

## President's Report. Rotorua U3A 16 August 2023

Resilience is a much misused word but apt for how Rotorua U3A has responded to events since the 2022 AGM. A year ago covid traffic lights were still in force, remember them? But just when we thought life was back to an equinamous normal, the climate has given us a boot up the backside and reminded us that a lethally hot and stormy planet is looming. Last year covid affected our schedule, this year it has been cyclones, storms and floods. But we are still here, making way, and intend to continue doing so in the year to come.

This time last year we had 389 members and now we have about 386. Our membership has stabilised with deaths and departures matched by new joiners. Other statistics are much the same as last year: we are now 68% female 32% male and 97% have email, which means they have internet access and we hope, internet banking to pay their subs. Our Treasurer will comment on that.

We have 25 groups, two more than last year. Anne Hunt resurrected her excellent Art History Group and Cate Frey started a brand new group – Cities, concentrating on ancient but still thriving modern cities. I went to one meeting and now I'm hooked. It is a study group in which members choose an aspect of the city and tell what they have learned at a meeting. It's what U3A is all about – we are never too old to learn, there's always something new! I appeal to those members who have joined in recent years to step forward and share your skills and interests – convening a group does require some time and effort but can be very rewarding.

At our first forum in October, Raymond Burr, Consultant director of Qlabs, Waipawa shared his extensive knowledge of Healthy Soils. In December we held an in house show and tell for our groups. In February we were lined up for a Schools Forum with six local high schools/colleges and Professor Paul Spoonley as convenor. But along came Cyclone Gabrielle with its climate-change wrecking ball swinging wildly, and with Paul stranded in Hawkes Bay. But we showed resilience, postponed the event till May (four of the schools pulled out but the remaining two scholars from Boys High and Western Heights did well) and held a March forum with Fiona George from NZ Red Cross, and a July forum (originally for April) with Professor Richard Haverkamp from Massy University instructing us about that wonderful stuff collagen.

Our committee to be elected for 2023-2024 reflects the sad fact that Ruth Gadgil died unexpectedly in May. She had been a committee member for many years and compiled our colourful newsletter. Also our Secretary Paddi Hodgkiss will leave the committee (though not U3A) to concentrate on her work with Trade Aid. We thank Paddi for all she has done for us over the 8 years she has been on the committee. Two new members will join the committee, Brian Gillespie and Paul Gellatly, and I know they will make a strong contribution to our splendid organisation.

Thank you all Peter Wood Rotorua U3A President 12 August 2023