



**KNOX**  
UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# Capability Statement 2014

LIFELONG LEARNING | SHARING / COLLABORATING | DIVERSITY / INCLUSION | INNOVATION / CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

## History

The U3A Ferntree Gully (now the U3A Knox, since May 2002) was established in 1993. In the initial period, classes were held at a number of locations including Coonara House, Sporting Group Clubhouses, Ferntree Gully Technical College, Church Halls and Members' homes. After several discussions with Knox Council, the growth in our membership was recognised and in 1996, we were offered the kindergarten in Park Boulevard at a peppercorn rent to use as our headquarters. We called the building Parkhills.

As our membership continued to grow, two additional classrooms were added in 2000. Some five years later, the Knox Council provided a major renovation to the Parkhills facility to make it more suited to our particular needs.

Today, the growth in courses, combined with our desire to be accessible to our members has necessitated that we operate from many additional venues and several private homes. Each venue provides a supportive learning environment where people can participate in a meaningful and productive way.

All of those who contribute to the courses and activities, and the management and administration of U3A Knox, are volunteers.

## Our Values

*We value:*

- 1. Lifelong learning and its impact on the intellectual and social capacities and potential of our members.**
- 2. The willingness of our members to share their knowledge, skills, interests and experiences as a collaborative learning community.**
- 3. Diversity and inclusion so that people are treated with dignity and respect and their personal strengths and resilience are promoted.**
- 4. Innovation and the continuous improvement of all aspects of our organisation.**

## Our Mission

*To provide quality programs and developmental activities which enhance the capabilities, quality of life and connectedness of our members.*

# Our Goals

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## Creating our Environment

- *To provide a safe and comfortable learning environment for our members.*
  - *To provide facilities which allow for greater social interaction of our members.*
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## Accessing Resources

- *To advocate for and secure additional resources for the betterment of our members.*
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## Securing our Growth

- *To review and continuously improve the quality of courses and activities.*
  - *To increase our enrolment and the participation rate of members.*
  - *To improve the geographical coverage of programs and activities within the Knox area and improve ease of access for our members.*
  - *To broaden our range of programs within each of the current categories.*
  - *To increase the range of meaningful and fulfilling volunteer activities available to our members.*
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## Involving our Members

- *To regularly assess the participation needs of our members.*
  - *To initiate and promote participation in research relating to education, health and welfare of our members.*
  - *To continually engage our members in the implementation of the U3A Vision.*
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## Improving our Profile

- *To improve the public profile of U3A Knox.*
  - *To actively participate in Network activities and improve member opportunities within U3A.*
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## Assessing our Contribution to Society

- *To assess and improve the Social Capital of our activities.*
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## Our Classes

In each of the last four terms, U3A Knox has offered over 120 courses, most of which involve a weekly attendance. The vast majority of courses operate over all four terms of the year. In several cases, classes are offered at various levels eg. beginners, intermediate or advanced to better cater to the knowledge and expertise of members. A selection of the courses available is detailed below.

<b>Languages:</b>	German, French, Italian, Spanish, Esperanto
<b>Outdoors:</b>	Cycling, Bushwalking, Angling, Golf, Caravan and Camping
<b>Recreation:</b>	Gardening, Bird Watching, Model Building
<b>Games:</b>	Bridge, Mahjong, Chess, Scrabble
<b>Exercises:</b>	Water Exercise, Gentle Exercise, Line Dancing, Aerobics, Tai Chi, Belly Dancing
<b>Mind and Body:</b>	Yoga, Meditation, Relaxation Training
<b>Literature:</b>	Language and Literature, Russian Literature, Book Discussion Groups, Poetry Appreciation
<b>Music:</b>	Musicals, Opera, Classical Music Appreciation, Jazz, Swing and Blues, Folk Music
<b>Performance:</b>	Handbells, Recorders, Hawaiian Ukulele, Singing, Chimes, Drama Skills
<b>Painting:</b>	Oil Painting, Water Colours, Glass and Reverse Glass Painting, Acrylics, Decorative Painting
<b>Writing:</b>	Creative Writing, Writing your Life Story
<b>Handcrafts:</b>	Knitting, Tatting, Crochet
<b>Creative Stitching:</b>	Patchwork
<b>Paper Craft:</b>	Paper Tole, Card Embroidery
<b>History:</b>	History of Scotland, North Korea, Arabia and the Arabs
<b>Art:</b>	Modern Art Movements, Drawing, Calligraphy, Floral Art
<b>Photography:</b>	Camera Club, Photoshop
<b>Humanities:</b>	Philosophy, Psychology
<b>Computing:</b>	Basic Computing, iPads, Android Tablets, Computer Users Group
<b>Ungrouped:</b>	Current Affairs, Investment and Finance

## Art Show

The U3A Knox Art and Craft Show began in 1997 and has been held annually since that time, becoming one of the pre-eminent art events in the Knox City calendar.

The first show had 120 entries and has grown each year particularly after the Knox City Council initiated its Seniors Week activities and assisted with both the advertising and financing, as it still does.

Progressively, the space available for the show was extended and we were loaned and later given to keep a number of art stands for exhibition usage and share those with other organisations during the year.

Over the years, it is estimated that we have raised over \$60,000 in prizes (donated by sponsors, and raised from our raffle and entry fees) for local artists. We have major sponsorship from Knox City Council, Bendigo Bank, and lately Ferntree Gully Toyota, as well as Knox Environmental Society and many local businesses.

In 2014 we anticipate having over 400 entries in eight categories - oils, watercolours, other media, pastels, photography, patchwork, needlework and creative craft. It is expected that the Show will attract 700 - 800 visitors over the two days.

## Events

Our Events Sub-Committee facilitates the provision of guest speakers at our end-of-term luncheons and organises regular bus trips, social events and fund-raising activities.

In recent times, activities have included visits to botanical gardens, galleries, nurseries, antiques and collectables markets, historical sites and wineries.

On average, each of the four end-of-term luncheons are attended by over 100 members and guests and the bus trips and other events are well patronised.

## Vacation Program

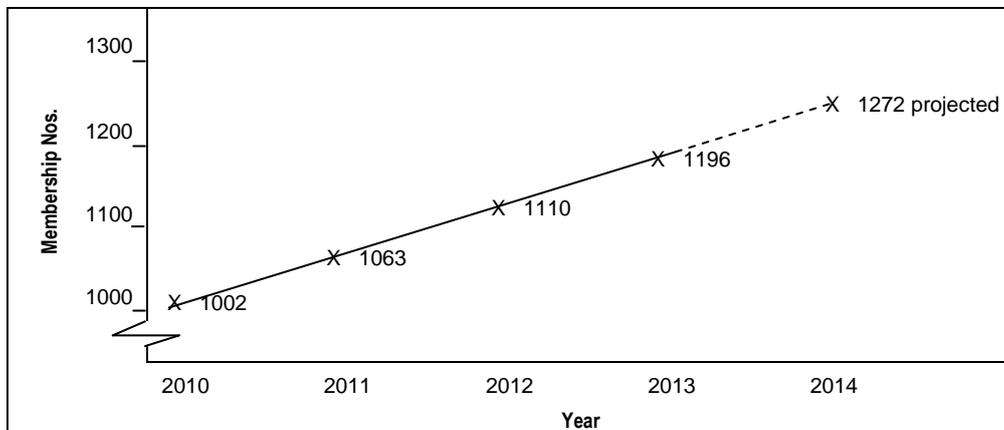
While some classes continue throughout the year regardless of the term structure, U3A Knox initiated a formal course program in 2013 to meet the needs of those seeking a broader range of learning opportunities during the term breaks.

The program consists of talks by members and guest speakers, discussion of DVD-based presentations, focus groups and other activities designed to keep the brain active. A major emphasis to date has been on the Health and Wellbeing of members.

In the past 12 months, the four programs have involved 112 courses and activities attracting 1321 members and guests. With the advent of the Vacation Program, our facility at Parkhills is now used extensively for 50 weeks a year.

## Growth

U3A Knox Inc had 1196 members and associate members at the end of 2013 growing at an average rate of 6.1% per annum in the previous three years.



## Our Members

Our members are drawn from all walks of life but share the passions to continue learning, maintain their physical and mental health, to contribute to the organisation and its administration, and participate and remain connected to their peers.

Our members are predominantly female although the percentage of males (28.5%) is increasing. The Members represent a broad age range as demonstrated below:

Age Grouping	% of Members
45 - 60	7.7
61 - 70	45.2
71 - 80	39.0
81 +	8.2

Over 78% of our members live in the City of Knox with the remainder mostly drawn from surrounding areas.

## Governance

Our Committee of Management comprises individuals from a broad range of backgrounds with qualifications and extensive previous experience in Teaching and Higher Education, Management of Information Technology, Psychology and the Arts, as well as Financial, Retail and Manufacturing Operations in the Private Sector, and Senior Management and Administration Roles in the Public and Community Sectors.

Furthermore, we have a Constitution which complies with the New Model Rules established by the Victorian Government, and a comprehensive set of policies and standard practices for the administration and management of finances and resources.

## Our Tutors and Leaders

Currently, U3A Knox has some 100 tutors and group leaders who provide their services on a voluntary basis. The vast majority of the tutors and leaders are members of U3A Knox and all choose to share their knowledge, skills, experiences and interests in a variety of learning formats.

Tutors and Leaders typically organise a framework of their activities, topics, projects or events for the duration of their courses and facilitate the learning and development in collaboration with course members.

Many have been actively involved as Tutors and/or Leaders for over 10 years at U3A Knox and have received awards for their service to the organisation.

## Our Volunteers

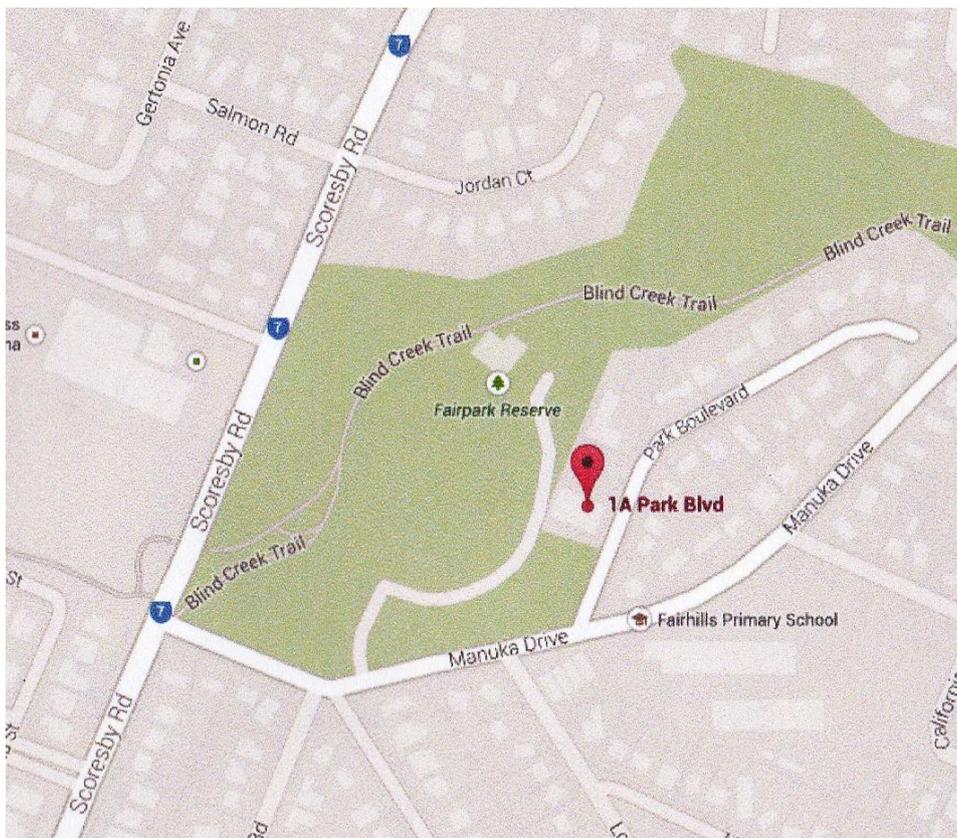
Volunteers are the key to the success of U3A Knox as we have no paid employees. Currently, U3A Knox identifies over 30 roles for Volunteers, each of which makes a contribution to the development, maintenance, administration and management of classes, events, activities, communication, marketing, resources or finances of the organisation. Members are encouraged to volunteer.

Some 530 persons (45% of our members) participated as volunteers during 2013, with many of them engaging in several roles.

U3A Knox offers an incentive to those who volunteer i.e., they are given first opportunity to enrol in classes within a priority system which is relative to the time and effort volunteered.



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