

President's Report: for AGM 28th April 2022

Hello all U3A members.

Who would have thought that when I first became the President of U3A Croydon Inc. some 2 years ago, that we have had this prolonged upheaval to our operations over that period. Continual lockdowns, Zoom meetings and classes, interspersed with the occasional face to face meetings and classes with surgical masks, vaccination certificates and QR Codes. In spite of all those difficulties, our committee and tutors, office volunteers and members have kept on with their commitment to our organisation. Today U3A Croydon Inc. has about 900 financial members. Our budget is in good shape and we are approaching a great future with the support of Maroondah City Council, building new facilities for our classes to utilise.

Recently, at a Zoom 2022 Members' Council meeting of U3A Organisations throughout Victoria, the subject about the monetary value that volunteers bring into the community was discussed with a view as to how we can use that information to our advantage when applying for Government Grants. The dollar value of volunteers' time was estimated at \$28.54 per hour a year ago. Nationally, the value to replace volunteers is about \$2.5B and their value to the economy is estimated at \$4.9B.

Today, we have 9 members on our committee, probably averaging around 8 to 16 hours per week: - with meetings, phone calls, emails, reports and liaising with Council etc. There are generally 3 volunteers in the office for 2 hours per weekday and almost 100 course tutors for about 1-hour classes each per week. There are also setup and travel times for these volunteers. That is about 54 hours plus 45 hours plus 200 hours – about 300 hours per week. Realistically, that probably saves our local community between \$400,000.00 and \$500,000.00 per year.

I would to take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the U3A Croydon Inc. Committee, including those retiring members; numerous Maroondah City Council officers, in fact, too many to nominate and all of the office volunteers for their help to me and to U3A Croydon Inc. over this last 12 months and beyond. I would also like to thank the Councillors of Maroondah City and our local members of Parliament, both State and Federal for their support to our organisation.

Now some good news: the \$2M Federal Government grant promised to U3A Croydon Inc. by Michael Sukkar MP, Member of Deakin, in 2019, has been assigned to Maroondah Council for work on Hub B (the Croydon Council Chambers) as the first part of the Croydon Wellbeing Precinct Project. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Maroondah Council and U3A Croydon Inc. detailing future accommodation facilities for our classes and office has been signed. The specifications and layout of our new office and flexible computer hub have been agreed to and work should be commencing now and hopefully we should be able to move in there by the end of this financial year. Our task over the next 12 months is to consolidate most of our classes into these new modern facilities as outlined in the MoU. Eventually over the next 5 years or thereabouts, U3A Croydon Inc. will become the anchor tenant of 1500 sqm of the space within Hub B. So, in spite of COVID-19, things have moved forward.

U3A Croydon now has access to the availability of conducting classes in the new Springfield Pavilion. When the refurbishment is completed, we will be able to hold classes again in the Cheong Park Pavilion. Both of these new, modern facilities with good access and parking will be a great improvement to some of the older facilities that we now use. I can only think back over the last 30 years since U3A Croydon first commenced operations and how far it has progressed.

This year is our 30th anniversary year and I am working with the Mayor of Maroondah Council to hold a proper celebration of our anniversary in conjunction with the official opening of our new office.

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President, U3A Croydon



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