

President Communique – August 2023

Dear U3A Executive Members

I have some exciting news to convey to you. With their recent incorporation U3A Alliance Australia is now known as U3A Australia. I would appreciate your assistance in making this known as widely

U3A Australia advocates for a stronger U3A nationally

The newly formed U3A Australia aims to be a national advocacy group for the U3A movement nationally. Recognising the combined strength of the 250 local U3A Associations with almost 100,000 members, U3A Australia Chair Glen Wall said the new organisation aims to establish strong connections with governmental and peak bodies nationally.

“We now have the opportunity to advocate for our U3As to all levels of government and national peak bodies,” Glen Wall said.

“As a ‘bottom up’ organisation, with our strength in our 250 independent U3A Associations nationally, we are a powerful voice, especially considering that we have close to 10,000 volunteers connecting with up to 90,000 members weekly.”

Recently incorporated in July this year, U3A Australia is focusing on two immediate programmes: closer collaboration with the nbn[®] organisation and negotiating favourable pricing for U3As with the Officeworks Buying Group.

nbn[®] Collaboration

Glen Wall said that nbn[®] have officially confirmed a national collaboration with U3A Australia to support the delivery of an nbn[®] U3A Australia National Digital Literacy support program.

“‘Digital Mentor’ will be a redesigned educational program for seniors who are facing barriers to digital inclusion – with the intent to increase both broadband connectivity and digital ability.”

Officeworks Favourable Pricing

Officeworks have agreed to set up a U3A Australia National U3A ‘Favourable Price’ organisation-buying group, and its communications department is preparing promotional packs to assist U3A Australia promote the Buying Group to Member U3As.

Officeworks will also provide help with U3A marketing campaigns, promotional materials and branded stationery. Local U3As will also be able to ‘Speak to a “Geek”’. ‘Geeks2U’ will help sort out tech problems with on-site, remote and same day services available.

Also planned is closer collaboration with U3A Online to expand its offering of online lectures.

The New Organisation

U3A Australia intends to be more proactive nationally in support of U3As, with a greater focus on advocacy and negotiating agreements that benefit U3As. The organisation's principal purpose is threefold:

- Advance and support an effective and sustainable U3A movement in Australia;
- Represent U3A state networks in Australia; and
- Support lifelong learning, health and wellbeing interests, and the reduction of social isolation of retired and semi-retired people.

Membership of U3A Australia consists of each State Association that represents the U3A Movement in each State or Territory of Australia and U3A Online.

Glen Wall said, "the incorporation of U3A Australian Alliance (U3AAA) as U3A Australia is a significant development for the U3A organisation as we celebrate the 50-year anniversary of the U3A movement worldwide and in 2024 the 40-year anniversary of U3A in Australia.

"I acknowledge the excellent work of our state member networks, member U3As in each state and the commitment of their committees, tutors and leaders to ensuring U3A in Australian can look forward to a bright future."

As you can read above, the change also comes with a new outlook by U3A Australia to be more of a national advocate for U3A and a central organising body for programs that benefit our U3A members.

Also, please keep in mind the next U3A Queensland State Conference to be held in Beaudesert 28 - 30 May 2024. There will be more information about the conference on our website soon.

Sincerely



Rhonda Weston AM
President

