



U3A NORTHERN ILLAWARRA

Newsletter

No. 112

Editor: Ainslie Lamb

Term 1, 2026

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear U3A Members

At the start of another new year I'd like to wish you all a very safe and happy 2026. Let us embrace our U3A friendships and promote a friendly and supportive network.



This year brings a few new developments:

1. Look out for a refreshed website. Our website is our public face and new retirees who hopefully join in the near future will expect a website that is a little more responsive to their needs. This is not a dramatic make-over, but our listings of what's on, for example, will be more transparent and up-to-date, including our offerings at Stanwell Park. I'd like to thank Jason Wright (non-member) for his assistance.
2. Jason has also worked with us to develop our digital membership renewal system allowing you to pay via credit card. You should have received an email before Christmas about this. If you have not yet renewed your membership please do so as soon as possible. \$50 per annum is excellent value for the diverse range of activities that we offer.
3. Talking of diverse offerings, I'm please to be able to inform you that due to demand, a new group, Line Dancing, will commence on 3 February at 1.30 in the Excelsior Hall. This activity will be offered EVERY Tuesday from 1.30-2.30. Joe Lane will be the tutor. Joe has bought a range of DVDs starting for beginners and then progressing beyond that. NOTE: the Hall will open at 1pm so that the class can commence at 1.30 sharp. Ensure you are wearing appropriate footwear (cowbot dress and hat optional).

Best wishes

Patrick

President, U3A Northern Illawarra

We pay our respects and acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Land on which we meet, the Dharawal and Wadi Wadi people, whose country extends from the area around Helensburgh to the Shoalhaven River, and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Happy Lunar New Year - February 17 2026 – Year of the Fire Horse

2026 is the **Year of the Fire Horse** in the Chinese zodiac, beginning on February 17, 2026 and ending February 5, 2027, bringing an energetic, bold, and action-oriented period symbolizing freedom, innovation, and ambition, with strong Yang Fire energy encouraging big changes, creativity, and travel but requiring mindfulness to avoid restlessness.

Themes: Independence, forward momentum, courage, transformation, and chasing goals.

Opportunities: Ideal for starting new ventures, career leaps, creative projects, and travel.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TERM 1 - note these dates in your diary now

The **2026 NSW Seniors Festival** will be held between 2-15 March- note the following events_

- **Shellharbour Seniors Trivia Challenge**, to be held on **Thursday 5th March** . We usually have 2 teams of 6 in this event. If you would like to attend, please contact Margaret (0411 426 899)
- The **Premier's Seniors Gala Concert** in Sydney which will be held on **Thursday 12th March**: we have been allocated 20 tickets for the 2:45pm performance. The concert runs for approximately 1 hour and 45 minutes, including a short intermission. Groups are encouraged to arrive at the venue early. Doors into the Theatre Auditorium will open at approximately 1 hour before the show commences. Contact Margaret If you would like to attend. (0411 526 899) Those attending should meet at Thirroul Railway Station to catch the 11.48am train to Sydney, second carriage, which will leave time for lunch at Central in advance of the Concert.
- **Open Day at our U3A – Wednesday 11th March** . when we will showcase our U3A activities. Bring a friend , and encourage new potential members to come along and learn what U3A is about, and what educational, physical and social activities are available at our U3A.

Memory Walk & Jog - Sunday 22nd March , Lang Park Wollongong, in support of Alzheimers Australia, commencing at 7.30am. Form a group and walk or jog over 2, 6 or 9km. together. Information and registration at memorywalk@dementiaaustralia.org.au

Payment of 2026 Membership fees

The annual membership fee for 2026 remains at \$50 – what a bargain! It entitles you to attend as many of our programs as you wish. Payment should be made by February 28 to ensure your membership continuity.

Members have or will be been advised how to make direct payment by credit card. Alternatively you can make payment Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). The U3A bank details are:

- Bendigo Bank, Fairy Meadow branch,
- BSB: 633 000
- Account Number: 187 964 762
- Account Name: U3A Northern Illawarra
- Reference: Your surname and initial

If you aren't able to pay by EFT you can pay in cash or with your debit/credit card to the Treasurer at the Wednesday talk session, or by cash to the Group Leader at your preferred Special Interest Group.

New Members – You must complete an application form, to be submitted with payment of the annual membership fee. The form is available on our website –

www.northernillawarra.u3anet.org.au – *Membership menu About membership* – or you can obtain it at Wednesday talks or from your special interest group leader.

Your membership badge is available for collection at Wednesday Talks.

Are you interested in a U3A Table Games group?

Some members have indicated interest in forming a group for table games such as Scrabble, Mah Jong, Rummikub , Bananas etc. If you are interested, talk to Sue Muller, and if there is sufficient interest, we can work out when and where to meet. Rules can be explained.

Contact Sue on 0476 291 996

WEDNESDAY TALKS PROGRAM - TERM 1 2025

At the Excelsior Hall, Thirroul Community Centre, Lawrence Hargrave Drive, Thirroul
Talks are scheduled for 9.30am, followed by morning tea

Note - *The timetable may change on occasion.. The best way to stay up to date is by checking the latest Wednesday Program menu button at www.northernillawarra.u3anet.org.au*

28 Jan	Alison Byrnes, Federal member for Cunningham	Alison will talk about My Aged Care and other Senior related policy issues
4 Feb	Aileen Harland, a member of Wollongong U3A and regular speaker	Protest and Revolutionary song: Why do we protest? And why do we protest through song? A wide ranging investigation, including examples that consider indigenous issues, early feminist claims, historical Irish demands and ongoing Ukrainian voices in the world today
11 Feb	Helen Wilson (U3A NI member)	The Illawarra Folk Festival (now in its 39 th year). A history of the Festival and what it takes to organise and run successfully.
18 Feb	Judy Bull (U3A NI member)	What really happened to Anastasia? Grand Duchess Anastasia was believed murdered along with the rest of the Romanov family in Russia in 1918. but conflicting reports about possible survivors led to a number of imposter claims. There is now a musical called Anastasia, soon to be seen in Australia.
25 Feb	Maryanne Stuart, State member for Heathcote	Maryanne will talk about State based issues affecting Seniors in our region, including traffic (Bulli bypass) E-bikes, koalas etc.
4 Mar	Cherri Hardaker	The Knitting Nannas, their activities and the causes they support
11 Mar	NSW Seniors Festival. U3A Northern Illawarra Open Day Showcase	Encourage new potential members to come along and learn what U3A is about, and the range of activities available at our U3 A.
18 Mar	Annual debate- U3A NI v. Bulli High School	Topic: <i>That there should be a tax on sugar</i>
25 Mar	Thirroul Seaside Festival is using	the Hall – No U3A Talks today.

Co-ordination of the Wednesday Talks Program – The Term 1 program has been co-ordinated by Joe Lane – talk to Joe if you have suggestions and contact details for speakers.

Fran's Bookstall (proceeds to U3A) is open on Wednesday mornings. Bring and buy a book.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS AND CLASSES DURING TERM
held at the Thirroul Community Centre

New members are welcome at all our groups – however, due to room sizes there are some limits on the numbers who can actually attend. For further information, contact the co-ordinator.

Please do not attend if you feel unwell with Covid-like symptoms.

Don't forget to wear your membership badge!

Australian/Pacific Studies (Convenor – Toni Conley (toni_conley@yahoo.com.au) meets 2nd and 4th Mondays, 1.30 – 3pm, Black Diamond Room . Topics are usually prepared by a member, followed by discussion.

Note: *each session this term is a group participation session on a broadranging topic. If you wish to include a contribution, please let Toni know in advance what specific aspect of the topic you will be presenting, so that the program is balanced.*

9th February

The whole session will be a continuation of our last term's topic on Australian women of note.

23rd February Group participation (Whole session) Australian animals, native or feral. 'Facts', even if apocryphal, or from Australian fiction.

9th March Group participation (Whole session) Australian towns or suburbs with interesting tales or facts .

23rd March - Group participation

First session. Australian scientists and inventors. Notable or crackpot.

Second session, related to this. Australians who have won Nobel prizes or who should have.

Balance'n'Bones (Co-ordinator - Helen Whelan.(0419 983 265 . Email:helen@dispoiled.com).

Gentle aerobic, balancing and stretching exercises for both men and women.

Due to demand, two sessions are now held weekly, but you may register and must remain in one class only (limit 20 persons each class). Excelsior Hall (enter from TCC main side entrance of hall).

Mondays 9.30 – 10.30am and 10.30 – 11.30., continuing from 12th January, including term breaks (but excluding public holidays) Wear light clothing, flat shoes, bring own weights if you have them, and water bottle.

Book Clubs – meet monthly on Tuesdays 1.30 - 3pm – Ocean Breeze Room, all limited to 12 persons. Contact the convenor if you'd like to join. The groups usually adopt a theme for the year, if not previously advised, this may be checked by contacting the respective club convenor.

1st Tuesday– Classic Book Club - (Convenor Alison Wiig (alisonwiig@hotmail.com)
meeting *3rd February and 3rd March*

2nd Tuesday Book Club - (Convenor Lyndall Dawson (lynfount40@gmail.com)
meeting *10th February and 10th March*

3rd Tuesday Book Club – (Convenor Helen Wilson (helenwilson@bigpond.com)
meeting *17th February and 17th March*

Brain Games (Co-ordinator Ainslie Lamb) – 2nd and 4th Tuesdays , 9.30 – 11am, in the Ocean Breeze Room. *Term 1 dates –10th and 24th February, 10th and 24th March.* Attendance limit 20 persons. A variety of amusing puzzles, activities and creative challenges to stimulate different parts of the brain. Bring clip board, paper, pencil and a sense of humour.

Creative Writing (Co-ordinator Rose Andrew (sachasrose@yahoo.com.au) Facilitator/Tutor Raewyn Proctor.. Meets 1st and 3rd Tuesdays in the Ocean Breeze Room, 9,30 – 11.00am
Creative Writing takes many forms but provides the writer with the opportunity to use imagination, to convey emotion or feeling, and to use elements such as character development, plot, and the lyricism of words to share the author's connection with the reader.. The class provides the opportunity to give and receive feedback on class members' efforts.
Attendance limit 20 persons *Term 1 dates - 3rd and 17th February , 3rd and 17th March*

The Current Affairs group meets on the first and third Monday of the month at 1:30pm to 3pm in the Ocean Breeze Room. Attendance limited to 20 persons.
After welcome and introduction to any new participants, an around the room scan (we sit in a circle) is conducted to provide a clearinghouse of public affairs that have come to our attention in the preceding two weeks since the last meeting. Two topics previously agreed are then discussed in turn. An attempt is made to balance domestic Australian and international events but some topics are thrust upon us with their media prominence or urgency and impact. Time is left at the end for "looking ahead" to topics for the next session.

Term dates are 2nd and 16th February, 2nd and 16th March.

For further information contact Convenor David Muscio at dtmuscio@gmail.com or 0434 292 964

Drama Group – (Co-ordinator - Cath Philps - (rcmp72@bigpond.com)

Release your inner thespian! After exercises to develop our mental and physical alertness and performance skills, we practice monologues, sketches and other performances in readiness for presentation to our members eg. for the Christmas Party. Meets in the Escarpment Room, 11.00 am – 12.30pm *Term 1 dates are 2nd and 16th February, 2nd and 16th March .*

Drawing and Painting (Co-ordinator and tutor Jeanette Southam, Ph. 4285 1986) –

2nd and 4th Mondays , 11.00am-1.00pm, Escarpment Room. Attendance limit 16 persons.

Unleash your creative talents for visual expression or just for the joy of it.

Beginners and experienced artists welcome. Every session has a theme chosen by members prior to each meeting so they can be prepared. Themes have included drawing animals, buildings, outdoor scenes; different paint mediums, and types of shading. It's a very sociable group.

Term 1 dates are 9th and 23rd February, 9th and 23rd March.

U3A Northern Illawarra Film Appreciation Group –

Weekly Wednesdays, **11.30 – 3.00pm** in the Excelsior Hall, Convenor Virginia Cawsey

((vcawsey@gmail.com) Leader Rick Thompson.

Term 1 commences 28th January, concludes 18th March - See pp. 9-10 for Term 1 program.

Italian Language - Convenor - Freda Turner (freda.turner45@icloud.com) Tutor: Pina MacPherson. Meets weekly Venerdi (Fridays) 9.30 – 11.00 during term, *commencing 6th February*. In the Escarpment Room. Open to anyone with some experience in Italian. New members interested in joining, please contact Freda ,

NEW CLASS Line dancing - Convenor Joe Lane (joelane52@gmail.com; Ph: 0415 269 934) Every Tuesday during term , commencing Tuesday 3rd February in the Excelsior Hall, hirroul Community Centre. Time: 1.30pm - 2.30pm. (Hall opens at 1pm for set up and registration). Ensure you are wearing appropriate footwear (cowboy dress and hat optional - Yeehah!!)

Leader: Joe Lane. Joe will be using line dancing DVDs, commencing with beginners level and working our way through more challenging routines.

Reading Aloud (Convenor Ainslie Lamb, email : ainslie2518@gmail.com)

1st and 3rd Tuesdays, 11.00 – 12.30pm Ocean Breeze Room. Attendance limit 20 persons.

Term 1 dates are 3rd and 17th February, 3rd and 17th March,

Reading aloud to others is a great way of sharing items old or new that you find interesting, and an opportunity to listen and reflect on other times, other viewpoints, other possibilities.

The convenor chairs the program, but participants bring to share and discuss a wide range of readings – humour, poetry, stories, philosophy, magazine articles and whatever else takes our members' fancy. Non-readers are warmly invited as listeners and contributors to discussion.

Yoga – Convenor – Helen Gibson (0423 00 4172, gibbo_hj@bigblue.net.au). Classes are held in the Ocean Breeze Room every Friday at 11:00am for an 11:15am start. Classes run for an hour. We are nearly at full capacity, so please contact Helen Gibson regarding attendance (We may need to move to a bigger room in the future.) The class will continue during term breaks (except Good Friday) to ensure continuity of the benefits of yoga.

You will need to bring a yoga mat and two yoga blocks. Our teacher Amanda-Lee Ruddiman, has some spares you can use for a try out class. Cost of the class is \$10 per session, payable to the tutor.

Indigenous Weather Knowledge - D'harawal calendar

The D'harawal Country and language area extends from the southern shores of Port Jackson (Sydney Harbour) to the northern shores of the Shoalhaven River, and from the eastern shores of the Wollondilly River system to the eastern seaboard.

Time of Burran - January-March

The behaviour of the male kangaroos becomes quite aggressive in this season, and it is a sign that the eating of meat is forbidden during this time. This is a health factor; because of the heat of the day meat does not keep, and the likelihood of food poisoning is apparent. The blooming of the Weetjellan (*Acacia implexa*) is an important sign that fires must not be lit unless they are well away from bushland and on sand only, and that there will be violent storms and heavy rain, so camping near creeks and rivers is not recommended.

Gadalung Marool—hot and dry

Source – Bureau of Meteorology

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS HELD AT OTHER LOCATIONS

Lawrence Hargrave U3A Stanwell Park

All Monday morning talks begin at 9.30am followed by Morning Tea at 10.30am and Music Appreciation from 11am to 12pm. Everyone welcome to join our small but friendly group in the delightful Hillcrest House, behind Kennett Home, 1A Railway Crescent, Stanwell Park.

For further information contact Jenny on 4294 3475 or 0406 350 025

2 nd Feb	'The Point' –Uluru Handback	SBS On Demand
9 th Feb	What is Art? With examples	Wendy Leatham
16 th Feb	Crossing the Gobi Desert	Roy Lawrie
23 rd Feb	Topic tba	Jim Powell
2 nd March	Maritime Mysteries	Mike Traynor
9 th March	“What did you do in the War, Mummy?”	Kerrie-Anne Christian
16 th March	My Trip to Vietnam	Ann Brown
23 rd March	Raja Ampat and the Spice Islands	David Christian

Illawarra U3A Choir (Convenor Margaret Stratton, Musical Director Iris Costello) – practices in Room 1-2 , close to the car park at the Wollongong Conservatorium of Music, Glenifer Brae, Murphy’s Avenue, Keiraville, Tuesdays 10am. *Term 1 commences 3rd February.*

From time to time the Choir gives concerts at local retirement villages and other venues. Our next booking is in March, so it is essential we get back to work at our first rehearsal on 3rd February.

New members are welcome: The choir currently has vacancies, and if there are prospective new members, you are welcome to attend on our first day back (3rd February): bring water, a pencil and a blue folder for your music. For more information, ring Margaret on 0411 526 899

Table Tennis – (Coordinator Terry Newham, terrynewham@bigpond.com) – weekly on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 am – 12pm at the Bulli-Woonona RSL Club, Princes Hwy, Woonona. Play for fun and fitness. All gear (bats, table tennis balls etc) is provided, but players should wear appropriate footwear and bring a water bottle. Attendance limit – 20 persons per session. Membership of the RSL Club is recommended as it provides the venue to us for free.

Congratulations to U3A Table Tennis member Stephen Young (from Christina Gava)

U3A member Stephen Young recently competed in the Australian Maters Table Tennis in Canberra. He came away with a silver medal in Doubles in the 70+ age group and a bronze medal in the Opens Singles (all ages). Stephen began playing with the Northern Illawarra U3A a few years ago and quickly adapted his tennis skills to table tennis. Wanting to improve his skills, Stephen also began playing in the Illawarra Table Tennis Association competition at Beaton Park where he now plays A grade. He also has attained Coaching Qualifications to give back to us social players as well as the young players of the Illawarra. This goes to show starting new interest with U3A not only offers social activities but can lead to so many other opportunities.

CANBERRA U3A TUESDAY LUNCH FORUMS, which are conducted by Zoom, are available to members from any U3A. Canberra U3A is able to access retired politicians, senior public servants, academics and a range of other experts to talk on important issues of the day.

The Tuesday Forums will re- commence in February. The Forums will be accessed via Zoom and run from 12.30 -1.30. The Forums offer a selection of top class speakers covering an eclectic range of topics sure to attract interest amongst members

Interested members should register with Patrick (Ph: 0448 061 951) who will co-ordinate their email addresses with the Canberra U3A chairman Alex Gosman, and advise interested members of the program as it is released. Log in at least 10 minutes ahead of the start of the talk.

Note - The talks will be recorded but rather than contacting the organisers for a copy they will be available on-line on the U3A Canberra website to reduce workload. Further information on accessing the recordings will be provided but it is a simple process – you do need to be a member to access the website where the recordings will be stored.

The U3A NETWORK NSW ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026 will be hosted by U3A BATEMANS BAY. 20th – 22nd May at the Soldiers Club Beach Road. Bateman’s Bay

Program includes Guest speakers, Workshops, Conference Dinner, Guided Tours and the opportunity to meet with U3A members from other parts of NSW and gain new ideas.

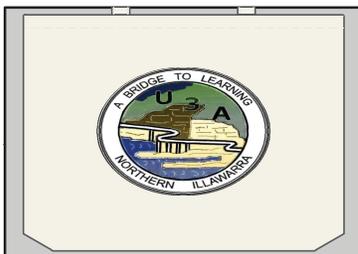
For full details go to <https://u3abatemansbay.org.au/category/latest-news/>
Or pick up the flyer about the conference, from the front table on Wednesdays.

Are you interested in a Philosophy Group meeting once a term, likely on a Tuesday from 11 am to 12.30, hopefully to commence in Term 2. .If so, talk to Tamara Jero (4284 8223)

BRAIN TEASER

How many words of at least 4 letters, each containing the letter **N** and including at least one 9-letter word, can you make from the following letters, E O L A N S K W F

Solution on p. 10.



U3A ECO BAGS - Now available for only \$5 each.

Useful for your library visit, carrying your Balance’n’Bones or Table Tennis equipment, etc etc.

Or just advertising your favourite place - U3A

Available on Wednesdays or order through your Special Interest Group Co-ordinator.

U3A NORTHERN ILLAWARRA FILM APPRECIATION GROUP – TERM 1, 2026

Venue - Excelsior Hall,* Thirroul Library and Community Centre, 11.30 - 3.00 each Wednesday during term commencing 28th January (Convenor – Virginia Cawsey (vcawsey@gmail.com) Leader – Rick Thompson.

These sessions are about discussing the film(s), not simply watching them. A discussion follows each screening. Short films or excerpts may accompany some programs.

28 January *THE SOCIAL NETWORK*. (USA 2010. 120 mins) Directed by David Fincher and written by Aaron Sorkin. It is based on the 2009 book, *The Accidental Billionaires* by Ben Mezrich and portrays the founding of Facebook. It stars Jesse Eisenberg as founder, Mark Zuckerberg. Two frame stories are intercut: Zuckerberg being sued by former friend, Eduardo Saverin and also by twins Cameron & Tyler Winklevoss. The film's factual accuracy has been largely contested. **ROB**

4 February *THE CRYING GAME* –(United Kingdom, Japan 1992 ,111 mins). Directed by Neil Jordan, this crime thriller stars Stephen Rea, Miranda Richardson, Jaye Davidson & Forest Whitaker. Set against the Troubles in Northern Ireland, the film follows Fergus, a member of the Provisional Irish Republican Army. It explores themes of race, gender, nationality and is notable for a plot twist involving Dil. The film won the BAFTA Award for Best British Film as well as Academy Award for Best Original Screenplay. **TINA**

11 February *THE COVERED WAGON* - (USA 1923 , 98 mins) Directed by James Cruze and based on a novel of the same name by Emerson Hough. It is a silent epic film starring J. Warren Kerrigan and Louise Wilson. In 1848 a group of pioneers travel 2,000 miles through the old West from Kansas to Oregon. They encounter desert heat, mountain snow, hunger, Indian attack and the lure of Californian gold. **RICK**

18 February *THE EARRINGS OF MADAME DE . .* – (France, Italy 1953 ,105mins) Directed by Max Ophüls. This is a period romantic drama starring Charles Boyer, Danielle Darrieux & Vittorio De Sica and said by critic Andrew Sarris to be “the most perfect film ever made”. It was based on the novel, *Madame de ...* by Louise Lévêque de Vilmorin. The surname of the main character is never revealed. In Belle Époque Paris, she is companionably married to count and general André, whose mistress is Lola. Louise secretly sells her wedding present earrings back to their maker, Rémy to cover her debts. The film follows their adventures after that. **RICK**

25 February *SCENT OF A WOMAN*- (USA 1992 ,156 mins) Directed by Martin Brest and adapted from *il buio e il miele (Darkness and Honey)* by Giovanni Arpino. The film stars Al Pacino, who won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance. Charlie Simms watches over blind Army Lieutenant Colonel Frank Slade during Thanksgiving weekend. Themes include moral courage, self-worth and vulnerability. **MAY**

4 March *THE STORY OF THE WEeping CAMEL* – (Germany, Mongolia, 2003 ,87 mins) Directed and written by Byambasuren Davaa and Luigi Falorni, this docudrama concerns a family of nomadic shepherds in the Gobi Desert trying to save a rare white bactrian camel after it was rejected by its mother. They call on a group of llamas to perform rituals and a musician who plays a *morin khuur*, a type of fiddle, to try to reconcile the mother camel. **TINA**

11 March *FRIDA* (USA 2002 , 123 mins) Directed by Julie Taylor. This biographical film concerns the Mexican surrealist artist, Frida Kahlo. Salma Hayek stars as Kahlo while Alfred Molina plays her husband, Diego Rivera. The film was adapted from a 1983 biography of Kahlo by Hayden Herrera. Several of her paintings are either shown directly or depicted by characters in the film. The stop motion animation sequence is inspired by the Mexican holiday, Day of the Dead. **TINA**

18 March *BRAZIL* (United Kingdom, USA 1985 , 142 mins) Directed by Terry Gilliam, written by him, Charles McKeown and Tom Stoppard. It is a dystopian science fiction black comedy starring Jonathan Pryce and Robert de Niro. It satirises “the bureaucratic, industrial world that had been driving Gilliam crazy all his life”, according to film critic, Jack Mathews. Despite the title, it is not about Brazil, nor is it set there; it is named after the recurrent theme song, Ary Barroso’s *Aquarela do Brazil*. **TINA**

25 March – The Thirroul Seaside Festival is using the Hall – no Film shown today

From Diane Hillier, Wollongong City Council

We have great news to share with you on Wollongong City Council’s Learning City Project.

Wollongong has stepped onto the world stage, joining cities such as Cairo, Lisbon, Hanoi and Buenos Aires as a new member of the UNESCO Global Network of Learning Cities (GNLC), a recognition that celebrates the city’s commitment to lifelong learning for all.

The city’s application to the GNLC highlighted key priorities including sustainability, health, equity, inclusion, and entrepreneurship. UNESCO commended Wollongong for programs like the Illawarra Multicultural Water Safety Network, Living Books, and Economic Development and Business Learning initiatives as positive examples of local learning in action.

The application was accompanied by the Wollongong Learning City Strategy: Shaping our Direction 2025-29, Draft June 2025, developed with input from community members, service providers, and Council teams.

We are looking forward to exploring, how we can grow our Learning City in 2026 and anticipate strengthening understanding, community connections, collaboration and innovation, using lifelong learning as a tool for community development.

To learn more about the Learning City Project check out:

- Media release: [Wollongong takes its place on the world stage as a UNESCO Learning City](#)
- UNESCO’s profile of Wollongong: [Wollongong | UNESCO Global Network of Learning cities](#)
- Council’s Learning City page: [Learning City | City of Wollongong](#)

Answers to Brain teaser - aeon alone anew ankle awoken élan fawn felon flank flank flown knew know lane lank lawn lean lens loan lone news nose oaken salon sane sank sawn sewn snake sneak snow SNOWFLAKE sown swan swank waken wane wean woken ***well done if you got them all***



The Shortest History of Australia by Mark McKenna (Black Inc. 2025)

Mark McKenna offers a compelling new version of our national story. This is a modern Australia permeated by First Nations history; a multicultural society with an island mindset; a continent of epic beauty and extreme natural events; a country obsessed by war abroad but blind to its founding war at home; and a thriving nation-state still to realise its political independence. McKenna's wise and humane history reveals the surprising in the familiar, and reframes the past so we can see the present more clearly.

And so say all of us ...

Extract from the Acknowledgement section of A Great Act of Love by Heather Rose, pp 479-480

I also want to acknowledge the booksellers and libraries of the twenty-first century. Information has become currency, yet the reading of books is an act of courage, and duct of defiance, an act of self-education and a gift of sanctuary. Thankyou to all the bookseller sharing their love of books with readers every day, and providing delightful havens in which to read, meet, connect and explore. And thankyou to libraries everywhere that provide such essential services to our communities, and without whom I would not be a writer. May we powerfully protect our public libraries , book stores and writers from those who seek to limit our curiosity, hide our history; deny our experiences, destroy our words and dismiss our shared humanity by the banning and burning of literature, and the persecution of artists. Long live hardbacks, paperbacks, audio-books, e-books and second hand books. They are repositories of imagination, courage, insight and endeavour. Each of them a rare human achievement. May we continue to gain inspiration from the books we read, share and pass on. Supporting . protecting and promoting the arts is integral to the wellbeing of our minds, our communities, our humanity and our planet.

ON A LIGHTER NOTE...(From *Crikey* newsletter, Jan 9, 2026)

A tortoise that lived through two world wars and 20 US presidents has passed away. San Diego Zoo announced that Galápagos tortoise Gramma died on November 20 [2026] and was thought to have been about 141 years old.

The Associated Press reports officials from the zoo said the female tortoise arrived from Bronx Zoo in either 1928 or 1931 as part of their first group of Galápagos tortoises.

“For nearly a century, Gramma the Galápagos tortoise has been a quiet and constant presence at the zoo, a witness to history, a beloved icon, and an extraordinary ambassador for her species,” the zoo said in a statement.

“Her story has become woven into the very fabric of the zoo community, a thread connecting generations of team members, guests, volunteers, and conservationists. Through decades of technological advancement, she went from appearing in a handful of black-and-white photographs to becoming an ever-endearing social media star. Her care specialists affectionately called her ‘the Queen of the Zoo’, and she truly was.”

2026 TERM DATES – note them in your diary now

Term 1 - Wednesday 28 January to Friday 27th March

Term 2 – Monday 20th April to Friday 26th June (no classes 8th June)

Term 3 – Monday 20th July to Friday 18th September

Term 4 – Monday 12th October to Friday 4th December

U3A Northern Illawarra Inc. is a self-run non-profit community education organisation for retirees which provides members with the opportunities to maintain mental, social and physical fitness and to retain independence and self esteem.

As a member you agree to -

- Respect others and their rights to learn and teach
- Look after all property and the environment in which we work
- Act responsibly so that the reputation of our association is maintained
- Treat others fairly and resolve conflict with fairness and dignity
- Do not accept bullying or harassment from or towards others
- Value what each member contributes to the group
- Work in a voluntary capacity and not use U3A for personal or financial gain.

U3A NORTHERN ILLAWARRA Inc - CONTACT DETAILS

Management Committee 2024

President - Patrick Heaven (Ph 0448 061 951)

Vice-President – Operations - Maureen Jarvis (Ph: 0450 878 6230)

Vice-President – Development – Position vacant

Treasurer and MyU3A Administrator -- Geoff Barnes (Ph: 0417 203 912))

Secretary – Elizabeth Edwards – secretary.u3a.nillawarra@gmail.com

Publicity Officer: Barbara Cranfield (Ph: 0413 047 687)

Committee members:

Toni Conley (Ph 0457 598 946)

Robert Dalmás (robertdalmás60@gmail.com)

Ainslie Lamb (Ph: 4283 7818)

Joe Lane (joelane52@gmail.com; Ph: 0415 269 934)

Margaret Stratton (Events Manager) (Ph: 0411 526 899)

Helen Whelan (helen@dispoiled.com)

Other contacts:

Welfare Officer, Safety Officer – Margaret Stratton (0411 526 899)

MyU3A Administrator - help.u3a.nillawarra.@gmail.com.

Minute Secretary –

Newsletter Editor - Ainslie Lamb (ainslie2518@gmail.com) *Proofreader* – Ron Browne

Public Officer : Patrick Heaven

Website: www.northernillawarra.u3anet.org.au

Thankyou to the office staff of Alison Byrnes MHR, who print our newsletter.