



E-Bulletin September 2021

A Proposal for Seeking Funds from the NSW Government

1. Funding Available:

Apart from 5 times in its history, the U3A Network NSW Inc has never searched for sources of money to supplement the funding that each U3A gets from its members to run each association. This reluctance to seek funding among U3A Networks began to decrease about 2018 when the U3A Network Victoria Inc. began to actively seek Victorian government funds. They have developed a close working relationship with the Victorian government. When the guest speakers from Victoria spoke at the Wagga Wagga Conference, they made the attendees aware of the extent of the funding they receive. NSW members were quite taken aback by the extent of their funding from the Victorian Government and ask why our NSW Network Committee could not do the same. I work with the Victorian members on the U3AAA. In my recent contact with the Victorian Vice-President and his team, he informed me that at this point of history the Victorian Network has been awarded 2 bundles of money — \$3 million for a period of 3 years and another sum of \$450,000. The way that Victoria operates these funds is through the Network Committee, where local U3As can request an amount to run a project within the goals of the government.

If a U3A Network and its members decide to seek NSW Government funding, we will need to keep some figures about our decrease in members and our financial difficulties during the two COVID19 periods over the last two years. Below is my suggestion for us to consider what data we need when gathering information so that we can argue our funding case. We would then have solid data at hand to use and to quote: for example, the number of members who have been lost in the last few years.

An Example of U3A Membership							
Beginning 2020	End of 2020	Members Lost	Percentage Lost 2020	Beginning 2021	Expected End 2021	Members Lost 2021	Percentage Lost 2021
700	500	200	35%	500	300	200	40%



When COVID19 hit and U3As were required to close down, some U3As did the following to keep their numbers together:

- A. Tried to keep contact with members by phone and by Zoom
- B. Set up Zoom Meetings in order to keep classes going
- C. Sent out frequent/more frequent newsletters, including quizzes etc, to maintain the interest and participation of the members.

Some of the decreases in finance mirror the loss of members:

Finance U3A for the Example above							
Beginning 2020	End of 2020	Membership Fees Lost	Percentage Lost 2020	Beginning 2021	End 2021	Members Lost 2021	Percentage Lost 2021
700	500	200 @ \$30 = \$6000	40%	500	300	200	40%

2. Recovery from COVID19 Project:

COVID19 hit our local U3As very hard. It has affected us particularly in terms of membership. Some U3As have found that fewer members have returned after COVID19. One of the things I am suggesting is that every local U3A identifies its members who have not returned after COVID19. What is needed is for a large number of current members to contact former members (preferably by phone) to invite them to come back, and to find out why people have not returned. If we share those reasons with one another, we get a whole-of-Association view of the reasons for the departures.

In some shape or form, every U3A would have the required information to contact former members of the Network:

All Names	Phone No	Day Contacted	Reason for Not Returning	What do you need to happen to Rejoin U3A?

We need an enthusiastic team of people with good telephone skills and rapport with people. They also need to have the skills to be able to fill in the form as they speak with the people, so that we come to know why members did not return.

3. Management Committee:

The other area that was hard hit was at the Committee level. While not all necessarily related to COVID19, some U3As have reported that they have lost Committee members to death, illness, moving and residential aged care facilities. At the 2019 Conference, I presented a process on how to ensure succession planning by using a selection process in local U3As. It is also part of *Recovery from the COVID19 Project* and will eventually end up on the Website. Until that becomes a reality, you can contact me for the two (2) files that make up this second step on bbirrer@bigpond.com.

Finally, U3As have been hard hit at the financial level. We have many politicians who attend our AGMs and are positive in their vocal support for U3A. We need to build on the good reputation that we have with politicians. We are looking at a Project where both the Network and the local U3As come together and work as a team.

4. Seeking Government Funding:

At the Conference in Wagga Wagga this year, the Victorian Network shared the details of how they went about asking for money from the Victorian State Government over a number of years. The NSW Network members asked why this approach had never been tried by our own U3A. This is the first attempt and there will be others. We have no reason to doubt that our efforts will be just as successful as Victoria's, but it needs to be done as a partnership between the local U3As and the Network. In my five years as a Member, I do not believe that we have ever done a project together.

The first step in this project is to have the Network write to the NSW politicians in January 2022 outlining the difficulties that we have faced since COVID19 and what we have done to increase our membership. Once those letters have gone out, local U3As who have the same politicians will be invited to go on their own or together with their Regional Representatives to talk with their local politicians about receiving Government grants.

5. NSW Funding:

In September 2021, the Treasurer, Dominic Perrottet, announced that the NSW Government had provided a package of \$200,000 for the Not-For-Profit sector to help them to face the difficulties that COVID19 had caused. There is also an amount of \$5.1 billion dollars available from the Federal



Government. The monies will be used for the fragile of our community and the support of people in lockdown.

6. Plagiarism:

I was accused of two offences of plagiarism this week.

The first was in the July E-Bulletin, in relation to the 'Five Stage Model of Team Development'. I acknowledged that Bruce Tuckman presented the model which I quoted, and then related our own U3A Network to the points which he made in my Reflection on Page 3 of that Bulletin.

I studied in the United States when I was in the Centre for Organisational Development. When we were given our Master's Academic Gown, we were also able to use a system called a 'fair use' of copyright promoting freedom of expression by allowing use of licensed copyright of works in particular. I was not aware of any difference between the two countries.

In relation to the second-article, we did not have a problem before we had members saving copyright to their own name. Formerly, in days gone by, members would write an article and would save the article as the Network's possession. I tried to contact Graeme Eggins, the author of 'Dealing with difficult committee members', which I found in our Archives and reproduced in the August E-Bulletin. My aims were to obtain his permission to reproduce his article, and to honour him for being such a fine U3A member. I have been unable to locate him, and would appreciate it if anyone can tell me how to contact him. I wish to thank him for his article, and to apologise for any distress which I might have inadvertently caused.

7. Conclusion:

I hope what you read in this month's edition is uplifting and energising for your U3A, and that in your endeavours everything is going well for your U3A and for your members.

Happily serving the 63 U3As in the NSW Network I am yours truly,

Bob Birrer

(Robert V Birrer) President U3A Network – NSW Inc. 28/09/2021