



U3A Manawatū
Chairperson's Report
September 18th 2019

I am pleased to present the Chairperson's Report for U3A Manawatū for the year ending September 2019.

We have maintained a relatively stable membership during the past year, with 337 members at September 2019. There are currently 38 learning groups. Seven new groups were formed this year including a second Book Group, another Write your Memoirs group (Write Our Memoirs Too) and another Cryptic Crosswords Beginnings group. Also, Classical Ballet, Photography, Russia and The West, and TV Drama Series.

Ideas from members who are considering setting up new groups are always welcome. Guidelines for setting up and maintaining groups are available, as are support and mentoring if required.

The seminar series held in Spring 2018 focused on developments past, present and future which continue to have a significant impact on the world and on society. This was the final series coordinated by Margaret Hazelton who has been planning and coordinating a wide range of seminar topics and speakers for the last seven years. She has done this with considerable expertise and enthusiasm.

Thanks to continuing support from the Eastern and Central Community Trust, we are again able to provide two free series both for U3A members and the general public. The Autumn 2019 series focused on ethical issues: is there a right and wrong?

- Dr Brian Finch discussed how society ensures that the quest for new knowledge is conducted responsibly and ethically.
- Dr Chris van der Krogt explored how religions typically claim to offer instruction on how people should conduct their lives.
- Dr Bethan Greener looked at ethical issues involved in the UN peacekeeping missions.
- Dr Geoffrey Kira dealt with some of the ethical issues in our health system.

The series was well attended, attracting audiences of between 80 and 100 for each session. We are indebted to Stuart Birks for his creativity and organizational skills which provide us with

informative, stimulating and sometimes challenging seminars. Stuart has picked up the baton from Margaret Hazelton and he continues to function with enthusiasm and passion.

The Spring seminar series is well into the final stages and will carry the title of "Misinformation and Fake News". It will be held on Wednesdays 2.15 - 4 pm on 23rd and 30th October, and 6th and 13th November, at the Crossroads Church, 220 Church Street, PN. This is a hot topic which will only continue to grow. Further information will be circulated soon.

I would like to thank the many other U3A members who work behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of each series. There is a great deal of activity to ensure these seminars are interesting, informative and accessible.

Group coordinators' meetings were held in November and June, at which coordinators reported on their groups and discussed matters of general interest. One of the topics for consideration was how to include the growing number of members who are living in retirement villages and rest homes, particularly those who are no longer able to travel to groups. This is an ongoing issue being explored by U3A groups both in New Zealand and overseas, so while we have not as yet come up with any solutions, we will continue to explore possibilities and watch developments with interest. We welcome any suggestions as to how we may solve this issue.

U3A Manawatū will turn 20 in 2020. Carol Phillips has generously volunteered to produce a history of the organisation. We were recently handed some valuable early files held by the late Rolf Panny. These will be a valuable resource in terms of the history and give us an important record of our activities for the archives. The committee feels it would be a good idea to mark the milestone with an event of some sort. Suggestions are welcome.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of a stalwart member of the U3A committee. Cherry Gordon is stepping down at this meeting. Cherry has filled a number of valuable roles and she will be missed. On your behalf I would like to offer her our thanks and best wishes.

U3A is only able to function because there are so many dedicated and able members who give of their time and skills. Group coordinators are at the heart of the organization, and it is their skills and commitment which allow us to continue to offer a wide range of active groups. Committee members hold many roles which contribute to the smooth running of the society, and I would like to thank them for the ideas, practical skills and the many hours they contribute to U3A. Particular thanks to our very efficient secretary and newsletter producer, Rosemary Krsinich. Thanks also to Chris Phillips for continuing to manage the website and learning groups; Ron Paddock who does a sterling job of overseeing our expenses; Larry Haist who is responsible for membership, and Janet Black who looks after social events and catering.

We are also indebted to Allan Martin for his review of the Financial Statements in the Performance Report.

We reach the end of another year in a strong position, financially secure and with a thriving learning community; we are well placed for another successful year of learning together.

Graham Slater, Chairperson, U3A Manawatū