

# Newsletter - April 2026

*Are you aged 55-plus and retired or semi-retired? Live in the Bass Valley or surrounds? Want to keep your brain and body active and make new friends? Want to share your skills and experience with others? Then join in the University of the Third Age Bass Valley (U3A Bass Valley). For a modest annual membership fee you can participate in a wide range of courses, social activities, excursions and events.  
Learn, Laugh & Live*

## U3A Bass Valley Committee

<b>President:</b> Pam Richmond	<b>Committee Members:</b>
<b>Vice President:</b> Marg Boyer	Geoff Guilfoyle
<b>Treasurer:</b> Glenda Bent	Janet Cobden
<b>Secretary:</b> David Laing	Marcia Comber
<b>Minutes Secretary:</b> Di Goeman	

## News

### Learning with Locals - Living Well & Ageing Positively



Our very own Janet Cobden delivered two standalone presentations on Living Well: Positive Ageing (session 1) and Strength Resilience & Nutrition (session 2).

Both sessions were well attended and highly praised. Besides giving case studies and examples we can all relate to, Janet provided valuable information and tips garnered from research.

We all know we are living longer. In particular Janet spoke about Resilience & Robustness. These are the things we should aim for to help us become fitter for longer. The key to remaining robust lies in modifying behaviour and adapting or protecting ourselves from environmental challenges. Our aim is to lengthen our enjoyment and shorten our suffering. Common sense really!

## How to access U3A Network Victoria website - why is this important?

To get access to the Nutrition Online Sessions below, just log in to their main website. You'll find heaps of interesting courses and tips there. Plus, you can also subscribe to their monthly newsletter (bottom left hand corner) to stay up-to-date on all the latest happenings. Just enter your email address. It's pretty easy to do and definitely worth the time!

The address of U3A Vic website is:

[Home - U3A Network Victoria](#)

Which gives access to the various topics on the website. Anyone can access several pages without logging in.

If you go there you will notice in the centre just below the page headings is "Member Log In" If you create an account (free) you can access more information by logging in.

To create an account go to:

<https://u3avictoria.org.au/register/u3a-2/>

enter your details including a username and a password (note: must be medium or strong) and click "Register". You will be sent a confirmation email. You then use the username and password you created to log in where it says "Member Log In" in the main U3A Vic website.

You will now be able to access more information under the various pulldown pages.

## Healthy Eating In Our Third Age: Dr Mitra Zarrati Online Sessions starting 22 April 2026

U3A is pleased to offer a new online Nutrition course created by Accredited Practising Dietitian Dr Mitra Zarrati, who brings extensive experience in community health, ageing and chronic disease management. Designed especially for U3A members, the course provides clear, practical guidance on healthy eating, gut health, mood, mobility, heart health and sleep – all using simple, evidence-based strategies and everyday



foods.

**Sessions will be released weekly from Wednesday 22 April.**

More information about these sessions can be found in the Wellbeing section of the Course Ideas Hub on our website here: [Course Ideas Hub - U3A Network Victoria](#)

**The online course can be viewed at home at any time.**

Session 1: Healthy Eating – Understanding Food Groups and Daily Servings – Live 22 April

Session 2: Gut Health – Supporting Digestion and a Healthy Microbiome – Live 29 April

Session 3: Food and Mood – The Connection Between Nutrition, Gut Health, and Mental Wellbeing – Live 6 May

Session 4: Strong Bones and Muscles – Nutrition for Strength, Mobility, and Independence – Live 13 May

Session 5: Heart-Healthy Eating – Protecting Your Heart Through Everyday Food Choices – Live 20 May

Session 6: Nutrition and Quality of Sleep – Foods and Habits for Better Rest – Live 27 May

View Dr Mitra Zarrati's website [here](#).

The Nutrition Community of Practice (COP) space provides updates, an opportunity to participate in a Q&A session with Dr Mitra Zarrati, and to share ideas.

To express your interest in joining this COP, please email [info@u3avictoria.org.au](mailto:info@u3avictoria.org.au)

## Elder Rights Australia - Fri 15 May 1.30 - 3pm @ CDCC



**ERA** Elder Rights Australia  
Promoting the human rights of all older people

**Invitation to all  
U3A Bass Valley Members  
and friends**  
Elder Rights Australia  
will be attending on:

**Friday the 15<sup>th</sup> of May at  
1.30 pm**  
**Corinella & District Community Centre**  
**To provide information on:**

- Navigating the Aged Care System
- Accessing aged care services at home
- Aged Care Rights
- The Value of Advocacy

**To register email [admin@u3abassvalley.com](mailto:admin@u3abassvalley.com) with subject ERA  
or call 0411 049 708**

Aged Care Advocacy Line  
1800 700 600 | [elderrights.org.au](http://elderrights.org.au)

Maree Bayley is back after her excellent informative forum last November! Those who were there will tell you how helpful it was, with Maree sharing real-life examples and answering your questions. There are still heaps of questions to sort out since the new Aged Care rules and regulations kicked in last November. There is still a lot of confusion regarding the best way to navigate the system, especially accessing aged care services at home.

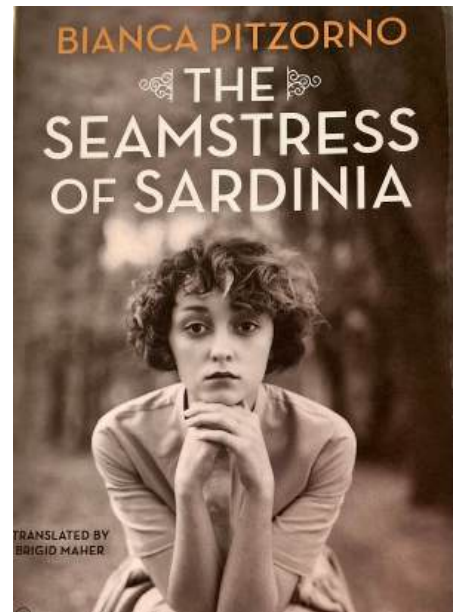
So, bring your questions and have a yarn with Maree over a cuppa—you won't want to miss it!

## The Seamstress of Sardinia - Book Review by Liz Bernal

Set in the early 1900s, in the slums of Italy, a very young girl learns to embroider. Her grandmother, Nonna, is her seamstress teacher and guardian.

The Seamstress of Sardinia has its origins based ON REAL LIFE EVENTS as told by her Nonna. Sewing is their main source of income. They reside together, doomed to a seemingly endless, mundane, monotonous life.

Bianca Pitzorno provides her readers with an insight into how life was, with all the trials and tribulations during that time. "AS FAR AS I CAN RECALL, WE NEVER WENT HUNGRY, THOUGH WE OFTEN HAD TO MOVE HOUSE AND HUDDLE TOGETHER IN SQUALID HOVELS OR BASSI IN THE OLD PART OF TOWN WHEN WE COULDN'T AFFORD TO PAY THE RENT ON HUMBLE FLATS THAT PEOPLE OF OUR CLASS USUALLY LIVED IN."



Social class divided the rich and poor, with girls and women being subservient to dictatorial men! "WAS JUST A POOR SARTINA." And yet, she fights the odds with sheer determination and dogged stubbornness, often permitting herself to dream of a better life.

But, how does she overcome adversity while trying to make sense of the world? Will plying the needle be sufficient for her? Can she free herself from the constraints of poverty?

The Seamstress is thought provoking, painful and a testimony to the strength and resilience of girls and women of that era. A sense of compassion and empathy lingers with the reader long after the final page.

## Assessing Visual Measures in Parkinsons Disease

Jingjing Lin, a 3rd year PhD student from the Department of Optometry and Vision Sciences, The University of Melbourne, supervised by A/Prof Christine Nguyen and A/Prof Andrew Anderson reached out to U3A Network Victoria with the following:

"We are currently conducting a research study "**Assessing Visual Measures in Parkinson's Disease**", which aims to assist in the early detection of Parkinson's disease through assessing vision and through using instruments that image the retina. We are seeking to recruit healthy volunteers (aged 50–80 years) as well as people living with Parkinson's disease (of all ages)."

**People interested in volunteering can contact Jingjing via phone: 03 8344 3018 or via email: [Jingjing.lin1@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:Jingjing.lin1@student.unimelb.edu.au).**

## THE EYE AS A WINDOW INTO PARKINSON'S DISEASE

HREC Approval ID: 20018

This study evaluates whether the eye can be used as a window to help diagnose, monitor and develop new treatments for Parkinson's disease. Participation is voluntary and you are welcome to withdraw from the study at any time. If you are interested in participating in this study or would like further information please get in contact.

### RECRUITMENT REQUIRMENTS

The study involves two sessions, the first test session being 1-2 hours and the second test session at your home/office for ~10 minutes. First visit includes some or all of the following, a screening eye exam, computerised vision tests, eye scan, eye recording which are commonly used in optometry/ophthalmology clinics. You may also be asked to perform a smell screening test and/or take a blood test. You will receive a 40-dollar voucher to contribute to out-of-pocket expenses.

**First Session: 1-2 hours**  
(including some or all of below)

Eye exam

Vision test

Eye Scan

**Second Session: ~ 10 minutes**

Hand movement test



THE UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE

### SUMMARY

- Duration
  - Session 1: 1-2 hours
  - Session 2: 10 minutes
- Voluntary participation
- \$40 voucher to contribute to out-of-pocket expenses

### INTERESTED? GET IN CONTACT

**Ms Jingjing Lin**  
 The University of Melbourne  
 (03) 8344 3018  
[jlinl1@student.unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jlinl1@student.unimelb.edu.au)

**Dr Christine Nguyen**  
 The University of Melbourne  
 (03) 9035 3186  
[christine.nguyen@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:christine.nguyen@unimelb.edu.au)

Or scan the QR code



## President's Message

We are already in the 4th month of the year and nearly into the 5th! Our classes are in full swing now and filling up fast, especially Tai Chi. The Ukelele group has also become very popular, meeting on the 2nd and 4th Sundays at 2-4pm @ CDCC Function Room. There are still places in Book Club B which meets on the 3rd Wednesday of the month and Games Club on the 2nd Wednesday, both of these at 2-3.30pm at Myli library Grantville. Just come along and join in the fun and banter.

Unfortunately we had to postpone our planned Nutritionist speaker until later in the year. We are hoping to collaborate with Myli Grantville to view the online Nutrition Sessions by Dr Mitra Zarrati at the library for members who do not have access to the internet.

Recently we were invited to Wonthaggi U3A AGM and lunch afterwards. We met with some interesting people including Anne Griggs, the President of U3A Network Victoria. We learned a lot from this much larger U3A (over 300 members & 50 courses!) including how AI has supported many tutors. We have access to a CANVA Pro licence through U3A and I am exploring ways of creating course designs eg Ikebana. Let us know if there are other subjects you would like us to run. All you need to be a tutor is enthusiasm, as we can support you with lesson outlines!

Our committee is now in its second year, and after a steep learning curve things are now running smoothly. We've identified some different roles: Program Coordinator, Memberships, Promotion/Advertising, Newsletter, Data Management, Grant Applications and Regional Representative. These are in addition to the usual roles of President, Secretary, Treasurer and Vice President. All positions will be vacated at our AGM, and I encourage you to nominate for the committee. It's not as scary as you might think and actually quite fun working with great people. Think about it! We also propose that Marg Boyer be made an Honorary Committee Member - this will be on our agenda for the AGM.

We have now confirmed the date for our **AGM and lunch - Friday 21 August 11.30-1.30pm at the CDCC Function Room**. Pencil it in your diary.

## Memberships

I urge all members to log in to the [U3A Victoria Network website](#) . On the bottom left hand side of the page you will find a link to the [U3A Network Victoria News](#). All you need is to provide your email address and create a password. You can do this at Myli Grantville library.

## Brain Games

Trivia Games are available on this link: <https://www.seniorsonline.vic.gov.au/services-information/trivia>