system in which ‘pharmaceutical mixes can be seen as symptoms of old age’

Patricia’s paper was thought provoking... from my notes

‘It is sad that we are being portrayed as a burden on society’

‘An economy is not a society...Somehow the idea about how a healthy community should function is being lost’

‘Economists and politicians are prosecuting a campaign which is engineering a wedge between old and young’

‘There is a backlash against ‘positive ageing’ by those who benefit from older people being seen as ‘frail, dependent and demented’.

Patricia spoke of ‘Definitions of ageing being ‘all over the place’. The attributes of being ‘too old’ e.g. frail and dependent are being conferred far too early – they are more likely after 85 than 65.

‘These images can become debilitating self-fulfilling prophecies’

Patricia stressed to the audience...

‘We are innovative, independent and best educated group of older people in human history!!!’

‘We are in an age of ‘creative transformation’

- Better educated
- Valuable work experience
- Wisdom
- Emotional Intelligence
- Housing security
- Accumulated wealth

‘Curiosity and Humour can take us a very long way’.

Common Assumptions... Myth 1 Older people are unproductive and a burden

- A lot of people want to keep working
- Workplace of future will require interpersonal skills, which older people have in abundance

Myth 2 Older people are/will break the health system

- Old age is not a disease
- Demographic aging is not the sole or main cause – population growth is a major contributor

Myth 3 We are told we don't look so good – and we believe it!

(NB: these myths were spelled out and dispelled more fully in the session and in her book)

“We don't have a champion in Federal Parliament. We are ignored and blamed. If we are recognised at all it's in relation to a story about a decrepit old age home or the person who grew the biggest pumpkin! However only 6% of older people are living in aged care.”

“Life is always about effort. It can be hard, we have to push ourselves, but it is up to us to develop a new approach to ageing. We need to exert our electoral power, to lobby as the Women's Electoral Lobby did many years ago. It's time for the 'EEL' or Elders Electoral Lobby. We need to be supported to stay at home, to have right to die issues addressed.”

“We need to prevent the 'wedging' of older vs younger people. We need to participate with young people in intergenerational ways, such as in Power Hour Projects (*I looked this up – possibly “Power Hour: Making Minutes Count is an interactive, after-school homework assistance program in US for children aged 6 to 18 years in high poverty areas. It encourages young people to view homework as an opportunity to learn to work independently, successfully complete projects on time and feel positive about their school accomplishments. Unlike assignments done in class, Power Hour work is conducted in a non-threatening and fun after-school environment using “Homework Helpers,” adults or older students who supervise completion of a Club member's homework.”*) We need a new, sustainable model for comprehensive exchange of experience between generations which is able to be replicated easily.”

“In conclusion - successful aging means we must accept the responsibility of looking after ourselves; of renewing ourselves – our attitude will make a difference.”

- *Hopefully these notes from Patricia Edgar's session capture the essence of her presentation – for greater depth consider purchasing her new book 'In Praise of Ageing'.*

Communities of Learning – The Vision

Professor Harry Ballis from Federation University began his session in a reflective way, drawing on stories of a female PhD student in her 70's he met doing his own PhD's and of older people he has met over many years as supervisor of PhD's and course adviser for people articulating into and studying at degree level while working initially at Monash Gippsland, and now for Federation University in Gippsland. He said that today older people doing PhD's are no longer exceptions, neither are TAFE graduates articulating in their third age into degree and Masters courses. He gave an example of Bill the commercial pilot who wanted to do a Masters in the Sociology of Religion. Bill was 'scared that if I stop studying I will cease learning'.

Harry spoke of the importance of 'communities of inclusion' and of the importance of including marginalised groups in universities. He spoke with passion about his quest for enabling access of local young people in the university in Gippsland, and the greater capacity to do this now as part of Federation University than previously with Monash, which applied university wide gatekeeping rules which restricted the capacity of local young people to be educated in Gippsland. He spoke of having

in the past to institute the Diploma of Foundation Studies to 'go around' gatekeeping policies of universities to promote inclusion of marginalised groups and of his continuing interest in expanding the capacity of older people to access university education through Federation University.

"Ordinary People are capable of extraordinary things if you give them the opportunity".

What are the next 30 years going to bring?

Harry suggested that continuing education will become more actively perceived as 'Human Right' – and spoke of education as 'a human right and the means to unlock and protect all other Human Rights'.

He said that there is a need to persuade people that no person is too old to learn new or old ideas; to know, to do, to live together and with others, to be self-aware, to take multiple pathways to life wide learning which is relevant and applied.

Harry included by expressing his enthusiasm for the positive role Federation University now plays as an open access, community focussed university which is inclusive, socially just and features ordinary people doing extra-ordinary things.

Communities of Learning – The Reality

Chair: Leon Piterman – Pro Vice Chancellor Monash University, Berwick and Peninsula campuses. A Panel with a 'Hypothetical'

Commencing by highlighting the Monash motto 'Ancora Imparo' (I am still learning), Professor Pitterman spoke of the way in which he is linking his continuing experience as a general practitioner, his academic work in Health and his interest as Pro Vice Chancellor at Monash in developing communities of learning around health issues in activities involving the Berwick and Peninsula campuses. He spoke of for many years calling on his older patients as 'clinical tutors', and of his more recent work on a project to prevent ageism in the Berwick and Peninsula communities through involving older and younger people with lectures and discussions on genome, obesity and dementia – noting the particular interest in these topics of Health and Human Development senior school students involved with the project.

Panel:

Professor Philip Taylor, of Federation University of Australia, a specialist in growing old in the workplace...spoke of the need to develop "solidarity between generations" – "the challenge for society is not to separate older people and younger people"; and asked 'How will U3A respond to people who want to develop new skills to keep working until 70 or longer?'

Emily Kalamaras, Sunraysia

Emily spoke of Sunraysia U3A's strong relationship with TAFE. They have a Memorandum of Understanding which is negotiated every four years. They are given low rent – for example \$5 an hour for the auditorium; with classrooms less than this or free; and do their own cleaning.

Janice Kelly, Banyule

Banyule U3A has an historical relationship with Latrobe University. Twenty nine years ago Lesley Claydon, who was an Associate Professor in the Education Department at Latrobe; arranged for our members to attend as audit students, with no tutorials, pracs or exams.

This was initially an informal agreement – now Banyule and Latrobe are into their third formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Reflected that universities are forever changing and it's possible to lose track of the person you negotiate with. "Hold on to people you can talk to".

The current person they liaise with in the Education faculty is 'in Educational Partnerships role'.

"We put ourselves up as research subjects for projects with older people."

"We need and maintain a presence in the University" - Janice taught a class on "Thinking Philosophically" – offered it as a study group at the university.

Jill McArthur, Bendigo

Bendigo U3A started off their adventure with Latrobe University as Bendigo TAFE 25, but 20 years ago, they were effectively asked to leave by a new hierarchy at Bendigo Latrobe. They recently received funding using 'Positive Ageing Funding' and will be looking towards new ways of being involved with the University.

Loretta Winstanley, U3A Geelong

Liaising with the Deakin University re auditing of courses.

Project involving leading edge speakers – trialled 6 speakers; formal Memorandum of Understanding with 6 speakers; now starting to move to going to Deakin for some lectures.

Question to Professor Harry Ballis re advice in negotiating with Universities–

Harry stressed "the importance of the Pharaoh's you meet along the journey – if the Pharaoh goes, the project can be turned on its head". He stressed the importance of documentation and establishing a Memorandum of Understanding. U3A's need to have involvement of a person of leadership and resolve agreements with a formal MOU. When there is a new person or 'Pharaoh', courting starts again. It is important to maintain regular contact. Keep in mind that events at universities can be timetabled when no one is there. Also remember that while risk management issues are large/must be considered, they are being resolved with schools; dialogue with U3A can resolve these."

Hypothetical – thought provoking and fun, but I didn't take notes! It was a great idea and would be a worthwhile exercise at, for example, a Meet and Mingle!

It's the Year 2040 – 23% of 30 million people, i.e. 6 million people, will be over 65. There will be a different group of older people with different life experience and needs, they won't be static. Universities will have to change as well to meeting the learning needs of older students. In 2040

U3A will have more political muscle – allowing greater possibilities to be negotiated for using Moodle online learning tools and community based auditing, etc. Then asked individuals on the panel to respond in relation to their U3A or university....

Day 2 – Tuesday 18th August

Network President Elsie Mutton welcomed participants back to Day 2, with reminders of key messages from Day 1 – the possibility that we may need to change the style of our U3A; that we need to ‘get our message out to the community’, and of Patricia Edgar’s reminder that ‘Life is here for living, regardless of age’.

The first speaker on ‘Tech Savvy Seniors’, Robert Morville, provided background to his role and the importance to him and to the role of encouraging digital connectedness. He explained that the mission for Telstra had the words ‘for everyone’ written in/ incorporated and that the Digital Inclusion team to which he is Technical Advisor works towards ensuring this.

Robert reflected on the ‘remarkable revolution now underway’

- Digital Watches have now been released – ‘The stuff of science fiction is now a reality’.
- He was able to watch his grandchild take first steps via Skype
- Six million years of video is created every month
- 14 million people visit Facebook; watch You-Tube each month.
- Thousands of different transactions (including bill paying, etc., etc.) are now on line.
- By 2017 most Government transactions are to be on line.
- Telstra is now investing heavily in next generation mobile technology.

Research evidence that while the Digital Divide is narrowing, however it seems to be deepening, has influenced in the launching of ‘Tech Savvy Seniors’ Partnerships. 7000 training places have been created across 40 libraries; also U3A’s, Neighbourhood Houses.

A simple and relevant approach is being used to try to encourage as many people as possible with training materials designed to achieve ‘digital engagement’. He spoke of the way in which the social isolation which increases with age for many can be reduced through Facebook, which makes it easier to keep up with family and friends; and the way in which the Tech Savvy Seniors project has introduced training materials to encourage this.

He also spoke of another project, the Lower Plenty Library project, which introduces tablets into nursing homes.

Robert also spoke about the special place seniors are in in terms of creating content. ‘A reservoir of stories – how can we share this with our children and grandchildren?’ He highlighted the potential of user participation and production by more tech savvy senior citizens.... Using digital technology to create knowledge and sharing this with others by producing in a digital world”.

Robert used a power point during his talk – hopefully this will, like other Power Points from the conference, become available on the U3A Network Victoria website.

Michelle Berner – from U3A Nunawading

Michelle's presentation at the 2015 Biennial Conference is available with narration as a YouTube video – [Michelle's Presentation at the Conference](#). Links are available for further resources at the end of this video.

A 'tech savvy' I-Pad user and I-Pad tutor at Nunawading U3A, Michelle has developed a wide range of materials which she is happy to provide links to – see for example Michelle's You Tube [resources for working with I-Pad users](#)

Michelle had two key messages for those approaching training and mentoring in U3A contexts;

1. Allow the person to focus on the one thing they really want to learn, to do, first – **'What do you want to do?'**, for example
 - a. Send an email
 - b. Read an e-book
 - c. Watch TV
 - d. Make a movie
 - e. Create a You Tube Account
 - f. Pay Bills on Line
 - g. Organise documents
 - h. Photos – various possibilities will come up here...
 - i. Set up a 'blog'
 - j. Write family story
 - k. Learn how to use Camera App – this may involve
 - i. Learning first – how to edit/enhance/organise/compress etc. then perhaps
 - ii. Sharing photos on Flickr.
2. **'Baby Steps'**
 - a. Start with 'Tech Savvy Seniors' resources
 - b. These come with training guides.
3. **'Best Friends'**
 - a. Train person to 'Google' and 'You Tube' in answering their learning questions.
 - b. Consider creating a You Tube account for Tech Savvy Seniors Group
 - c. iPad has a YouTube app

[Michelle's You Tube account for her Tech Savvy Seniors class is Nets@Life](#) – Michelle has uploaded hundreds of freely available training videos here.

Michelle's website - <http://technologyfueled.com> – is an excellent resource and has two freely learning guides for U3A members. Begin with the **IPad Quick Start Guide** – U3A members click a link to get a voucher to cover the cost of this course from udemy. This could then be used as a support resource for a class. Follow this with the **Becoming an IPad Power User** course (similar voucher available) – this helps people get past the baby steps.

Michelle's departing advice on the last red background slide 'Keep Calm and Practice'!

michele.berner@gmail.com

Rachel de Sain, Digital Strategist, provided a bigger picture update of the changing digital world.

Rachel described her role as a digital strategist 'to solve problems for clients delivering measurable improvements'.

Rachel reflected on changes over the two years since she spoke at the last U3A Network Vic conference –

- In 2015 the 'I watch' was launched and wearable devices becoming more common.
- In 2009, MOOC's were unavailable. By 2014 millions were taking part.
- Mobiles are being used in different ways.
- People 65+ demographic has shown a marked increase in use of social media.
- Blogging has become widespread – 1 in 4 Australians use WordPress.

"There is no sign of digital development and uptake slowing down! 89% of our population are using the internet."

However affordability is an issue, contributing to the Digital Divide. Rachel's statistics suggest we are the 49th worst in the world re affordability.

"It is now a Human Right to have the Internet".

Mobiles – now a 100% penetration rate (some people have 2 or 3); while the market is stagnating overall; in marketing and product development it is not just about having a mobile any more – it's about the many different ways they can be used. 'Triple Effect' – e.g. giving away with upgrades.

Social Media – Facebook is the most used. There is an increase in people creating their own content e.g. using YouTube. There is an increase in citizen journalism.

'[The Internet of Things](#)' – now a 'full eco system' is available. 'Digital tools **Talking to One Another**' – e.g. Big Belly Garbage Bins notify admin. Computer when full; Smart Sprinkler Controls, etc.'

'[The Sharing Economy](#)' where it's not so much about ownership of things as having trusted people we can share things with... "I do not need a drill. I need a hole in the wall". People can have 'multiple income streams' in the shared economy, may be a Uber driver three days a week, do something else on-line on other days, paid work others

'[Air Tasker](#)' – community market place - Refer to cofounder interview on Today Show - video clip at <https://vimeo.com/64124904> (also has an embed code)

'[Udemy](#)' – Anyone who has a talent can film teaching s skill they have – e.g. 'Photography Fundamentals'. Find out more: <https://www.udemy.com/the-fundamentals-of-photography/>

Responding to the fact that people learn in Different Ways ...

“MOOC’s” (we already have access to David Muir’s presentation from the Shepparton Digital Literacy Information Session)

- EG.... Melbourne University Mooc’s eg. ‘Generating the Wealth of Nations’

‘Flipped Classroom’ –

Flipped institute.org Video clip: <https://youtu.be/iQWvc6qhTds>

<https://youtu.be/WFOJSSWxK3s?list=PLB4C7262E8DBEF24D>

https://youtu.be/26pxh_qMppE?list=PLB4C7262E8DBEF24D

Blended or Hybrid Learning –course that blends on-line learning (30% - 79%) and face to face teaching. Some programs to support this:

‘**Scootle**’ - www.scootle.edu.au - only for school age education at present, but could be applied to U3A. ‘**Scootle** is a 'one stop shop' that provides teachers with access to more than 20,000 digital curriculum resources in the [National Digital Learning Resources Network](#) which is managed by Education Services Australia. Scootle provides easy ways for teachers to find, organise and use the digital resources.’

‘**Gooru**’ Learning – ‘personalized learning’... ‘Gooru's mission is to honor the human right to education. We envision a world in which technology and a supportive community empower every student to personalize his or her learning. Educators support individual students while contributing to a larger community.’

Rachel had an excellent power point which I hope will become available through U3A Network Victoria. Rachel’s firm – Flaxworks – aims to ‘lead by example and deliver by numbers’. Website: <http://flaxworks.com.au/>

Intergenerational Learning

Intergenerational learning was a theme of the conference, from references in a number of presentations to two final presentations which focused on this area in particular.

It seems that as well as bringing benefits to younger and older people involved, intergenerational learning can counter ageism and potentially counter the political wedging of older people vs young people spoken about by speakers.

Gerard Mansour showed the You Tube video on a project involving younger people working with older people to produce ‘You Tube’ videos for a competition - <https://youtu.be/bemDf6wuHJ0>.

Patricia Edgar made reference to ‘Power Hours’ ... “*Power Hour: Making Minutes Count is an interactive, after-school homework assistance program in US for children aged 6 to 18 years in high poverty areas. It encourages young people to view homework as an opportunity to learn to work independently, successfully complete projects on time and feel positive about their school accomplishments. Unlike assignments done in class, Power Hour work is conducted in a non-*

threatening and fun after-school environment using “Homework Helpers,” adults or older students who supervise completion of a Club member’s homework.”

Monash Pro Vice Chancellor Leon Piterman spoke of the way in which a lecture sequence for U3A members, Frankston College and John Paul College students in Frankston on genomes; and dementia were structured in such a way that groups of three (one from each organisation) discussed ‘further questions’ together, in a way which was successful and impacted on ageist attitudes.

In these three examples three possibilities for intergenerational learning were evident – older people mentoring young people in homework clubs; younger people mentoring older people in a ‘You Tube’ video making competition; and a learning organization offering a service which provided, in a structured way, discussion groups involving older and younger learners.

In the first presentation specifically focussed on intergenerational learning, we were privileged to hear two teachers, a volunteer, three students and an interpreter from Kolbe College speaking about their involvement in a program in which Mercy Connect coordinates volunteers to mentor refugee young people at the school, assisting them through the use of technology. Kolbe College is a ‘One to One Technology’ School. Up to year 9 each student has an iPad, the year 10+ students work in an Apple ‘Macintosh context’. The students who spoke to us, a year 12 girl and two year 7 boys, are refugees from Iraq who arrived in Australia and at the school at a time when no places were available in the English Language School programs, clearly had need for support. Volunteer retired teacher Frances explained how she heard through a church newsletter about the program, volunteered, was matched with her mentee Neema, and went on, with Neema by her side, to speak of the journey they have been through together. The books to be read for English – under the theme – Identity, presented an enormous challenge for Neema, and for Frances in working with her. Frances described the ‘lateral’ ways she had found to do so, often using technology (e.g. finding resources in Arabic which would set the context and using emails to keep in touch with Neema) and it was clear from Neema’s response to our group that she had been able to make amazing progress with Frances’s support over the past two or three years.

The second presentation specifically focussed on intergenerational learning was presented by Libby Wilson, the Intergenerational Coordinator at U3A Mornington, who spoke about the development of their partnership with Mornington Park Primary School. This partnership began almost ‘ecologically’ after the Primary School Principal at the time offered rooms for their U3A at the school. Children would drift into the groups such as the Singing Group, and beginning to support the students with the development of their basic literacy skills soon developed into a long lasting program which has yielded broader benefits to both students and U3A members. One of the clear thrills for Libby is the way in which parents, who very rarely presented at school events at this lower socio economic school, have over time become more engaged with their children’s learning and the school community. I will try to access Libby’s excellent power point, which discusses other projects/models of intergenerational learning U3A Mornington have become involved in over time. It was interesting to hear her say that in a project initially set up to get young people help older people use their Ipads (the idea behind a pending project for our U3A with the Flexible Learning Centre), the value was in the connectedness, as in reality most of the older people already knew as much if not more than the young people. Libby personified the value of actually having an

'Intergenerational Coordinator' to watch over the implementation and further development of intergenerational programs.

I was left thinking about these models and how we, informally through individual members if not through a formally developed program (though one has been in the offing), already work intergenerationally. I've done this to provide a clearer 'where are we now' picture in Benalla to provide a better basis to think about 'where do we want to be'.

'Intervention'	Conference E.g.	Example	Benalla	Example
Older people supporting learning of younger people in projects auspiced by NGO/faith based org.	Volunteering in projects funded by Boys & Girls Clubs of America	'Power Hour' Homework Clubs (USA)	Homework Club at Waminda/Salvation Army	Heather Sloan; Doreen Harrison,...others?
	Volunteering with refugee young people in projects set up by Mercy Connect.	Kolbe College program assisting refugee students to understand English and the wider school curriculum.	Tomorrow Today tutors	Refer Terry's message from Cathy Hair re Tutors
Older people supporting learning of younger people in school settings	U3A Mornington and Mornington Park Primary S.	Literacy program; other e.g. singing/choir; and more.	Flexible Learning Centre students Volunteer Program/s at Benalla P-12 various?	Heather Sloan
Younger people mentoring/supporting learning of older people	Gerard Mansour's referral to video at https://youtu.be/bemDf6wuHJO	'You Tube' seniors competition outcome.	Planned program with Flexible Learning Centre	In planning stages – to involve use of Ipads.
Educational learning partner setting up involvement of older and younger learners	Monash Frankston w local seniors group/s; schools	Series of lectures on health related topics with discussion groups of mixed older and younger learners.		