

PORT HILLS 2019 PRESIDENTS REPORT

It is my pleasure to deliver the Port Hills U3A 2019 President's Report. A copy of this report can be viewed on our U3A website.

2019 has been a year of change for our organisation. In July we received the news that the rent for our long standing venue, The Hoon Hay Presbyterian Church, was to triple, with immediate effect. Unless we implemented a fee increase, this rent was unsustainable. The committee went into overdrive in a quest to find a new venue. We have been lucky enough to rent this existing venue for a reasonable and sustainable fee. With some degree of member reservation, we moved to the St Martins Presbyterian Church in October and have now grown to appreciate the improved facilities it offers.

The roll remains steady. We began the year with a roll of 169 members and our current role, as of today stands at 175. We have been unable to close the gender gap and still have a minority male membership. Our roll remains open to new members.

Interest groups remain varied in their agendas and are generally well supported. In the middle of the year the Explorers Group morphed into a general outings group open to all members as visit numbers were dwindling and some visits were cancelled. Study groups have failed to attract many members and earlier in the year, one had to be closed after only two sessions. I hope that we are able to rectify this in 2020. Ongoing learning remains at the core of the U3A organisation. Towards this end the committee spent time perusing course options at their monthly meetings and agreed to purchase material in advance so that members could have a look at the study material before committing to support the group. I remain hopeful that members will support these interest groups.

We have been fortunate to engage a variety of interesting speakers for our monthly meetings in 2019. The committee is indebted to Naida Murray who has been most active in pointing the committee towards some excellent speakers. Naida has agreed to continue in this support role this year, for which we thank her in advance for the time she devotes to this task.

We have continued to use South Library facilities free of charge. Other U3A branches pay for their public spaces and I am not sure how long we will be able to maintain the current status quo. Suffice to say, that unless we are approached, we will continue to book rooms without incurring fees.

We have enjoyed two social events this year, both at the Cashmere Club on Colombo Street. The venue is convenient as it is sited within our branch area with plenty of onsite parking. The committee were able to subsidise the cost of each event from savings made from fee collection last year.

One of our monthly guest speakers in 2019 was John Milligan from City Harvest. Following on from his talk, a monthly food donation was started by our own members. It has been my privilege to deliver this donated food to the food bank on Kilmarnock Street each month. The donations have always been gratefully received by foodbank's volunteer workers. The December Christmas donation filled the boot of my car and the foodbank staff were quite overcome by your generosity. I am optimistic that we can each help to ease the plight of the City's food poor people again this year.

We continue to be part of the Canterbury Network of U3A Organisations. I attend four meetings a year along with one committee member. These meetings are always useful to our members for the cross fertilisation of ideas and speaker recommendations. This year's Curious Minds all day seminar in May

proved again to be a brilliant way to listen to entertaining and informative guest speakers. Look out for Curious Minds Seminar this year in May. The fee of \$40 includes both morning tea and lunch, and is well worth the dollar outlay. The Network also supports the Ageing Expo in October. This year we had a highly visual stall and many enquiries about the aims of our organisation. All Canterbury U3Abranches benefit from this annual exposure of our existence, aims and programmes. The Network also assists with the establishment of new branches in areas where there is a growing senior population and interest.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of the U3A committee. We are 12 members who work hard to make sure that the branch functions well for its members. Four of the current committee are leaving the committee this year: Denise Crowhen; Derham MacAven; Rose Catley ; Brenda Nagle and we acknowledge their contribution to this organisation. I would also like to acknowledge the work carried out by Interest Group Leaders. Again without their willing support we would be unable to offer such a wide and varied range of interest groups to our membership.

I would like to close by reminding all members that our organisation relies on its members for volunteering in a role that helps support our active and friendly membership. I would encourage all members who have not yet played an active role in the Port Hills U3A to consider how they can offer support in the future. Towards these ends, I would like to give notice that both Vivienne Boyd, our committee secretary and myself as president, are stepping down at the end of the u3a year after 3 years in these roles. At our next AGM in 2021 a new president and secretary will be elected. I remain hopeful that two of our members will step up to fill these vital roles.

I conclude this report and move that it be accepted .

Wendy Gallagher President 2019