

Dear All

Well after a minor hiccup, we are back and operating at Karingal Place and some of our off- campus venues. The classes are smaller, but we are anticipating the go ahead to increase numbers in the coming weeks. We have also amended parts of the program to allow for longer classes as requested by our tutors and some of you. Thank you to everyone for your patience. Hopefully, the Choir will be up and running again soon. Keep wearing those masks in public areas and use the sanitiser and cleaner. I also welcome our new members and some returning members. Thank you for your interest and confidence in U3A Frankston.

Your donations to the office of paper, biscuits and various other items have been a wonderful help to us as well as your willingness to pay your class fees ahead of time. Thank you.

We welcome some new tutors and new help in the Office. Please make them as welcome as you always do. They are all volunteers and very valuable members of our family. We are currently also negotiating to offer new classes at other venues such as Mount Eliza and Carrum Downs.

As the vaccine rollout commences, we will see a little more optimism creep into the community. This will not end the pandemic, but I believe it will at least protect our most vulnerable from the worst effects of this terrible scourge.

I did enjoy watching the Australian Open Tennis and apart from the disappointment of Ash Barty not making it to the final, I commend the organisers for doing what most of us thought was impossible.

March marks the beginning of Autumn. This is when the gardens become their most spectacular with colours and shades of green and brown appearing everywhere. We are so fortunate to have such a beautiful environment to enjoy and we must of course look after it.

Early in March we celebrate International Women's Day. To the men who are reading this, I could not resist mentioning it!!! It is a day to acknowledge the achievements of women over the years and for those of you who attend my classes either on Zoom or Face to Face, you will know that I have found some amazing unsung heroines to laud. There are many more, so I look forward to seeing some of you next Wednesday and the rest the following Monday.

As we get a little older, our birthdays seem to get closer together and March is my birthday month. With the passing years, I remember being at boarding school and having the thrill of my mother driving all the way to the school to deliver my cake. She had made one of her marvellous fruit cakes and a friend of hers had iced it. My favourite was, I recall, when Doctor Who was at its height on the TV and I had a police box and a dalek on the top. Happy Memories. So, to anyone else who has a birthday this month, I say, Happy Birthday. Enjoy every moment of it.

I hope with this mild weather that many of you have managed to get out and about again. I know the ramblers' group is up and going and so is the golf but for those of you with a dog or a friend to walk with, now is a marvellous time to get out and breathe the air. Having spent so much of last year under lockdown, it is essential we take every chance to exercise.

I hope to catch up with as many of you as possible in the coming weeks.

Stay safe and stay well.

Andrea McCall

PS. As a result of announcement from the Premier on 26th February, masks are now no longer mandatory in class. We are now able to increase numbers of people in each classroom and so those of you on the waiting list may be lucky enough to join your chosen class. The class coordinator will be in touch with those tutors with waiting lists to confirm their preferred class numbers. Please still be mindful of safety and of hygiene to ensure we do not return to the previous restrictions.

We are now moving towards a COVID normal world, I ask us all to be ever vigilant and careful.