U3A Golden Bay Mohua

Annual Chairperson's Report, February, 2021

Reflecting on what has happened this past year for our U3A and its members, the pandemic looms large, with the cancellation of some of our public talks and study group meetings, and of course the challenges of study groups trying to meet virtually with "Zoom". Even looking forward to this new year, it is possible that our meetings will be interrupted again by the need to socially distance in response to possible cases of COVID-19 in the New Zealand community.

Despite the challenges that we have faced with the pandemic, our U3A has managed to grow slightly in membership this past year, from 120 to 125 members. We have provided three public talks in 2020, and virtually all study groups have met for at least most of the year. Public talks included:

Jenny Pollock on 26 June, 2020, on the "weird moons of our solar system".

Chris Bennett on 9 October, 2020, on projects he has led at the World Bank.

Oke Blakie on 20 November, 2020, on his experiences as a district court judge.

The U3A organising committee is now attempting to incorporate into this coming year's programme those public talks that we had planned for last year and missed.

At this time last year, we sought ideas for new study groups, with a particular interest in making room for new members to participate in the study group aspect of our continuing education. In response, five new study groups were formed in 2020, bringing the number of active study groups to a total of 17 for the year.

The organising committee continues to function well, with all members for 2020 willing to continue serving on the committee into 2021. The committee submitted two small grant proposals this past year – one to the Tasman District Council (TDC), for financial support in bringing one or more nationally-recognised speakers to our public talks in Golden Bay, and another to the Golden Bay Lions Club for the purchase of a replacement projection screen. The TDC proposal was successful, and we are delighted that, with a portion of these funds, we will be able to bring Dr. Nikki Turner, Director of the NZ Immunisation Advisory Centre, down to us in April to speak with us about the new COVID 19 vaccine. We withdrew our proposal to the Lions Club, when the Friendship Club, from whom we have been borrowing a projection screen, purchased a suitable replacement which they continue to let us use for our meetings at the Senior Citizens' Hall.

On behalf of the membership, I would like to thank our committee members for their work this past year, which has continued to maintain our vibrant U3A chapter.

Paul Taylor, Chairperson