



CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2024

Having been appointed Chairperson of the U3A Manawatū by the incoming committee in October 2023, I have the pleasure of presenting my report for the year ending September 2024.

The committee has continued to meet monthly except in January, and since February we have been meeting in the Society of Friends' Meeting House in College St rather than in members' houses. Checking through the minutes, I have to say that most of the matters discussed and decided are probably not of sufficient interest to make their way into an annual report. Has everyone paid their subscription? Who will speak in this seminar series? Do we approve of these payments for printing and posting? But, that said, most of what I shall now report would not have happened without the efforts of the committee and its members.

A couple of matters that are noteworthy are that our revised Constitution and re-registration under the Incorporated Societies Act (2022) were officially accepted on 14 November 2023 and that we now supply a report on one of our groups for each issue of Grey Power Manawatu's quarterly publication.

A pressing concern for the committee, as yet unresolved, has been the difficulty in finding a successor to our long-standing and greatly appreciated Treasurer, Ron Paddock, who will be leaving Palmerston North at the end of the year. Under Ron's guidance, and as confirmed by our reviewer, Alan Martin, the finances of the organisation are in good health. Two other committee members are standing down (Janet Black, who has managed the U3A's publicity, and Sue Stirling), and I would like to thank them both very much for their service to the U3A.

After deleting non-subscribers in July this year, the membership of the U3A Manawatū stands at 269 (as of 9 September) though there still seem to be a few group participants who are not paid up U3A members. There are currently about 40 learning groups affiliated to the U3A Manawatū, about the same as this time last year. Some are of long standing and others recently established or revitalised. Ten new or renewed groups were proposed at the beginning of the year. Most groups are meeting regularly though, as is natural, a few are struggling to get enough members.

Under the guidance of Stu Schwartz, who was seconded to the committee for this role, the Science, Technology and Environment group has been very successfully revived as Sci-Tech. This group meets in a member's garage, and the committee purchased 20 folding chairs to make the seating more comfortable. The committee is always keen to receive proposals for new groups, and the most recently established began meeting in July.

We have held two afternoon teas (November 2023 and June 2024) for the committee and group co-ordinators, but since not all of the latter have been able to attend, I would like to take this opportunity to express the committee's gratitude to the co-ordinators for their work in organising and running the groups.

Over the past year, Stuart Birks and the committee have organised two highly successful public seminar series, each with four sessions: "Approaching End of Life" in Spring 2023 and "Entertainment" (focussing on the arts and culture scene in Palmerston North) in Autumn 2024. These talks were well attended, and we are most grateful to the speakers for sharing their time and expertise. Stuart and Mike Lawrence are currently preparing the Spring 2024 series called "Manawatū Memories: Reflecting on the Past, Embracing the Future".

In sum, the U3A Manawatū is in great shape and continues to provide good company, entertainment, and intellectual stimulation for its members and the wider community.

Chris van der Krogt, Chairperson

September 2024