



**U3A Manawatū**  
**Chairperson's Report**  
**September 16<sup>th</sup> 2020**

I am pleased to present the Chairperson's Report for U3A Manawatū for the year ending September 2020.

Well, this has certainly been a year (to forget). I hope we are over the worst of it and we don't suffer a bounce in COVID cases. I became a little apprehensive in August when we went back to Level 2 again. It is up to us all to ensure this does not happen again. We have come through this in better condition than most other countries in the world. For some of us it was an unwelcome intrusion into our lives, for others it presented challenges to be overcome.

As an organisation I was impressed at how well we adapted to the changes and managed to continue group activities at varying levels. Email, Skype, Zoom and the internet generally enabled us to maintain levels of contact and information exchange sufficient to keep up some level of communication in operation.

As we celebrate 20 years of existence this year we have a significant event by which to remember it. The luncheon we will hold and the publication of our history in the book '**U3A Manawatū, the first 20 years**' compiled, researched and written by Carol Phillips will be a lasting memento of the occasion. The team that collaborated to compile the finished book did a great job.

We have maintained a relatively stable membership during the past year, with 310 financial members as at September 2020. We seem to have stabilised at around this number for a number of years.

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

Lockdown also forced us to cancel our last U3A public seminar series. Fortunately, Stuart Birks who coordinates these series, has managed to reinstate much of the series and has supplemented it to cover and include topics around public health, etc. The series which is entitled '**Unhealthy Societies: Problems and Possibilities**' will be presented at the Crossroads Church venue at 2.15pm on the four Wednesdays in October.

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.

I would like to acknowledge the contribution of a stalwart member of the U3A committee. Larry Haist is stepping down at this meeting. Larry was involved in the U3A here from the start. He has been on the committee for many years and held the valuable role of membership secretary. His sterling work and wise head will be missed. On your behalf I would like to offer Larry our thanks and best wishes.

I would also like to acknowledge the passing of Cherry Gordon during 2020.

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 Stu Schwartz, Chris Phillips for continuing to manage the website and learning groups, Ron Paddock who does a sterling job of overseeing our finances, Merle Smillie who is taking over responsibility for membership, Janet Black who looks after social events and catering and Stuart Birks who organizes and coordinates the highly successful seminar series.

U3A is a great organization; it provides us with a sense of belonging, helps to focus the mind and enables ongoing contact with other people with similar desires. This is your organization, use it well and keep it strong.

We are also indebted to Alan 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*