



U3A Castlemaine Inc.

Reg. No. A0017409G

Encompassing the Shire of Mount Alexander and
nearby communities

Learning in the Third Age

Members Handbook

Updated January, 2011

MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a Member

Application forms are available from the Secretary or Treasurer at the monthly Coffee Mornings or from the U3A Castlemaine office, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine. Completed membership forms are returned to the Secretary who then presents them to the next meeting of the Committee for acceptance. Our Constitution allows for any person retired or semi-retired to make an application for membership.

Annual Subscription

The subscription is set at each Annual General Meeting. Members joining U3A Castlemaine after 30th June pay only 50% of the annual subscription for that year. Associate Membership is available to members of other U3As for 50% of the annual subscription fee.

Name Badges

Name badges are issued to all members who are requested to wear them at all U3A functions and classes both as a form of identification and so that no one may be embarrassed by a “senior’s moment”. The Secretary is responsible for the printing of the badges.

Register of Members

The Constitution requires a Register of Members to be kept. A Membership Application form is required to be completed by new members and a Subscription Renewal form by existing members to ensure that our records are kept up to date. The Register of Members is kept by the Membership Officer. Privacy Legislation ensures that members’ personal details are not given to any outside bodies or persons. When new members register they are requested to sign the following statement: *“I agree to allow my telephone number and email address to be disclosed to other members within the organization.”*

Change of Address

If you change your postal address, email address or telephone number please advise the Secretary or the Membership Officer.

Life Membership

The Committee resolved in May 2000 that Life Membership may be conferred on a member as the result of exceptional service to U3A Castlemaine in many diverse areas over a long period of time. The number of Life Members is not to exceed more than 5% of the total membership at any one time, unless in exceptional circumstances.

HISTORY

In the University of the Third Age, the term “University” is used in the original sense, meaning a community of seekers of knowledge and understanding, for its own sake. It started in Toulouse, France in 1973. It had close ties with programs run by the University there. The concept grew rapidly in Australia, but any formal connection with a university was rejected, and each U3A functions through the co-operation of its own members. U3A Castlemaine began its formal existence in June 1988 and became an incorporated body. Its Constitution is available to any member for reference.

Today U3A Castlemaine is an autonomous organization, loosely connected to a ‘Network’ of other U3As. Our purpose is to provide learning opportunities for people who are retired or semi-retired, using members’ own skills and abilities where possible so they may teach and learn together.

U3A Castlemaine and its relationship with other U3As

U3A Castlemaine is autonomous. There is however a ‘Network’ of most Victorian U3As which seeks to work for the betterment of all U3As. U3A Castlemaine is represented at Network meetings. Members of any U3A are welcome at meetings of other U3As. U3A Castlemaine especially welcomes visitors from other U3As.

FUNDING

U3A Castlemaine is dependent for its day to day operations on monies received through the subscriptions of its members and funds raised from the Trading Table and cake raffle held at each Coffee Morning. From time to time grants have been made from government sources in response to applications for specific purposes.

Trading Table

To assist with fund raising, a Trading Table is conducted at each Coffee Morning to which members contribute, for sale, produce or items no longer needed. A cake raffle is also conducted at these meetings and volunteer members are rostered to provide the cakes to be raffled.

Member Financial Contribution

To help defray the costs of printing, electricity and internet connections, a small contribution per session is required of all members attending computer classes. Some other classes also require a small payment to cover the cost of materials or venue.

Expenditure

The major portion of funds is expended in rent for class accommodation and the U3A Castlemaine office, together with administration expenses. Class Convenors are requested not to be out of pocket for expenses incurred in the conduct of their classes and can apply for re-imbursment of any appropriate expenses to the Committee of Management through the Course Co-ordinator.

ADMINISTRATION**Constitution**

The provisions of its Constitution govern the activities of U3A Castlemaine. Under this Constitution executive office bearers comprising a President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Newsletter Editor, Course Co-ordinator together with 5 Ordinary Committee Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting held in October each year. The Immediate Past President is automatically a member of the Committee.

Committee at Work

The Committee meets monthly at the Uniting Church Hall, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine. The Committee is responsible for the overall co-ordination of the administration for the year, managing the organisation's finances and forward planning

The Committee seeks to meet the needs of each member and group. Any member may attend any Committee Meeting as an observer, but has no right to vote. They may contribute to discussion, if invited to do so by the Chairperson. The attendance by members is valued and welcomed. The Committee may co-opt members where necessary.

Other Positions

In addition to the Committee, volunteers undertake many other tasks. Your help with those is always appreciated and is a good way to meet fellow members.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The AGM of U3A Castlemaine is held, by custom, on the first Friday in October at 10.00am. Nominations of candidates for election as Office Bearers must be made in writing, signed by two financial members of U3A Castlemaine and be accompanied by the written consent of the member. Forms for nomination can be obtained from the Secretary and the completed form must be lodged with the Secretary not less than 7 days before the date of the AGM.

Newsletter

The newsletter is available on the U3A Castlemaine website: www.u3acastlemaine.com which is an excellent and comprehensive website. Members can also collect copies of the newsletter at the Coffee Morning, or may pay an extra fee to have the newsletter mailed to them. The newsletter serves as notice of plans for forthcoming events and as a communication medium for reporting class activities.

Members are encouraged to make reports of events of an unusual nature, opinions on controversial subjects pertaining to U3A and creations in the form of prose, poetry or art. The deadline for items to be included in each newsletter appears in the monthly program.

The Editor is responsible for the inclusion or non-inclusion of any item. Items for the Newsletter can be emailed to the current Newsletter Editor at the email address advertised in the newsletter, preferably in Word format. Handwritten or typed items can be left at the U3A Office.

Photos submitted must be saved in JPEG format if good quality printing is to be ensured. They can be either saved on a CD or attached to an email.

U3A Website

The Webmaster is responsible for publishing and updating the U3A Castlemaine website which can be found at www.u3acastlemaine.com. The Webmaster's contact details can be found on the website.

You are encouraged to use the website to check on class and other U3A information. Course leaders may use the site to supplement and update course material.

Web content can only be updated by the Webmaster guided by policies approved by the Committee. Items for the website about any non-U3A activity must be approved by two members of the Committee Executive.

Rent and our Responsibilities

Rent is paid for the use of the Uniting Church facilities and other suitable premises. As good tenants, it is important that when leaving the buildings all windows and doors are locked, the urn, heater and lights are turned off and the furniture replaced. At the Uniting Church venue adequate parking is available within the church grounds.

Insurance

U3A Castlemaine has public liability insurance cover but the personal accident cover only applies to members if they are on duty (e.g. as tutors) at the time of an accident. A member's signature on a U3A Roll Card or Attendance Book will help to establish attendance at a U3A event if a public liability claim arises at a later date. The U3A Insurance policy does not cover use of private homes. The owner of every private home used for U3A classes or social events should have their own public liability insurance policy to protect themselves from potential claims. For visiting leaders or presenters there is an insurance indemnity form which the visitor should be asked to complete.

DUTIES AND EXPECTATIONS

All Members—Keeping of Attendance Records

All groups are asked to keep a record of attendance at all meetings. Roll cards, supplied for this purpose, are stored in the U3A Castlemaine office or are available from the Course Co-ordinator. These completed rolls are available to the Course Co-ordinator as are the visitor's insurance indemnity forms. For the purpose of insurance it is essential that each member personally sign the attendance record at each meeting they attend.

Class Convenors/Leaders

Convenors are those who undertake to lead an activity under the auspices of U3A Castlemaine. As the Convenor of a class they undertake to:

- Provide a description of the proposed activities of the class for inclusion in the Course Prospectus on the form provided by the Course Co-ordinator.
- Organize the activities provided to the class. Class Convenors do not have to act as the teacher/lecturer/tutor/instructor, but they are responsible for ensuring the program for the class.
- Keep a roll of all those attending each class. This roll provides a record of attendance in the case of insurance claims or in the case of misadventure.
- Ensure that class times and places are notified to all members. The correct times and location of class meetings assist with insurance coverage.

- Appoint a member of the class to provide a report of the activities of the class in each edition of the newsletter, particularly future activities.
- Ensure that the names of any leaders/assistants/tutors who are not members of U3A Castlemaine are submitted, in writing, to the Secretary at least one month before their appointment, for the purposes of insurance. These persons may be listed as Honorary Members.
- Submit a record of expenses incurred through conducting the class for reimbursement either at the end of each term or at the conclusion of the activity. Whilst it is not possible to pay for instruction, no Class Leader should be out of pocket for expenses involved in the conduct of the class.

A VCR/DVD player is located in the equipment cupboard in the office, the key for which should be obtained from the U3A Office, Equipment Officer or Secretary.

ACTIVITIES

Program

The Course Co-ordinator is responsible for the development of the Program. The program is timed to fit the school terms with special theme-based programs planned during the year. A timetable for the upcoming term is published in the newsletter.

Duration of Activities

Activities vary in their duration and frequency of meeting times. The majority of activities last for the year and are held weekly, or once or twice a month. A recent development has been the introduction of short-term classes which meet weekly for two to four sessions. Other activities are “once off” lectures, demonstrations or workshops. For any meeting or activity it is essential that those who are attending personally sign the attendance register for insurance and funding purposes.

Location of Activities

Activities are conducted wherever it best suits the Class Convenor. Some classes are held in private homes, but most are held in either the hall of the Uniting Church, U3A Office, or other suitable accommodation.

Forming of Groups

If you, as a member, feel that you would like another group to be formed, consult the Course Co-ordinator.

Operation of Groups

It is the policy of U3A Castlemaine that all activities be non-sectarian and non-political. Otherwise it is not the wish of the Committee to dictate to individual groups what they discuss. Matters of insurance require that the public should not be invited to any activity without the prior consent of the Committee, nor must there be any press release without the Committee's approval.

Enrolment in Activities

At the beginning of each year enrolment days are organized so that members can express their intentions and the viability of classes can be determined. The practice is for the Program Prospectus to be published in early December. An enrolment form and subscription form are included with the Prospectus. All members need to do is complete the personal information details and then place a tick in the boxes which represent their choice of activities. Unless otherwise notified, members should assume acceptance into courses for which they have indicated an interest. Enrolment Day is usually run in conjunction with membership renewal and payment of fees.

COFFEE MORNINGS

Coffee Mornings are held on the first Friday of each month, unless otherwise notified, at 10.00am in the Uniting Church Hall. Apart from a short business meeting and a guest speaker, Coffee Mornings are informal and are meant to allow members the opportunity to meet in a social environment with other members whom they may not necessarily meet in their classes. At the Coffee Morning you can collect your newsletter, browse the trading table and obtain other information that is posted on the notice board, take a ticket in the cake raffle and, of course, avail yourself of tea, coffee and light refreshments.

Guidelines for Coffee Morning Duty

The Duty Group is always shown on the previous month's calendar in the newsletter. Members need to be there by 9.30am to set up the room for the meeting. A volunteer brings the milk, sugar, tea and coffee but members of the Duty Group usually bring something in the way of light refreshments. The meeting is usually held first followed by morning coffee.

Setting up the room involves moving chairs and tables and other duties as required by the Secretary. At the conclusion of the meeting the furniture is to be replaced in its original position, eg chairs in stacks of three.

COMPUTERS

The PC computer group of U3A Castlemaine is housed in the old Visitors' Information Centre, affectionately known to us as "The Octopus". Computer classes are held here on most days of the week where members act as tutors to instruct other members in computing skills from switch on through word processing, web surfing, email, to digital imaging. There are short courses lasting only a few weeks to more lengthy courses. There is a small fee per session to cover the considerable ongoing costs associated with running this facility which cannot be covered by funding.

Computer Maintenance

The computers are maintained by a member who has expertise in this area. Rules regarding their use are issued to each tutor who is responsible for the safe operation of the Octopus and the locking up and turning off of all electrical appliances. Each tutor is issued with a key which may **not** be lent out.

Mac Computers

There is an active Mac User Group within U3A, which meets once a week (please see www.u3acastlemaine.com).

U3A OFFICE

Emails

Emails can be sent to the U3A Castlemaine office at u3acastlemaine@mmnet.com.au. Emails are checked 3 times a week by the office volunteer staff.

Office volunteer staff

In 2007 an office was established within the Parish Centre of the Uniting Church, 12 Lyttleton Street, Castlemaine. The office is staffed three half days a week by volunteers. If you would like to be a volunteer please contact either the Office Manager on 5472 2249 or the Secretary who will be very grateful for your assistance. Training will be provided.

EQUIPMENT

Digital Camera

A digital camera is available for use by members. It may be borrowed, when not in use for computer based courses, through the Computer Convenor.

Overhead Projector

An overhead projector is kept in the Equipment Cupboard in the U3A office. It may be borrowed through the Office Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Course Co-ordinator and must be recorded in the “Borrowings Register” which is kept in the office.

Photocopier

A photocopier is located in the office. It is available for U3A groups, Committee and Office use only. Use of the copier must be recorded in the Photocopier register near the photocopier. Please indicate which group or course is involved, sign and date the register and state clearly the number of copies made. Photocopying can be done during office hours (refer page 12) and outside class meeting times, i.e. before 9.30am, between 12.30 and 1.30pm and after 3.30pm. Malfunctions/lack of paper/other problems should be reported to the Office Co-ordinator or Secretary.

Tape Recorder

A tape recorder is available for use. It may be borrowed through the Office Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Course Co-ordinator and be entered in the “Borrowings Book” held in the office.

TV, VCR/DVD Player

All U3A groups are free to use this equipment. The equipment and the obtaining of videos/DVDs is the responsibility of the Video Officer. The TV is mounted on a trolley and should only be moved with the greatest of care, pushing from the ends only, never from the back or front. The VCR/DVD player is located in the locked Equipment Cupboard in the U3A office. Key is available at the office.

Digital Projector and Laptop Computer

The digital projector and laptop are available for use by any trained Class Leader or Committee member for U3A Castlemaine purposes only. This equipment is kept in the locked metal Equipment cupboard in the office. The Office Co-ordinator keeps a list of persons who have been trained in the use of the projector. Training can be provided by an authorised person of U3A Castlemaine.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Is U3A Castlemaine a University?** *No. It is a place where older people are encouraged to share and learn about things of mutual interest.*
- Do I need qualifications to join?** *The only qualification is that the person is retired or semi-retired.*
- Is there a charge for classes?** *Some classes charge a small fee per session per member for photocopying or materials.*
- How many classes can I attend?** *As many, or as few as you wish.*
- When are the activities held?** *Most activities are held during the day on Mondays to Fridays.*
- Are classes held during school holidays?** *There are sometimes special activities organized for school holidays but some classes prefer to continue.*
- How often do Class Groups meet?** *Each group decides this. Some meet once a month, some fortnightly and others weekly. There are some “once off” short term activities.*
- Who are the Class Leaders?** *Some are members with special interests or knowledge from their previous work experience or from hobbies or recreation. Others lead groups because they enjoy the challenge of learning and sharing with others. Yet others act as Convenors using the knowledge and skills available from members of the group.*

- What kinds of activities are offered?** *There are currently over 60 courses conducted within the following categories: Art & Photography, Computers, History, Other Humanities, Languages, Life Style, Music and Dance, Science, Social, Current Events, plus access to some Latrobe University lectures.*
- How do I join a class or group?** *In December of each year members are issued with a Prospectus outlining the courses which are to run for the term, semester or year. Enrolment days are held in conjunction with membership subscription renewals in January. Thereafter new classes and activities are advertised in the newsletter where guidelines for enrolment are specified.*
- Who runs U3A Castlemaine?** *A Committee of Management consisting of 5 elected office bearers, past president and 5 ordinary committee members.*
- Am I covered by Insurance?** *U3A currently has public liability insurance cover but the personal accident cover only applies to members if they are on duty (eg as tutors) at the time of an accident. Your signature on a U3A Class Roll Card or Attendance Book will help to establish your attendance at a U3A event if a public liability claim arises at a later date.*
- Does U3A Castlemaine have an office?** *Yes. The office is leased from the Uniting Church in the Parish Centre, 12 Lyttleton St, Castlemaine and is staffed three times a week by volunteer staff.*

STILL WANT TO KNOW?

If there is a question in your mind which is not answered in this booklet, on any matter affecting U3A Castlemaine, then we suggest that you select from the following options:

Ask the leader/convenor of the particular group to which the question may relate;

Or

If you have a question relating to the Committee then telephone the U3A Office on 5472 2249 during office hours, or contact the President or Secretary on the phone numbers advertised in the monthly newsletter. A list of current committee members, together with class convenors, is enclosed with this booklet on a separate sheet.

Please address all correspondence to U3A Castlemaine Inc.

The Secretary
U3A Castlemaine Inc.
PO Box 792
CASTLEMAINE. 3450

Email the office at u3acastlemaine@mmnet.com.au

or

Visit our Website at www.u3acastlemaine.com

Office Hours

Mondays: 1.30—3.30pm
Tuesdays: 1.30—3.30 pm
Wednesdays: 10am—12noon

Honorary Life Members

Bruce Baud
Lisle Freedman
Helen Green (Dec)
Dorothy Henshall
Judy McKenzie
Malcolm McKenzie (Dec)
Brian Poidevin
Marie Shaw (Dec)
Rhoda von Laue
Peggy Munro
Valorie Anderson
Alan Robinson