



**MORELAND**  
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# NEWSLETTER

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Website: [www.u3amoreland.org.au](http://www.u3amoreland.org.au)  
Email: [info.u3amoreland@gmail.com](mailto:info.u3amoreland@gmail.com)  
Telephone: 0421 318 872

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As an individual member of U3A, join me and be proud to be part of a very impressive movement - at our local branch level, and at a state level, U3A Network Victoria, and nationally, U3A Australia Ltd. Furthermore U3A is a global movement. IAUTA (International Association of University of the Third Age) has a presence in 85 countries and 6 continents with the common purpose of U3A's everywhere providing opportunities for learning, social and physical activities, friendship, fun and enjoyment for people in retirement. Remarkably here in Australia all from volunteer efforts.

The breadth and success of the movement, with growth in Memberships across the nation, was well highlighted at our 2024 Conference just concluded at the weekend, celebrating U3A in Victoria being Forty and Fabulous.

Focussing at our local level, I share with you our efforts to increasingly involve and receive support for accommodation, funding and networking from Merri-bek Council for what we do and where we wish to be. We were recently invited to join the Fawkner Service Providers' Network and meetings, and to share the Council stall at the upcoming Fawkner Festa (17 November), all to assist us have a presence across Merri-bek's northern suburbs.

Our other exciting news is our change of name process is underway. Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) has accepted U3A Merri-bek as our incorporation name, following Members' approval at our Special General Meeting on 19 September. The new name is not visible or used everywhere yet, with more to happen before we are freely using it, aiming by year's end.

Many thanks to Tricia Lester and Team for their great work on the name change process.

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## OUR SPRING CELEBRATION



*A Spring theme*



*Plants on show from the Community Garden*

Congratulations to our Social Team for all their work in planning and arranging our end of term social gathering. They gave it a special theme of celebrating springtime and invited speakers from the Community Garden nearby. Congratulations also to the Catering Team for their help as always. Well done to our volunteers once again for making things happen for U3A Moreland.



*Devonshire tea for everyone*



*Jan, Cris and Jan, team members from our Social & Catering team*



*Glen Wall, President, addressing the Special meeting after the Celebration to confirm change of name*



## CATHY'S COLUMN

by Cathy Beesey

There are times when words cannot be found; this was one of them. Ten days exploring Uluru-Kata Tjuta and Watarrka National Parks, Northern Territory.



*First night, sand dune in Uluru viewing Uluru*



*Helicopter experience with views of Kata Tjuta*



*Field of lights, 6.30am*



*Driving by Mount Connor, a must stop for photos*



*Walking Kings Canyon*



*Close up Uluru - spiritual*

Our last day perfect, driving and walking: Uluru and Kata Tjuta. Dinner: *Wintjiri Wiru*, meaning 'beautiful view out to the horizon' in the local Pitjantjatjara language, is a breathtaking cultural storytelling experience that brings to life a chapter of the ancestral Mala story through choreographed drones, lasers and projections that illuminate the night sky. A story passed on for thousands of generations, now passes to you. We were invited to share the story.

Do you have a photo journal to share? Contact the newsletter team.

# MY EXPLORATION OF SUPER

by Chris Moss

In general, we don't want to know about our Super - particularly if it provides us with enough money to live on. The good thing is that we can invest our money, get a good return, and not invest in things we don't want to encourage.

I happily invested my little nest egg in an ethical fund - now called 'socially conscious' which is a bit cringeworthy. Most funds now have these funds, which have filters, for things that they won't invest in. They also have other funds which may invest in particular types of investment, such as property or equities or a balance of different types. My own Super fund has two 'socially conscious' funds, one that doesn't invest in thermal coal, which is used in coal fired power stations, and one that has more comprehensive filters. The returns are comparable to other balanced funds.



A community group called Market Forces have run a successful legal case against a super organisation that was investing in areas that they said that they wouldn't. Now I think that all the funds will up their game.

## A bit about Chris

I'm Chris Moss and I've been a member of U3A since 2017. I'm currently a facilitator of the Climate Change group which runs fortnightly on a Monday afternoon. I first got involved back in the 1980's when I heard about the issue of climate change in the 'New Scientist' Magazine and thought that there would be big changes in the future as the world responded to the challenge. I joined a group called the Alternative Technology Association, which was full of hobbyists making their own Solar Hot Water heaters out of old car radiators and other concoctions. Some of the members went on to start companies such as the Environment Shop and Plasmatronics, which are still going today. We built a Solar Workshop at the Ceres site, which unfortunately was burnt down during Covid times a few years ago. It was made from Bluestone which was littering the site, as Ceres used to be a Council Depot, where they deposited the bluestone from street kerbs.

As time went on, renewable energy became more mainstream, and as I was working at VicRoads, we pioneered the use of Solar power for streetlights and signs, as the cost of supplying mains power could be excessive over even relatively short distances.

Solar became relatively common for Off Grid installations, to avoid the need for generators, which are costly to run and noisy. Telstra became a major buyer and developer as they have many remote towers and exchanges in the bush.

I stayed with VicRoads for many years, eventually becoming a traffic consultant working on tram priority. We made the trams go faster by giving them extra light sequences and more green time, but they slowed down again because more people used them. Now with low floor trams and platform stops, they can move a lot more people more quickly, except in Sydney Road on the weekend!

I kept my association with Alternative Technology Association, now Renew, and we pioneered projects in East Timor - now Timor Leste, where we installed Solar panels on community buildings and houses all over the country.

At present I'm a convenor of the Melbourne Branch of Renew, and we hold meetings at the RMIT Cinema in Swanston Street about once every two months.





## Nordic walking

*By Justin McDermott*

It is easy to see why Nordic Walking is one of the most popular U3A Moreland activities. It combines sustained but civilised exercise with open air, changing scenery and good company.

It's a very social activity. People can chat as they walk (or not if preferred), exercising in pleasant surroundings with friendly people.

Due to demand, two groups currently operate fortnightly, on Thursdays and Fridays, facilitated variously by Marcie Hayes, Deb Morawsky, Melinda Venticich and Lauris Grant.

Your intrepid reporter joined the Friday group led by Lauris. The 4 to 6 kilometre walks are never technically difficult, but they may involve the occasional steep hill or rocky crossing (where the walking poles are a definite help). But a certain level of physical fitness is required.

This Friday morning's walk was along the Maribyrnong River where it loops around below Avondale Heights and West Essendon. People gathered at the footbridge near Poynton's Nursery, climbed steadily uphill along a well-made concrete path, emerging on the cliff top above the river valley that enfolds the old munitions factory down below. To the south there are splendid views all the way to Highpoint and the CBD. And then down the path onto the river flats and along the banks of the wide Maribyrnong as far as the old Essendon Tea Gardens. Its dance halls and aviaries were very popular in the 1920s, but have now vanished except for a charming statue of a Greek nymph.

The return trip ended with a welcome cup of coffee and a chat at the Maribyrnong Boat House.

**What about those poles?** The distinctive feature of Nordic Walking is the use of a pair of what look like ski poles. The sport originated in Finland as a way for cross-country skiers to keep fit during summer.

The poles are specially designed to activate muscles other than the legs. Correct action will activate 90 percent of your muscles, improve your circulation, posture and balance, and take some of the load off your knees and hips. You will be exercising your arms, chest, shoulders, etc. while burning more calories than in normal walking. A comparative study showed that Nordic walking was the style that most reduced body fat and increased aerobic capacity in older adults<sup>1</sup>.

U3A has sufficient poles for the group to use. Newcomers are given tuition, and a facilitator will help you find your rhythm.

What more could you want?

Justin McDermott

1. Valentina Muollo et al., The effects of exercise and diet program in overweight people – Nordic walking versus walking, *Clinical Interventions in Aging* 2019; 14.



# The streets of Brunswick

*Book review, by Justin McDermott*



*Thomas Stranger's house in Barkly St, c.1910*

Anyone who lives in or around Brunswick will find it fascinating to delve into this book. It includes an alphabetical list of all the streets, so you can easily look up a brief history of your own street.

Albion Street, for example, was first named in 1863, perhaps from the name of a passenger ship. West of Sydney Road, it was originally a track running through a farm owned by JM Chisholm on land taken up in 1840. That was before the 1851 Gold Rush, so Albion St soon became a route to the Ballarat and Bendigo diggings. It carried so much traffic that it was the first street to be upgraded by the new Brunswick Council in 1857. (Maddeningly, it wasn't widened!) Then in the 1930s Depression, as a dole relief scheme, it was remade, with a six-foot drain covered by a concrete road.

As you flick through the pages, with lots of old photos and facsimiles of auction posters showing dates and plans of residential allotments, you begin to understand why the urban fabric and street layout of Brunswick is so varied – and even haphazard. It was simply not guided by a well-planned, street-by-street, south-to-north expansion of greater Melbourne, proceeding from say Park St northwards to Albion St.

Instead, we start from the very orderly plan of the Parish of Jika Jika, covering today's Brunswick, Coburg, Pascoe Vale and Preston, published as early as 1840. This envisaged a grid of farms stretching east-west between the Merri Creek and the Moonee Ponds Creek. Many such farms and rural holdings were taken up throughout the 1840s to 1860s. Some had mansions for City gentfolk, like the 1850s Whitby House, owned by a Flinders Lane merchant, whose property ran down to the attractive Moonee Ponds Creek.

Many of these substantial blocks were subdivided in the 1860s to one or two acre blocks that might support a family and a market garden, with a cow and a horse. The roads would remain unsealed semi-rural tracks. Meanwhile various sizable industries were spreading, particularly quarries with brickworks exploiting the excellent clay. Eventually 29 brickworks fired a total of some 64 million bricks. As these brickworks sporadically closed down over the next 100 years, they were demolished and replaced by new streets and houses. The carpark of Barkly Square (1983) was once a clay pit, for example.





*Albion St at the bridge  
over Moonee Ponds  
Creek, 1950s*

'Marvellous Melbourne' after the Gold Rush stimulated a land boom through the 1870s and 80s until the 1890s crash. Hence the scatter-plot of land auctions randomly occurring across the municipality that has resulted in today's appearance of streets with architecture from quite different periods. Rows of distinctively Victorian terraced housing as in Hunter St and Smith St (1888) in West Brunswick might be adjacent to, say, Halpin St (1926) with its Californian bungalows and off-street parking.

For the ultimate in auctioneer boosterism, consider this 1889 poster for an auction of the 'Land of Promise'. Farmland in the triangle between Moreland Road and the Moonee Ponds Creek was to be cut up into 164 housing allotments. The flowery description is a delight to read:

"A Paradise in Miniature, verily, verily! Eden Resuscitated! A Home for the Chosen People. [Big illustration of rolling countryside with classic homestead. Inset image of Moses and Aaron gazing at it.] The most perfect sites of rural beauty to be found in Great Australia ... commanding views of City, Sea and Mountain ... (etc. etc.)."

"Situated between Moonee Ponds, Essendon and Moreland railway stations, and but 4½ miles from the General Post Office. 102 trains daily, on the two lines, running every fifteen minutes. Trams and Omnibuses incessantly. Fares 4d and 6d return. Terms £10 deposit."

Sadly, the auction failed. It had coincided with the financial crash and labour strikes of the 1890s. The land was not developed until the early 1900s under the State Government's Closer Settlement scheme. We're still waiting for those 'incessant omnibuses'.

*The Street Names of Brunswick*

Cheryl Griffin

Published by the Brunswick Community History Group 2023

Copies in the Brunswick Library (who also sell copies for \$40).

## Stories Connecting Us



Stories Connecting Us, my passion project, is a creative space for writers to publish their writing and find an audience, and readers who want to read something with a difference.

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or send to [storiesconnectingus@gmail.com](mailto:storiesconnectingus@gmail.com)

Cathy Beesey

Find a Chatty Cafe in your area and enhance your social connectivity. They are across Merri-bek and many other suburbs at libraries, Neighbourhood Houses and elsewhere. Their website is: <https://chattycafeaustralia.org.au/venues/>



U3A Moreland acknowledges the bodies whose grants allow us to flourish in 2024.



Families,  
Fairness  
and Housing



Jobs,  
Precincts  
and Regions



*Feel free to circulate this newsletter to anyone interested in what U3A Moreland offers.*

*Any ideas or items for the Newsletter, see our policy on the website.*

*(Christine Filiamundi, Gwen Rosengren, Cathy Beesey, Justin McDermott)*

**[info.u3amoreland@gmail.com](mailto:info.u3amoreland@gmail.com)**

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