

President Welcome to 2022

A special welcome to all of our new members who have enrolled in U3A Healesville and also a warm welcome back to those members who are re-enrolling. I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible during the course of 2022, especially our new members. The Course Coordinator, George Doig, has put together an interesting and wide-ranging set of courses for 2022 and I am sure you will find something in this handbook that will interest you. I also encourage you to make the most of your membership by enrolling in as many courses as you can reasonably manage. One of the joys of belonging to U3A Healesville is meeting people and by enrolling in a variety of classes you will inevitably meet many more members. Our Course Leaders do a wonderful job and enjoy sharing their interests and passions with you. We also offer a number of social opportunities so that members get to know others outside your courses.

Despite the lockdowns of 2021 many of our courses continued throughout by one means or another and for that I am grateful to those course leaders who showed creativity and energy in finding ways to keep in touch with their members. Once we were able to gather again in face to face activities, the laughter and fun were palpable.

It is pleasing that our membership increased during 2021 to 259 members, our largest ever, and although four courses will no longer run in 2022, we have added eight new courses. So, the choice has increased. I encourage you to check our website (www.healesvilleu3a.org.au) for the most up to date information about courses and activities. Bob Willis has done a great deal of work in maintaining the website as well as managing 'UMAS for Members' which allows the website to be readily accessed on a smart phone. UMAS allows portability and uses large icons on the homepage for accessing information.

Your committee has worked hard to ensure that we commence 2022 on 31 January and I want to thank Barbara Woods (Vice President and Membership Officer), Rebecca Doig (Secretary), Bill Woods (Treasurer), George Doig (Course Coordinator), Wendy Veitch (Safety Officer and Courthouse Hire), Carol Taylor (Communications and Marketing) and Bob Willis (Website and Data Base Manager) for all that they have done to get us to this point of ensuring a smooth and Covid-Safe commencement to the year.

I cannot emphasise enough that the health and well-being of each and every member is paramount, and so being fully vaccinated, as defined by the Department of Health, is a prerequisite for belonging to a class/activity that is delivered face-to-face. Social distancing during courses, sanitising as we enter buildings, using the QR code or maintaining a Covid-safe register of attendance and deep cleaning after classes will continue to be a necessary part of how we operate. While mask wearing is not mandatory at this stage, I do encourage you to wear a mask, especially when indoors. The Chief Health Officer constantly reminds us that it is one of the most important things we can do to keep Covid at bay.

A feature of U3A Healesville is our sense of community. We live in a wonderful part of Victoria; we are a fortunate community. Enjoy each other's company in 2022 and may we grow together through our learning.

John Pascoe