U3A Meadowbank

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President: John Goodman **Secretary Vivianne Child**

www.u3ameadowbank.nz

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY / HUI-TANGURU 2026

Greetings from the President

It always good when you don't have to have those hard conversations – you know, if x or y happens, I'll really have to have serious talks or make a hard decision or whatever. We thought we might have to at least look seriously at the January meetings, if the trend of low numbers attending continued. But, fortunately, thanks to all you members, there is no need, over 100 of us turned up to hear our January speakers which is Really Good News! Hooray!

Instead of our usual mini speakers, Chris Dee told us about the development of the new website and then showed it to us, going through the various pages. To go live, all that needs to happen is for the domain name of the old website to be transferred to the new website. Unfortunately, we may need to depend on our web hosting provider to do this, so it may take longer than expected, but, even so, our new website should be live by the February meeting. Chris, Terry Lord and Paul Cleary have worked very hard to bring this project home, and we are all Very Grateful Indeed.

After morning tea we heard from our main speakers Drs Arif and Fahima Saeid, who were both honoured for their work with the refugee community in the latest New Years honours. Such awards for voluntary work come as a result of countless hours of work for the community and the common good. I remember looking at the news article from a local paper about someone who had been honoured and thinking after reading the list of work she had done that it seemed little enough recognition, and how all volunteer workers deserve our respect and gratitude. Arif and Sahima talked about their journeys to New Zealand, being unable to work as doctors in New Zealand and the difficulties overseas doctors face meeting the qualifications required and how they turned their attention to working in the refugee community, retraining as therapists and setting up new organisations which they now head. Among the accompanying images we saw our very own newsletter editor, Lesley Elia, working with Jane Hayward and others organised by the late Viv Wilson, teaching English to a group of refugee children, last year.

Among resignations in 2025, in particular, I should mention Carole Paykel and John Fleming, both of whom joined U3A Meadowbank in 2002, Randall Kebbell who joined in 2005 and Keith Janes who joined in 2001. It is sad to lose such long standing members.

I'm sure 2026 is going to be a very good year. First let's quickly celebrate our achievements last year. We celebrated our 25th anniversary. We have a new website, which will be live very soon and new application forms which will go online with the new website, we have a new membership and publicity committee, we are making posters advertising our meetings each month, and we have an online presence on Neighbourly and Facebook (as a start and if any of you have ideas of where we can advertise please let us know). We have a new Constitution and have re-registered as an incorporated society and the Winter Series started again after a long break (thanks to Gay Williams). Finally in 2025, we started 3 new groups (with others in the pipeline) and gained 33 new members. And we have started off the year with a Secretary and a Treasurer. Let's keep up the good work.

I hope all members have had a very happy Christmas holiday and an enjoyable start to the New Year, and I look forward to seeing you at the February meeting. Remember that we have room for more members at our monthly meetings, so come yourselves or invite friends and neighbours.

John Goodman

January Meeting

Chris Dee introducing our new website

Chris Hawley introducing our main speakers

Chris with Drs Arif and Fahima Saeid

Arif and Fahima sharing their own experiences as refugees and the work they do now to support new refugees to our country

Who's Who for Monday 16 FEBRUARY 2026 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.
Greeters: Current Events
Mini Speakers: Gay Williams – Poetry and Ruth Ruge - Saints & Sinners
Guest Speaker: Dr Stephen Child
Topic: New Zealand's Private and Public Healthcare System: Why all the negative media and what does it mean for me?

Dr Stephen Child

Dr Stephen Child is the current Chief Medical Officer for Southern Cross Health Society as well as a practising specialist at Auckland City Hospital. He also sits on the Medical Council regulatory body and the Clinical Governance Group for the National Telehealth service. He has past experience with clinical training, overseas doctors' training/registration and health workforce which provides him a unique opportunity to offer general commentary and answer questions on our health today!

Who's Who for Monday 19 MARCH 2026 meeting: 9.45 a.m. for a 10 a.m. start at St Chad's Church, 38 St Johns Road, St Johns 1072.
Greeters: Dollars & Sense
Mini Speaker: External Speaker, Joanne. Topic: Kidney Disease
Guest Speaker: Jooles Clements, Auckland Zoo
Topic: Auckland Zoo – A wildlife science conservation organisation

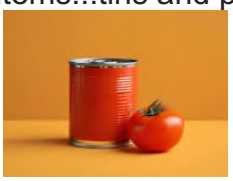
New Member

A big welcome to our new member, Fraser Guthrie.
Best wishes for many enjoyable experiences at U3A Meadowbank!

U3A Notices

Reminder - City Mission Appeal February

We will be holding our annual appeal for the City Mission in February.
The need this year seems to be greater than ever.
Please bring non-perishable food items...tins and packets...to the **February** meeting.



U3A Meadowbank has always given generously to this cause… let's make it a bumper year

Group News

500 Group - A new group has been formed to play the card game of 500. We will be meeting at Remuera Gardens Village at 1.30 on the 4th Tuesday of each month.
We would be interested in hearing from anyone who has knowledge of this game and might like to join the group. Contact Vivianne Child 0211806943 or Mary Martin 021 045 499

Books

"**JOYSPAN** -a short guide to enjoying your long life" (2025) **by Dr Kerry Burnight.**

The key to longevity isn't just about the length of your life, it's the quality of your life. Do you see ageing as decline or as continued growth?
Kerry Burnight is a gerontologist who has spent decades studying the factors that enable people to thrive in the second half of life. She describes 'Joyspan' as the experience of well-being and satisfaction in longevity, achieved by actively committing to four critical actions:
The ability to;

GROW - continuing to explore and expand

CONNECT - putting time into new and existing relationships

ADAPT - adjusting to changing and challenging situations

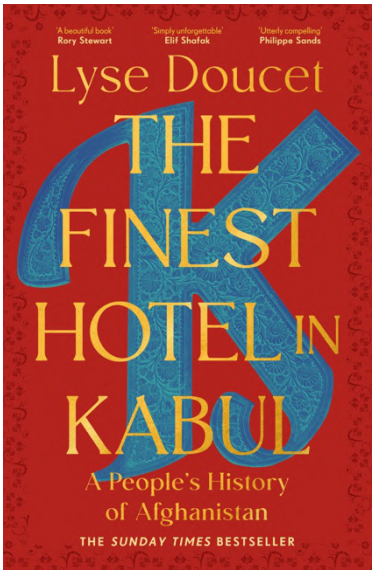
GIVE - sharing yourself

Kerry writes about why Joyspan matters, and explores how to create and strengthen Joyspan, giving lots of examples of how to enjoy living. Throughout the book are helpful questions to check the readers' attitudes and responses.

A fascinating read.

Gay Williams

The Finest Hotel in Kabul, Lyse Doucet, 2025



By the time of this February newsletter, we will have heard Dr Fahima and Dr Arif Saied talk to us about their lives, in Afghanistan and here in Aotearoa New Zealand. Members might be interested in this compelling new publication, authored by well-known BBC journalist, Lyse Doucet, looking at the lives of people in Kabul, the capital of Afghanistan since the time of the last King right up until the current second iteration of Taliban rule. Lyse Doucet writes beautifully with a deep affection and experience of Afghanistan, through all its upheavals of the last 40 years. She writes with sensitively with respect for Afghan people. The book is easy to read and set in the Kabul Inter-Continental Hotel, built In the late 1960s. The hotel, the most prestigious in Afghanistan, has witnessed untold dramas, horrors and joys over the years and the book follows the lives of the staff and visitors to the hotel, through all the highs and lows of contemporary Afghanistan. It is a moving read, filled with the stories of people coping with events most of us could not imagine. A great read!

Chris Hawley

Events in Auckland

Some Old Favourites

Are you looking for places to visit in 2026 with your group?

Highwic and Alberton are Category 1 Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga properties that offer a wonderful opportunity to experience how two prominent Auckland families lived in the late 1800s and learn about the history surrounding them. Presented as house museums set in beautiful grounds, these are wonderful places to consider for a visit this year.

What to expect:

Highwic and Alberton are self-guided experiences. On arrival our team will introduce the house and family before leaving you to explore the property independently using our printed house guides. $10pp (Heritage NZ Members free) ($18pp with tea/biscuits).

Guided House Tours can also be arranged with our staff. $20pp (includes cup of tea).

Highwic | Coal Range Baking (monthly)

Once a month (on the first Wed of the month) our wonderful volunteers light the coal range and recreate traditional Victorian recipes in the Highwic kitchen. Please book if bringing a group.

When: first Wednesday of the month (March – Dec)

Time: 11am – 12.30pm

Cost: $10pp (normal entry)

Download flyer here

SAIL GP

The City of Sails will once again transform into the City of SailGP! Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland sets to host the unforgettable sailing spectacle, the **New Zealand Sail Grand Prix** on the iconic Waitematā Harbour.

The most exciting racing on water will return to Waitematā Harbour on 14 to 15 February 2026 after raising the bar for SailGP events globally with the first record-setting edition of the New Zealand Sail Grand Prix. And this year, the Wynyard Point Race Stadium is set to be even bigger...

Witness Peter Burling and Blair Tuke's Black Foils take on the world in high stakes racing as teams look to set the pace in 2026 and witness the thrilling high-speed competition on the water. The city's world-class waterfront, just minutes from downtown, will serve as the perfect backdrop for this dynamic, high-octane competition, which promises to deliver a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The most exciting racing on water will see Auckland Harbour transformed with a grandstand, offering world-class race viewing meters above the shore.

Thousands of spectators will also watch the racing from the sold-out **Bring Your Own Boat (BYOB)** and Adrenaline Yacht fleets, offering unparalleled views from the water.

Auckland Events – February to Early March 2026

Music, Concerts & Live Shows

Synthony Festival (Mar 21) Auckland Domain

Music in Parks: (Feb 14 – 15) Domain Rotunda**, (Feb 21)** Long Bay

Morning Melodies (Feb 23) Bruce Mason Centre, NZ Opera soloists

Opera Prince Orlovsky's Ball (Feb 21) at Cornwall Park, an outdoor, picnic- style event featuring opera performances from Strauss' Die Fledermaus by University of Auckland students and alumni.

Auckland Philharmonia (Feb 12,19,26) Rach 3, Brahms, Mendelsohn, Dvorak.

Candlelight: Tribute to the Beatles (Feb 21) Kulios String Quartet, Holy Trinity,

Four Seasons (Mar 14)

Bluebird's Castle (Mar 13-14) New Zealand Opera

Shanghai Symphony Orchestra (Mar 13) Auckland Town Hall

Lorde (Feb 11) Spark Arena, **Pulp (Feb 21)**

BadBadNotGood (Mar 1) Auckland Town Hall, **LeftField** Powerstation

Sports, Action

New Zealand Sail Grand Prix – Part of the Sail GP series with elite foiling sailboats racing Auckland Harbour on **14–15 Feb.**

New Zealand Oaks (Horse Racing) – Prestigious thoroughbred horse race at Ellerslie Racecourse in late February.

Classic Yacht Racing (Moana Auckland) (6–7 Mar) Spectacular on-water racing of classic yachts in Waitematā Harbour as part of Moana Auckland.

Blues (Feb 14) Chiefs, **(Mar 7)** Crusaders, **(March 14)** Moana Pasifika**.**

Festivals & Cultural Events

Auckland Pride Festival – Month-long celebration of diversity and LGBTQ+ culture throughout February.

BNZ Auckland Lantern Festival (26 Feb – 1 Mar) A stunning celebration of culture at Manukau Sports Bowl with hundreds of handmade lanterns, live performances, cultural stalls, amusement rides, and spectacular fireworks each evening. A free, family-friendly event (ticket registration required).

Moana Auckland (28 Feb – 15 Mar) New Zealand's Ocean Festival on the waterfront brings culture, food, and ocean-inspired entertainment, including Try Sailing experiences, classic yacht racing and more.

Pasifika Festival (14–15 Mar) Auckland's iconic Pacific cultural celebration at Western Springs Lakeside Park — free entry, live performances, authentic Pacific food, and arts from Pacific Island communities.

Auckland Arts Festival (4 – 22 Mar) Celebrate the best of arts and culture from local and international artists at Te Ahurei Toi o Tāmaki Auckland Arts Festival. Discover shows, gatherings and performances - from riveting cabarets to family friendly activities, there's something for everyone.

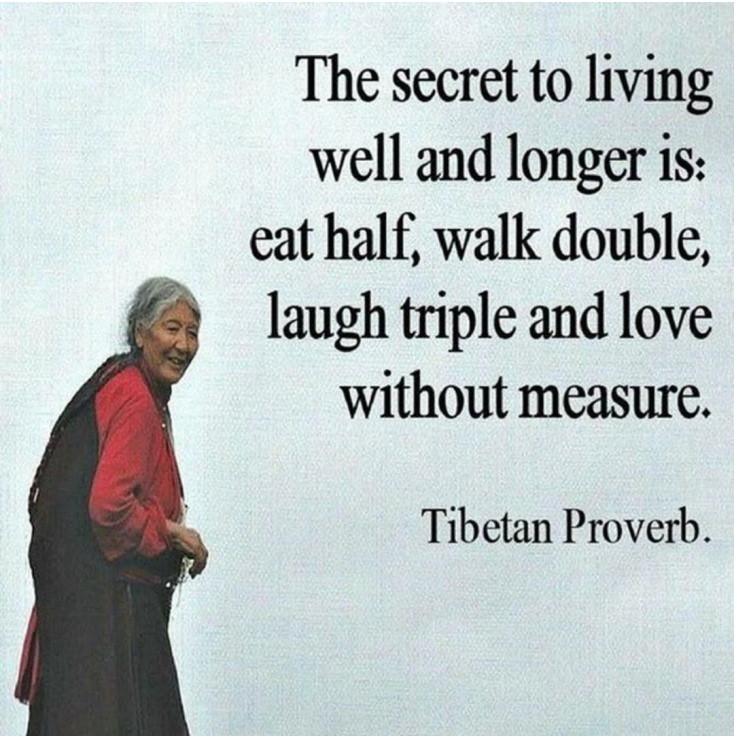
Expos & Community Events

Seniors & Travel Expo (28 Feb – 1 Mar) at North Harbour Stadium – Travel, lifestyle, and leisure expo.

U3A Meadowbank Meetings February 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WEEK 1	2	3 French (9:45)	4 Time poor walkers (09:00) Current Events (10:00) Memoir writing (2:00)	5 Ramblers (10:00)	6 Jazz (10:00)
WEEK 2	9 New Zealand History (10:00) Science & Technology (10:15)	10 Shared Reading 1 (10:00) Art History (1:30) Book club (1:30)	11 Time poor walkers (09:00) History (10:00) Literature (10:00)	12 Dollars and Sense (10:00) Ramblers (10:00) Bridge (1:30)	13
WEEK 3	16 Convenors Breakfast (8:30) Main Meeting (10:00) Stephen Child	17 French (9:45)	18 Time poor walkers (09:00) Saints and Sinners (10:00) Shared Reading 2 (1.30) Music (2.00)	19 Short walks (09:15) Poetry (10:00) Ramblers (10:00) Modern American Literature (2:00)	20
WEEK 4	23	24 Money matters (10:00) 500 (1:30) Wine studies (2:00)	25 Time poor walkers (09:00) Foodie Group (10:00) Classic films 1 (7:00)	26 Ramblers (10:00) Bridge (1:30) Books & Authors (1:45)	27 Classic films 2 (7:00)

Food for thought



If you change your personal details, OR LEARN OF THE BEREAVEMENT OF A U3A MEMBER, please email the change to u3ameadmemb@gmail.com. Please include YOUR full name, physical address, phone number and email address.

TO CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBERS please use the gmail addresses below:

Secretary: u3ameadowbank@gmail.com	Membership Coordinator: u3ameadmemb@gmail.com
Treasurer: u3ameadtrea@gmail.com	Newsletter Coordinator: u3ameadnews@gmail.com
President: u3ameadpres@gmail.com	Groups Coordinator: u3ameadconv@gmail.com

Next Monthly Meeting: Monday 16 February at 10 am at St Chad's

Don't forget to send in your U3A news to include in the next newsletter. We rely on your contributions.
Deadline for the MARCH newsletter items is THURSDAY 26 FEBUARY 2026. Expect receipt confirmation.