



UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE (UWA)

University of WA (M421)
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Dear Members

We are in strange and unusual times, I thought I would send you an updated letter to let you know what we have been doing in these difficult times so that you feel appraised of the things that council and myself are doing and decisions we are making in your best interests.

I have found it indeed difficult to have made some of the decisions we have had to make and indeed feel saddened that the wonderful programmes and events that your hard working committees have put together have had to be cancelled or postponed.

We are keeping abreast of the government directives to ensure we are complying with these and in some instances have gone beyond these to ensure the safety of our members. Unfortunately we have reached that time in our lives where we fall into the vulnerable group in terms of COVID-19. This nasty virus is very contagious and at this time there is no vaccine to prevent or lessen the effects on us. **Our best chance of surviving this is to keep away from it and not put ourselves at risk.** It is for this reason that we have cancelled all face to face meetings and events. U3A (UWA) has a duty of care to do all things possible to make sure our members are not put at risk.

Initially I thought we might be able to have some small groups meeting but seeing how rapidly this virus spreads and how quickly Western Australians are testing positive to COVID-19 I am saying do not have any face to face contact in this way. Community transmission is happening.

I know this is all new for us and we have not experienced anything like this in our lifetime, if you are feeling down or overwhelmed by all these changes and would like someone to talk to you can call the Lifeline Counselling line 24 hours a day everyday on 13 11 14 or you can chat on line at their website www.lifeline.org.au 7pm-12am AEST.

To bring you up to date with happenings

- Council has cancelled all city courses and is making a full refund to members booked on the courses even if the courses had commenced.
- The seminar has been cancelled by Council, Swan Hills who were organising it and felt they could no longer do this in these uncertain times, in any instance the Queens Building in the city where the seminar was to be held is not available due to the coronavirus. This is such a pity as Janice Brooks from Swan Hills had lined up some wonderful speakers for the seminar titled “The Universe – Local Wisdom”. She has been in touch with them all and providing the new date is suitable they have indicated they are willing to deliver their presentations in 2021. Thank you so much for all your hard work Janice.
- Regions have cancelled all their activities, most are reviewing these on a month by month basis. However with the directives from government and their advice around how long this is going to go on for, it will not be a short fix and they consider it could take six months.
- The choir and film groups have both suspended their face to face activities.
- Inform will be out at the end of April as is normal, some programs may change but it is unavoidable in these ever changing times.



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Currently Council is trialling a programme called Zoom to use for Council meetings and if these trials prove successful we will advise regions to use them for their executive meetings and in fact some clever people out there might think about putting together some presentations for members to participate in. Technology is an ever evolving platform and at this time we can look at innovative ways to take advantage of it.

I call on all regions to share what they are doing with other regions. However please do this in a formal way by getting your Secretary to email the General Secretary and ask her to forward to other secretaries. Christine does a wonderful job but at this time her email box is fuller than it ever has been so we want to limit the number of emails she has to deal with.

I am deeply concerned that many of our members will not have any contact with their fellow U3A members and for this reason encourage regions to come up with informal and more formal ways for members to keep in touch in this virtual world. One of the Swan Hills members decided on the spur of the moment to email those members she had email addresses for and tell them about how she spent her first non meeting day. Her email was rather inane and frivolous but members responded by emailing back with the things they had been up to. It is these informal acts that keep us in touch with each other.

Pick up the phone and call a member, I have seen talk of RUOK calls and that is wonderful and something more formal regions can do, Mid-North and North Coast are doing this, ask them how. But we can also just call a member ad hoc off our own bat and have a chat about what we have been doing. Lets all remember back in the olden days when we would pick up our pen and write someone a letter, wouldn't you like to walk out to check the letter box and find a note rather than a bill. Small things make a big difference.

Of course for some of us (not me yet) this extra time off might encourage us to do some of the jobs around home we have been putting off. I was thinking of cleaning out the cupboards and getting rid of some of my old clothes in the wardrobe I am sure the charities could put them to good use. How is your garden looking, as we are now in autumn there are a lot of jobs in the garden to do. How about growing some vegies or herbs or even a nice pot of colour to brighten up our day. Shame we cant grow loo paper although I'm told some leaves can do the job, I'll let you try and tell me how it went.

We haven't forgotten those without email - a hard copy will be posted our to all members, Please stay healthy and safe and keep in touch with each other.

With very best wishes

Denise Beer

President U3A (UWA)