

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020-2021.

In 1992, I was a newly elected Councillor for the old City of Croydon, when I was approached by Dorothy Ward, seeking my support for the formation and accommodation for U3A Croydon which was just starting up. Together, with the help of our local MP, the late and sadly missed Mrs Lorraine Elliott, we successfully lobbied the State Government for funding and Croydon Council for access to some local facilities to hold classes. U3A Croydon started and has since moved on to become a successful organisation. We now have over 900 members and well over 90 classes.

In 2019, I decided that it was time to retire. I looked around to find local activities to join and keep mind and body active and came across the website of U3A Croydon and the classes that they were conducting. I was very impressed and signed up immediately. I decided upon 6 classes to join, some of which were, in hindsight, totally unsuited to my level of activity! However, I did sign up to help with the Committee where I could. I was then encouraged to stand for a position on the Committee and indeed was honoured to be asked to nominate as President of U3A Croydon. After being successfully elected, I had one face to face Committee meeting and 2 meetings with Maroondah Council Officers over the vexed subject of exclusive accommodation for U3A members and classes in the revised Croydon Civic Masterplan Project.

Then, the sky fell in and COVID-19 lockdown came into effect. All face to face classes, including those normally conducted outside were stopped. Those classes that could, continued digitally via Zoom, as did Committee meetings. The Committee made a decision to try and defray some of the 2020 membership fees to those members who were not able to attend classes and also to encourage them to re-enrol by decreasing the 2021 membership fees to \$35.00. That decision has obviously found favour with you, our members because current enrolments have far exceeded our original budget estimates. Your Committee and I would like to express our thanks to you all for staying on with our organisation. For your information, the membership fees this year will just about cover U3A Croydon's rental costs and utilities for all of our classes. Any further expenses such as IT upgrades and other equipment will come out of last year's cash reserves. We fund all those costs ourselves, not Maroondah Council.

We are now able to hold most classes again under the modified COVID-19 restrictions and we are hopeful that these restrictions will be progressively lifted as the vaccination program is rolled out. Our Committee, this year, will continue to concentrate on negotiating with Maroondah Council and other levels of Government to have our own exclusive space to hold classes, as does U3A Ringwood. We are in the fortunate position of having been promised a \$2M federal grant for accommodation, by our local Member, Mr Michael Sukkar MP. This grant has been lying unspent since 2019. We believe that this grant will afford us our own exclusive space somewhere near our current office. We hope that we can count on your support in that endeavour.

Neil Rose,
President, Croydon U3A Inc.