



Meadowbank

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NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER / WHIRINGA-Ā-RANGI 2025

Greetings from the President

Life is just one thing after another. No sooner has the excitement of membership renewals died down than the AGM is nearly upon us. If you haven't renewed your subscription for the new year, please do so, and in November, do remember to attend the monthly meeting...

The drama of the Annual General Meeting, reports, votes and bitterly contested elections, the excitement of the second instalment of the story of Auckland's trams, and, if that wasn't enough, the treat which is the end of year function. What more could anyone want? Seriously though, it will be good!

It was very busy before the October meeting with a long queue of people wishing to press cash on Miles the Treasurer and give their renewal forms to Agi, the head of Database. Miles and Agi dealt very efficiently with the rush, and the amount of cash collected, stuffed into a paper bag and banked, seemed to match the amount expected from the number of people who had paid. It is always pleasing when this happens, and, I believe, helps to keep the auditors happy.

Before morning tea, instead of the usual interest group presentations, we heard from Rachel Hopkins from Less is More, Auckland. Her topic was not on the history and philosophical and artistic implications of this phrase, but rather, on Downsizing and Decluttering. Unfortunately, after her fluent, interesting and informative talk, my mind must have been Downsized because I completely forgot to ask Rachel if she was happy to take questions before thanking her and breaking for morning tea. It was just after twenty minutes past ten, so we had a very leisurely break, with lots of time for coffee and conversation. I take full responsibility for this error and in future I will write "Questions" in Large Letters on my morning crib sheet. There may be important information about Decluttering and Downsizing which now you will never possess, and we all know Who is to Blame!

After morning tea, we heard from our main speaker, Barrie Brown, from the NEXT Foundation. Barrie started by telling us about the conversion of Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf to a wildlife sanctuary and education centre, planting 400,000 native plants and working with Auckland Zoo to raise birds such as kiwi and takahe. We learned how much mulch 30,000 pine trees produce and saw the award winning visitors centre.

Later, he told us about the ZIP Project (Zero Invasive Predators) operations in South Westland (fortunately we are not classed as predators, but rabbits and hares are, which seems a bit unfair). Using poison drops and trapping, an area of 107,000 hectares initially has been cleared of possums, stoats and rats and that area will be kept pest free while the project is extended to a wider area. Technology is utilised as much as possible, using AI cameras and semi-intelligent traps which need less human attention. This process can be partly self-funding using carbon credits which can be obtained by measuring the increase in the take up of CO2 by pest free forests.

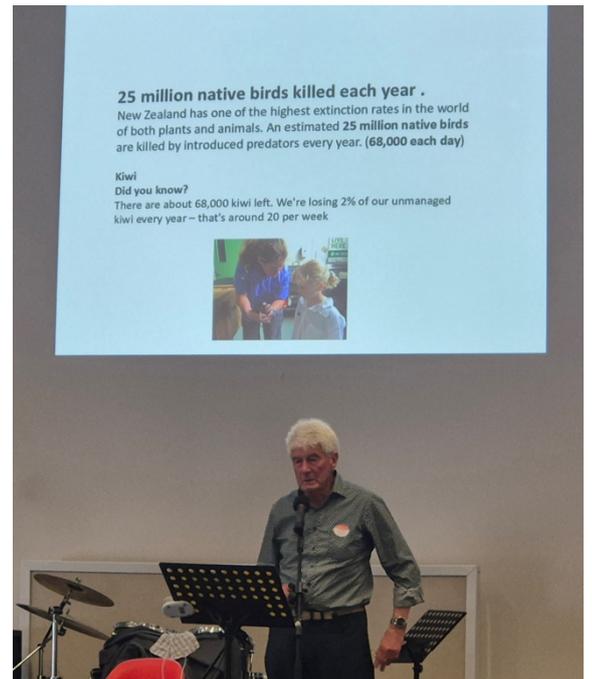
We have room for more members at these meetings. The quality of our speakers is uniformly high and the talks often genuinely fascinating. Try coming to a meeting even if you don't think you are interested in the topic, you will almost certainly be pleasantly surprised.

John Goodman

October Meeting



Mini speaker Rachel Hopkins and (right) with her business partner



Our main speaker, Barrie Brown from the NEXT Foundation

Committee News



The Publicity Committee hard at work

Who's Who for **Monday 17 NOVEMBER 2025** meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Poetry

AGM

Guest Speaker: James Duncan

Topic: Part 2 of the story behind Auckland's much loved electric trams **ALWAYS A TRAM IN SIGHT**



James Duncan

James grew up in Auckland during the 1960s and 1970s when Auckland was served by a large and extensive electric trolley bus system.

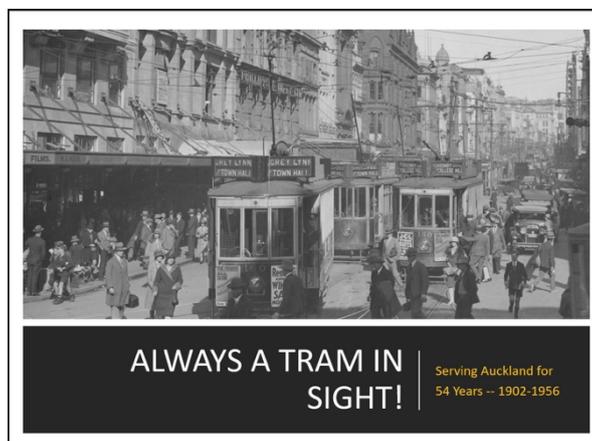
At age 15, he joined the Tramway Division at MOTAT and has now been an active volunteer member of the tramway for 48 years.

Most of his working life was spent in retail, but in 2011 he was asked to take on managing the operation of the new tramway down in Wynyard Quarter.

Today, he is busy with this role and a full-time position at MOTAT looking after the infrastructure for the MOTAT Tramway.

In January, he shared part 1 of his talk with us. This month he returns to share part 2, told through a selection of historic images covering the glory years, then their fall from grace. The programme includes a ten minute video,

taking us through the declining years of the trams – these are the years that many of us will remember.



Who's Who for **Monday 19 JANUARY 2026** meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.

Greeters: Books & Authors

Mini Speakers: Art History and Jazz

Guest Speakers: Drs Fahima and Arif Saied, New Settlers, Family and Community Trust (NFACT): Refugee Support

New Members

Five new members this month: Bravo to our membership committee!

**A big welcome to our new members: Alex Smith, Mary and Chris Baylis,
Melanie Chitham and Annemarie Thompson**

Best wishes for many enjoyable experiences at U3A Meadowbank!

U3A Notice

U3A Meadowbank Incorporated.

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Notice is hereby given that the 25th Annual General Meeting of the Society is to be held on Monday, 17 November 2025, at St Chad's, Meadowbank, at 10am

Order of Business

- To approve the minutes of the 24th Annual General Meeting, held on 18th November 2024 at St Chad's, Meadowbank.
- To receive and approve the President's Annual Report.
- To receive and approve the Treasurer's Report and reviewed annual accounts for the year ending 30th September 2025.
- To approve a reviewer for the 2026 annual accounts
- To elect the Officers and Committee for 2026.
- To approve the recommendation to re-register as an Incorporated Society
- To approve the revised Constitution
- General Business

The official Agenda, Minutes, Reports and Constitution to follow.

Group News

Foodie group répas



In September our Foodie group focused on Iranian cooking. For this occasion we cooked and tasted Ghormeh Sabzi (herbs and beef/lamb) often regarded as the national dish of Iran, Khoresh Fesenjān (Pomegranate & Walnut Chicken koresh (stew)) and Chicken and Pistachio Koresh all served with saffron rice and Maast-o Khair (Yoghurt cucumber), ending our meal with Baghlava cake. As we tasted and talked we shared the background of this food, some of the more unusual ingredients, some of which we could not locate eg dried limes and the various books we had read to acquire the recipes utilised. Jocelyn Goodman shared with us her photos taken in a recent visit to Iran, all of which added to our enjoyment of the occasion.

Book Review

"CULPABILITY" , by Bruce Holsinger 2025

What a surprise I got when reading this novel - the first with Artificial Intelligence (AI) experiences throughout.

The story starts off with a family of five going on holiday together. They are driving in a self-driving car. The son aged eighteen is behind the wheel with his father working beside him.

The son is texting, gets distracted, grabs the wheel as he sees an oncoming car he thinks could cross over the midline, and crashes into the oncoming car. The couple in the car are killed- is the fault that of the self-driving mechanism or the son?

A digital forensic company examines the evidence. One of the daughters sitting in the back seat is hurt in the accident, and hospitalised, developing a friendship in hospital with an AI chatbot.

When the family arrive at their holiday destination the house uses 'Calandra' a AI voice assistant that controls the house temperature, the blinds etc.

The son develops a relationship with the girl next door who is an experienced sailor. While out together in a storm they go missing. Drones are sent searching using AI sensors. The son is found, the girl goes missing but is found using AI sensors.

The father regrets his hiring of the self-driving car, working while his son is driving, living in the house with AI voice assistants , and giving his children smart phones, and that's not all....
A fascinating story.

"CARELESS PEOPLE - A STORY OF WHERE I USED TO WORK. POWER, GREED, MADNESS" By Sarah Wynn- Williams 2025.

Building on AI, this memoir is written by a NZ diplomat who pitches for her dream job working for Facebook 'Meta'. A candid front row seat to the decisions that have shaped world events. How the promise of Facebook when Sarah first joined the company in 2011 aiming to connect everyone in the world and changing the world for the better, changed to become a corrupt organisation that has mislead world leaders through power and greed.

Sarah outlines how the leaders in the company (particularly Mark Zuckerberg, Joel Kaplan and Sheryl Sandberg) could have made different choices in links with China, Myanmar and the Rohingya, influencing USA elections, dealing with hate speech, and protecting vulnerable teens.

She was fired in 2017, and Facebook has tried to stop the publication of the book,
Another fascinating read.

Gay Williams

Speakers in 2025

We have been privileged to hear from a diverse group of speakers at our meetings this year.



James Duncan: Tramway Project Manager, MOTAT January & November

Jackie McLaren: The Penan, A Tribe in Transition. February



Nigel Pounds: The Past, Present and Future of the NZ Red Cross. March

Emeritus Professor Laurence Melton: Ways to feed the world and its growing population and the challenge of climate change. April



Peter Lester: The America's Cup. May

Ester Haver: Restorative Justice. June

Tessa Duder, Author: Who was Sarah Mathew and why is she important in Auckland's history. July





Wendy Hampton, lawyer and author: Estate Planning: August

**Dr Craig Radford, Professor of Marine Science, University of Auckland
Topic: The Reef Whisperer: Researching and Understanding through microphones; the life of the Hauraki Gulf. September**



Barrie Brown: Generous Philanthropy – Helping restore NZ Wildlife (especially on Rotoroa Island in the Hauraki Gulf. October

A huge vote of thanks to our Main Speakers committee, Chris Hawley, Maureen Putt, David Morris, Shirley Grayson and David Arrowsmith, for all the work they put into selecting and organising the speakers for our meetings. If you would like to provide feedback to them, please do so at meetings or through the newsletter email: u3ameadnews@gmail.com

Are you interested in what other U3As are up to?

- 1. Visit u3a.nz**
- 2. Click on “Find a u3a”**
- 3. Follow the prompts to locate a u3a**
- 4. Click on the name that appears on the map and if that group has a website simply click on it.**
- 5. A great variety of information will be available to you, including newsletters, activities and much more.**

Events in Auckland

ASB Waterfront Theatre



- [What's On](#)
- [ASB Waterfront Theatre](#)

Auckland Theatre Company presents

Tiri: Te Araroa Woman Far Walking

by Witi Ihimaera Additional writing by Maioha Allen & Katie Wolfe

“For as long as Māori and Pākehā have shared Aotearoa, Tiri has walked with us all.”

4 – 23 Nov 2025

Theatre Lovers – A feast for you! November and December at the Theatre

FIZZ: LIVE COMEDY! (The Mischief Company)

Think "Whose Line Is It Anyway?" — but live, local, and bursting with mischief. A hilarious night of improvised madness, fuelled by your wild suggestions. Expect lightning-fast games, over-the-top characters, local gossip spun into global tales, and pure chaotic joy. You don't have to take the stage — we've got that covered. Just sit back and enjoy stories told with humour, heart and a healthy dose of absurdity. Recommended for ages 14+.

31st October, Christmas show on 14th November 2025 at The Vic, Devonport

Tickets from <https://www.thevic.co.nz/movie/fizz---effervescent-improv-comedy>

THE PINK HAMMER (Phoenix Theatre)

A hilarious Kiwi comedy that truly nails it, where laughter meets power tools in Takapuna. Four women sign up for a cosy ladies-only carpentry class, only to be met by Woody, a grumpy, nearlwy single builder who would rather work alone. Undeterred, they charm their way into the workshop, sparking a whirlwind of handsaw mishaps, baking disasters and razor-sharp banter.

Thu 30th October 2025 to Sat 8th November 2025 at The PumpHouse Theatre, Takapuna

Tickets from <https://pumphouse.co.nz/whats-on/show/pink-hammer/>

LIFE ON A LOOP (Peach Theatre Company)

For Grace, Christmas Day is just like any other - filled with the same songs and stories playing on a relentless loop, echoing the rhythms of the dementia and elderly residents she cares for. After thirty years in a rest home, the repetition can wear her down, but Grace still turns up with spark, energy, and a glint in her eye. In Life on a Loop, Ellie Smith's vibrant one-woman show, we meet this exhausted but fiercely likeable carer who finds joy, absurdity, and real connection in the monotony. With cracking humour, this show is a deeply moving and refreshingly honest look at the toll of caregiving, and the unexpected beauty found in life on repeat.

Tue 11th November to Sun 16th November 2025 at Q Theatre, Auckland City

Tickets from <https://www.qtheatre.co.nz/shows/life-on-a-loop>

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST (Titirangi Theatre)

Wit, romance and cucumber sandwiches collide at Titirangi Theatre this November in Oscar Wilde's most brilliant comedy, The Importance of Being Earnest. When two young men invent alter egos to escape social obligations, their tangled lies spark a whirlwind of mistaken identities, sharp humour and sparkling satire. Indulge in Wilde's sumptuous Victorian classic, brimming with charm, laughter and delicious absurdity.

Tue 18th November to Sat 29th November 2025 at Titirangi Theatre, Titirangi

Tickets from <https://titirangitheatre.co.nz>

LITTLE WOMEN (Foolish Wit Theatre)

Kate Hamill's adaptation of Louisa M Alcott's timeless classic Little Woman views the story of the March Sisters through a different lens. Jo tells Beth a 'real story' which unfolds on the stage as it plays out in Jo's imagination. It is a story of four sisters dealing with the struggles of growing up and their different ambitions against the background of a war that they see serves no purpose but to deprive them of their Father. This fresh take on a coming of age story has more laughs, fewer tears and an unruly parrot to add to the fun.

Wed 19th November to Sun 23rd November 2025 at The PumpHouse Theatre, Takapuna

Tickets from <https://pumphouse.co.nz/whats-on/show/little-women/>

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (The Dolphin Theatre)

Christmas Eve, 1946, Bedford Falls. Down-on-his-luck banker George Bailey feels life has passed him by, and he's at the end of his rope. But when George's guardian angel pays him a visit, he's amazed to discover what life in his beloved town would be like without him. Maybe it's a wonderful life, after all? Based on the critically acclaimed Frank Capra movie, Mary Elliott Nelson's reimagining is a joyful story of love, hope and community.

Fri 21st November to Sat 6th December 2025 at The Dolphin Theatre, Onehunga

Tickets from <https://nz.patronbase.com/DolphinTheatre/Productions/2506/Performances>

H.R. THE MUSICAL #2 (Artsense Productions)

Dick and his band of generic employees are back, and things just got personnel. It's time to restructure - ahem, again - with a completely new show of riotous musical sketch-comedy from the team that brought you the runaway 2024 hit, H.R. The Musical.

Onboarding genres including pop, latin and oonst-oonst, and work stories crowd-sourced from real-life human resources, these People take the 9-to-5-and-beyond Culture and see what's barely working while working comedy magic. Perfect for your office or client Christmas party, your team night on the comedy razz, or even your 1:1 occupational therapy session, H.R. The Musical #2 is for anyone who's ever had a job, or thought about getting one.

Tue 25th November 2025 to Sat 6th December 2025 at Q Theatre, Auckland City

Tickets from <https://www.qtheatre.co.nz/shows/hr-musical>

THE TEMPESTUOUS (Penny Ashton)

In a Shakespearean mash up of the Bard's best bits The Tempestuous is storming into TAPAC. Sicily's beloved King Enzo is dead. Now Princess Rosa, a stropky spinster, must navigate the tempestuous waters of belching Step Fathers, lusty suitors, popping cod pieces and menopausal witches, to face her destiny. Award Winning Comedian Penny Ashton (Promise and Promiscuity, Olive Copperbottom) presents her latest literary solo musical with this Shakespearean frolic. She'll spark 11 characters into life in an Elizabethan tale of magic, meddling and puffed bull's puzzles. 20% of Opening Night profits from tickets and merch will be donated to Shine, a charity that supports those experiencing domestic violence in New Zealand.

Thu 30th November to Sun 2nd December 2025 at TAPAC, Western Springs

Tickets from <https://www.iticket.co.nz/events/2025/oct/the-tempestuous>

CHARLES DICKENS' A CHRISTMAS CAROL (Auckland Live & Shake & Stir Theatre Co)

This magical, grand-scale production is brimful of song, humour, love, and lashings of festive joy. Shake & Stir's *A Christmas Carol* has become a much-anticipated annual tradition in Australia, and since its 2018 premiere, this heart-warming stage show has captured the hearts of over 127,000 people across seven return seasons. Complete with live music, yule-tide carolling, innovative video design, lavish costumes and, of course, snow, *A Christmas Carol*, is quite simply "the most uplifting theatrical experience you'll have this year."

Tue 3rd December to Sun 7th December 2025 at The Civic, Auckland City

Tickets from <https://www.aucklandlive.co.nz/show/a-christmas-carol>

SINBAD THE SAILOR BY PETER DENYER (TheatreWorks Birkenhead)

As our daring hero sets sail in search of fortune, the wicked Cassim the Corsair hatches a plan to sink his dreams and steal the hand of the radiant Princess Haidee. Expect dazzling spectacle, laugh-out-loud comedy, and plenty of chances for the audience to join the fun! With the larger-than-life Mrs. Sinbad and the delightfully daft Sillibillibad leading the chaos, it's pantomime fun for the whole family.

Fri 5th December to Sun 14th December 2025 at TheatreWorks, Birkenhead

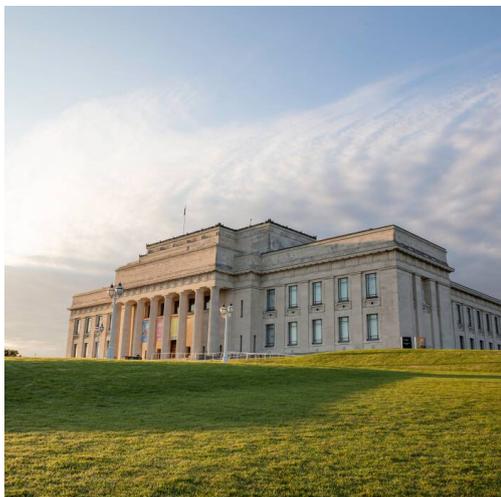
Tickets from <https://www.trybooking.com/nz/ZZW>

AUSTEN FOUND: THE UNDISCOVERED MUSICALS OF JANE AUSTEN (Penny Ashton)

Huzzah! It's Jane Austen's 250th birthday bonanza and you're invited to the ball of the season as Austen Found tours

Aucklandshire. Join Penny Ashton (Promise & Promiscuity, Olive Copperbottom), Lori Dungey (LOTR, M3GAN) and marvellous musical maestro Greg Ward, (Instant Broadway, Lyons & Ward) as they swoon, laugh and romp through an entirely improvised Austenian Musical. Charming suitors, meddlesome mothers, tight breeches and surprisingly well-educated girls will all paint a vivid picture in song, dance and passionate handholding. Are you addicted to Darcy? Bonkers for big balls? Lost all sense and sensibility? Then best be booking with haste. Rated: PG 14
Thu 11th December to Tue 16th December 2025, at venues across Auckland.
Full details are <https://www.hotpink.co.nz/austen-found/>

Auckland Museum



The Grand Foyer and seven galleries are now open

We are thrilled to welcome you back into the Museum as we re-open our historic 1929 Grand Foyer and seven more galleries as of Thursday 16 October for the first time in five months, welcoming visitors back to WWI Hall of Memories, the much-loved *Mataaho Volcanoes* and *Te Ao Tūroa Māori Natural History* galleries, and more.
Please note: The Māori Court and Pacific Galleries remain closed while essential remediation continues.

Haere mai, Aucklanders

Love the Museum and live in Auckland? The new MyMuseum card is for you.

Simply show it for free general admission whenever you visit. There's no need to queue – just dive in and explore!

GET YOUR CARD NOW



If you change your personal details, OR LEARN OF THE BEREAVEMENT OF A U3A MEMBER, please email the change to u3ameadmemb@gmail.com. Please include YOUR full name, physical address, phone number and email address.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the gmail addresses below:

Secretary: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com
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Newsletter Coordinator: u3ameadnews@gmail.com
Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

Next Monthly Meeting & AGM: Monday 17 November at 10 am at St Chad's

Don't forget to send in your U3A news to include in the next newsletter. We rely on your contributions.

Deadline for the JANUARY newsletter items is THURSDAY 11 DECEMBER 2025. Expect receipt confirmation.