



## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

I am pleased to present the Chairperson's Report for U3A Manawatū for the year ending September 2023.

This has been a good year as far as U3A activities are concerned. Post COVID we are recovering our numbers well and the organization is thriving again. I am not convinced that Covid is yet a thing of the past and urge ongoing caution.

We certainly had some issues to deal with during the lockdown period and it was pleasing to see the creative solutions groups came up with to enable some level of contact to be maintained.

As this will be my final report as the Chair of U3A I would like to take the opportunity to thank the hard-working, dedicated group who comprise the committee of the organisation. We are fortunate to have the people who hold office for us and keep the entity running so well. I leave the committee in good heart and am pleased to see some new blood putting themselves forward to continue the good work.

Also, the Group Coordinators who lead the 40 Learning Groups. I am indebted to the ongoing work they put into the maintenance and upkeep of the groups they lead. The model we run relies heavily on coordinators to ensure the organisation continues to provide the opportunities for the membership to have a diversity of experiences in the groups they attend. As always we welcome ideas for more such groups and activities.

It has been rewarding to lead this organisation for the past 5 years. I am not lost to U3A as I will be maintaining the Learning Groups I coordinate. I also hope to create some time and space to indulge again in the tranquil activity of fly fishing.

The upcoming Spring seminar series entitled "Approaching End of Life" looks like it will be one of the most important series we have run to date. It will run from Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October to Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> November at the Crossroads church at 2.00pm. The array of speakers we have lined up covers legal aspects: EPOA, wills and estates, health related issues as we age, the funeral process and the issue of assisted dying.

The group of people who organise and run these events create something special. Also they give our membership the opportunity to mingle with other people, an essential element as we age and tend to slow down. Since the model of U3A we run here is based on an array of Learning Groups, the wider membership does not get many opportunities to interact with members from other groups. These seminars also provide the opportunity for that interaction. We are especially indebted to the work put in by Stuart Birks for the fine job he does in wrangling speakers to contribute to the interesting array of topics he manages to secure.

We are currently in the process of trying to re-establish the Science etc group after it foundered when the long-term coordinator Brian Tapper decided he could no longer continue to run the group. Stuart Schwartz is driving the project to see if we can't rescue something out of one of the largest groups in our U3A. We are trying to set up meetings with interested parties to see if we can get something going again.

During the past year we have spent some time reviewing our constitution in line with changes to the Charities Act. This activity has been led and coordinated by Claire Barrett. The reviewed document will be available to the AGM.

We are once again indebted to Alan Martin for his review of this year's 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.

I would like to wish everyone a restful Christmas and a better new year.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to our members, volunteers and committee who have contributed to the success of U3A Manawatū. You make our organisation truly exceptional and inspiring. Thank you all.

*Graham Slater, Chair U3A Manawatū*