

Tuggerah Lakes U3A Inc
Presidents Report – December 2008

As we come to the end of 2008, we can take some pride in the knowledge that we have operated successfully, if somewhat modestly, for a full ten years. At the conclusion of this AGM, I will give a brief review of our early history.

Earlier in the year, we lost our most senior member, Clive Seale, who was in his early nineties and had been in indifferent health for a year or so. Our thoughts go out to Eva and her family at their loss. Clive was a Foundation Member and often made interesting observations stemming from his experiences in a long life. He will be sadly missed.

Sadly, there some other deaths, namely, Helen Riley, Kevan Salter, Pat Downs and an ex-member, David Reed

A number of other members had problems with health issues, some requiring hospitalisation, and our Welfare Officer, Kath Sewell, wrote to these as well as sending flowers where appropriate.

During the year, we have continued to run our regular perennial activities, to present talks by both members and guest speakers as well as organise a few walks and bus outings such as the one to St Albans. Some of the talks were in series based on such themes as Interesting Careers, The Mystery of Music, The Status and Roles of Women Down the Ages, Psychology and Travel.

Again this year, we have a venue which we can call our 'home', namely 'diggers@theentrance'. Whilst it has had the advantage of enabling us to run the majority of programs in the one location, giving us a place to store our equipment and a means of reducing considerably our overall costs of operation, there continues to be some undesirable consequences, namely, we have to provide our own morning tea and we only meet on a limited number of occasions at other venues. We, thus, have not been able to offer many venues which are more convenient for members living in the north or west of the shire.

Whilst on the subject of "diggers", can I suggest that those Members who have not already done so, consider supporting the club by becoming members – the annual fee is a modest \$2.20.

Because we are able to use the meeting rooms here at "diggers" free of charge and had no need to buy any equipment this year, we have a surplus of funds once again – about \$1,800. For this reason, we have reduced the Annual Fee from \$25 per member or \$40 per couple to \$20 per member starting 1 January 2009. This will reduce annual income by about \$500.

At great length in my last President's Reports and repeatedly in the Newsletter, I have tried to stress the importance of increasing our membership numbers as well as the need for younger recruits who might be more willing and able to serve on your Management Committee. I don't intend to do so again today.

Regretfully, there has been no net increase in numbers or decrease in our average age and, this year, we have had difficulty in attracting fresh blood to the Management Committee. For this reason, although not completely so, we will be recommending to this meeting a little later, and before the election, that the "Two

Year Rule" limiting any Committee Member to holding any position for that time be changed to three years. This only serves largely to put off for a year the need to find replacement Committee Members.

As I mentioned last year, there have been a few pleasing instances where 25 to 30 have attended meetings; at our OBE session last week, we had a record attendance 37. But there have been some other occasions when attendances have been as little as four or five. Again as mentioned last year, the latter have been embarrassing for us and not complementary to the speakers.

For some years now, we have recompensed guest speakers for the cost of petrol when they travel appreciable distances to our meetings; we intend to continue doing so. Because of the ever increasing cost of petrol, we now intend offering to do the same for Committee Members in addition to reimbursing their costs for stamps, phone calls etc. Costs of the latter would be greater if it wasn't for the ability of most committee members to use Email on their home computers as no cost to us.

Public Relations continues to be a difficult area

We were delighted last year that one of our members, Pam McGlinn - a keen participant in our Creative Writing program - wrote an Australian historical novel which was published earlier in 2007. We hoped that a sequel would be coming. It did so early this year and turned out to be another good and absorbing read. We were also delighted that the book launch was combined with one of our meetings when we were also given some readings from the members of the Creating Writing Group.

Our thanks again:

- To Guest Speakers;
- To Members who have given talks, been Course Leaders, helped create PowerPoint presentations, operated audio-visual equipment, arranged the morning teas or otherwise helped during the year;
- To Henriette Vanechop and Rita and John Richards for allowing us to use their homes for French Discussion and Movie Appreciation respectively;
- To Committee Members - Eva Seale, Rita Richards, Joyce Clinch, Tommy Thomas, Pam McGlinn, Betty Seigman, Jayne Davis and Kath Sewell - who have spent an unbelievable amount of time looking after their various portfolios with such competence and enthusiasm and despite their family commitments and, in some instances, serious personal health problems;
- To Charles Proctor for acting as our Public Officer; and finally
- To "diggers@theentrance" for allowing us the free use of rooms at the club throughout the year and the storing of equipment etc.

Although the present Management Committee ceases to exist at this AGM, several members have been busy setting up a Calendar of programs for Terms 1 and 2 of 2009 as well as booking dates and times for our meeting room for the whole of 2009 including our next AGM.

I hope you will agree with me that this has been another reasonably successful year for us members of the third age and, in ending this report for 2008, I thank you again for the honour of having been your President.

Tom Marish

10 December