

April 2025 Newsletter

From the President

Canterbury U3A Network

Last month, I attended a meeting of the Canterbury U3A Network at the Fendalton Library. The main purpose of the Network is to share ideas between U3A groups, and to provide information on potential speakers to other groups. Every U3A group represented at the meeting spoke on how they operate. Some have quite draconian rules about members who attend irregularly, or fail to pay their subscription on time. For example, several U3A groups monitor attendance at meetings and if a member does not attend, say, at least seven times in a year, they receive a friendly letter inquiring about their intentions. We have no intention of adopting such a policy at present.

The following points were noted from the meeting:

- U3A branch membership in Canterbury ranges from 60 to 300 members.
- Annual subscriptions mostly ranged from \$25 to \$50, although one U3A, which provides seven 5-week series during the year charges \$110. Another U3A also offers 7 series of 5 talks each year. Their subscription is \$25, with an extra \$25 to attend a series.
- The majority of U3As meet in churches; one city church hosts several U3As.
- Most U3As have spaces for new members, but several are like us with a cap on membership.
- Most U3As operate similarly to us, with speakers on different topics each month. Quite a few offer lecture series, such as a group of five talks then a one-week break before the next.
- One U3A has chosen to have no president; instead, its committee shares the responsibilities.
- U3A Pegasus has 18 interest groups, of which 5 are social.

At the meeting I also heard several positive ideas that we could consider, for example:

- Providing a morning (or afternoon) tea from time to time, for new members to meet the committee.
- At one U3A, 66% wore hearing aids, so a tip-sheet for speakers is provided in advance to ensure that everyone can hear their presentation. This is a good idea for us, given the reluctance of one recent speaker to use a microphone. This sheet could also encourage the speaker to use larger font type in PowerPoint presentations, making them clearer to people seated near the back.
- One U3A records talks on video so that members who were absent can view it on YouTube.
- Another U3A is running a trial to subsidise interest groups, only requiring receipts as evidence that the grant has been used appropriately.

Unpaid annual subscriptions

Neal has informed the committee that there are still 26 members who have yet to pay their subscription for 2025. If you are on this list, you will receive an email soon regarding this. We have decided on this step in fairness to people who are keen to join us, and are now on our waiting list.

Our April speaker

Des Lines spoke about his experiences as a pilot, from a tiny single-seater Auster to the mighty Boeing 747-400. He provided a unique opportunity for us to see behind the scenes from a pilot's perspective, hear about challenges that they face in the job, and how they deal with them. Since retiring Des has continued to give his time freely to mentor prospective aviators, and has hosted over 3,000 school children at his hangar at Swannanoa .

Our upcoming speakers

Wednesday 28th May

Alex Tan is Professor of Politics and International Relations at University of Canterbury. His topic will be "Donald Trump - America First or America Alone?"

Professor Tan is also Honorary Professor (NZDF Command and Staff College), Associate Director (NZ Contemporary China Research Centre), Fellow (John G. Tower Center for Political Studies, USA), adjunct University Chair Professor of Political Science (National Chengchi University, Taiwan). He writes extensively in the areas of parties & elections, political economy, Taiwan and Asian politics, and international relations of the Asia-Pacific.

Wednesday 25th June

Sarah Anderson, Coordinator of the Te Ahu Pātiki Charitable Trust will speak about conservation in action on Te Pataka o Rakaihautū / Banks Peninsula.

Te Ahu Pātiki Charitable Trust is the guardian of Te Ahu Pātiki, 500 hectares of whenua on Te Pataka o Rakaihautū Banks Peninsula. Te Ahu Pātiki is a newly created public conservation estate in the heart of Whakaraupō Lyttelton Harbour. It includes the summits of Mt Herbert Te Ahu Patiki and Mt Bradley, the two highest peaks in the wider Ōtautahi Christchurch area. The whenua is protected by a QE11 Covenant and its track network is gazetted with Herenga ā Nuku as part of the Te Ara Pātaka track network.

Note the change to meeting date:

Our July meeting will be held on the 5th Wednesday (ie, 30th July), not the 23rd July.

Interest Group update

The Movie Group is looking for a new convenor. There is also space for more members. The group currently meets on the second Tuesday of the month. There is the option to meet for coffee after the chosen movie.

A new convenor could continue the Tuesday group, or choose another day. This may encourage more members to join, as many of the U3A interest groups meet on a Tuesday.

If you are interested in either convening, or joining this group, or would like more information, please email me at wattle@xtra.co.nz

Lyn Minchington

Interest Groups Co-Ordinator

The Last Word(s)

Promoting longevity

"If you are 70-80 years old and can still do eight things, you are a rare gem, destined to live to 100."

Recently, I came across this title of a 14-minute YouTube video clip. The checklist of 8 topics and the YouTube link are below.

1. Strive to maintain physical strength and mobility
2. Keep a sharp and active mind*
3. Stay socially active and engaged*
4. Manage stress and maintain emotional balance
5. Continue learning and adapting to new things*
6. Maintain independence in daily living
7. Enjoy a healthy and balanced diet
8. Have a strong sense of purpose or passion

* Belonging to U3A or a similar group can promote these.

The link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EN9oG19ysyU>

To test yourself on topic 2, here is a puzzle to try.

Can you divide this figure into four parts that are of equal size and shape? The solution will be in next month's newsletter. Sorry, no prizes, just the satisfaction of success.

