

## **President's Report to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting**

I must express my thanks and gratitude to all who have assisted in the smooth running of our Society over this year. We have been very fortunate with the calibre of our committee who have worked so well together.

Carole Misra was elected Secretary at the AGM but unfortunately resigned in December for family reasons. Fortunately, Vivianne Child volunteered to fill this role. There was no Treasurer nominated at the AGM so the President continued to do the Treasurers job, until Miles Shephard joined the committee as Treasurer in February. We are very grateful to Vivianne and Miles.

### **Acknowledgements:**

There are many members to acknowledge and thank for their major contributions. The following list is probably incomplete and the thanks, inadequate. But, thank you.

1. The Committee – Secretary, Vivianne Child, Membership Coordinator, Jocelyn Goodman, Groups Coordinator, Margaret Davidson, Database Coordinator, Agi Ryan, Treasurer, Miles Shephard, U3A Network Representative, Shirley Grayson, Newsletter Editor, Lesley Elia, Speakers Coordinator, Chris Hawley, Greeters and Mini Speakers Organiser, Rose Tait, Chair of the Publicity and Growth Committee, Judi Higginson, Member at Large, Judith Stewart and Immediate Past Presidents, Maureen Putt and Gay Williams.
2. Members outside the committee assisting with hospitality, Barbara Langguth, Honor Houldsworth and Gill Naden. They provide morning tea at our monthly meetings and organised catering for the end of year function after the AGM, the convenors breakfast and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in August.
3. The Audio visual/tech team headed by Chris Dee. Chris has worked on many aspects of AV this year, liaising with St Chads about the new system and supporting Gay Williams' Winter Series.
4. Allan Davidson for the meeting slides.
5. The team maintaining the old website and developing the new website, Chris Dee, Terry Lord and Paul Cleary. They have worked through many challenges and as a result, the new website should be ready for use early next year. Thank you.
6. Archivist Gay Williams.
7. Ev McGowan who organised the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.
8. Convenors and Co-convenors of interest groups, some of whom have been Convenors for many years. Particular thanks to Yvonne Kennedy, convenor of History.
9. The speakers committee for organising the speakers for the year.
10. Gay Williams for preparing and presenting the Winter Series.

Thank you all for your hard work and dedication. Apologies to anyone who has been left off these acknowledgements, I assure you it is accidental.

### **Membership/Interest Groups:**

We began the year with 225 members and at the time of writing this report, membership stood at 244, although a number of resignations must be expected before the end of the year.

Several of our long-standing members have died or resigned this year, among whom must be mentioned Wally Hirsh, Beverly Hannah, Vivienne Wilson, Tony Hill, Lois Hill, John Fleming and Kim Heppner. We are sorry to lose any members; we miss those who have resigned and sympathise with the families of those who have died.

At the beginning of the year, we had 28 interest groups. This number fell to 26 by midyear, but recovered to 29 by year end, thanks to the formation of new groups, Art History, Foodies and Bridge for Beginners. Functioning interest groups are vital to our success and even to our survival. As older groups close it is necessary that new groups are started and that there is a wide range of interest groups with vacancies to attract new members. Consideration could perhaps be given to opening up vacancies for new members in well-established groups and it would be good if more new groups could be formed.

Even to maintain our numbers, we need to attract at least 20 new members each year. The committee is of the opinion that our numbers should be somewhat higher, and a new sub-committee has been formed to look at attracting new members, concentrating initially on publicity but thinking also on other aspects of the organisation, members have been Judith Stewart, Judi Higginson, Shirley Grayson, Margaret Davidson, Jocelyn Goodman and Miles Shephard. New posters have been created, advertising the monthly meetings and posted in various locations, an online presence has been created on Neighbourly and Facebook and a new members event was held. This committee will continue work next year.

### **Meetings:**

Our monthly meetings are reasonably attended but we certainly have room for more members to attend. The speakers are interesting, the company excellent, and the morning tea free. It would be good to see more members at these meetings. There will always be debate over the viability of the January meeting and at the January meeting this year attendance was less than 80.

### **Mini Speakers**

Each meeting except for the AGM includes Mini Speakers before morning tea. These include interest group speakers as well as outside speakers

During last year these have included speakers from our interest groups:

Dollars and Sense, Mid Walkers, Jazz, Time Poor Walkers, Modern American Literature, History, New Zealand History, Literature, and Short Walks.

Jeanette de Heer gave an illustrated survey of her overseas travels in 1961 and 1962.

In addition, we have had presentations from proposed new interest groups and Terry Lord demonstrating online renewals and outside speakers:

David Thomson, President of Auckland U3A Network : How it all began,

Madelaine Ball from Digital Seniors, and

Rachel Hopkins from Less is More: Downsizing and Decluttering

In August instead of mini speakers we had our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. A dozen foundation members sat on the stage and most spoke, giving us fascinating insights into our early days. When they reassembled on solid ground, candles were lit, the celebration cake cut and words by Allan Davidson sung to the tune of Happy Birthday. Out in the foyer,

which was beautifully decorated by the hospitality team, the tables were covered by cakes baked by the committee. Thanks to Ev McGowan, Vivianne Child, Gill Naden and Barbara Langguth.

#### Main Speakers:

As always, we have had mostly excellent speakers. Many members find that sometimes they are not particularly looking forward to a topic only to be surprised and pleased to have listened to an amazing presentation. This would apply to many other members, who do not come to meetings, but would almost certainly enjoy them if they did attend.

Main Speakers included:

James Duncan: Infant Sparks, the beginnings and early years of the Auckland Tram network. This talk was particularly enjoyed by a disappointingly small audience, who were however the so enthusiastic that James will be giving us part two after our AGM.

Jacky McLaren: talked about her work with the Penan people of Borneo, now semi nomadic and struggling to maintain their life in contact with the modern world. She illustrated her talk with a Penan blow pipe, projectile puffed perilously proximate to participants.

Nigel Pounds: talked to us about the origins and history of the Red Cross.

Laurence Melton: Feeding the World, Professor Melton looked at various diets and their climate and land use footprints and nutrition and examined alternative sources of food.

Peter Lester: The Americas Cup. Peter gave us a behind the scenes discussion of the last Americas Cup in Barcelona. A fluent and fascinating talk. Sadly, Peter died not long after this talk.

Esther Haver: Thinking Hats and Restorative Justice. Esther told us about her experiences in prison – working on thinking with inmates – and in restorative justice. A thought provoking and insightful talk.

Tessa Duder: Sarah Matthews, Sarah was the wife of Felton Matthews, first Government surveyor, and was a prodigious diarist, covering Auckland's founding and first years.

Wendy Hampton: Leave a legacy, not a mess, however much it was promoting her estate planning books, Wendy's amusing and comprehensive talk was appreciated and enjoyed by her audience. She probably sold a lot of books too.

Craig Radford: The Reef Whisperer, One of those talks about which you say later, I had no idea. Craig debunked the idea of the silent world, showing us how important underwater sound is and how much sound there is. Fascinating and informative.

Barrie Brown: talked about the work of the NEXT foundation and the generosity of its founding donors, in particular the conversion of Rotoroa Island to wildlife sanctuary and the work of ZIP (zero invasive predators) in South Westland. At the end, we all felt better.

#### **Important developments and events:**

The new website has been under development since last year, first by our website hosting company and then by Chris Dee, Terry Lord and Paul Cleary. The story of how they came to be doing the work is a fascinating one, which I am sure they will be willing to share with you. The website is projected to be live early next year.

We celebrated our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in August (see report above).

We restarted our Winter Series this year with three sessions on Artificial Intelligence given on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> by Gay Williams. Chris Dee helped with AV and the committee provided afternoon tea. This came about because the committee was discussing the possibility of a winter series in 2026, and Gay offered to give the series for 2025.

The series was well attended and a great success. To say we are grateful to Gay, is of course an understatement. She is chairing a committee which will organise a series of talks to take place next year.

The committee offered life membership to Gay Williams, who is our latest life member. The passing of the Societies Act 2022 required all incorporated societies to re-register with the Registrar of Societies or risk de-registration. As part of re-registration, the constitution required updating to ensure compliance with the Act. This has been done, and the updated constitution will be sent to members with this report. It must be approved by members at the AGM.

The publicity and membership committee has been formed and commenced operation (see report above).

#### Re-registration as Incorporated Society

After agreeing to reregister and voting to approve the revised constitution at this meeting, (see AGM agenda and constitution sent with this report), and electing the officers (committee) the next steps will be to file the financial statement and then apply to reregister, by completing an online application, including the constitution, contact details and details of the committee members. This should be completed by the end of the year.

#### **Social events**

A morning get together of convenors and co-convenors was held before the March meeting. The purpose of this event was to both thank Convenors for their contribution to the success of our society, and to canvas them about some possible changes.

New members were invited to a wine and cheese function at the home of Shirley Grayson in August. This was better attended than last years afternoon tea for new members.

There is an end of year function held at the conclusion of every November meeting and AGM. This year will be no exception.

#### **General remarks**

To keep an organisation such as ours going requires a lot of work, most of which is unseen and un-thanked. I am very grateful to all those who contribute to the smooth running of U3A Meadowbank. Most I have acknowledged, some I have forgotten, and all deserve more thanks than I have given.

The organisation also requires constant renewal. When interest groups close, new ones must open, when members resign, new members must join. We have also to keep up with technology, for publicity, communication and the sharing of ideas and opinions. Putting application forms online is an idea I have put forward, perhaps this will happen next year.

The end of 2025 finds U3A Meadowbank in good heart, with lively, intelligent members, good organisation and an excellent committee. In conclusion I would like to thank you, the members, for your support and encouragement, which even extends to laughing at my jokes. We can look forward confidently to a successful year in 2026.

John Goodman  
President.