

Presidential Ponderings – June 2021

Well, here we are again – ground-hog day, déjà vu or whatever you wish to call it. Sadly, we are back into a lockdown for what we hope is only a very short time. We are strong and resilient and having endured 112 days last year, we should get through this.

I had hoped that we had seen the last of these, but it is very clear that this virus is virulent and very persistent. Please all of you stay safe and ailment free. Don't forget all the usual sensible things like sanitiser, masks and getting tested or vaccinated.

We will let you know as soon as classes recommence. I will be doing my usual face to face class on Wednesday on Zoom instead. Feel free to join in if you wish.

We have been thriving at U3A Frankston. Our classes are well attended, and Graham as Class Coordinator has come up with some excellent new offerings. Ann is working hard on our Winter Warmers series, and I do hope you will be joining us for some of them. We have also upgraded our software and purchased a couple of new tables for the Mah Jong classes. Thank you also for the donation of laptop bags.

Last week was Volunteers Week and we were lucky enough to receive a small grant in recognition of our hard work. We decided to give a small token of our appreciation to all those tutors who worked throughout our massive lockdown last year by continuing classes on Zoom or YouTube. I have purchased vouchers for each of them and we will be distributing them over the next few weeks, virus willing. A huge thank you again to all of them for their dedication to us all.

Please let me remind you that we are looking for committee members for next year. I ask each and every one of you to consider what contribution you could make to your U3A. It does not survive without the strength and commitment of those people – from Leonie and her team of office volunteers, to tutors and above all to the treasurer, and the president. Being a part of the decision making of any group is exciting and very rewarding and I know I have really enjoyed my term at the helm of such a wonderful collection of people.

The book launch for *Stories at the End of the Line* went well and it was good to see a number of U3A Frankston members represented within the pages of the book.

June marks the true beginning of winter and I know many of you if circumstances were different would be heading north. I do hope you will be able to, but if not, take advantage of our experience from last year and set about all those chores you have ignored for the last few months. The gardens will appreciate your tender care and have another look at the wardrobe and the cupboards.

Later in the year we will be participating in Seniors Week again – by exhibiting our paintings at the Carrum Downs shopping Centre in late October and by having a stall at a small expo at the Frankston Arts Centre (not organised by us this time, thank heavens) and another at Mount Eliza Neighbourhood House Fete. We hope to run our Bunnings sausage sizzle again soon and would welcome any volunteers to assist us. Please let the office know if you are interested.

This week should have been the opening of a new international arts festival in Melbourne called *Rising*. Regrettably, the shows for this week have been cancelled. Spare a thought for all those artists and organisers who worked so hard to get this off the ground. A number of excellent shows at

the Frankston Arts Centre have also been cancelled for the second time. The staff tell me it is very demotivating, and I do understand.

I also feel desperately for the owners of small businesses – cafes, hairdressers, one off retail stores etc. This is a hard road for anyone but for those trying to feed families, pay rent or mortgages this is a dreadfully stressful time. Our thoughts are with them.

Until we meet again at Karingal Place, my best wishes to you all and above all stay safe

Andrea McCall, President