



President's message

Happy New Year to you all! 2022 is off to a bit of a shaky start, with Omicron ripping through seemingly every community in NSW. I hope you are all managing to keep away from it and staying well. We haven't been too troubled by hot weather either, have we? Apart from a few warm days, it hasn't seemed much like summer at all. Our gardens are all looking wonderful, with the regular rainfall we have been receiving, as well as perhaps the increased attention the plants have been receiving, as we find ways to keep busy at home.

I trust you are ready to throw yourselves into another term of U3A activities! Our wonderful volunteers are again offering to run a wide range of courses. Hopefully, there is something for everyone in the program. Unfortunately, learning to play the recorder has been withdrawn from the program pending advice on rules regarding mask wearing. Unfortunately, singing is not possible either.

Please read through the document to see what may be of interest and then register your wish to attend via oberonu3a@gmail.com. If you don't have a computer, please phone Course Coordinator, Denise Harper with your choices. Her phone number is on the program.

Your committee unanimously decided at our last committee meeting to continue with the policy of permitting only double vaccinated members to attend classes. This decision was not taken lightly, but we are absolutely committed to doing all we can to keep our members safe, as coronavirus continues to spread around our community.

I hope you enjoy Term 1! Jenn Capel

U3A Rusty Restorers

A merry band of men had a productive 2021 restoring a number of vintage farm machinery pieces. Included is a horse driven chaff cutter, a large portable one man engine driven two foot diameter circular saw, a Fordson tractor, which is now brightly painted and on show at the entrance to the Museum. Work on a hay steamer and other items continues.

Much of the restoration is carried out in a small workshop with a reasonable selection of tools and a great amount of elbow grease. The camaraderie, high spirits, fun and laughter amongst the workers is great and many tall stories told even higher. A greater thing is the many varied backgrounds and skills.

The only cloud over the past wonderful year was the sad and sudden loss of Phil Harper. His expertise and friendship will be sadly missed.

All U3A members are welcome to join Rustys. The more, the merrier and there is plenty of restoration to be done.

Making a splash at Aqua!

Want to get fit without realising it? Want a great start to your Fridays? Why not consider joining the Aqua Aerobics class at the Pool starting at 8.20am once a week? This class has been going since late October and continued throughout the holiday break. There

Committee Contact Details
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are still about 8 weeks left and there's room for more participants. Regular participants guarantee that you will enjoy the warm water, the instructor's humour and enthusiasm, and the benefits to be gained from exercising in the water.

Favourite Walks

We as a group have had a topsy turvy couple of years, like everybody! But when we have been allowed to get together and it isn't raining too hard, we have put on our boots and set off. Our walks take us to various forestry tracks, most of them with a hill or two to challenge us all. We see some glorious vistas, which reminds us of how lucky we are to live here! Our walking and talking usually takes about an hour, and everybody walks at their own pace. Some fast some slow! The walk ends with coffee and cake and happy chat.

Membership Fees

A huge thank you to all those who have paid their fees for 2022.

Membership fees were due by the end of December, 2021. If you haven't yet paid you will need to do so before you enrol in any courses. The fee is \$20.00 per person and can be direct deposited to

Oberon U3A Inc, BSB: 882-000 Account No. 100084866 (Please remember to include your name).

Or you can drop your money off (in an envelope addressed to Oberon U3A, Membership Renewal with your name on the back of the envelope) to the Craft Shop, 10 Ross Street.

Our **AGM is on Tuesday, March 1st starting at 3.00pm** at the Robert Hooper Community Centre. Please come along to elect your committee for 2022. If you are interested in joining the Committee, fill out a nomination form, get two members to sign it and send it to Secretary, Maree Arrow, 926 Lowes Mount Road, Oberon by 3.00pm on Friday February 18th at the latest. A scanned copy can be emailed to oberonu3a@gmail.com, or a photo texted to 0402 120 606, by that time and date. Nomination forms can be found on our website (<http://oberon.u3anet.org.au>) or you can phone Maree on 0402 120 606. The website also contains our Constitution. We will have afternoon tea at the close of the meeting.

If you could let us know that you will be attending, preferably via email oberonu3a@gmail.com or by phoning Maree, that would be a great help with the catering for afternoon tea, as well as assuring us that there will be a quorum!

Dates for your Diary

- ◆ Term 1: Monday Feb 7th - Friday April 1st
 - ◆ AGM: Tuesday March 1st, 3pm
 - ◆ Term 2: Monday May 2nd - Friday June 24th
 - ◆ Mid year morning tea - Saturday June 25th
 - ◆ Term 3: Monday July 25th - Friday September 16th
 - ◆ Term 4: Monday October 17th - Friday December 9th
 - ◆ End of Year morning tea - Saturday December 10th
- (The program & newsletter will be out to you approx. 9 days before the start of each term)*



Koala Tracking Life Changing Adventures

In our previous newsletter, there were articles about what some of our members have been doing during these strange times. In this edition Michael Kerans and Jenny Jobling describe what has become a highlight for them in their week's activities.

Every week, sometimes twice a week, Jen and I head off into the bush in search of some well known critters. At least they are well known to us, that is. For the past 5 months we have been tracking these furry individuals and noting their travels and their tree location. We were fortunately asked by Lacey Hofweber, one of the scientists from Science for Wildlife, after we helped with a related research survey, if we wanted to become trackers. YES THANKS! Was our response without delay. So, after the mandatory induction and training we were set to search. At the beginning of each day out, we meet our young scientist who hands over the radio tracking gear and assorted recording equipment and are given the name of our koalas for the day. Come lunchtime we meet up again, share the results of our "treasure hunt" and the other delights witnessed on our travels.

Koala tracking is now the highlight of our week. The benefits are surprisingly many and varied, including meeting passionate scientists with a love and great appreciation for the bush and all natural things; a chance to learn about radio tracking devices and eucalypt tree identification; the chance to discover hidden gems, such as lush glens and magnificent dense forests within local national parks, and of course a chance, and the need, to improve our fitness. There is also the reward of knowing the information we collect is being used to learn more about these retiring marsupials. Such as they can travel over 1.2kms in a few days! Or that their diet is not limited to just one or two species of eucalypt trees.

At times it is infuriating to have identified the tree using the radio equipment, only to be thwarted by dense foliage from an actual sighting. But that only makes the successful sightings even sweeter. Just last week we sat for over 30 minutes under one proud mum, with her recent joey cuddling her, a mere 3 metres above us. It was delightful.

Trekking through the bush is sometimes difficult, particularly on cold wet days, with spikey shrubs and stinging nettles, fallen trees and uneven loose rocks in the undergrowth. But all that pales into insignificance when the bush is quiet and inviting on a crystal clear day and you feel like you are the only two people who have seen such wonder and wild beauty.

Lacey can be contacted on 0456 508 406 if you would like to hear more about the programme.

