AUGUST 2026 NEWSLETTER

President's Report

Fred Sacroug

Wow, wow, wow! Our Open Day on Thursday the 16th was truly impressive and demonstrated what a wonderful family we are. The enthusiastic response from our members made me feel both humbled and excited. It was heartwarming to see so many people come together to support and celebrate our U3A Townsville

Some time ago, Pauline suggested the idea of hosting "A Members' Open Day" — an opportunity for us all to reconnect, catch up with members we may not see very often, and showcase everything our organisation has to offer. What a fantastic idea it proved to be.

One of the real highlights of the day was the exhibition showcasing the wide variety of classes and activities available within our branch. The displays were beautifully presented and reflected the incredible talent, dedication, and enthusiasm of our members and tutors. We were able to see firsthand the creativity and skills that are developed across our many classes, from beginners through to highly accomplished participants. The exhibition not only demonstrated the breadth of opportunities available but also highlighted the strong sense of achievement, friendship, and lifelong learning that our organisation encourages.

There was a genuine sense of pride and admiration for the quality of work on show. The exhibition sparked conversations, encouraged members to learn more about classes outside their usual interests. It was a wonderful showcase of what we can accomplish when we share our knowledge, creativity, and passion with others.

Adding to the success of the day was the attendance of our Mayor Nick Dametto and Councillor Andrew Robinson. Their presence gave them the opportunity to see firsthand the value our organisation brings to the community. It was truly an eye-opening experience for them to witness the vibrancy, talent, and fellowship that exist.

Events such as this remind us that we are much more than a collection of classes—we are a community, a support network, and indeed a family. To everyone who contributed by organising, exhibiting, volunteering, or attending, thank you. Your commitment and enthusiasm made the day a tremendous success and one that we can all be very proud of.

As Treasurer of U3A, I would like to acknowledge the Community Benefit Gambling Fund for accepting and approving our Grant application and the funds that we have now subsequently received. ***Larry Frazer.***

DISCLAIMER: Some of the U3A newsletter is based on information provided by various sources. While every care is taken to provide accuracy, U3A cannot guarantee it is free from error, nor does U3A accept responsibility for any articles or entries published in the newsletter.

MEMBERS OPEN DAY.

Class Coordinator, Robyn Frew, shared 'an observer's point of view, using song themes to illustrate her observations. Can you pick the songs?

With the organization of the Members Open Day in the excellent hands of the Management Committee, I was able to spend the morning looking, talking and observing. From the front foyer to the auditorium, to the outdoor pergola and everything in between, it was clear to me that this was going to be a morning to remember.

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL NOISE – The level of noise throughout the building was wonderful to hear. Seeing people talking, laughing and enjoying themselves was one of the highlights for me.

LET ME ENTERTAIN YOU – I loved the entertainment provided by the Guitar class under the outdoor pergola. It was great to see people in the seats outside enjoying the entertainment. When I went out, the group were playing – and singing – I'm Leaving on a Jet Plane. And yes, I did join in the singing.

PERFECT – The displays were impressive, and the areas were set up beautifully throughout the building. I enjoyed seeing members engaging with them, from trying computer coding to browsing photobooks. Running classes on the day, including Digital Photography, Canasta and Craft Group, added an extra dimension to the displays. The lyrics for this song say, "It's got to be perfect". It was.

PAPERBACK WRITER – After spending plenty of time looking around, it was time to talk. I had many conversations, the first was Margaret Pepper from Creative Writing. I found Margaret's explanation of the class very interesting. Each week, members are given a different topic to write about and then present their work at the next Tuesday meeting. It has certainly piqued my interest. What am I doing next Tuesday?

Secondly was with Claire Tutt from the Craft Group. Claire created the incredible cross-stitch squares by hand (no patterns, just photos from her travels) that formed the Craft Group's display. Claire's display started with the "Making Happy Memories. Let the Journey Begin" square. I'm honoured that Claire shared her story of the display's creation with me. Putting the display together was a huge team effort. Fellow Craft Group member Christine Bruce spent hours sizing and ironing each individual piece, and Class Tutor Gen Caldwell spent many, many hours sewing and mounting each panel. I know Claire was very appreciative of, and thankful for, their assistance.

SAY IT LOUD, SAY IT CLEAR – The speeches opened with our President Fred Sacroug welcoming everyone and briefly outlining what our group is about, before discussing the search for new premises and our upcoming 40th birthday next year. Mayor Nick Dametto then addressed the members before we all adjourned to enjoy a beautiful morning tea provided by the management committee.

PICTURES OF YOU, PICTURES OF ME – Check out other photos from U3A sessions in this newsletter.

Thank you everyone for a very enjoyable and memorable morning.

SENIOR EXPO

At short notice on 22nd and 23rd May, I was available to attend my first Volunteers Expo at Kirwan. This Expo was part of a Volunteering NQ project promoting Volunteers Week and was held at the Campus of the Northreach Baptist Church, Kirwan.

I absolutely loved the experience, jumped in at the deep end with Pauline, Ian and Karen not quite knowing what to expect.

LOTS OF PRAISE AND GRATITUDE to the OFFICE ADMIN girls who very quickly provided copies of info, newsletters, timetables, etc for Pauline who set up the stall.

All I had to do was turn up, network, chat with people. What an eye opener for me – I was amazed that there were quite a few Volunteer groups that I had no idea about all providing such wonderful and much needed service to community in Townsville.

People who approached the U3A stall were very keen to know about us, some people had never heard of us, mostly people were surprised by the number of classes we hold.

It was a great opportunity to be able to network for U3A in a public space and to meet other like-minded volunteers. Thank you to Antonia and Pauline. I would encourage all U3A members to give time and expertise at forthcoming events of this nature.

There are many people in the community for whom groups such as U3A provide a wonderful supportive and educational, social outlet.

Rita Tomba

Over the next few pages are some of the activities our U3A members are doing to keep their mind and bodies active.

Christmas in July.

The **Mahjong** group enjoyed a social event at the Kirwan Tavern over lunch on Monday July 13, which was organised by Denise Kennedy and her merry elves. Tables of 6 were strewn with Christmas baubles and confectionery. An added bonus to the lunch was an activity sheet with the word Christmas to list as many festive items using the letters from the word 'Christmas'. Chris Ward wrote the most items gaining her a gift selection from a prize table.

Maggie Island Mahjong Tournament May 2026.

12 members from the U3A Mahjong group travelled to Maggie Island for a two-day tournament held on May Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th.

Some of the group ferried each day while others stayed overnight. The Tournament is a bi-annual event organised by the highly motivated Pam English, who lives on the Island. People also came from Cairns, Brisbane, Victoria and New Zealand with the day attracting forty-eight competitors. Another event will be held in August.

The tournament was a fun event with some changes to the normal rules. There were three sessions each day with eight games per session, four of which had each game played as a Goulash, the other two sessions had games played as a Galah, which is Mahjong talk for those in the know. The white or joker tiles are referred to as loosies, and if you Mahjong with no loosies you get an extra point. Interesting!!

The Galah sessions played were only Chow hands. All games throughout the two days attracted points both for a win and for "fishing", with every player receiving a prize at the end of the tournament.

We were also treated to some delicious goodies for morning/afternoon teas and lunch. The event was held at the Arcadia Bowls Club where we were given a complimentary drink from the bar at the conclusion of the event.

All in all, a very enjoyable, successful but tiring two days of Mahjong fun. See you next time.

Christine Douglas

PEGS & JOKERS with Rocky and Sherry Jordan can be found at the **Friday Fun Board Games.** It's a new board game at U3A **Vinent** at **10am**. Lots of laughs with this happy group of players. All welcome to come have a go!

Please send your stories to Anne at the U3A office. admin@u3atownsville.com

Computer Sessions with Malcolm Hall and Gaye Higgins take place at Riverway or Aitkenvale libraries on **Mondays** and **Fridays** from **9-10am** and **10-11am.** They are small groups designed to meet individual needs.
BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.

Computer programming is not something one should be even slightly interested in… unless you're an Angry Granny!

The Townsville U3A Computer Programming class has just published its first app on the Apple App Store with the Google Play Store version soon to follow. It's a Sudoku-type game with a twist: although you can play the traditional numbers version, we wanted players to go beyond that and play using various icons instead. The idea is that, by ringing the changes, players would be further challenged by learning to deal with different visual symbols. So, we have animals, musical instruments, opera singers, butterflies and seashells, with more to come. Our team hopes that this innovation will not only be more fun but would add a further element of 'brain-training'.

Currently there are two class members who have been learning since February 2025. We started right at the very beginning and within a few months had made a simple game. Learning to programme is very similar to learning a language, except that programming only has about a dozen key words! The main difference is that programmers invent their own language as they go along.

Imagine you were to write down the steps in making a cup of coffee. You then give that set of instructions a name, like 'make coffee', and then every time we wanted to use those instructions, we would just use our new 'word' – make coffee. So, it's about breaking a task down into small parts and working out how to make the computer do that named set of instructions, using the aforementioned 12 key words. Much easier than you'd think, but just like learning a language, it takes some work!

Why 'Angry Grannies'? It's a bit of a misnomer – we're sweet old folk, really! It came about because in our first game you had to be very quick and it gave the impression of being a bit angry. That game has long been shelved. Also, computer programming involves a lot of frustration when the computer doesn't do what you think it should be doing!

Tuesdays 2-3pm. Private Residence. Tutor: David Browning

Arts and Craft Exhibition at St James runs from 29th July to 9th August, showcases some of the work of U3A members, which can be purchased by the public.

It is an annual event highlighting some of the talent gems of Townsville. Well worth a look. It is not a U3A organised event.

Well-known artist and teacher, Donna Benningfield, will be this year's ***Featured Artist***. Donna will be judging the non-acquisitive $200 Art Prize. This year's topic is ***Townsville Icon — person, place, animal or thing***. The winner will be announced at the Opening.

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CREATIVE ART takes place on Wednesdays @ U3A Offices in Ronan Street, Vincent, from 9.30-12.30pm.

Keep your mind active and alert with SCRABBLE. Another social event at **U3A Vincent** on **Friday** mornings from **10am -noon**.

Canasta Key Wild started this year on **Tuesdays, Thursdays & Saturdays** @ **U3A Townsville QLD** Offices in Ronan Street, **Vincent**. Tues & Thur starts at 8.50**am to 1pm**. BYO lunch and come and have a great time with challenging game of Canasta Key Wild! **Saturdays from 1pm.** New members are taught the rules and strategies under the guidance of Karen Fourie. So, come along and try something new.

Five Crown Card Game is another game to keep the brain active **at U3A Vincent** on **Wednesday 1.30pm - 3.30pm**. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced player, **Kaye Martin** will guide you through Five Crowns, a rummy-style card game with an extra suit that makes every round exciting. The deck has no Aces or twos, and there are two of every card, giving everyone more chances to go out quickly. If you have your own Five Crowns set bring it along or just bring yourself and enjoy the game. Come along, meet new people, and enjoy a lively, friendly game session!

Family History and Ancestry DNA. Monday 10am – 3.15pm. Aitkenvale Library.

Bring Your Own Craft is a new course this year designed for members to share their time and talents encouraging each other to try new things by seeing what projects others work on.

Karen is very versatile to offer pointers on various tasks. **VINCENT. Thursdays 1-4pm. Tutor: Joanne Gillespie.**

CRAFT The craft group also at **Vincent** is from **9am _12noon** on **Thursdays**. This allows more time to chat and create our works of craft. Featured are some of the projects our members have been working on. All the best . Cheers, **Gen Caldwell, tutor.**

Scarf by Liz.

Heather helping Suzi on her first day.

Desley's creation.

Shawl by

U3A WALKING GROUP - AUGUST TO NOVEMBER

Meet on Fridays at 6.45am for 7am start – 8.15

Coordinator: Angela Ward. Phone U3A office **4724-3530** for details

Please bring your: hat, sunscreen, water bottle, & wear comfortable shoes.

Aug	7	Roundabout at Riverside Blvd & Riverbend Ave, Douglas	Ross River downstream
	14	Otto's carpark. 12 Village Dr, Idalia.	Fairfield Waters, downstream,
	21	Park near "Chubby Magpie" Café, 71 Eyre St.	Queens Garden
	28	Palmetum Carpark	Ross River, upstream
Sept	4	17 Echlin St. West End	Cemetery & return.
	11	Palmetum Carpark	Palmetum & river walk
	18	Rock Pool, The Strand.	Jezzine Park
	25	Apex Park, Rasmussen	Loam Island & return
Oct	2	Weir School Carpark.	Downstream Riverside Garden
	9	Sth. Tsv. Recreational Boating Park, end of 5th Ave.	Park Circumference & Nearby Streets
	16	Pallarenda Carpark at Roundabout.	Towards city.
	23	Port end of Bell St. South Townsville.	Environmental Park & bridge.
	30	Carpark at entrance to Town Common, near Rowes Bay Golf Club	Forest Walk & Viewing Platform.
Nov	6	End of Year Breakfast	TBA

WHY I JOINED U3A

ROBYN FREW

Fred, our newly elected president, was forever saying, “Can we call into U3A on the way?” whenever we were out and about. Before long, I began to feel that with the new visitor sign-in sheet, my name might end up there more than anyone else’s. In many ways, that is what led me to join.

Through those visits with Fred, I came to know some of the wonderful admin volunteers, committee members and tutors who so generously give their time. It didn’t take long for me to feel that joining U3A was the natural thing to do. I also discovered there were plenty of ways to lend a hand while enjoying activities such as Friday Fun Board Games.

The warmth and kindness I have continued to receive has meant a great deal to me, and I am truly grateful for the welcome I have been given.

JO-ANNE GEE

I’ve had the privilege to reach the age of 73 & have been fully retired since 2023. I grew up in Brisbane, then moved to Townsville in 1981 with a young family of 2 boys, to start a small business with my husband, which lasted 42 years, closing up in 2023.

I have been a widow for over 12 years & have stayed in Townsville while my youngest son ran our Engineering Workshop to help out till it closed & to help out my oldest when needed.

Throughout my life, I’ve enjoyed many varied interests, hobbies and sports: I’m a keen reader; broken down tennis player; Motor Sport Official; proficient in Stained Glass; Love to travel; Retired volunteer.

I heard of U3A through the grapevine & as I was looking for other interests to get involved in, I looked it up & found that there was "Mahjong for beginners through to experienced players". I had always wanted to learn so rang up last year and spoke to Anne, who welcomed me to come along & have been enjoying it ever since. In the last 6 months I have also taken up Five Crowns & Key Wild Canasta. Having added that to my other routine is definitely keeping me out of mischief!

KEN LOW

I was born in Melbourne and come from a Chinese Malaysian background. As a full-time medical specialist in anatomical pathology, I receive only five weeks paid annual leave each year, so every day away from work is precious. Choosing to use that leave to play mahjong reflects not only my passion for the game, but also my belief that lifelong learning and meaningful experiences are worth investing in. Whilst I have over 20 years’ experience with the Japanese and Hong Kong mahjong rules, I am willing to broaden my mahjong repertoire by exploring the Western rules at U3A mahjong. Exploring new strategies, adapting to different styles of play (regardless of my personal beliefs on certain rules), and learning from fellow enthusiasts are opportunities I genuinely value. For me, mahjong can be more than a game - it can be a lifelong journey of growth, challenge, and connection.

Brian Furby. Aged: 90 years. **Died: 8/7/26**. It is with deep sadness that we mark the passing of Brian who passed away peacefully at the age of 90. After receiving an Oxford University Mathematics degree Brian made a significant contribution for Australian Defence in Adelaide, South Australia, in the design of ordnance, specifically rockets. Brian's passion was ornithology, he presented ' A Vehicle on the Strzelecki Track' on South Australian ABC Radio Country Hour, before retiring to Magnetic Island. The members of the University of the Third Age were able to share Brian's extraordinary bird photography. In recent years he has led the U3A Magnetic Island Monday Talks, giving a sense of purpose and dedication. Brian was a U3A committee member during 2024. He is profoundly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

CONTACT US

Office location: Former Church of Christ Complex, Building A1 accessed via Ronan Street, Vincent

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Tuesday—Friday 9:00am – 12:00pm

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Important Dates for 2026

QLD School Terms:

Term 3: Mon 13 July — Fri 18 Sept

Term 4: Tue 6 Oct — Fri 11 Dec

Next Newsletter deadline for articles & photos is **Tues Oct 20.** Preferably before.

CURRENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Role	Name	Email
President	Fred Sacroug	admin@u3atownsville.com
Vice President	Phil Young	
Secretary	Lorraine Ryrie	admin@u3atownsville.com
Treasurer	Larry Frazer	admin@u3atownsville.com
Class Coordinator / Events	Robyn Frew	admin@u3atownsville.com
Promotions	Pauline Woodbridge	
Committee	Ian Cormack	
Committee	Antonia Gerrard	
Committee	Rita Tomba	

DO YOU HAVE A COURSE THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE?

Contact **Robyn Frew** to discuss content, venue, time and day plus costs involved.

Download or ask for a Course Proposal form to be sent to you.