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NEWSLETTER –AUGUST 2026

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Christine Trimnell

Our numbers and courses continue to increase with U3A Casey now having well over 750 active members! With numbers like that we are always looking for new courses and ideas, so if you think you can make us even better, please contact the office or one of our committee members.

With that in mind, we have had 2 recent offers from people who are willing to run short courses or single events. If you are interested in attending a Self Defence Course or would like to learn more about Artificial Intelligence (AI) please contact the office and leave your name and contact details.
We have a new venue beginning this term – Bridgewater Community Centre which is currently hosting our Chair Dancing and an additional class of Beginner Tai Chi.
Bridgewater is a beautiful new venue and we are very pleased to be able to use it. It is located at 45 Bridgewater Blvd, Berwick, just near Berwick Chase Primary School.

Please make sure you are letting your class tutors know if you are unable to attend a class – it makes it much easier for them to plan each session. To do this, you will need to be registered for the new Member Wizard Portal. There are details on how to do this on our website and also in this newsletter.

Our Annual General Meeting is on Friday 14th August at Fiddler's Green beginning at 2:00pm. An email was sent to all members on July 17th with reports, Proxy Nomination forms and all other information you need about the AGM.

Finally, a very big congratulations to Helen McGrath on her recent Tutor of the Year award. This award recognises the wonderful work that Helen does for all of our members and the mentorship she gives others in her classes so that they feel confident leading sessions when required.
Well done, Helen.

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COURSE COORDINATOR'S REPORT – TERM 3

Fiona Tonizzo – Course Coordinator

Hello everyone! No doubt some of you are enjoying holidays in warmer spots while the rest of us are braving Melbourne's winter! For those still here, I hope you are enjoying your classes this term. There's also a couple of new classes for you to try – Chair Dancing is at Bridgewater Community Centre and there's a new free dance coming to Hallam soon!

It's still a little early for us to be thinking about classes in 2027, but we have already had a few members coming to us with ideas for classes next year. If you have been thinking about a class you wish we had (or even an additional session of a class we already have) now is the tine to be getting your ideas together. And please don't think that just because you are not in a position to run a class that you can't put an idea forward – you absolutely can! To get you all started, think about the following things:

- What type of class is it? Dance and fitness classes are by far the most popular, but there is increased interest in 'hobby' and craft classes at the moment too.
- What venue would you think would work for your proposal? Is it an outdoor class or indoor? What size room would you envisage?
- How would you describe the class i.e. what would we put on the website to show members what the class is about?

For all classes (new and existing) we will be looking for 2027 information early in Term 4 – stay tuned!
By far the biggest project at the moment is our move to Member Wizard. If you haven't already moved to the Member Wizard portal, please do so as soon as possible. It is the only way to log absences and join classes. If you are not on the new portal, you will definitely be at a disadvantage when we all book our 2027 classes in January – and no one wants that!
Stay warm and stay connected to this wonderful U3A community.

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PYROGRAPHIC ART CLASS

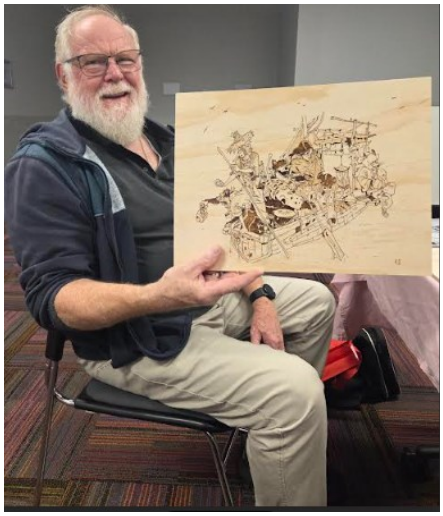
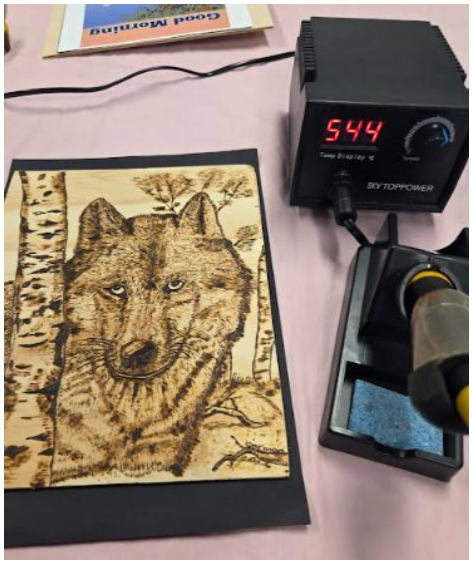
Carmen Mizzi - Attendee

April saw us enjoy another productive month of Pyrography.

Our tutor Karen continues to finish many pieces with Disney characters, Winnie the Pooh and other children's favourites which are then donated to various fundraising causes. The rest of us are kept busy with our own projects.

Throughout April, our group hosted 3 Trainee Social Workers and we discussed whether Pyrography would be an appropriate activity in Aged Care facilities.

Wood-burning/Pyrography is a very relaxing and easy craft to learn, and fun to do.
PHOTOS BELOW

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MEDITATION AND SPIRITUALITY

Bhavani Padmanabhan - Tutor

Happiness:

1. Happiness is not an emotion or a feeling. It is a state of being – IT IS WHO YOU ARE!
2. Happiness is independent, outward flowing energy, that neither takes nor wants from any person /thing/situation.
3. Any form of negativity within me blocks my happiness.
4. Happiness in action looks like lightness, contentment and spontaneity.
5. To maintain my happiness:
   a) Don't consume the pain of others;
   b) Stop blaming others for how you feel and take full responsibility for your own creation;
   c) Don't endorse the pain of others as you are endorsing them as "victims", thus disempowering them;
   d) Don't take sides in any situation if you were not present to actually know what transpired;
   e) Don't be a people pleaser. Please yourself. I need to give myself validation, approval and endorsement.

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PARMA, POT AND POOL

David Harding

The Parma, Pot and Pool group met on Thursday 7th May at what has become our home, the Hallam Hotel.

After enjoying a Seniors lunch from the new menu, and a lively debate about current affairs and young people today, we went next door to the sports bar and played three frames of pool. As you can see from the photos, pool is not exclusively a male skill, or in fact that afternoon, not even a male skill.

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VALE KAYE POADE – 9/10/1932 – 29/6/2026

It is with a sad heart that I pass on the news of Kay's death. Many will know her, as she lived at FIddlers Green for 8 years and joined the U3A committee for 2 of those years. She was always a helpful, caring person like her brother Ken, who lives at Fiddlers Green and always helps set up the U3A Games on a Friday afternoon. Kaye loved her Mahjong and Cryptic Crosswords. She always wanted to keep her brain active!

I attended Kay's memorial service which was held last month at the Baptist Church in Doveton. With the help of her daughter, Sue Black, the following is a bit of a summary of her well lived life.

Kay and her hubby Geoff came to Australia from England in 1969 with their young family, Ian, David and Susan. Ken and his late wife came during the 70's. Then 7 grandchildren were born and a great grandchild.
They moved from the family home of over 40 years in Endeavour Hills into Fiddler's Green in 2018. Geoff went into care in March 2025 and passed away a year later. Kaye went into Melville Grange Nursing Home in April this year. She was only there two months before passing away in June.
As I said at the start - a well lived life and Kay will be missed by many. Rest in peace.
- Chris Trimnell
President U3A Casey

OUTDOOR TAICHI

Helen McGrath - Tutor

The outdoor Taichi group at Brentwood Park behind Bemersyde Neighbourhood Centre has been having a very interesting year. We started out in the beautiful summer weather but by the end of January our handy basketball court, with the whole playground, was fenced off for renovations...

When you start working on your balance for Taichi a solid floor below you is almost necessary, however our hardy group stayed the course and showed anything is possible for U3A!

The grassed area we chose was lovely and flat and our gallant member, Graham, took it upon himself to be our grass inspector for dog jobbies, sadly proving to be quite necessary!!

During May/early June Heather and Kaz filled my role to allow me to travel and I was so grateful for that. And the class had nothing but praise for them on my return, so encouraging to us all.

Week by week we watched the digging and activity and occasionally heard it during class but the promise was a June finish, so we pressed on. However, one morning we arrived to a tree planting group, planting right in the middle of our chosen space, so we were a little put out. Not to be put off by that though, a thoughtful group of the ladies gave them very sound gardening advice...

Towards the end of June it was getting very suspenseful but still no access, and one morning class was even held under a huge oak tree, which turned into a special treat really.

Finally, on the 2nd July we were able to corral a couple of workman and Vicki asked what was happening. It was supposed to be finish by the end of June.
Cowering away from us, they promised that it would definitely be finished in time for next week's class. So, the next week, just as we were rocking up from the carpark, a truck had arrived and they were taking the barricade away!

Another little story was that two engineers were wandering around as we finished our class and asked our impression of the finished playground, saying that there were balancing beams and other toys for our age too. It was noted from us that we didn't like the colour scheme and it shows the dirt so they didn't ask more after that. Ha Ha.

And so we now have the benefit of solid ground and it's useful in the wet mornings, although we're debating whether the puddles still hanging around on the new surface as normal.

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FLORA AND FAUNA GROUP
Moni Lee

During our July 2026 group meeting, 14 members created some beautiful terrariums with a variety of shapes and arrangements. This was much easier than they thought. With our spare bowl' a special group terrarium was made as a surprise for the Brentwood Community Assistant Jess, for her help in setting up the tables.

Thank you to everyone for a fun and relaxed morning and those members who brought extra items and assisted with packing up.

Early in July I had an opportunist chat with Kim, the manager of the Community Garden at the Old Cheese Factory in Berwick. Kim was extremely generous and offered the Community room for our Flora and Fauna monthly group meetings; such a lovely surprise. Special thanks to Chris, our President, for her assistance with officially confirming the arrangements.
Future monthly Flora and Fauna meetings will now be at The Old Cheese Factory Community Garden.

At the August 19th meeting. 10am-12pm, Kim will discuss seed collection, propagation and members are welcome to be more involved in the garden activities. Future meetings may involve outings to gardens and involvement in the new donation garden beds.
Gardening can bring such joy and benefit for all especially in group settings.

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TUESDAY, COFFEE AND DISCUSSION FOR ENQUIRING MINDS

Hu Schroor – Tutor

We meet twice a month to *Solve the Problems of the World* – or at least to discuss them wholeheartedly! Come along, try us, join us.
Our venue couldn't be better – it's the History Room in gracious Edrington House, long the residence of Baron Casey of Berwick, now the centre of a lovely retirement village. So even if you don't join, we're well worth a visit just to check out the mansion … including the toilet the Queen used when she stayed there in the 1960s (Look but Don't Touch, since then). We discuss one topic in each 2-hour session – with a break for coffee and tea, biscuits and cake, and social chat. Members of the group propose the topics, which range far and wide, and guide the lively discussions.
Recent topics have included:

- **Universal Minimum Income**
- **Israel and Gaza**
- **Leadership in an upside-down world**.
- **Gossip and its impact on outcomes**.
- **Marriage,** and its many varieties.
- **Identity.** What does "I identify as …" mean?
- **Travel broadens the mind.** What it means to "have a mind" for travel.
- **Happiness**. What is it, what helps or hinders?
- **The News**. What is it about? Sources, Channels, Emphases, Scope, Influence.
- **The Future of Work and Measuring Productivity**.
- **The Dismissal** – recollections and implications of Kerr's Dismissal of Whitlam
- **Inter-Generational Change –** generations, personal experiences, impact.
- **Antisemitism and the Bondi Massacre.**
- **Does Our Democracy Serve Us Well?**
- **Public vs Private Education**
- **How Publishing is Changing.**
- **The War On Iran**
- **Hobbies –** What are they? Why do we have them? Show and tell.
- **Immigration and Australian Values; Citizenship.**

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OIL PAINTING
Diane Shottle – Tutor

Shelise only joined our class at the end of last year. She had never attempted any oil painting before but has come with so much enthusiasm that she often researches new topics and techniques. Much of her work she continues at home and the work that she is producing and bringing to show the class is excellent.

A valued member of our class, she has revealed an amazing talent in the short time she has been with us. This is an almost finished work she commenced at home. One of the most difficult subjects for any artist.

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ORIGAMI
Gillian Ford

The wonderful Art of Folding sheets of Paper to produce birds, animals, and geometric shapes, is a Japanese practice which has its roots in various cultures. The Japanese words ORI (folding), and KAMI/GAMI (paper), coming together to name the artform that
we know as ORIGAMI.
Who better to teach us this discipline, than a lady from Japan - Kaz Barrass - one of our kind U3A volunteer leaders. It is quite incredible that paper can be folded in a matter of minutes to produce three dimensional flying birds, leaping frogs and even dogs that can move their heads 180 degrees, simply because the head is suspended on a folded arrowhead of paper, in similar fashion to a human skull being poised on the Atlas (1st cervical bone at the nape of the neck). The ultra impressive side to all of this, is that NO tools or accessories such as scissors, Sellotape, or glue are used to hold the trophies in place.

When my 63-year-old daughter said that she was dropping by for her regular hug recently, I had all my handiwork displayed on the kitchen table in readiness for her to view. This was a confusing state of affairs – one over which there was much laughter. Roles of a bygone age were reversed as she cried out “Oh mamma, they look so gorgeous – this is incredible – Well done You!” I felt as though I was the child returning home from Kinder with my display!
We sipped a hot cuppa as we did in the past, but this time, concluded with my Origami leap frogs being raced by us along the kitchen bench.
Thank you Kaz for your expert guidance in this fantastic skill, and for the tit-bits of history surrounding Origami, that you share with us in the classroom.

TRAIN HOPPING THE SENIOR'S WAY – DROUIN – 15 MAY 2026

Joan Gaudion

How lucky were we with the beautiful weather and a group of 32 fun loving members. We enjoyed a singing game on the train as we journeyed to Drouin, a town much bigger than expected. Gerry took some members on a walk through the Civic Park while Ellen took others for a fine lunch at the Royal and others ventured through the shops and found Bakehouses and cafés a plenty.

The town has a lovely country feel with plenty of dogs to pat, retail assistants with great conversations and most of all good coffee and amazing cakes. Drouin was first known as Drouin Junction where timber harvesting was its starting point until it became a thriving dairy and agricultural hub.

One can see the old Drouin Butter Company building from the train station. Now a country town/commuting to Melbourne destination it is well worth a visit. Our journey home was delayed by 30 minutes and as usual, lots of laughs and interesting conversations became all part of making new friendships.

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TRAIN HOPPING THE SENIOR'S WAY – JULY

Joan Gaudion

What a different train hopping activity! We were not in a train....it was held in the evening. We supplied our own food; enjoyed getting to know one another games, and tried to understand some riddles. A terrific fun-loving group, and an amazing array of delicious food. What an evening and I wish to send out a very big thank you to so many people who joined in the cleanup and assisted me before and during the event. Keep well and smiling till our next trip.

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Are you using the new Member Wizard Portal yet?

The new portal is the only way you can now lodge absences for your classes so your tutors can plan for each session.

It is also the only way to add new classes (including at the beginning of next year).

If you are having trouble logging in, there are instructions on the U3A Casey website https://u3acasey.org.au/ and the office is open to support you on Monday and Wednesday afternoons from 1pm until 3pm during school terms.

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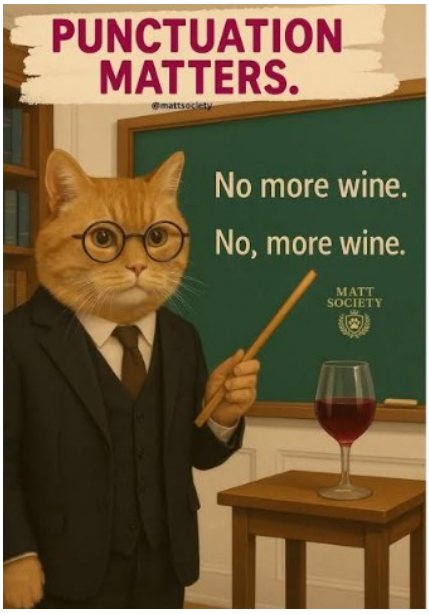

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EDITOR: Barbara Erskine

NOTE: ***The next Newsletter will go out mid-October.***
U3A Members as well as Tutors are encouraged to send in an article, if you feel it may be of interest to fellow U3A Casey members.
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