



U3ACanberra

NEWS

Newsletter of
Canberra's University
of the Third Age

www.u3acanberra.org.au

[https://www.facebook.com/
groups/u3a.act/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/u3a.act/)

June 2026

Volume 40 Number 2

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From the President



I spoke at the recent Network NSW Conference at Batemans Bay on the importance of engagement to the viability of individual U3As. Having been a member of U3A Canberra for over ten years I thought I would reflect on my learnings around how U3A operates and the nature of its membership. A fuller report on the conference will appear later in the Newsletter, but for the moment let me

say that under the title of the TEN COMMANDMENTS OF U3A, I made the following observations:

- Put people first — Members come for learning, but stay for friendship, purpose, and belonging.
- Respect the volunteer spirit — U3A runs on goodwill, patience, and the efforts of a committed people.
- Ownership makes things happen — Ideas are common; progress needs people willing to lead.
- Understand— U3A has history, complexity, and ways of working that deserve respect.
- Never stereotype members — U3A spans generations, talents, experiences, competencies and levels of confidence with technology.
- Don't undersell members— Members are curious, capable, and intellectually diverse.
- Recognise life's realities — Caring roles, health, family, and travel shape how people participate.
- Listen often — Members have valuable opinions; seek feedback and adapt to changing needs.
- Keep it social and welcoming — Shared interests, connection, and recognition matter as much as education.
- Stay flexible and future-focused — Embrace technology, new formats, fresh topics, and changing lifestyles.

My Ten Commandments were well received and lead to quite a few questions and discussion. I also added the importance of maintaining a positive and optimistic approach as a Committee given our leadership position. We have received positive feedback on this approach.

U3A Canberra has had quite an increase in course offerings recently which is important as it provides the opportunity to offer a diversity of activities given the interests of each U3A member is different.

*Alex Gosman
President*

From the Editor

Sad to see a colleague leave our team, but we bid farewell to Glenn Davidson who is leaving to undertake family responsibilities. Glenn brought his huge imagination and innovation to the newsletter and he will be sorely missed. Meanwhile, we also have to acknowledge the huge response to our call for a replacement – we were overwhelmed by it. In the end we have one definite new starter – welcome John Wells. He has immediately started looking for opportunities to use his creativity. We had some volunteers for whom the way we operate didn't sit well with their skills or interest, meanwhile there are some who we'll keep in mind in case we have further opportunities open up.

This is the second edition in our new quarterly schedule. For some reason we've had a bit fewer 'Like Minded Organisations' put forward items, we'll see if this continues. However, as a compensator, we continue to get submissions from our 'creatives' ... many thanks to those who create with word and image, it really lightens up our pages.

Bill Blair
June Newsletter Sub-Editor
newsletter@u3acanberra.org.au

Newsletter Timetable for 2026

Please observe the deadline for each edition — it makes our job much easier.

Newsletter Edition	Deadline for copy	Newsletter placed on U3A Website
September 2026	25 August 2026	1 September 2026
December 2026	23 November 2026	1 December 2026

U3A Contact Details

U3A Canberra Office at Hughes (ph. 6281 6998) is in the Hughes Community Centre at 2 Wisdom Street, Hughes, ACT, 2605 and is usually open Monday to Friday from 9:30 to 4:30. All general enquiries should be directed to this Office.

Our Cook facility (ph. 6251 8005) is in the Cook Community Hub at 41 Templeton Street, Cook, ACT, 2614 and has the same opening hours.

Our Flynn Teaching Rooms (Course activities only; NO public or member enquiry services) are at Flynn Community Hub at 21 Bingle St, Flynn, ACT, 2615.

Please note: Access to U3A at the Flynn Community Hub is from Hedland Circuit.

For more information on holding a course at Flynn please contact the course coordinator for Flynn at flynn@u3acanberra.org.au.

Our mail address is now: U3A Canberra
Hughes Community Centre
2 Wisdom Street
Hughes ACT 2605

U3A ACT Inc. Members' Calendar 2026

UC = University of Canberra, Bruce Updated May 2026

JUNE

Monday 1 Newsletter published online.

Monday 1 Reconciliation Day – Offices close

Monday 8 Tuesday Forums end for Semester 1

Monday 8 King's Birthday – Offices closed

Monday 8 UC Winter Term begins

Tuesday 9 Committee Meeting

Monday 29 Tuesday Forums begin for Semester 2

JULY		AUGUST		SEPTEMBER	
Monday 13	Committee meeting	Friday 7	Newsletter published online	Tuesday 1	Newsletter published online
Monday 13	Call for nominations for annual U3A awards	Monday 10	Committee meeting	Monday 14	Committee meeting
Friday 24	Deadline for August Newsletter	Monday 10	UC Semester 2 begins		
Monday 27	<i>Registration Opens for Semester 2 at University of Canberra</i>	Monday 24	Nominations for Committee positions open		
		Tue 25	Deadline for September Newsletter		
		Friday 28	Nominations for annual U3A awards close		
OCTOBER		NOVEMBER		DECEMBER	
Thursday 1	Membership renewals for 2027 open	Wed 4	Nominations for Committee positions close	Tuesday 1	Newsletter published online
Monday 5	Labour Day Offices closed	Monday 9	Committee meeting Nominations for Committee positions close	Friday 11	Offices close for Christmas-New Year break
Monday 12	Committee meeting	Tuesday 17	AGM (Hughes)	Monday 14	Committee meeting
		Tuesday 17	Tuesday Forums end for Semester 2	Monday 11 Jan 2027	Offices reopen
		Monday 23	Deadline for December Newsletter		

Information for Members and Course Leaders

[CLICK TO ENROL>>](#)

Following successful trials across several courses, Online Enrolment is now available for use across all courses.

[Click to Enrol »](#)

Members: a single press and you are on your way! No more enrolling via email and waiting for a response. An acknowledgement email is sent to you immediately. You can also view your current online enrolments anytime via the Membership page on the website.

Course Leaders: Online Enrolment offers many benefits:

- ✓ **Less admin:** Course Enrolments, Attendance, and Payments forms are automatically pre-filled in alphabetical order.
- ✓ If using a Wait List, Full courses trigger a **Join Wait List** button automatically.
- ✓ **Prerequisites supported:** Members self-report if they meet course requirements.
- ✓ **Easy communication:** Email all participants or individual participants directly from the system.
- ✓ **Choose to have enrolments automatically recorded or manually vet requests for enrolment.**
- ✓ **Automatic notifications:** Receive a daily summary of enrolments.
- ✓ For courses that have the same participants each year, import enrolments from the previous course.
- ✓ **Better planning for U3A:** Enrolment data helps the Program Development Team assess demand and plan future courses.

Here is what an Enrolments screen looks like for Course Leaders

Course Enrolments: Australian History 'A' Group

Course dates: Tuesday, 21 Apr, 2026 - 24 Nov, 2026

Course status: Vacancies

Online enrolments: MANUAL

Enrolled: 32 / 60 (28 vacancies)

[jump to forms ↓](#)

request date ▼	status ▶	member name (id) ▶	requirements (if applic.)
2026-04-02 @ 6:31pm	ENROLLED		
2026-04-02 @ 6:40pm	ENROLLED		
2026-04-02 @ 8:47pm	ENROLLED		
2026-04-03 @ 9:54am	ENROLLED		
2026-04-03 @ 12:25pm	ENROLLED		
2026-04-03 @ 2:10pm	ENROLLED		

Total requests: **32**

32. Enrolled

[Email 32 enrolled members »](#)

Printable forms: (links open in a new window)

- [Course Enrolments Form](#)
- [Class Attendance Record](#)
- [Class Payments Record](#)

Data download (enrolled and waitlist):

- [Download enrolments](#) (CSV)

What our Course Leaders are saying

- “I run five U3A courses with 20–65 participants in each course. Previously, manual enrolments created heavy work during peak registration in January–February. After trialling online enrolment for several courses in 2026, I found it simple and efficient. It significantly reduced setup workload and improved communication with members as they enrolled. I look forward to moving all five courses to the online system”
- *Alex Gosman*
- “All the members of our course found the online enrolment system easy to use and efficient for both members and course leaders.”
- *S O'Brien, The Play's the Thing*
- “Online enrolment significantly reduces the administrative workload for enrolling in and administering courses. The system automatically lists names and membership numbers for course leaders and allows individual or group emails to class participants. Again for course leaders, it will sort names in alphabetical order in proforma printouts for attendance and collection of course fees. It is dead simple to use for enrolling in courses and equally simple for course leaders to use to full advantage. It really is a no-brainer.
- *James Catchpole*
- “Like all new things, there was a bit of working out needed from me about how the U3A Canberra Online Enrolments system worked, but I found it a significant time-saver. For years I've been enrolling members in 4 courses each year and this process really helps keep me on track.”
- *Joanne Maples*

Getting Started is Simple

To switch your course to Online Enrolment, email coursesdata@u3acanberra.org.au and let them know if you want to use **Automatic** or **Manual** Online Enrolments. You can even transition a course that's already underway—existing participants can simply enrol online.

Our goal is to have all courses use **Online Enrolments by early 2027**.

If you have any queries, please email courseleaderassistance@u3acanberra.org.au

Courses Subcommittee

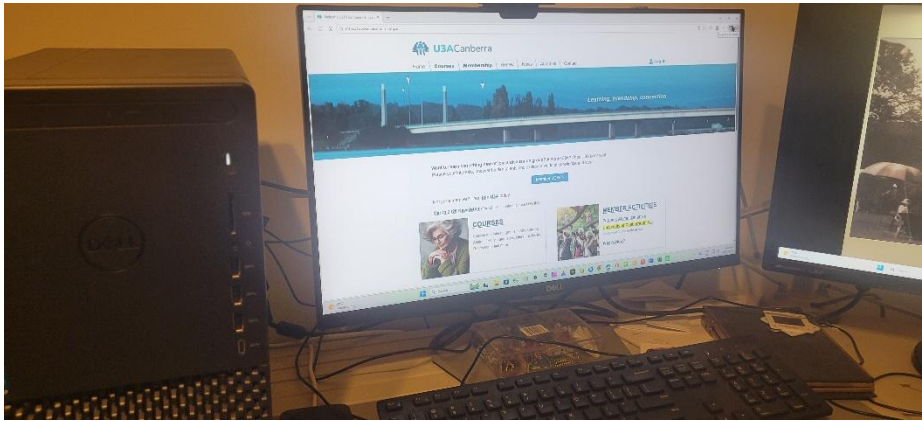
The 2026 Member Survey is coming!

The 2026 Member Survey will be held in August this year, and you will be invited to participate.

The 2026 Member Survey is the latest in a biennial survey of ACT U3A members. The aim of the survey is to find out what you think about current offerings and operational arrangements, but also to put your views about possible further development. Topics to be covered include courses, forums and seminars, volunteering, communication, satisfaction with current services, safety and well-being.

The last Member Survey, in 2024, provided valuable information and feedback from members. In brief, the 2024 Member Survey indicated strong satisfaction with U3A overall, signalling further refinements were welcome, rather than major changes. In response to the 2024 results, several initiatives have been undertaken, including improved volunteer record-keeping, and an automated course registration option to improve efficiency and reduce administrative requirements, particularly for course leaders. Further

improvements in response to members views included a refreshed website, increased media presence (radio interviews, Seniors Expo, Facebook) and expanded course offerings. Further, in response to course access concerns, a Program Development Team was established to extend course offerings in areas of strong demand and to explore further opportunities.



The Survey will be run online in August. All members will be invited to participate, with additional input sought from course convenors, volunteers and other specific groups. We expect the Member Survey will take about 10 minutes to complete, with some additional time required for input from specific nominated groups and individuals. Results

will be analysed and a report prepared for members, to be presented at the U3A ACT Annual General Meeting in November.

Your views are important, so look out for further notices in eBulletins about the survey and your invitation to participate.

For further information: surveys@u3acanberra.org.au

*Mary Bermingham
Membership Secretary
Member – Survey Working Group*

Sending to eBulletin and Newsletter

The U3A in the ACT has a Newsletter and eBulletins to keep members informed and, where appropriate, showcase U3A Canberra to a wider audience.

The **Newsletter** showcases U3A activities and relevant local events through text and images and is published quarterly on the first day of March, June, September and December. A link is sent via an eBulletin, also a link to the newsletter is immediately available on the U3A website. The current edition is available on the public U3A webpage; past editions are in the members' area of the website.

The **eBulletin** is a short, text-based document, published twice weekly via email to members. Course related items are published on Fridays with other information published on Mondays.

We welcome items from members. To meet our publication requirements, items must:

- be of major significance and/or relevant to members
- be consistent with U3A objectives
- be from members or a not-for-profit entity
- contain subject matter and be of a tone that does not bring the good name and public reputation of U3A into disrepute.

For us to provide a high-quality service to our members, we need contributors to:

- include only relevant information (i.e. matters likely to be of interest to our members) and avoid extraneous detail to keep your item succinct
 - eBulletin items are to be no more than a paragraph or two.
 - Newsletter items can be up to a page (about 250 words), preferably accompanied by relevant images
- include relevant links

-
- submit items by the following deadlines:
 - Monday eBulletin items are due by midday Saturday. Friday eBulletin items are due by midday Thursday.
 - Newsletter items are due one full week prior to publication although they are welcome to be submitted earlier
 - send your item to the correct email address for the appropriate information source:
 - Newsletter items go to newsletter@u3a.canberra.org.au
 - Monday eBulletin items go to ebulletin@u3a.canberra.org.au
 - Friday eBulletin items go to coursesdata@u3a.canberra.org.au
 - Newsletter contributions are made either through text in an email or through an attached Word document. Images should be clear, ready for immediate inclusion and attached as separate files at an appropriate resolution (around 3 Megapixels).

Meeting these requirements helps us to publish your item as requested.

Many thanks

The Newsletter and eBulletin teams

Participate in Units at the University of Canberra

Did you know that U3A Canberra members can sign up to view lectures at the University of Canberra? We can watch lectures, whether in person or online, and access reading lists for units, without all the other stresses of university studies (there are no assignments, no exams, no tutorials, and no HECS) as part of our annual U3A membership. It's a wonderful opportunity to learn new things or update existing knowledge.

U3A has had a longstanding arrangement allowing members to participate in UC units and the agreement was renewed, for another five years, in late 2025. Over forty U3A members participated in UC subjects in Semester 1, 2026, and we receive some great feedback about their experiences.

Subjects available include creative writing, culture and heritage, early literacy, ecology, economics, education, indigenous cultures, landscape architecture, law and justice, mathematics, nutrition, psychology, screenwriting and many more. There's information here:

<https://www.u3acanberra.org.au/members/courses-uc.html> (login required) and here:

<https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/learning-at-uc/university-of-the-third-age-u3a-members/how-to-register-to-audit-a-unit> including a link to available courses: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/learning-at-uc/university-of-the-third-age-u3a-members/unit-registration/available-units> .

Answers to many frequently asked questions are available here: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/learning-at-uc/university-of-the-third-age-u3a-members/faq> .

Winter term starts on Monday 8 June, Semester 2 starts on Monday 10 August 2026, and enrolments (for U3A members) usually open about two to four weeks before the term or semester starts. When the time comes, you'll be able to enrol by completing the form at: <https://www.canberra.edu.au/about-uc/learning-at-uc/university-of-the-third-age-u3a-members/unit-registration>.

Enjoy!

Karin Hosking
U3A/UC liaison person
ucanberra@u3acanberra.org.au

U3A Course News

Art at Flynn

Art at Flynn is another of our very talented painting groups who have kindly shared some of their work with us in the past and again now. I'll sprinkle them through this edition to brighten the pages. Many thanks to the group and to Meryl Causebrook for curating.



Meryl

Canberra Recorder Orchestra and Sarabande Recorder Ensemble and A Brief Music History Lesson

As reported elsewhere in this edition, The Canberra Recorder Orchestra and Sarabande Recorder Ensemble were the hosts again for the tenth annual Eight Foot Pitch Recorder Orchestra in Canberra. Sixty-six recorder players from many parts of Australia converged on Canberra for a full day of playing beautiful, mellow music. Visitors who popped in to listen expressed amazement that the so-called 'humble' recorder could sound so beautiful and musical.

It amazes me that even musicians still have no idea about this ancient instrument. And as for the general public... there are memories of themselves (or children or grandchildren) having class lessons on cheap descant recorders at the age of seven, and imagine that that is the extent of the instrument. Children must now move on to a 'proper' instrument!

Let's be fair – most classroom teachers, with the best will in the world, don't really know the extent of the recorders' capabilities and repertoire. And now, with Western Classical music at the bottom of the curriculum, they probably have never heard Bach's Second and Fourth Brandenburg Concertos and the fabulous (and difficult!) recorder solos. Thus, they have no idea of the range of recorders (there are ten sizes) and the beautiful music written for them. In a consort, or a larger orchestra, the music weaves from one voice to another, like a vocal choir.

Concertos with a solo recorder, usually the alto (treble) size were *de rigueur* for educated people in the few hundred years leading to and including the Baroque period. Stage plays and early operas used recorders for ethereal effects such as angels descending, fairies, romance, things melancholy, pastorales and bird songs. The name 'recorder' means bird song'. The Italian name, 'flauto dolce' means 'sweet flute'. Shakespeare mentions players learning the recorder. Samuel Pepys, the London diarist of the 17th Century, played recorders, and encouraged his wife to do so, all the while bemoaning her laziness when it came to practising.

As fashions in art, architecture and clothes changed, so too did music. Orchestras increased in size until the delicate recorders were drowned by the louder flutes, oboes and clarinets and the increased numbers of strings and brass. Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert had probably never heard a recorder, and certainly never included them in their compositions.

Old wooden and ivory recorders were found in museums, and in the early 20th century, Arnold Dolmetsch found one in an antique shop in London, and taught himself to play it. He made some of wood, and so began a great revival of the instrument, as old music was sought out in libraries and monasteries. The Dolmetsch family travelled Britain giving recitals of the newly discovered music.

They established a recorder-making workshop in Surrey. Other factories followed making bakelite and plastic instruments. Educators decided that the smaller sized recorder would fit nicely into a young child's hands, and so began a century of cheaply made, shrill-sized recorders being used in schools to teach the reading of musical notation in preparation for other woodwinds. Some tutors did, however, teach this very difficult instrument well, and so carried on the fine tradition.

More recently, there has been a rediscovery of early music, along with the desire to recreate it as well as possible using old instruments (or good copies) such as viols, lutes and recorders, and voices such as counter-tenors (no longer the castrati of disastrous fame.)

Along with this marvellous resurgence, has come the interest of modern composers, and many now write music especially for recorders in small or large groups. Instrument makers pride themselves on making fine instruments with different woods, and these can cost thousands of dollars. I must also add that some plastic, resin and 3-D printed recorders are very good.

The Canberra Recorder Orchestra, a group within U3A, was founded 30 years ago by Margaret Wright. We are fortunate to have composers in Britain and Australia who write music especially for us.

The latest was March, 2026, and to contrast with our Tudor and Baroque repertoire, we played the Suite called 'Reading, Wrihting and A-rythmetic' straight off the press, by English composers Ann and Steve Marshall at our National Recorder Orchestra day.

PS, found this postcard advertising Paetzold 'square' recorders. We have all these.

<https://share.google/9nQVCZv2AoolRKGbg>

Margaret Wright



Anita



Nadia

Join Warrani Chorale on June 3 for their Mid-Year Concert

Give yourself a treat on June 3 and come along to Warrani Chorale's Mid-Year Concert at Weston Creek Uniting Church on Wednesday, June 3 at 10.30 am. We can promise you a feast of well-known music with songs such as "A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square," "What a Wonderful World," "The Sound of Silence," "Moon River," "You've Got a Friend," and "Here comes the Sun." In addition, you will get the chance to sing some old favourites yourself in the audience sing-a-longs with the choir which are always very enjoyable for everyone.

Warrani Chorale in concert at Weston Creek, November 2025



For the choir, the concert is a very fitting finale to the first semester of the year. Following our concert, the choir is in recess until Wednesday 15 July when Semester 2 commences. The start of the semester is always the best time to join us at Warrani Chorale. We are a non-auditioned U3A ladies' choir and we can offer you good music and singing plus plenty of fellowship and friendship. We are fortunate to have two brilliant musicians in our

conductor Helen Swan and pianist Brigid Cummins. These two ladies continue to inspire us and to make every choir practice enjoyable and worthwhile. For details about membership and practice times, please contact our Membership Secretary Bev Payne, phone 0418 110 808, email: bev.payne2020@gmail.com

Warrani Chorale's conductor Helen Swan (right) and pianist Brigid Cummins.



Margaret Martin

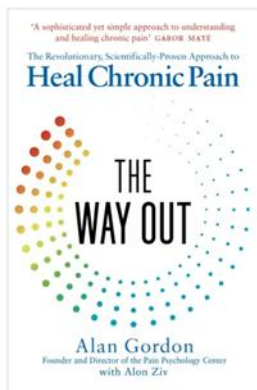
Chronic Pain and Anxiety

Welcome to the mind/body world. Symptoms such as chronic pain and/or anxiety can feel like they are coming from the body, however, in most cases, they are generated by misfiring pain circuits in the brain. Due to the neuroplasticity of the brain, it's possible to develop new neural pathways and unlearn painful symptoms. Fear is the fuel that keeps the brain stuck. This mind/body approach has been successfully used for conditions such as back pain, neck pain, Irritable Bowel Syndrome, chronic headaches, migraines, pelvic pain, dizziness, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Fibromyalgia, Repetitive Strain Injury, Carpel Tunnel Syndrome, many skin conditions, anxiety and many, many more. It is not for cancer pain, autoimmune diseases, diagnosed nerve injury or some arthritic conditions.

The mind/body world began in the 1970s with an American back specialist, Dr John Sarno, who developed the concept of tension myoneural syndrome (TMS). He argued that TMS was caused by emotional or psychological stress. Dr. Sarno's treatment methods focused on addressing the psychological factors that contribute to TMS symptoms. Since then, there have been many clinical trials that have demonstrated the efficacy of his original concept. In 2021, the University of Colorado Boulder conducted a study of 151 people with back pain. The study found that two-thirds of chronic back pain patients who underwent a four-week psychological treatment called Pain Reprocessing Therapy (PRT) were pain-free or nearly pain-free post-treatment. And most maintained relief for one year. They also showed changes in pain-generating brain regions after therapy.

I've had chronic pain all my life with stomach issues, migraines, anxiety and back pain, to name a few. I have pursued so many pathways over the years for ways to manage the symptoms: doctors, specialists, MRIs, CAT scans, X-rays, medication, physiotherapy, acupuncture, psychologists, etc. Nothing worked.

Some time ago, I discovered this mind/body world. I then began a journey of recovery using the methods and techniques outlined in this new world. Today, I can say that I am almost fully recovered from chronic pain. I wanted to share this knowledge, so, earlier this year, I presented a nine-week course on Chronic Pain through U3A. We used *The Way Out* by Alan Gordon as the basis of the course, but we also explored other experts in this field like Dr Howard Schubiner, Professor Lorimer Moseley, Dan Buglio and Jim Prussack.

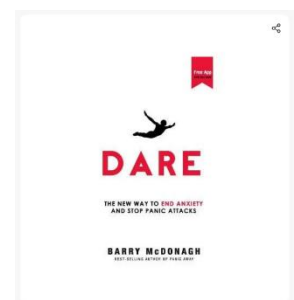


All of the participants came to the sessions with an open mind which created a fabulous, supportive environment. My goal was to plant a seed that maybe, just maybe, there could be something in this; that they, too, may be able to recover from their chronic pain through their own understanding of how their brains were operating and through implementing the methods and techniques.

"Without your course I would have spent much more time at home and taken many more painkillers. So I feel positive that I can continue to benefit from the knowledge you generously shared, while working on my recovery." SR

We're all going to meet up again for [three sessions in June](#) to review the ideas and techniques and to see if they have experienced any changes. I have opened up these sessions to any U3A members so that anyone can come and see what this is all about.

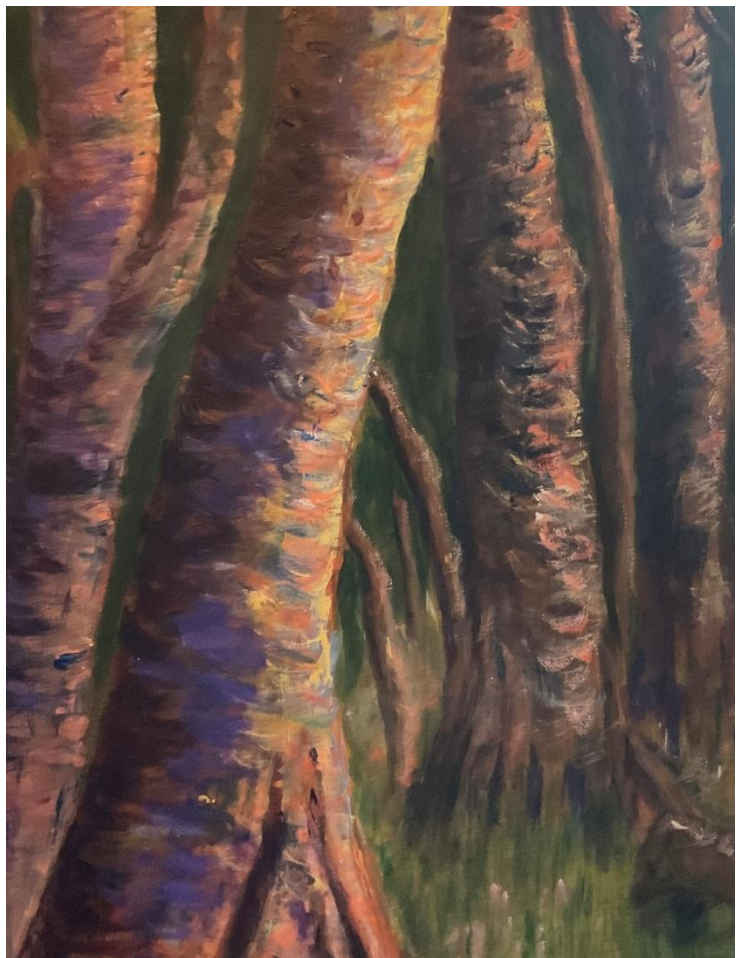
Due to the success of my first course, I'm going to present this [nine-week Chronic Pain course again](#) beginning on 29 July 2026 on Wednesdays at 10am to 12 noon at Cook. I'm also going to run a [nine-week course on Anxiety](#). This will begin on Thursday, 30 July 2026 at 10am to noon at Hughes. We will be using *DARE* by Barry McDonagh as the basis of the course.



Renee Koukoulas



Nadia



Meryl

Harmonia Monday (Mixed) Choir

U3A Choral Studies Group



Do you love to sing in a choir? We do, in four-part harmony, and we have a lot of fun as well! U3A members are welcome to join us whether your voice is Soprano, Alto, Tenor or Bass. Previous choral experience is desirable but not essential. Ability to read music is highly desirable. We don't audition.

We meet every Monday morning from February to November with a four-week break between semesters. We are lucky to have two talented (and patient) musicians as our conductors who each take half of the morning; Oliver Raymond and Sheila Thompson. Our accompanist is the wonderful Jenny Kain.

The choir relaxing at the end of the performance, Nov 2025.

We sing a wide variety of mostly classical choral music, both sacred and secular, from the western tradition ranging from about the 16th century to the present day.

We meet on Mondays in the Yarralumla Uniting Church Hall, Denman Street, Yarralumla from 9.45 to noon. A small fee is charged (presently \$50 per semester) to pay for the venue and sheet music needed. On the final Monday of each semester an Open Morning is held at which friends, family and anyone else interested are invited to hear us sing the music we have been practising during the semester.

Sheila and Oliver waiting in the wings at our last Open Morning, Nov 2025.



Our next Open Morning will be Monday 29 June at 11am at Weston Creek Uniting Church, 16 Parkinson St., Weston 2611. Note that this is a different address from where we normally meet. Feel free to join us to hear what we do, and for tea or coffee and bikkies afterwards.

Among other things we'll be singing:

- *My Soul, there is a Country* by CHH Parry
- *The Long Day Closes* by Sir Arthur Sullivan
- *Swansea Town* arranged by Gustav Holst
- *Lo, My Shepherd is Divine* by Franz Joseph Haydn
- *He, Watching Over Israel from Elijah* by Felix Mendelssohn
- *The Last Rose of Summer* arranged by Alfred Hill

Membership and other enquires to Marilyn Carey: mcarey@netspeed.com.au

Sue Beatty

Cryptic Crosswords in U3A Canberra

If you are anything like me, I could never figure out how those cryptic crosswords work. A discussion with Meryl Causebrook caused me to do a little digging. I found there were three courses being offered in U3A Canberra (though one was completed when I was writing this). The ones with currently on our website are:

- Continuing Cryptic Crosswords – Hughes (R100.05) led by Julia Rymer (welcoming new players) juliarymer8@gmail.com
- Continuing Cryptic Crossword Skills (R113.03) held at Flynn run by Meryl

An earlier course run by Meryl sounded more like my level as the two above were calling for “experienced crossworders only” or students with “some experience”. I did wonder whether watching a few YouTube videos might give me enough background, but I fear this might be ambitious. For instance:

<https://youtu.be/HrKiYFJxgic>

<https://youtu.be/c9ZtJMAVqqY> (he's a bit weird)

Meryl cautioned me about another wrinkle – apparently US and classic (British) protocols for clue development are different – indeed the grids are also different.

Anyway, Meryl provided some sample clues that would be typical in a cryptic crossword – they are beyond me, but maybe some of you would like to try your hand in solving them and perhaps looking to do a course sometime – or even step in to start a new course given the current courses are full or nearly. Solutions will be at the end of this newsletter.

Less Challenging

- Nice entreaties by social worker (8)
- Partially decorates a long room (5)

More Challenging

- While retreating, an ambush is what gets this ancient city state (6)
- Provide support for an alien reported to be drunk (12)
- King holding a pen not long ago (4, 4)

Bill Blair with help from Meryl Causebrook

Photography Group

This edition I thought it appropriate to have an autumn theme:



Sandra



David Raff – *Colourful Justice* – The High Court in Autumn



Sandra



Robert C Lee



Ross Anderson

Landscapes around Canberra – Their Origin and Evolution

Have you ever wondered how Black Mountain, Mount Ainslie or the Brindabella Ranges came to be in this part of the world and how they may have changed over millions of years? In February – March 2026 an U3A course examined the origins of the landscapes around Canberra throughout geological time and the processes that shaped them. The presenter was Doug Finlayson who has run the course for over ten years. There were three morning classroom sessions at Hughes Room 3 followed by two all-day self-drive tag-along excursions, one around central Canberra and the second around the Cotter – Tidbinbilla region to the west of Canberra.

The course started by explaining the mysteries of plate tectonics, the rock cycle and the water cycle to fifteen keen students. These are the three geological processes that have shaped the planet Earth since its beginnings over four billion years ago.

However, the part of the world that we now call Canberra is, in fact, part of a larger geological province called the Lachlan Fold Belt or Lachlan Orogen. The oldest rocks in Canberra are about 470 million years old and are called the Pittman

Formation and can be seen in outcrop at the side of Caswell Drive along the freeway cutting at Black Mountain or at the tip of the Black Mountain Peninsula. These sedimentary rocks were formed in a deep ocean basin during the Ordovician geological period on the edge of a supercontinent called Gondwanaland.



The course then went on to describe how the brachiopod fossils evolved in Woolshed Creek near the airport and the many granite plutons evolved in the Brindabella Ranges to the west of Canberra during the Silurian and Devonian geological periods. Have you ever wondered why the road between

Canberra and Cooma is so straight? It follows a major crustal fault, the Murrumbidgee Fault that controls the river. The course also examined how geophysics can be used to examine the deeper crustal geology of the region.



The fun part of the course was the two excursions to look at real rocks on the ground round central Canberra first of all and then around Cotter, Tidbinbilla and the Birrigai Education Centre.

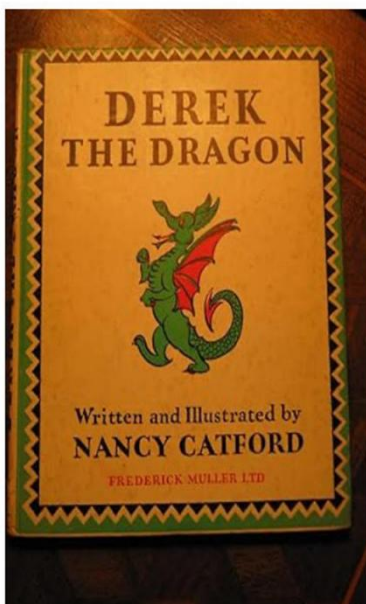
The U3A students also visited the Geoscience Australia education centre, an absolutely magnificent centre for geological teaching.

Doug Finlayson



Memories of Earlier Times

For the Love of Derek



As a small child, one of my favourite books was Derek the Dragon, by Nancy Catford. It was published in 1939, with wartime austerity allowing just three colours. It was a small tome - six inches by five inches (twelve cm by fifteen cm) – just the right size to hold in my five-year-old hands. It was a Christmas present from my grandmother in 1945.

Derek was a simply-drawn green dragon with red eyes, tongue and wings. He was a happy dragon who had been given the wrong spell at his Christening, thus ensuring that at Dragonton School he was always bottom of the class in ranting, roaring and how-to-frighten-people classes.

I delighted in reading the whimsical tales of how Derek had to make his way in the world as a friendly dragon. I was bemused by such gentle Englishness as squirrels, woodpeckers, weasels and robins in the woods, the sea-side, where one ‘bathed’ in the sea, and some very mysterious and obviously edible objects called ‘sticks of rock.’

My reading ability and tastes obviously expanded, but I was blessed with three younger siblings, so I had many years of excuses to read Derek to them, even into my teens.

Our father made an unexpected decision to move from Sydney to Canberra at the beginning of 1963, and the turmoil of deciding what to take to a much smaller house had all five children flustered. I arrived home from work to find a box of books ready for the local children's hospital, and to my horror saw Derek on top of the pile. I moved forward to retrieve it, but the derision from my family – "Why do you want that? You are twenty-two!" - was too much and I left it there, withdrawing my outstretched hand instantly. I then spent the next fifty-eight years wishing I had had more fortitude, including being able to share the delights of the little book with my own children. Nevertheless, 'Derekisms' became part of our family sayings... 'Very tasty, Mr Lion, very tasty indeed!' to describe a nice treat.

Bookshops all over the British Isles had my name and address with a request to let me know if a copy should ever appear. One year, while visiting family members on the Isle of Wight, I found Shide Books at Newport and wrote my name and address in the 'requests' book. When I returned several years later, the young shop owner looked up from his desk and said, before I had uttered a word, "I'm sorry, no sign of Derek the Dragon!"

Then came internet book searches, and new avenues opened up for me.

Eureka! There it was! One single copy in the world, in Lydia's bookshop in America. The cost was about \$100. Rationalising that this was my Christmas present sorted, I contacted Lydia. E-mails flashed back and forth until finally Lydia admitted that she just could not find the book. Someone may have slipped it into their pocket (well, everyone wanted Derek!) I suggested that as it was so small, it may have fallen down behind the shelves. All searching was in vain, so there was Derek, just out of reach again.

In 2001, I was in England again, and reading a copy of a fine magazine for people of a certain age, *The Oldie*. I spotted the section called 'Book Search', where people requested books that others no longer wanted. Surely there might be someone with their copy of our vintage's childhood books.

I took advantage of this, and my request for Derek the Dragon duly appeared in 'Book Search', and I returned to Australia.

On 14th December, 2001, an envelope addressed in an unknown hand arrived from Brighton, England.

I see in The Oldie that you are looking for a copy of Derek the Dragon. I have an old, dearly-loved copy which I should be pleased to let you have, if you would like it. The copy is a first edition, 1939.... and is obviously well-read, but it's not falling to pieces or dilapidated. If you have an offer of a copy in first-class condition, then you should accept that. I do not want anything for my copy....

I would never have sent the little book to a jumble sale or charity shop, but if it means something to you, then I'm delighted for you to have it.

Funnily enough, my children and grandson have not been all that enthusiastic about it. Perhaps there is more choice available now. I grew up in the war, and was grateful for any reading material. I always loved Derek.

Let me know if you'd like me to send him to you.

Best wishes,

Marion.

Marion's notepaper had her address and telephone number, so I rang. It was breakfast time in England. We had a very pleasant chat – here was a kindred spirit! Marion said she'd ask her daughter to post the book to me.

Derek the Dragon finally arrived in my hands in January, 2002. It sits on my desk to this day. Marion's note reads:

It was so surprising to hear from you this morning while we were sitting at breakfast! I really never expected to hear any more after I wrote offering Derek.

Having spoken to you, I'm delighted for you to have the book and I don't require any postage or anything.

I'm so happy for Derek to go where he will be really loved for a few more years! I fear that after me he might just be thrown out, in view of all that is available now. I hope you will be happily reunited with Derek and I send you my very good wishes.

Marion.

I sent a gift and letter of thanks. We began a long-distance friendship, enjoying each other's views on books we were reading.

Later that year, as Christmas approached, I found a lovely card for Marion, and reiterated my delight in finding my old childhood book again.

On 23rd December, a letter arrived from Brighton:

Thank you for your Christmas card. I'm sorry to tell you that Marion passed away on 18th November. She had been ill for eight years with myeloma, and had been in considerable pain all that time, so we must be glad that she is now at peace, although I miss her terribly.

She was sustained during her long illness by our family, her many friends, our garden, pets and her great love of books. I know she was glad that you gave one of them a good home.

With kindest regards, Barry.

Margaret Wright

A Pilgrimage Towards Healing

On my way to work on Monday morning, I reflected on this deep unhappiness that was pervading my being. My life felt like a waste land of meaningless daily rituals. My soul seemingly withering away like the parched landscapes of the drought-ridden Canberra I lived in. Somehow, at some stage, I had lost my Self, my usual positivity and good humour dried up by the relentless burdens of duty and responsibility.

On the surface, I had much to be grateful for. A six-figure salary in a secure job, an abundance of healthy adult children, a comfortable home. But inwardly, my life felt impoverished of meaning and joy. The utter banality and inefficiency of the public service, its rigidity squeezing out pockets of creativity. The close-up view of the machinery of government brutalising my inherently naïve and idealistic disposition. While on the home front, I was basically running a hotel - cleaning, cooking, baking, never knowing who would be home for dinner or when. A space which was constantly messy, bordering on the verge of chaos, where I was reduced to nagging my teenage and adult children, reminding them of their chores, being there for them when they needed me, adjudicating quarrels. All this, while responding to the increasing support needs of my beloved mother as she slowly descended into dementia.

There's a presumption in our society that at age 50 one is supposedly settled in life. Or, over the hill. Not surprisingly, a positive attitude is trickier to sustain when life choices begin to dwindle alongside drive and energy reserves. It seemed all I could do was hang on and watch the last third of my life trickle away ever so quickly, while feeling utterly disenchanting and trapped by the structures of life that I had created, and by the gendered norms of duty and responsibility.

It was this mindset that drove me to plan a holiday on my own, to a place I had never visited before. So, where to go? A Google search came up with Nimbin, the birthplace of the Australian hippie movement. Notoriously non-conformist. For some reason, I liked the sound of that. Plus, the promise of a lush, sub-tropical climate and an abundance of water was especially appealing, for Canberra's ongoing dry had also been contributing to the malaise that was afflicting all levels of my being.

My very first pilgrimage. At the time I wasn't aware that pilgrimage is a first step to finding healing. That it involves self-examination and personal inventory alongside journeying, and in the process hopefully finding salvation and enlightenment. The concept of pilgrimage never entered my mind when I booked my travel. All I thought about back then was the desperate need to run away from my life for a moment in time. With hindsight, though, the concept of pilgrimage has helped me to better understand what this holiday would come to mean for me.

Pilgrimage involves physical effort and a sense of adventure. Mine involved about 5 hours of travel by plane and car. The drive from Brisbane was uninspiring, but after the turnoff to Murwillumbah, I became increasingly entranced by lush, green vegetation, and full rivers that heralded the promise of psychological and spiritual replenishment. My first memorable encounter with a local was a middle-aged man - long dreadlocks, bare chest, bare feet. He reminded me of a gentle forest creature who, like me, had ventured to buy some organic produce at a stall on the side of Kyogle Road. The final few kilometres to my destination, a cottage surrounded by rainforest, was on narrow dirt roads, with numerous, deep potholes. The only noise I could hear was water babbling over rocks in creek, bird song and cicadas. And then I arrived. I was alone. Surrounded by wilderness. Intermittent sunshine alternating with fine spray from gentle showers enveloped me as I unloaded my car. The clouds nestled onto the surrounding hills. It was nothing short of divine.

There were no locks on the doors of my cottage, and curtains covered some but not all the windows. A composting toilet was outside. Sleep didn't come easily that first night. I was unable to shut my bedroom window, and the sounds of nature were deafening: frogs croaking, wildlife shrieking, and constant rain pounding on the roof. I was very conscious I had no phone or internet reception. I was alone, apart from a spider large enough to walk on a leash, which had made its home on the top of my bedroom ceiling. I lay in bed, isolated from all that was familiar to me. But then, I asked myself: does the familiar even make me happy?

In the morning, slowly waking up with a coffee on the veranda, I watched the fog roll into the valley like a gentle, soft blanket. I was spellbound by the scenery and by the fauna – wallabies and bush turkeys, who seem curious rather than scared. A dingo appearing out of nowhere and, just as suddenly, vanishing. Alongside the cacophony of bird song, I heard a python slithering on the cottage roof, seeking out the morning sun. I felt moved to tears by the beauty of this wondrous place. And for the first time in many months, I didn't feel old and over it. Possibly because nature is timeless and overrides humans' preoccupations with life stages measured by their value on the market economy.

Tanked up on caffeine, I ventured into Nimbin. The town was, as I expected, a mecca for druggies, dropouts and tourists. There is no doubt its hippie origins have become commodified and marketed to a fine art. And it attracts some people who indulge in predatory behaviour or overindulge in ways that are unhealthy to self and/or others. Nimbin, this asylum of cultural others, is not for the fainthearted. Paradoxically, it is at the same time socially inclusive. It does not turn away the smelly, the ugly, or the poor. It embraces weirdness. There is space for society's rejects in this unusual little town. And its inversion of mainstream norms governing property ownership, relationships and community opens up spaces wherein individuals and groups are able to test boundaries and explore alternatives. This cultural dialectic is not perfect, but it is creative. And for someone whose creativity had been stifled by the burdens of responsibility and public service dictates, it felt like replenishment.

Over a 10-year period I visited the Rainbow Region several times a year. The rainforest cottage became my healing sanctuary, a place of tranquillity and renewal. Nimbin became my anti-dote to working in a stifflingly rigid, bureaucratic structure in a town consumed by status anxiety. Little did I realise then, that my

first trip would evolve into a series of personal pilgrimages towards healing. Not only did these journeys help me to sustain my spiritual wellbeing; they emboldened me to transform the structures of my life. It is only now, with the cottage sold and no longer available, that I have begun to reflect on this chapter of my life, a time which rekindled within me a sense of wonder and magic. To this day, whenever I feel sad or distressed, I allow my mind to take me back to that cottage, and I am once again able to find solace, and tap into a sense of healing.

Doris Kordes

Like-Minded Programs

U3A Network NSW Annual Conference

The conference was held over 21–22 May in the beautiful coastal setting of Batemans Bay. Organised by Batemans Bay U3A, the conference brought together representatives from many U3As operating under the umbrella of Network NSW, the peak representative body for U3As in NSW.

U3A Canberra was represented by Committee members Maria Margo, Brian Weir and Alex Gosman. Alex also serves as a Board representative on Network NSW. The conference is hosted in a different location each year, with Canberra having hosted the event around six or seven years ago. Attendance was somewhat smaller than anticipated and consisted primarily of committee members from participating U3As.

Conference speakers addressed a range of issues highly relevant to today's U3As, including mature-age learning, succession planning, wellbeing and happiness, artificial intelligence, and Member Wizard. The program also provided valuable networking opportunities, allowing U3As to compare experiences and share approaches on matters such as membership fees, course structures, and the use of technology.

Alex presented a session on "Engaging Members", outlining "Ten Commandments" for consideration in how U3As support and engage their members (see President's Report). The presentation was very well received.

Following the conference, the Network NSW Board met to discuss objectives and priorities for the coming year, including the key elements of a strategic plan aimed at supporting the long-term sustainability and viability of its 85 member U3As.

School Volunteer Program ACT is Recruiting Again

Thank you to all the members of U3A who have joined the School Volunteer Program in the ACT. There are now more than 180 volunteers supporting students across 135 of the ACT public schools.

In 2026 we still have large numbers of students in the education system who struggle to read the printed word, many of whom have no other learning problems.

As a volunteer with the School Volunteer Program it is so rewarding to see the students gain self confidence and enjoy their school experience more once they master reading.

Reading is such an important skill. Once you can read the world becomes much easier to navigate.

One of our volunteers described her experience:

Volunteering in schools is fulfilling because of the joy of seeing children grow and progress in their personalities and learning. For anyone who has little contact with younger persons it is very stimulating to be regularly oriented to a younger person's point of view and interests. It provides the volunteer with empathy for and understanding of younger generations keeping the doors and windows of life open.

Every year we need to recruit new volunteers. Each volunteer must have a current Working with Vulnerable People card.

We offer Information sessions to potential mentors, so that they can find out all about what is required to volunteer with us.

We have two events coming up in July 2026.

- On July 24 we are holding an Information session for potential mentors from 10 am – 12 Noon.
- One week later on July 31 we are holding a training session for volunteers who want to be part of our literacy support program.

To find out the details go to our website <https://svpact.org.au/> or contact Nola Shoring on 0434 537 555 or by email to shoringnola@gmail.com

Nola Shoring, President SVPACT

National Eight Foot Pitch Recorder Orchestra

In early March the National Eight Foot Pitch Recorder Orchestra (NEFPRO) gathered for a wonderful workshop and concert. Unlike traditional recorder groups, this orchestra features only the large, low-pitched instruments — no tiny, high recorders in sight! The result? A rich, resonant sound like a magnificent pipe organ.

With some of these giant instruments being quite rare, musicians travel from across Eastern Australia to be part of this truly unique ensemble.

A special thank you to Margaret Wright, who has led the U3A Canberra weekly recorder orchestra and ensemble for an incredible 30 years, as well as directing NEFPRO for the last 10 years. Your dedication and passion bring music — and community — to so many.”



Photo by Peter Hislop.

Kristine Riethmiller

National Trust Australia (ACT)

Everyday Heritage: Conviviality, Creativity, Care

Our August Heritage Symposium is being held on 15 August at the National Film and Sound Archive. It celebrates how heritage is lived, loved and created through everyday life in the ACT region by exploring the themes of conviviality, creativity and care.

Conviviality: how do food and drink and community feasts and celebrations connect people, transmit culture and shape everyday heritage?

Creativity: from design to craft traditions, to contemporary art interventions that reimagine heritage for new audiences, what place does creativity play in shaping our experience of everyday heritage?

Care: how do caring relationships shape everyday heritage? This theme includes family and community histories, visitor interpretation, intergenerational knowledge, and the work of caring, for places, objects, and traditions.



Ticket prices: \$50.00 full registration Bookings open 1 July
<https://www.trybooking.com/DMLTP> .

Linda Roberts

2026 E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition

Every family has a story – write yours now!



The deadline for entries to Family History ACT's 2026 E.M. Fletcher Writing Competition is fast approaching — **15 July** is just around the corner!

If you've been thinking about entering but haven't quite started, there's still time to do so. Whether your story is almost finished or just a spark of an idea, now is the perfect moment to turn family anecdotes, or family history research, into a story to submit to the 2026 competition. Remember, your story doesn't need to be long – 1,500 – 2,000 words.

For competition guidelines and submission details, visit our competition webpage

<https://www.familyhistoryact.org.au/index.cfm?display=1166856> , or send any questions to writingcompetition@familyhistoryact.org.au .

If you're looking for a little push to get started, you can read extracts from past winning entries on the FHACT website by scrolling down to the bottom of the 'Writing Competition Information' page (see: <https://www.familyhistoryact.org.au/writingcompetitioninformation>).



FAMILY
HISTORY
ACT

Ann Peut

Other Matters of Possible Interest

NSW Transport Opal Card – a Tragedy in Multiple Parts

I wonder if anyone else in U3A Canberra has shared my experience in respect to their Opal Gold (Senior/Pensioner) card.



Just after Easter I received a rather disturbing letter stating that my Senior/Pensioner card was blocked and would be suspended in two weeks given that my 'entitlement' had expired. The letter kindly advised a telephone number of the 'entitlement' authority so I could phone to resolve.

The phone number turned out to be Transport Canberra who, after an extended 'music on hold' told me that they had no involvement in advising Opal/Transport NSW my entitlement to a Senior card – my ACT Senior Card was the responsible of Council on the Ageing ACT.

Hmm, a slightly shorter wait but a quick response that my ACT Senior's card does not expire but that COTA doesn't engage with Transport NSW. I will acknowledge that the gentleman did phone me back a little later saying that a number of other Canberrans were having a similar experience and COTA would discuss with Transport Canberra. (No update so far.)

I turned to my local Assembly member, who forwarded my concern to the responsible Minister (Chris Steel). When I returned from overseas at the end of April, and contacted Minister Steel to inform him that my Opal card had indeed been cancelled I received "For matters relating to my ministerial responsibilities, I will engage with relevant officials to ensure any necessary investigation can occur and prepare any required response. Typically, it can take between 6 and 8 weeks for a matter to be investigated and for formal response to be provided." I suppose he's got a few weeks left to run.

I took to phoning Opal directly and found that the 'entitlement number' was not my ACT Senior's Card number – enlightened the mystery. I was transferred to a specialist who advised it wasn't possible for her to edit my profile with my ACT Senior's card – I had to apply for a new Senior/Pensioner Opal Card. Some effort to establish a new account to order the card which in due course arrived. Contacted Opal to transfer the money (\$24) from my old card and the operator was very helpful in merging the two accounts. I was assured that the remaining funds in my old card could be transferred to my new card, but first I had to tap on an Opal reader – within the next 60 days. When we explored the idea of taking a trip from Goulburn (where Opal card is accepted) my wife and I found very few trains for which Opal is accepted. The operator offered an alternative – go to Goulburn and tap on, tap off 30 seconds later which would cancel the trip but still activate the card.

Sounded like we had a plan so off we went to Goulburn station (beautiful building by the way). Tapped on the reader only to be told I had no funds (so presumably not properly activated?). On advice from a friendly station master we went across the road to Woolworths. The card was functioning sufficiently to allow adding of \$5. Back to the station and successfully tapped on, 30 second wait, tap off ... but only showing \$5 credit. Phoned Opal. They had no record of my \$24 being scheduled to be transferred to my new card. They could schedule the transfer but then I'd have to tap on within the next 60 days or the money would go back to the old card? Anyone want to join me for another trip to Goulburn sometime?

Bill Blair

Cryptic Crosswords Solutions

Less Challenging

Nice entreaties by social worker (8)

Solution: Pleasant

Partially decorates a long room (5)

Solution: salon

More Challenging

While retreating, an ambush is what gets this ancient city state (6)

Solution: Sparta

Provide support for an alien reported to be drunk (12)

Solution: Bacchanalian

King holding a pen not long ago (4, 4)

Solution: last year

So, how did you go?

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