Benalla Inc.

Newsletter – February 2026

U3A Benalla Inc.
P O Box 674, Benalla 3672
Website: u3abenalla.weebly.com
Facebook: facebook.com/U3abenalla/
Newsletter: newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com

President: Margaret Jenkins 0424 454 313
Secretary: Malcolm Sanders 0408 194 469
Course Coordinator: Anne Nelson 0438 447 379

E-mail Address: u3aben@gmail.com

Please send reports for the newsletter to newsletter.u3abenalla@gmail.com by 24th February, 2026

President's Report

What a wonderful day we had at Enrolment Day this year. So many members and new faces coming through the door to find out about their courses for 2026. A huge thank you to all the Convenors for their time that day letting people know what they were offering in their course. The Committee felt that Elspeth Maconachie's idea of some Convenors being in Rooms 1 and 2 as well as in the Auditorium helped give everyone a bit more space.

Another thirty people came in the following Wednesday morning when the U3A Office was open for enrolments. Thank you to Gwen Mildren and Len Jeffers who spoke to those who came in about their courses. The U3A Office will be open each Wednesday morning from 10am to noon until the end of February.

Enrolment Morning on Wednesday 28 January, with Gwen (Treasurer) middle; Len (Membership Officer) on right.

There is a Convenor's Morning Tea organised for Tuesday 3rd March 2026 in Room 1 at 10am. We hope that all our Convenors will be able to attend, especially our new Convenors for 2026. The aim of the morning is to

find out first-hand what is working for Convenors, what is not working so well and also what they would like assistance with. We hope to see all Convenors at the Morning Tea.

Unfortunately, Nicole McFarlane, our Secretary of U3A Benalla has resigned due to ill health. Nicole has been a great team member for the past two years as well as doing an excellent job with the Agenda and Minutes each month. We sincerely wish Nicole all the best for the future.

At the January Committee meeting Malcolm Sanders was appointed as Secretary until the AGM in March 2026. Malcolm was already a committee member. So, thank you for stepping up, Malcolm.

Our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18th March 2026 in the Auditorium of the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre. Peter Keane, CEO of Benalla Rural City Council will be our guest speaker. According to the Model Rules which we adopted in 2024 we need 10% of our membership to be at the AGM. So please come along that morning.

All Executive and Committee positions in U3A Benalla Inc. will be declared open at the AGM. A **Nomination form** is available in this Newsletter and all positions are open to all members of U3A Benalla. It is important that we have new people on the Committee every year so that we get new ideas to work with. If you would like to come onto the Committee, please fill in a **Nomination Form** and send it to our secretary, Malcolm Sanders at m.sand@bigpond.net.au before 11th March 2026.

There are two important celebrations in the next few months. Firstly, the Singing for Fun group, which was established by Joyce Borschmann, will be celebrating 20 years since Joyce established the group on Thursday 5th March 2026 at the Hub at Cooinda. All current singers, and also those who have belonged to the group in past years, are invited to come to the morning. There will be songs chosen by Joyce and Gwen Barnes, who has also been with the group since its inception. There will be a few speeches, and a morning tea. Please come and enjoy the festivities.

This year we are also celebrating the 30 years that U3A Benalla Inc. has been in existence. There was a small ten-year brochure produced in 2006 celebrating the first ten years, and telling the story of how U3A Benalla commenced. Carmyl Winkler has kindly compiled a thirty-year history which we are in the process of getting published. Carmyl has agreed to speak regarding her history of U3A Benalla at the April Meet and Mingle which will be held on Wednesday 15th April in the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre. All welcome.

Margaret Jenkins
President

Assistant Membership Officer Required

For a number of years, we have been using a home-grown membership program originally designed by member Terry Dillon. The program was developed using Microsoft Access. As our membership has grown to over 470 and it relies on one person to update the information it has become very time consuming.

The alternative is to move our membership records to a commercial program used by many U3A groups called 'Member Wizard'. It is possible to move our records to this program. It is less time consuming as members can pay their membership and update other information online.

We are looking for a member who may be interested in taking on the role of introducing our club to this program.

If you are interested in assisting U3A Benalla in this role, please contact Len Jeffers on 0407 199 247 or Margaret Jenkins on 0424 454 313.

Enrolment Day 2026

Group Reports

February's newsletter includes reports from groups which held activities in December, messages about upcoming activities for some groups, as well as details of the starting and meeting times of all groups.

The headings of the group reports in the newsletter are hyper-linked to the group's webpage. If you are looking for further details, keen to see extra photographs, or feel like reminiscing by scrolling through past posts of group activities, simply click on the course heading.

Need a course coordinator's phone number? Just click on the heading to take you to the course web page.

A Taste of Art

A Taste of Art is held fortnightly on Wednesdays from **1.30 to 4 pm** at Broken River Painters studio, BARC Hut 11 in the Migrant Camp/Airport Precinct. Commences 4th February.

Carol Perry

American History

The December session saw the completion of our study of the history of the United States of America from the early explorers to the end of the Civil War and the tragic assassination of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

In 2026, the class will look at the impact of the expansion westwards, including construction of the railways, and the Reconstruction period, when the path towards reconciliation was not the smooth one that President Lincoln had optimistically envisaged. We will then follow the progress of the USA into the twentieth century and beyond.

Although helpful, it is not essential to have studied the early history of the United States, so new members will be welcome to join in 2026. Summaries of most of last year's sessions are now available on our webpage at https://u3abenalla.weebly.com/american-history.

1st Tuesday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Commencing 3rd February.

Barbara Rogers

Art Appreciation

At February's 'First Monday' session at the Pop-Up Benalla Art Gallery in Bridge Street, the guest speaker will be art curator **Rachel Arndt.** Rachel will talk about highlights of her time as Director of the Wangaratta Art Gallery and upcoming exhibitions for 2026, including the popular Petite Miniature Textiles exhibition. Monday 2 February, 10 – 11 am. Join friends for coffee afterwards at a nearby café or bakery.

Neville Gibb

'As Time Goes By' – Memoir Writing

The holiday break is nearing its end, with our first class for 2026 less than three weeks away. The holiday break '500 words' topics set for last year's class members for 16th February at 2pm:

- **'This (…….) Life'** Examples: - 'This (Downsizing) Life' by an 80+ year old planning to farewell a loved home; 'This (Number 8) Life' about growing up as 'Number 8' in a family of nine children. Also –see our **'This (….) Life**' stories! OR

- **'Triggers'** Keep a notebook close by during the break in which to note any 'triggers' which lead you to reminisce about a time in your lives. You may have been talking to someone, watching television or a film, driving somewhere, reading a book. Choose one to three of these - write about the memories evoked, keeping the total words to 500 – 750 words OR
- **'Memoir Review'** Did you read a memoir during the break? A chance to reflect upon a memoir which has meaning for you drawing upon our **'Memoir Review - Framework Suggestions'**

New class members are encouraged to write a story for the first class – topic suggestions:

- **'New in Town'** Have you ever been the new person in town? Or did someone else's arrival have a profound impact on you? Share your story in 500 words'. OR
- **'I Was There'…** Have you experienced a significant news, historical or cultural event first-hand? Share your personal piece of history in 500 words.

However, it's fine to just come along, find out about what we do, listen to the stories shared and say 'Pass' if you haven't written a story to share.

Class members can, of course, choose from any of these topics.

A recommendation - ABC Open's link to **'Tips for Writing your 500 Words Story'** can help to structure your story and get started.

A reminder - memoir writing always incorporates reflections on your life!

Bev Lee

Australian Shares & Stock Market

Following enrolment day on 14th January 2026 we have 15 members currently listed for our first meeting on Monday 2nd February in Room 1 at 2pm. Welcome to the 4 new members and to our members from 2025. At our first meeting you will need to nominate 3 selections for the spreadsheets. We can view any of the 2000 plus listed stocks on the ASX with live figures on the screen and charts, before you chose your selection.

With the Stock Market (ASX) All Ords (XAO) indices at an all-time high you may consider your selection on the long-term stock sheet difficult hence if we allow another month before we lock in your choice. *Market Index* is a good resource for you to find a lot of stock market information and can be found on this link:

https://www.marketindex.com.au/asx-listed-companies

For new class members, your three stock selections on the sheets do not involve real money; it's only a paper figure for comparison monthly within our group.

I look forward to another profitable year for the share market in 2026.

At our final session in December, awards were distributed!

'Gold Medallists' – Jeanette (Real Time), Neville (Long Term) and Wende (Monthly).

The full report of our December meeting and more photos of award winners can be found on our web page (If you are using the internet to read this, click on the heading above the report to link to the website).

Malcolm Sanders

Be Connected – Tech Advice

Appointment only tech problem solver sessions providing one on one advice for operating mobiles, tablets or laptops with either:

- Robyn (Android devices) 0403 164 931 or,
- Jenny (Apple devices) 0409 545 182.

One on One appointments are usually held in Classroom 2. Referral on will be suggested if necessary.

If you have put your name down for 'Tech Advice', there is no set class time. Please phone Robyn or Jenny to arrange an appointment time.

Robyn Lukey/Jenny Sawyer

Birdwatching

It's the Birdwatching group's 10th Birthday this year!

This photo was taken in November 2016 during a visit to a private property on Tiger Hill, Molyullah.

Thank you, Kathy, for convening Birdwatching for 10 years!

2nd Thursday 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Commencing 12th March – more details in the next newsletter.

Kathy Costello

Brain Games - Neurobics

4th Tuesday 10.00am to 12.00noon. Commencing 26 February.

Elspeth Maconachie

Cards '500'

1st and 3rd Wednesday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Commencing 4th February.

Doug Smith

Car Torque

4th Thursday 2.00 to 4.00pm. Commencing 26th February

Doug Smith

Chat n' Chew

There will be no Chat 'n Chew luncheon in February.

Our first *Chat 'n Chew* for 2026 will be on March 13th at The Royal Hotel.

PLEASE remember to ring or text me by March 19th on 0412263071 to book.

Dorothy Webber

Coin Collectors

4th Monday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Commencing 23rd February

Doug Smith

Collectors

Our High Tea in December was thoroughly enjoyed - it could be the beginning of an annual tradition!

Our first session for 2026 is on Tuesday 10th March at 2pm - the theme *A Piece of History.*

Dorothy Webber

Community Singing

Our first Community Singing for 2026 was held on Thursday 22nd January at the Hub at Cooinda.

We welcomed two new members Sue and Terry, as well as 11 residents from Cooinda plus carers. So, we had a roomful of people which was great.

Thank you, Brian for playing the piano for Community Singing. Brian has done a fantastic job playing for us for several years and we are very pleased he is playing the piano in 2026. Everybody really appreciates the way he can recall the songs providing we mention what key they are in.

Thank you also to Margaret and Rhonda for announcing the songs.

There will be another Community Singing on Thursday 29th January at 10am at the Hub.

Next month Community Singing will be on Thursday 26th February at 10am at the Hub. All welcome

Margaret Jenkins

Come and Learn Croquet

Tuesdays 9.00m to 11.00am. Commencing 24 February at Benalla Tennis Club and Croquet Courts, Ackerly Avenue, Benalla.

Debbie Hazell

Creative Writing

"You don't have to be great to start. But you have to start to be great." – Zig Ziglar.

Discussion: No discussion point or challenge this month. We discussed the stories written this month and then retired to a cafe for a celebration of another year of writing.

Some Stories: Three of our stories this month were continuations of stories, at least one completing a short story manuscript written over ten months.

Another story involved what could be seen as an anthropomorphic piano. Or at least it had a mind of its own. It would not allow itself to be removed from an old house and survived undamaged when the house was totally destroyed by fire.

For 'The Wild, Wild Woods', a creature called a munchkin went on an adventure through the woods. And there was the story of the release of a prisoner after thirty years. The author is planning to continue the story of his life after release.

Prompts: For members of the class who wish to write during the break, there are three new prompts. Others may wish to continue or complete manuscripts that are underway.

- The last few years have been punishingly dry
- And that was when Isabel pointed to the log
- His ruminations ended with the sound of the first one.

We are looking forward to 2026 and more writing challenges.

Joy Shirley.

Critical Thinking

New Course! Critical Thinking commences on Tuesday 24th February at 2 pm in Room 1. It is held monthly on the 4th Tuesday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

Linda Tullberg

Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group

In deep discussion at Ruby Blue Café on 16th December!

The *Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group* meets on the 3rd Tuesday from 9.30am to 11.30am in Room 1. Commencing 17 February. The *Demystifying Psychology* introductory course commences in Semester 2.

Jane Rushworth

Digital Upskilling for Lifelong Learners

New Course! Digital Upskilling for Lifelong Learners commences on Friday 6 February at 2 pm in Room 1. It is held monthly on the 1st Friday from 2 pm to 4 pm, with additional '5th Wednesday' sessions in April, July and September.

The topic for our first session on Friday 6 February at 2pm is 'Benalla Online', an opportunity to better understand the process of downloading and using Apps from Google Play and the App Store while exploring apps and services that connect you with the Benalla community.

Bring along your mobile or ipad/tablet device - you will be tempted to try the apps we will be introducing.

We are delighted that Melissa Antony from Community Business Connect will be taking workshops in Semester 1, including *A Beginners Introduction to Microsoft Office* on Friday 6 March; *Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Authentic Communications* (am) (encore session) and *Using AI for Planning Courses and other Activities* on Wednesday 29 April (pm); and *Getting more from your photo'* on Friday 5 June (encore)

Choose sessions which meet your learning needs –you don't need to attend every session.

Bev Lee, Dawn Stephens and Ruth Jelliff

Easy Bushwalking

Our Christmas Lunch in December was an enjoyable finish to a successful year of walks. The historic Tanswell's Hotel in Beechworth was a good choice, as we were seated outside on the upstairs terrace under sun umbrellas, enjoying the occasional breeze. Our obliging hosts, Dan and Cheryl kept us well fed and watered. After a couple of hours of socialising, we adjourned to Beechworth Bakery for coffee or tea.

Our first Easy Bushwalk for 2026 will be a visit to **Violet Town** on Wednesday 4 March for two short walks.

The first will be around the town's Honeysuckle Creek Walking Track, a 3km loop through Parklands and Creek Bushland on each side of the creek.

The second walk will be around the Shadforth Reserve, length 2.92km. Set on the edge of town among handsome rural outlooks, this Reserve presents a fine example of a grassy woodland, with a history of community management.

Lunch at the Reserve, where there are toilets and picnic tables. After lunch, we plan to return to Violet Town for coffee - if walkers are happy to.

Meet at the Car Park behind Benalla Seniors and Community Centre on Wednesday 4 March at 8.45am, to leave at 9am. * Contact leader Bev. Thornell: 0447193244 at least 3 days beforehand.

Beverly Thornell

Exercises for Fun

Mondays 9.30am to 11.00am. Commencing 2nd February.

Helen Jeffree

Exploring the Universe

Exploring the Universe is held monthly on the third Tuesday from 2 to 4pm, with the first session for 2026 on Tuesday 17 February at 2 pm. New members might enjoy reading a previous newsletter report, *'From Galileo to the James Webb Space Telescope'*, before the first session.

Bev Morton

Family Research – Getting Started

The first group session for the *Family Research - Getting Started* group will be on Monday 9th February from 1.30 to 4.00 pm in Room 2. After this, the class will meet monthly on the Third Monday from 1.30 to 4pm.

Deb Saunders

Family Research Time

New Activity! Family Research Time commences on Monday 2nd February at 2 pm in Room 2. Four sessions for members who have already completed *Family Research – Getting Started*, it is timetabled on Monday 2 February, Monday 2 March, Monday 11 May and Monday 1 June from 2 to 4 pm in Room 2.

Deb Saunders

Film Discussion Group

At our final session in December, we talked about a range of films, with very different genre and plots.

***Regretting You*:** This film centres on the strained relationship between young mother Morgan Grant and her teenage daughter Clara, exacerbated by Morgan's husband tragic death, that forces them to navigate life's challenges together. This is classified a "rom-com", but beneath its heartfelt romance lies a deeper story about growth, forgiveness, and the evolving relationship between parent and child. The screenplay did not do the story justice – quite light. There were some good characters and performances with some underlying messages – what should be kept secret and what should be told. This was rated as 3.0/5.

Springsteen: This is a bold, introspective portrait that dives deep into Bruce Springsteen's psyche during the creation of his haunting 1982 album Nebraska. The film strips away the myth and focuses on the man - his solitude, his trauma, and his artistic reckoning. It is a character-driven study of Springsteen as a man grappling with depression, legacy, and the weight of his own voice. Because of the performances and the value accepting help when needed, this was rated as 3.0/5.

Now You see Me: Now you Don't: This is a sequel film, this reunites retired Horsemen illusionists with new performers Greenblatt, Smith and Sessa as they target dangerous criminals. The plan is a diamond heist from the criminals. Some comedy, and also a message of "comeuppance" against the criminals. While reasonably entertaining, this is not an award winner. With a good message underlying the story, it was rated as 3.0/5.

***Wicked: For Good*:** This is the second of the two-part feature film adaptation of the Broadway musical. As an angry mob rises against the Wicked Witch, Glinda and Elphaba come together one final time. With their singular friendship now the fulcrum of their futures, they truly see each other, with honesty and empathy as

they change themselves and Oz, for good. Great costuming and some good performances, it was rated as 3.5/5.

***Five Nights at Freddy's 2*:** Another sequel. One year has passed since the supernatural nightmare at Freddy Fazbear's Pizza. The stories about what transpired there have been twisted into a local legend, inspiring the town's first ever Fazfest. It is a *Supernatural Teen Horror* which has been popular with a particular audience, but not necessarily for everyone. It has been rated as 2.0/5.

We are looking forward to returning on 11 February at 2 pm in Room 2 and to watching more films in 2026.

Joy Shirley

Garden Appreciation

Welcome to our new and current members. We are looking forward to seeing you at our first outing on Thursday, 26 February**.**

We will be going to **Park Lane Nursery,** 95 Park Lane, Wangaratta. You may be able to ask the nursery people how to regenerate our gardens after such a hot summer!

Meet at the Benalla Rose Gardens (Royal Hotel end) at 9.30 am, as the U3A car park may still be closed. BYO morning tea – we can have it at the nursery. Lunch venue to be confirmed.

It is very important that you let me know if you are attending, as I need to confirm numbers. Please also advise of any food allergies. Mobile: 0438637010 Email: gwenturner243@gmail.com.

There is a **photo gallery** of our relaxing end of year lunch in Geraldine's garden on the Garden Appreciation web page. The beautiful, shaded garden; verandah and lounge room allowed us to keep cool!

Gwen Turner

Garden Team

2nd and 5th Mondays, 2 pm to 4pm. Commencing 9th February.

Elspeth Maconachie

German

A most enjoyable end of year lunch at Horst's in December! 12 noon to 1.30pm in Room 1 from 3rd February.

Horst Gunther

Learning and Playing Traditional Celtic Tunes

New Course! Learning and Playing Traditional Celtic Tunes commences on Friday 27 February at 1 pm in Room 1. The time has been changed to 1 to 3pm to allow interested members to attend the Irish music session at 'The Northo'.

Following the first session, the course will be held on the 2nd and 4th Fridays from 1 to 3pm in Room 1.

Tim Shirley

Let's Talk Books

Welcome back to *Let's Talk Books* on Monday 2nd February at 2 p.m. I hope you have all enjoyed lots of reading over the holiday time, especially during the very hot days. I am sure we will have some great discussions and swapping of books during 2026.

Geraldine McCorkell

Mahjong

Mondays 11.15am to 12.45pm. Commencing 2nd February.

Kaye Blore

Meet and Mingle

At February's *Meet and Mingle* on Wednesday 18 February at 10am we have three guest speakers. The main speaker, Paul Berry from Benalla Rotary Club, will speak on Rotary's Domestic Violence Campaign; Steve Mars will speak on Historical Architecture in Benalla and Dawn Stephens will speak on the U3A Benalla website. All welcome.

3rd Wednesday 10 am to 12 noon. Commencing 18 February.

Margaret Jenkins

Music Appreciation

2nd and 4th Fridays 10 am to 12 noon. Commencing 13th February.

Bill Squire

Page Turners Book Group

Page Turners commences on Tuesday 3 February at 10am at the Dillon residence. It is held monthly on the first Monday from 10 to 12 midday.

The **Page Turners Book List 2026** is available on the website.

The book for discussion in February is *'Ghost Cities'* by Siang Lu.

Meg Dillon

Patchwork and Craft

As I will be away at the beginning of February, our first session will be on Thursday 19th February – 1 to 4pm in Room 1. Looking forward to seeing you all then!

Patchwork and Craft – Christmas Lunch in December

Dorothy Webber

Pickleball

New Course! After a successful trial period in late 2025, *Pickleball* commenced on Monday 2 February at 10am at the Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre in Ackerly Avenue. It is held weekly from 10 to 11 am, with the opportunity of a catch-up coffee afterwards for those who can stay on.

Jan Kennedy

Play Reading

Play Reading is 10 in February! Reading 'Wives Have Their Uses' by Gwen Meredith at the first class.

Our play for December was *Screen Play,* by A R Gurney. It is a satirical play from 2005 that reimagines the classic film *Casablanca* in a near-future America (set around 2015) facing political turmoil, with refugees fleeing to Canada, offering witty commentary on American politics, history, and the loss of ideals, all centred in Buffalo.

With a plot borrowed liberally from the classic 1942 American film, *Screen Play* is a tale of politics, history, the city of Buffalo, and a love ruined by the Bush-Gore election of 2000. It is set just before an election, envisioning a future ruled by a conservative religious majority. The economy is sagging, wars are raging, and culture is in decay. Many Americans have begun to flee to Canada and Mexico as the government struggles to stop reverse immigration.

The play is presented as a staged reading of a film script that is deemed too dangerous to be produced. It follows Nick, who runs his late father's bar in Buffalo, which is now a meeting place for those crossing the border into Canada. The playwright uses the Casablanca framework to comment on current politics, social issues, and the state of America at the time.

Filled with political satire and jokes, this was fun to read. It was written in 2005, but much of the commentary could be just as relevant today.

Joy Shirley

Just In **-** The play we have for Wednesday 4 February is *Australia Day***,** a comedy by Jonathan Biggins.

Shirley Swallow

Poetry Appreciation

New Course! Poetry Appreciation begins on Wednesday 25 February at 2 pm in Room 1. It is held monthly on the 4th Wednesday from 2 to 4 pm in Room 1. Bring a favourite poem to share during the first session!

Mary-Lou Keogh

Politics and Current Affairs

2nd and 4th Tuesday 9.30 to 11.30 pm, commencing 10 February. Please note the earlier start in 2026.

Brian Harker

Recorder Group

2nd and 4th Wednesday 10.00 to 12.00noon. Commencing 11th February.

Janet Douglas

Singing for Fun

During December 2025 the Singing for Fun group gave three great concerts at Benalla's Aged Care facilities.

On Thursday 4th December we visited Cooinda, on Thursday 11th December we visited Estia Health and on Thursday 18th December we visited Morrie Evans at Benalla Health.

Thank you to our Leaders at these concerts Carmyl Winkler, Kieran Smith, Ross Bootes and Margaret Merriman.

Also, a special thank you to Gwen who played for the Estia concert and Deb who played for the Cooinda and Morrie Evans concerts. Thank you to everyone who participated in the choir. You did a fabulous job.

After the Estia Health concert many Singing for Fun members enjoyed an end of year lunch at the Golf Club. What a great way to end a successful year!

Singing for Fun will commence for this year on Thursday 5th February 2026 at the Hub at Cooinda at 10am. A reminder that Singing for Fun is on the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Thursday of each month.

Something to put in your diaries. On Thursday March 5th, 2026, Singing for Fun will be having a special morning to celebrate 20 years since the commencement of Singing for Fun by Joyce Borschman. All current singers, and also those who have belonged to the group in past years, are invited to come to the morning. There will be songs chosen by Joyce and Gwen Barnes, who has also been with the group since its inception, and a few speeches. Please come and celebrate a special occasion.

Margaret Jenkins

Social Golf

New Group! Social Golf commences on Monday 23 February at the Benalla Golf Club, 170 Mansfield Rd, Benalla. Vic. Monthly sessions on the 1st Monday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

James Davey

Sustainability/Stock and Land

1st and 3rd Friday 10.00am to 12.00noon. Commencing 6th February.

John Lane

Tech Talks

2nd Tuesday 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Commencing 10th February.

Neville Gibb

Train Buffs

Train Buffs has new convenors, Anne Nelson and Joy Poole, in 2026.

Special thanks go to Athol Graham, who started and convened *Train Buffs* during 2025. Athol arranged a variety of special speakers and outside trips related to trains for his group. Although deciding not to continue due to ill health, Athol will continue to play a consultancy role in the group. Thank you, Athol for all the work you put into establishing Train Buffs.

New convenors Joy and Anne are keen to draw upon the train buffs in the class for guest speaker, excursion and topic ideas!

3rd Friday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. Commencing 20th February.

Ukes4Fun – Getting Started

There has been a recent change in scheduling for *Ukes4Fun - Getting Started*. Fortnightly classes during Term I to help new players learn the basics of playing the ukulele in a relaxed and supportive environment.

Four classes on the 2nd and 4th Mondays in February and March from 10 to 11 am will commence on Monday 9 February, with the option to observe and join the *Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming* Group at 11.30 am**.**

On the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month, *Ukes4Fun - Getting Started* participants are welcome to observe and join the *Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming (Practice Session)* at 11.30 am**.**

We look forward to meeting our new members on 9 February**!**

Heather Wallace

Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming

There has been a recent change in the scheduling of *Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming*. There will now be alternate fortnightly classes, *Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming* and *Ukes4Fun –Just Jamming (Practice Sessions)*.

The *'Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming'* sessions will continue to be organised by convenor Heather Wallace and will be held on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from 11.30 to 1.30 in Room 1, commencing on Monday 9th February.

The 'Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming (Practice Sessions) will be facilitated by Rae Jeffers on the 1st and 3rd Mondays, again from 11.30 to 1.30 in Room 1, commencing on February 16th.

These changes have been made to 'spread the load' and to retain the joy of 'just jamming', while at the same time offering opportunities for members to develop new skills and prepare for performing at outside events.

Heather Wallace

Using My Android Mobile

New Course! Using My Android Mobile is for members who would like to feel more confident and get more out of their Android mobile phone..

Sessions will be held on the 1st and 2nd Thursdays, 10.00 – 11.30 am, commencing 5th February.

Ruth Jelliff

Wine Appreciation

Wine Appreciation commences on Friday 20 February with a visit to **Darling Estate Winery**, 94 Whitty Lane, Whitfield, followed by lunch at the Moyhu Hotel.

Wine Appreciation sessions are scheduled on the 3rd Friday of each month, generally running from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Keep an eye out for an email from Garry, who will confirm the exact details closer to each date!

Carolyn and Garry Smith

Other news

Car Parking at U3A

Construction work on the new Pump Track in the park near the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre commenced on Tuesday 6th January 2026. Temporary fencing has been constructed around an area which will be used by the construction company to house their site office and equipment. Unfortunately, the area which is fenced off covers approximately half of the car park where many U3A members park their cars. The project is expected to be finished by the end of February. The Council has suggested that our members use the car park between the Benalla Seniors and Community Centre and the Library.

Patchwork at the Pop-Up Benalla Art Gallery's 'Regeneration' exhibition

Congratulations to the Patchwork and Craft group for your involvement in the recent 'Regeneration' exhibition at the Pop-Up Benalla Art Gallery in Bridge Street!

Vale – Vaughan Cowan

U3A Benalla Life Member Vaughan Cowan passed away early on Monday 8 December 2025.

Vaughan had been part of U3A Benalla since the early 2000's. In 2019 Vaughan was awarded a Life Membership of U3A Benalla for the 16 plus years that he led the Bushwalking Group.

Vaughan had immense bush skills. These included his incredible knowledge of wildflowers, and where to locate them, particularly in the Reef Hills. He was also a talented photographer and compiled several books of wildflowers found in the Benalla region. One aspect of Vaughan's love of bushwalking that particularly impressed me was his skill at walking downwards on extremely steep terrain very quickly.

Vaughan and Marion made a great team at bushwalking - Vaughan leading and Marion bringing up at the rear. They were also very generous hosts when people visited their home. One of Vaughan's other attributes was his love of music, particularly jazz music.

Our thoughts are with Marion and the family.

Vale – Elaine Murphy

Many U3A members were saddened to hear of the passing of Elaine Murphy on Wednesday 7 January.

A U3A member for nine years, Elaine enjoyed a wide range of U3A activities including Meet and Mingle, Patchwork and Craft, Garden Appreciation, and Exercises for Fun. A regular at Meet and Mingle sessions, she took a keen interest in the topics presented by guest speakers and always made a point of expressing her enjoyment of their presentations.
Originally a dressmaker, Elaine was a talented and creative member of our Patchwork and Craft group. She exhibited her paper-based works, including paper flowers and inspirational cards, both locally and in regional craft exhibitions.

Elaine was a founding and highly valued member of North East Artisans and, more recently, the Heart of Art Gallery. In September 2023, Elaine presented a Paper Quilling workshop for our Patchwork and Craft group, which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

An optimistic and resilient person who loved her family deeply, Elaine never missed a dance performance by one of her talented granddaughters.

Elaine's warmth, creativity and generosity of spirit enriched the lives of many, and her contribution to U3A and the wider arts community will be remembered with great affection.

What's On in February

MONDAY 2ND FEBRUARY
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Art Appreciation – Rachel Arndt, art curator, Wangaratta Art Gallery
10:00 Pickleball – Benalla Indoor Recreation Centre
11:15 Mahjong
14:00 Australian Shares and Stock Market
14:00 Family Research Time (Room 2)
14:00 Let's Talk Books

TUESDAY 3RD FEBRUARY
10:00 Page Turners - *'Ghost Cities'* by Siang Lu
12:00 German
14:00 American History

WEDNESDAY 4TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Play Reading – *'Australia Day'*, Jonathan Biggins
10:00 Enrolments - U3A Office
13:30 'A Taste of Art'
14:00 Cards '500'

THURSDAY 5TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Singing for Fun – Cooinda Hub
10:00 Using my Android Mobile

FRIDAY 6TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Sustainability and Stock and Land
14:00 Digital Upskilling for Lifelong Learners

MONDAY 9TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Pickleball
10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started – #1 of 4
11:15 Mahjong
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
13:30 Family Research - Getting Started (Group Session)
14:00 Creative Writing
14:00 Garden Team

TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Politics and Current Affairs
12:00 German
14:00 Tech Talks

WEDNESDAY 11TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Enrolments - U3A Office
10:00 Recorder
14:00 Film Discussion

THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Singing for Fun
10:00 Using my Android Mobile
14:00 Executive Committee Meeting

FRIDAY 13TH FEBRUARY
10.00 Music Appreciation

MONDAY 16TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Pickleball
11:15 Mahjong
11:30 Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming (Practice Session)
14:00 As Time Goes By' - Memoir Writing

TUESDAY 17TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Demystifying Psychology Discussion Group
12:00 German
14:00 Exploring the Universe

WEDNESDAY 18TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Enrolments - U3A Office
10:00 Meet and Mingle – Three Guest Speakers
13:30 'A Taste of Art'
14:00 Cards '500'

THURSDAY 19TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Singing for Fun
13:00 Patchwork and Craft

FRIDAY 20TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Wine Appreciation – Darling Estate Winery
10:00 Sustainability and Stock and Land
14:00 Train Buffs

MONDAY 23RD FEBRUARY
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Pickleball
10:00 Ukes4Fun - Getting Started – #2 of 4
11:15 Mahjong
11:30 Ukes4Fun - Just Jamming
13:00 Family Research Getting Started (1:1) Rm 2
14:00 Coin Collectors
14:00 Social Golf

TUESDAY 24TH FEBRUARY
*Newsletter Reports due today (Shorter month!)
09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
09:30 Politics and Current Affairs
12:00 German
13:00 Family Research Getting Started (1:1) Rm 2
14:00 Critical Thinking

WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Enrolments - U3A Office
10:00 Recorder
14:00 Poetry Appreciation

THURSDAY 26TH FEBRUARY
09:30 Garden Appreciation – Park Lane Nursery, Wangaratta
10:00 Brain Games - Neurobics
10:00 Community Singing
14:00 Car Torque

FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY
10:00 Music Appreciation
14:00 Learning & Playing Traditional Celtic Music

MONDAY 2ND MARCH
09:30 Exercises for Fun
10:00 Art Appreciation
10:00 Pickleball
11:15 Mahjong
11:30 Ukes4Fun – Just Jamming (Practice Session)
14:00 'Australian Shares and Stock Market'
14:00 Let's Talk Books
14:00 Family Research Time (Room 2)

TUESDAY 3RD MARCH
09:00 Come and Learn Croquet
10:00 Convenors' Meeting (Room 1)
10:00 Page Turners Book Group
12:00 German
14:00 American History

WEDNESDAY 4TH MARCH
08:45 Easy Bushwalking – Violet Town Walks
09:30 Play Reading
13:30 'A Taste of Art'
14:00 Cards '500'

THURSDAY 5TH MARCH
10:00 Singing for Fun – '20 Year Celebration'
10:00 Using my Android Mobile
13:00 Patchwork and Craft

U3A BENALLA
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

U3A Benalla Inc A0036654P

Nomination Form

Executive Positions & Committee

Person Nominated _____

Proposed Role _____

(President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer or Committee Member)

Proposer's Name _____

Signature _____

Seconder's Name _____

Signature _____

Nominee I am currently a financial member of U3A Benalla Inc. and accept nomination for this position.

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Return to the Secretary, U3A Benalla Inc. P O Box 674, Benalla, 3672 or
Red B4 Bookshop (next to Hide's Bakery) by Wednesday 11th March 2026.