

2023 MEMBERS' HANDBOOK

U3A Castlemaine Inc.

Reg. No. AO17409G

Encompassing the Shire of Mount Alexander and nearby communities

Welcome to U3A Castlemaine

We hope this booklet offers the information you require to start engaging in activities organised by U3A Castlemaine.

If you want to know how to join and enrol in U3A Castlemaine classes, you might like to skip to the [Membership](#) section.

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About U3A Castlemaine

History

In the University of the Third Age, the term "University" is used in the original sense, meaning a community of seekers of knowledge and understanding for its own sake. The University of the Third Age started in Toulouse, France in 1973. It had close ties with programs run by the University there.

The concept came to Australia in the mid-1980s and grew rapidly, but any formal connection with a university was rejected. Each U3A functions through the cooperation of its own members.

U3A Castlemaine began its formal existence in June 1988 when it became an incorporated body. Its [Constitution](#) is available to view by any member.

U3A Castlemaine and its Relationship with other U3As

U3A Castlemaine is autonomous, however [U3A Network Victoria](#) exists to assist all Victorian U3As with training and advice on all aspects of setting up and running a U3A in Victoria.

U3A Network Victoria receives and administers any State Government grants to Victorian U3As.

Members of any U3A are welcome at meetings of other U3As and U3A Castlemaine welcomes visitors from other U3As.

U3A Castlemaine Office

The U3A Office is located at the Uniting Church complex in Lyttleton St, Castlemaine. The office is in the Manse building at the rear of the church. Access is via Lyttleton St (shown at the top in the aerial photograph, below) near the corner of Kennedy St (left).



Office Hours for 2022 will be variable.

The Office is open by arrangement (with 24 hours notice). Phone 0425 712 362 or 5472 2249.

Emails can be sent u3acastlemaine@gmail.com.

Funding

U3A Castlemaine finances its operations through members' Annual Subscriptions, donations, and informal fundraising events.

Extreme Weather Policy

U3A Castlemaine activities must be cancelled on declared Catastrophic fire danger days. This applies to all classes, office attendance, administrative meetings and coffee mornings.

Class Leaders and class members are expected to take responsibility for their own wellbeing in deciding whether to attend on days of extreme weather conditions.

Member Activities

Classes

Each year, U3A Castlemaine provides a comprehensive program of classes for U3A members. The complete list of classes is published as a Prospectus in December each year. This can be obtained from the [U3A Castlemaine Office](#), The Information Centre at the Market Building or the Castlemaine Library. From early December until February it is also available at outlets in the local surrounding townships: Chewton, Guilford, Maldon and Harcourt. It is also available [from our website](#).

The classes are run by *Class Leaders*, who are volunteers who have a particular interest or aptitude that they are willing to share. The provision of classes is managed by the *Class Coordinator* (email u3acm.courses@gmail.com), who is always interested in hearing from people who would like to become a class leader.

The duration of courses vary:

- Some courses (and other activities such as gallery visits and car rambles, etc.) are scheduled for a single day.
- Others are termed Short Courses and vary in length from a few days to a few weeks.
- The remainder (*Long Courses*) are usually scheduled according to the school terms, either in selected terms or for all terms.

Also, the frequency of classes can vary. Typically they are either weekly or on two weeks in each month (e.g. the first and third or the second and fourth).

The venues where the classes are held also vary. Many classes are held in the Castlemaine Uniting Church Manse or nearby buildings. Some courses are conducted in private homes. All venues must have Public Liability insurance, details of which are available from the Venues Coordinator (email: u3acm.venues17@gmail.com).

Attending Classes

If you wish to attend U3A classes, then you will need to first become a member of the U3A. This is covered in the [next section](#).

When attending classes, please ensure that you wear your [membership badge](#) which will be issued to you when you become a member. Your attendance at classes is recorded on the class roll, which is required for insurance purposes and for compiling statistics that are used in allocating classrooms.

Number of Classes you can attend

In order to maintain fairness to all members, UMAS contains a limit to the number of classes in which a member can enrol. However, the limit is kept large enough so that it does not usually have any effect.

Most courses are free to U3A members, however:

- only currently financial members can attend classes;
- members can only attend classes they are correctly enrolled for.

Additional Fee for some Classes

Some classes may also require a small payment to cover extra costs, such as class materials, venue hire and transport costs.

Membership

Annual Subscription Fee

The annual subscription fee is set at each Annual General Meeting. For 2023 it is \$60 per year for *Full Membership*. New members joining U3A Castlemaine after 30 June pay 50% of the annual subscription fee.

Members of other U3As can join U3A Castlemaine as an *Associate Member* at 50% of the annual subscription fee for *Full Members*.

Joining the U3A and Enrolling in Classes

If you would like to attend U3A classes, there is a 2-step process to be followed:

1. Firstly, you will need to join the U3A (become a member). Membership is open to any retired or semi-retired person. If you are already a member, even if you have not used your membership for several years, then you can skip this step.
2. Secondly, you need to enrol in one or more classes. The first time you enrol in classes for the year, you will be charged the annual subscription fee, as described above.

You can perform each of these steps either online, if you have access to a computer connected to the internet, or by using paper forms, as described in the sections that follow.

Joining Online

If you have access to the internet and can use a computer, then the easiest way to join is to visit the U3A Membership Administration System (UMAS) in an internet browser (<https://u3acastlemaine.org.au/members/>), click *Join* and then fill in the online form. The membership type should be *Full*, unless you are already a member of another U3A in which case you can choose *Associate*, which attracts a smaller subscription fee.

If you need extra help, then please access the [UMAS Instructions](#) in an internet browser.

Joining using a Paper Form

Alternatively, you can fill in an [application form](#) on paper. These can be obtained from the following places:

1. At the monthly [Coffee Mornings](#).
2. From the [U3A Castlemaine office](#) at the Manse, Lyttleton St.
3. At the Castlemaine Visitor Information Centre in Mostyn Street. *
4. Or at Goldfields (Castlemaine) Library. *

* Application forms are available at these sites as inserts in Newsletters and Prospectuses, only during December, January and February.

When you pick up a membership form, please also pick up a Class Prospectus as you will need this to enrol into classes.

Completed membership forms should be returned to the Secretary (U3A Castlemaine, P.O. Box 792, CASTLEMAINE 3450. Phone: (03) 5472 2249).

Enrolling in Classes Online

Having become a member of U3A Castlemaine, the next step is to enrol in the classes of your choice. This requires you to log in to the U3A membership system (UMAS): <https://u3acastlemaine.org.au/members/> using your membership number and password. If you have just joined, as described above in [Joining Online](#), then you will have been required to choose a password and the last screen of the joining process will display your member number. On August 12, 2022 we changed our membership system from *MyU3A* to *UMAS*. However, your member number and password remain the same as before. If you have lost your member number, a U3A volunteer can retrieve it for you. However, if you have lost your password then, unlike *MyU3A*, it is not possible for U3A volunteers to retrieve it for you as it will have been encrypted for security reasons. To retrieve your password in this case, please click *Log in* and then click *Reset password* under **Help Links**. You then follow the instructions, which involve receiving a password reset authorisation code by email, which you then enter in the space provided. If you need further help, then please watch this video: <https://vimeo.com/560665723/627b8b3489>.

Having successfully logged in, you can then choose which classes that you would like to attend by clicking *Classes* in the menu and then scrolling through the available classes. Some hints on how to find the classes that you are interested in are described on the *Classes* page on our website: <https://u3acastlemaine.com/courses.html>. When you find a class that you are interested in, click on it to show more details. Then, if you are still interested, click on the *ADD TO CART* button. (If you do not see this button, it is probably because you are not logged in: log in and then select *Classes* again).

When you have finished selecting classes, click the *Cart* option to review your choices or the *Checkout* option to proceed with the enrolment process. This option displays your invoice, which may include fees for certain classes (though most classes are free) and, if this is the first time you have enrolled in the current year, it will include an annual subscription fee. If the invoice is for zero dollars, then there is no more to do. Otherwise, please pay the invoice using one of the pay options that are listed.

Classes generally have size limits, due to venue size or the nature of activities. Once the class limit has been reached, enrolling members will be put on a wait list. When a vacancy becomes available (e.g. due to a resignation), the Class Coordinator will move a replacement from the wait list into the class list. If a class is very popular then *all* class enrolments will be subject to a ballot. Where a class is expected to be very popular, you may find that the initial class limit is set to zero, which causes *all* enrolments to be wait-listed. At a suitable time, a ballot will be held to determine the successful applicants, who will be informed by email.

Enrolling in Classes using a Paper Form

A [Class Prospectus](#) is published in early December each year. It contains a list of the classes that are on offer in the relevant year and includes a Class Selection Form on which you can record your choice of classes. You can pick up a copy of the prospectus at the same places listed above under [Joining using a Paper Form](#). In early January, Membership Enrolment days are held where members can lodge their Class Selection Forms and, after checking, will be entered into the computer system by a volunteer. The date and time of Enrolment days is published in our newsletter. Please note that if a class is very popular and is oversubscribed, membership of the class will be determined by a ballot.

Recording Anticipated Absences from Classes

If you know that you will be absent from one or more classes due to illness, a holiday or for any other reason, please help the Class Leaders by recording your anticipated absence from classes by logging on to UMAS (<https://u3acastlemaine.org.au/members/>), selecting *My Absences* and filling in the start and finish dates, the classes affected and the reason, Then click *Submit*.

If you do not have access to a computer, please call the office and a volunteer will do this for you.

Name Badges

Name badges are required to be worn (e.g. on a lanyard or in a conference name badge holder) at all U3A events. If you are attending U3A events and do not have a current name badge, please request a name badge at the office or by asking a U3A volunteer at a public event such as a Membership Enrolment Day or a Coffee Morning.

Members with access to suitable computer equipment (a computer connected to the internet with Microsoft Word or LibreOffice Writer installed plus a suitable printer) can print their own name badge: log in to UMAS (<https://u3acastlemaine.org.au/members/>) and click on the *GENERATE NAME BADGE* button that appears under *Member links* on the *My Membership* page.

Name badges generated by UMAS have the member's emergency contact details on the back of the badge.

Change of Address

If you change your address, phone number or other contact details, please update your profile in UMAS (<https://u3acastlemaine.org.au/members/>) or advise the U3A Office if you are unable to change your details online.

Privacy Considerations

Register of Members

Incorporation and our Constitution requires that a Register of Members be kept. Under the Rules for Incorporation members are entitled to inspect the register and take copies free of charge. No information is given to any other persons. If you are concerned about this, you may request from the Secretary that your information be restricted.

Contact Details for Class Leaders

It is recognised that members and potential members may want to contact class leaders to find out more information on particular classes before deciding to join them. However, it is also recognised that class leaders have an understandable need to limit access to the private contact details. Accordingly, the Class Coordinator will be responsible for recording the permission (or lack thereof) granted by each class leader for the publication of their personal details (email address and phone number). This information will be entered into UMAS, which will ensure:

- Web pages (such as the *Classes* page) which are available to anyone on the internet without logging in *do not contain any* contact details of class leaders.
- Other web pages, which are only accessible by members who are logged in, only reveal the contact details of class leaders when specific permission has been granted by the class leaders themselves.
- The Prospectus (which is available online and as a printed copy at various collection points in Castlemaine) only publishes class leaders' contact details where specific permission has been granted.

How the COVID-19 Pandemic affects Activities

At the time on compilation of this booklet, COVID Safe settings for U3A Castlemaine activities are as follows:

- **Face masks are no longer required for indoor classes**, but they are still recommended for indoor classes and outdoor situations where you cannot socially distance.
- **Members should still carry a mask when attending U3A Castlemaine activities.**
- Members who prefer to continue wearing masks are encouraged to do so.

The State Government strongly recommends that you wear a face mask:

- if you have any COVID-19 symptoms,
- are with people who may be vulnerable to COVID-19, or
- are in a space where you cannot physically distance.

Proof of double COVID vaccination is no longer required to attend any U3A Castlemaine activities.

Online Classes

During the lockdowns of 2020 and 2021, some classes were able to continue by using the Zoom meeting software. By this means class members stayed at home and accessed their classes online using their computer. If this method of class delivery is required in future, then you will be informed of such by your class leader.

U3A Castlemaine has a Zoom Pro licence available for Class Leaders to access. Contact the Class Coordinator to enquire whether it is available for your class time.

Keeping in Touch

Newsletter

A link to the newsletter on our website is emailed to members each month, or a copy is available at the monthly Coffee Mornings or at the U3A Castlemaine office and key public locations (Market Building, Castlemaine Library).

Members can have the newsletter mailed for \$15 pa. If you require this option, please enrol in a special class called "Newsletter by Mail". When you do this you will be invoiced for \$15 and when this is paid you will receive newsletters each month sent to the address that you have registered with the U3A.

The newsletter serves as notice of plans for forthcoming events and as a communication medium for reporting class activities.

The deadline for items to be included appears in each newsletter.

The Editor is responsible for the newsletter content. Items for the Newsletter can be emailed to the Editor at the email address as listed in the newsletter (in Word format). Handwritten or typed items are also accepted. Photos submitted must be saved in JPEG format if good quality printing is to be ensured. They can be either saved on a CD, USB drive or attached to an email.

U3A Website

The website is found at www.u3a.castlemaine.com. Its main menu contains:

About Us:	A general description of U3A Castlemaine.
New Members:	Instructions for members of the public wishing to join U3A Castlemaine.
Classes:	Access to a list of current classes that can be browsed.
La Trobe University:	Details of an agreement between U3A Castlemaine and La Trobe University Bendigo allowing members of the former attend classes in the latter.
Documents:	Access to important documents relating to U3A Castlemaine.
News:	Access to the current newsletter and news from certain classes
Noticeboard:	Posters containing news items.
Local Weather:	Access to the Bureau of Meteorology's forecast for Castlemaine
Fire Restrictions:	Access to the Country Fire Authority to check for restrictions and warnings.
Contact Us:	Contact details for U3A Castlemaine.

The Website Manager is responsible for updating the website. Requests for addition, deletion or alteration of information on the website must be passed to the Web Review Team at u3acm.wrt@gmail.com. After review, the Web Review Team will pass on changes of content to the Website Manager

The website includes links to the [UMAS Membership Administration System](#), which allows members to:

- Browse information on classes.
- Enrol in classes.

- Pay their annual subscription.
- Record their absence or inability to attend a class or classes.
- Resign from a class.
- And more ...

Members are encouraged to use this resource to check on classes and other U3A Castlemaine information. Class Leaders may use the site to supplement and update course material.

Coffee Mornings

Coffee Mornings are normally held on the first Friday of each month, commencing at 10.00am at the Church of Christ, 66 Blakeley Rd. Castlemaine.

These start with Announcements, often followed by a guest speaker, after which members enjoy a social get together over morning tea. Members can also collect a newsletter, obtain other information from the notice board.

A cake raffle is also conducted at these meetings.

Governance and Administration

Constitution

The Constitution governs the activities of U3A Castlemaine. It is available on the website at [Documents -> Constitution](#). It specifies that the affairs of U3A Castlemaine shall be managed by the Committee of Management.

Committee of Management (CoM)

The Committee of Management meets regularly and is responsible for managing, with the assistance of several Working Groups, the administration and finances of the organisation. Committee contact details are shown on the back page of the monthly newsletter.

Working Groups

New members are encouraged to join a Working Group in order to contribute new and fresh ideas from their life experiences. Volunteers undertake many other tasks, and members' help is much appreciated. In addition, it is a good way to meet fellow members.

Public Risk Insurance

U3A's Public Liability insurance covers members and guests attending or volunteering at U3A courses or events. It does not cover general members for personal accident insurance. Evidence of attendance via the marking of a class roll may be required. The policy does not cover classes conducted in private homes. The Venues Coordinator checks each year for appropriate Public Liability insurance for private homes used to conduct classes.

U3A Castlemaine Policies

Policy documents are available on the website under Documents -> Policies. They include:

- Bullying Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Discrimination Policy

- Extreme Weather Policy
- Grievance Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Serious Injury and Incident Reporting Policy
- Sexual Harassment Policy

Operation of all U3A Castlemaine Activities

It is the policy of U3A Castlemaine that all activities be non-sectarian and non-political. Matters of insurance require that the public should not be invited to any activity without the prior consent of the Committee