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NEWSLETTER – APRIL / PAENGA-WHĀWHĀ 2026

Greetings from the President

Our numbers were down again for the March meeting, despite an interesting lineup of speakers, a very pleasant vibe and brilliant opening remarks from the president. I really would like to encourage you to come to our monthly meetings, even if you do not usually attend, or you are not attracted by the speaker or the topic. We have room for more attendees, the talks are almost invariably worthwhile, people are friendly, and there are chocolate biscuits. Our speaker lineup for the rest of the year is particularly good.

I am certainly not applying for a job as a weather prophet, despite the glowing recommendation I received after my traffic medical. Just after my remarks about the equinoctial gales, the winds died away and we had a lovely period of calm, sunny weather either side of the actual equinox. We had no rain at all in the last couple of months, so the rain on Wednesday and Thursday was most welcome. The accompanying wind, not so much. Did anyone see the amazing glowing sunrise a few days ago? My wife woke me up to see the eastern sky and it was beautiful, brighter and more colourful than all but the best sunsets, and well worth waking up for, if somewhat alarming for shepherds.

Our normal mini speakers were replaced by Joanne Hand, Development Manager from the Kidney Society, who talked about the work of the organisation, including education, support, social work and dialysis in the upper North Island for sufferers of kidney disease, despite receiving no government funding. Possibly their most impressive effort is their dialysis houses which allow over 50 people to receive dialysis outside hospital. New Zealand is a kidney disease “hot spot” because of our high rates of diabetes, especially among Maori and Pacific Island peoples. In New Zealand, diabetes is the cause of nearly half of all kidney disease.

After morning tea we heard from our main speaker Jooles Clements, head of Brand Experience and Business Development at Auckland Zoo. The title of his talk was “Auckland Zoo, a scientific, wildlife management and conservation establishment”. One of the main foci of his talk was the differences between older and modern zoos and between good and bad ones. The older zoo and the bad zoo display captive animals in inappropriate enclosures or cages, such animals being usually unhappy, unnatural and neurotic. The modern, good zoo, on the other hand, has purposes beyond entertainment, such as animal welfare, wildlife conservation, and research and education. Auckland Zoo plays an important role in the conservation and protection of endangered NZ species such as kakapo, kiwi and fairy tern. In addition, considerable work has been and is being done to ensure all animals are in a naturalistic and challenging environment which supports natural behaviour, as much as possible, for example the orangutan treetops area, the savannah and the newly developed SE Asian jungle track. There is of course, an unresolved tension between what the paying customer wants to see and the zoo’s interest in naturalistic settings and research and conservation. The customer wants to see a tiger, but a tiger in the wild may travel 30 km in a night’s hunting – from the zoo to Orewa, Papakura or Muriwai. I don’t think the zoo, or the public would allow this, although it would make the nighttime streets more exciting, if less safe.

Tiger, tiger burning bright,
In the Auckland streets at night,
Boy racers really are a pest,
Catch and eat one, scare the rest.

Apologies to William Blake.

John Goodman

March Meeting



Joanne Hand from the Kidney Society.



Maureen Putt with our main speaker



Joules Clement talking with great enthusiasm and pride about the high standard of the work and achievements of Auckland Zoo.

Who's Who for Monday 20 APRIL 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: French Group

Mini Speakers: Dollars & Sense

Guest Speaker: Rob Campbell (CNZM)

Topic: Our place in the future world.: Who we are, where we live and where our interests lie

Rob Campbell



Rob is one of New Zealand's leading professional directors, with more than 40 years' experience in capital markets and as director and advisor to local and international businesses and organisations. He is committed to seeing Aotearoa take a leadership role in the field of emissions lowering energy innovation and commercialisation, and is passionate about improving diversity and inclusion, promoting sustainability as a core value, and creating equality in the organisations he is

involved with.

Trained as an economist and holding degrees of BA (Hons)(1st) and M.Phil. (Economics) Rob joined the union movement in the 1970s and became a member of the Federation of Labour and Labour Party executives.

Rob is the Chancellor of Te Wānanga Aronui o Tāmaki Makau Rau (Auckland University of Technology), Chair of Ara Ake, Chair of NZ Rural Land Co, and Advisor to BBM.

He has served as the Chair of various private companies and public organisations including Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand, SkyCity Entertainment Group Ltd, Summerset Group Ltd, Tourism Holdings Ltd, and WEL Networks Ltd.

In 2019, Rob was awarded the Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit (CNZM) and is a Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Directors (CFinstD). He was recognised as a Distinguished Alumni of Victoria University (Te Herenga Waka) in 2019.

Who's Who for Monday 18 MAY 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: History

Mini Speaker: Art History, Memoir Writing

Guest Speaker: Paul Spoonley: Distinguished Professor Emeritus

Topic: Auckland's Changing Demography

New Members

A big welcome to our new members, Margaret Goldstone, John Blundell and Lynne Clark.

Best wishes for many enjoyable experiences at U3A Meadowbank meetings and group activities!

U3A News

It is with great pleasure that we report that the committee has offered Life Membership to Chris Hawley and Agi Ryan, recognising their outstanding contribution to U3A Meadowbank over many years. The awards will be formally presented at our Matariki celebration in July.

Something Interesting

U3A highlighted in the New Zealand Listener by Marc Wilson (Psychology)

“Ever heard of the University of the Third Age (U3A). It’s a network of groups of people around the country (and the world) that provide opportunities for individuals in the “third stage of their life journey” (aged 60-plus) to be mentally and socially active.”

Marc Wilson then acknowledges the help he has received from U3A members in his research and discusses a number of research projects on those “in the third stage” in New Zealand. The article concludes with *“...much of the work our researchers are undertaking looks at the positives of ageing rather than the deficits. And you don’t have to look further than U3A to see these possibilities.”*

Age-old Mystery, by Marc Wilson

New Zealand Listener, February 21 – 27 February 2026

Books

“Behind the screens” by Niraj Lal (2026)

Dr Niraj (Nij) is an award winning scientist with a PhD from Cambridge University, passionate about making science work in Societies interests.

He lives in Melbourne and hosts a podcast on ABC for children called ‘Imagine this Kids!’

The book “Behind the screens” is written for children, especially when they first get a mobile phone. The book is designed to help them become more aware about what is going on online, how the internet works, and help users to be safe and social, figure out what is fact or fiction, look after data privacy and more.

This might be a good present for your young grandchildren - but I suggest you read it too - I found it an interesting and informative read.

Gay Williams.

U3A Auckland Network



u3a Auckland Network welcomes you to a day of celebration

Salvation Army Church, 18 Allright Place, Mt Wellington
Saturday 25 July 2026 - 9:30am (for 10:00am) to 2:30pm

Speakers:

Morning: [Dame Wendy Pye](#) - "Teaching the World to Read."

Afternoon: [Shamubeel Equb](#) - "A Society Worth Having."

Also included are four presentations by u3a Members and lunch - \$50.00

u3a.nz/event to register



Dame Wendy Pye

Dame Wendy is a highly decorated figure in business and education. Her accolades include:

- Dame Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit and an MBE for services to literacy.
- Induction into the Business Hall of Fame (the first living woman so honoured).
- Recognition by Forbes Asia as one of the most powerful women in business.
- An honorary Doctorate in Education from Massey University.

Driven by a passion for global literacy, Dame Wendy continues to develop print and digital resources for children and English Language Learners, ensuring effective educational tools are accessible in both English and native languages.



Shamubeel Equb

Title of presentation: A Society Worth Having

Synopsis: New Zealand is more prosperous than ever, yet many families feel left behind, communities are fraying, and trust in our institutions is eroding. This talk explores why economic growth and social equity have drifted apart, what that costs all of us, and why investing in younger generations and shared opportunity is not the right and smart thing to do.

Events in Auckland



The Auckland Writers Festival

12 – 17 May

Programmes are available in libraries, including St Heliers and Remuera libraries.

Theatre



No matter your politics, you cannot deny the impact Helen Clark had on our nation. This is not a hagiography – it's a satire. It takes on the political landscape of yesteryear and asks how far we've really come. It's bound to make you chuckle and bound to make you think.

Top Events - April 2026

- [& Juliet \(Musical\)](#): Apr 8 – May 3, The Civic.
- [Machine Gun Kelly \(Concert\)](#): Apr 18, location details on [Heart of the City](#).
- [World of Cultures Festival](#): Ends Apr 5, featuring multicultural events and workshops.
- [EcoFest 2026](#): Various eco-themed events across Auckland including the Ōrākei Enviro Forum.
- [Dazzlehands \(Ballet\)](#): Apr 10–11, Bruce Mason Centre.
- [Sofar Sounds Auckland \(Intimate Gig\)](#): Apr 16, secret location.



Auckland Council +4

Family & School Holidays (April 2026)

- [Easter Sunday Events](#): Apr 5, Egg hunts and pony rides at Good Planet.
- [SS Puke Sailing](#): Apr 12 & 18, historic steam tug sailing.
- [Make-a-Fish Badge](#): Apr 19 & 26, children's craft at Gus Fisher Gallery.



Heart of the City +2

Sport & Culture

- [Powerade G9 Stadium Golf](#): Apr 22–25, Eden Park.
- [Night Mayors](#): Apr 14, Hunua Rooms, Aotea Centre.
- [Encore! Opening Act](#): Apr 15, Auckland Council Libraries heritage celebration.

U3A Meadowbank Meetings April 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
WEEK 1			1 Time poor walkers 9 am Current Events 10 am Memoir writing 2 pm	2 Ramblers 10 am	3 Jazz 10 am
WEEK 2	6	7 French 9:45 am	8 Time poor Walkers 9 am Literature 10 am 500 10 am History 10:30 am	9 Dollars and Sense 10 am Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm	10
WEEK 3	13 New Zealand History 10 am Science & Technology 10:15	14 Shared Reading: 1 10 am Art History 1:30 Book club 1:30	15 Time poor walkers 9 am Saints and Sinners 10 am Shared Reading: 2 1:30 pm Music 2 pm	16 Short walks 9:15 am Poetry 10 am Ramblers 10 am Modern American Literature 2 pm	17
WEEK 4	20 Main Meeting 10 am: Speaker Rob Campbell	21 French 9:45 am	22 Time poor walkers 9 am Foodie Group 10 am Classic films: 1 7 pm	23 Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm Books & Authors 1:45 pm	24 Classic films: 2 7 pm
WEEK 5	27	28 Money matters 10 am Wine studies 2 pm	29 Time poor walkers 9 am Classic films: 1 7 pm	30 Ramblers 10am	

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.

If a member you know is having trouble with transport to U3A meetings, please let a member of the committee know. We may be able to help.

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 20 April at 10 am at St Chad's

Please remember to send in your U3A news to include in the next newsletter.

We rely on your contributions.

Deadline for the MAY newsletter items is TUESDAY 28 APRIL 2026.

Expect receipt confirmation.