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President: John Goodman

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u3ameadowbank.org.nz

NEWSLETTER – MAY / HARATUA 2026

Greetings from the President

Today is the middle of a week of lovely autumn weather. Long may it continue. Our April meeting, on April 20th was attended by 134 members and a number of visitors, all of whom thoroughly enjoyed the proceedings. We had cake, balloons, birthday celebrations, excellent speakers and a very pleasant and lively atmosphere. Our speaker line-up for the rest of the year is particularly good, so I encourage you all to come along and to bring your friends and families, although, I cannot always promise birthday cake, or balloons.

Our one mini speaker was Gay Williams talking about her group, Dollars and Sense, which sounded very interesting, and has, I think, vacancies. I personally have never been very interested in financial matters, which, I admit, has been a mistake considering the importance of finance in both our personal and public lives. The second mini speaker slot was replaced by a birthday celebration, with balloons, cake, card, songs and two very attractive Marilyn Monroe impersonators. It went very well indeed and seemed to be appreciated by all. Thank you to the great organiser, Vivianne Child.

After morning tea, we heard from our main speaker Rob Campbell CNZM, a very well-known public figure and commentator, one of New Zealand's leading professional directors, Chancellor of AUT and former chair of Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand. The title of his talk was "Our place in the future world". Rob started off by talking about his journey, from academia to unions, then commerce and governance, and then the changes in universities, where online lectures and distance learning mean that a student may graduate without ever setting foot on the university campus. He then discussed New Zealand's changing demography, especially in Auckland, and our failure to internalise the facts of our geography and our trading relationships – South Pacific, not North Atlantic. When talking about New Zealand's difficulties with effective government, "obedience and compliance, not principles and innovation" he mentioned that intelligent, educated, successful, engaged older people, such as the members of U3A Meadowbank, can and should still play an active part in politics and policies. We need to speak out. Just when you thought it was safe to get out of the water!

Among other places, Rob Campbell often writes to Newsroom. A link to a recent article by Rob was supplied by Greg West-Walker <https://newsroom.co.nz/2026/04/20/rob-campbell-politicians-desperate-effort-to-avoid-the-real-tax-debate/>

I am sorry to have to report that Peter Cooper, who joined last year and was a member of the Music group, died on April 11th. His funeral was on April 18th.

The King's visit to Washington seems to have gone well, Meanwhile, we hope that some solution can be found for the ongoing crisis in the Middle East. One can understand the reluctance of the Iranians to enter negotiations when they have been attacked twice while negotiations were ongoing, but neither party is indulging in particularly adroit diplomacy. Agreements can be made by a succession of steps, each of which is strictly adhered to and in turn leads to other steps. The first steps in this case would seem to be to build on the ceasefire by both parties agreeing to lift their blockades, to maintain the ceasefire, and to engage in on-going negotiations. In an ideal world both sides would make some gesture of goodwill at the same time. It also helps if public broadcasts of hostility and demands are avoided.

See you on May 18th.

John Goodman

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

Distinguished Professor Emeritus Paul Spoonley FRSNZ ONZM

Auckland's Changing Demography: One of the Most Superdiverse Cities Globally



Distinguished Professor Paul Spoonley was previously Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University. Once he stepped down, he was appointed to advise the Police Commissioner (2022-25) and then as Co-director of the National Centre for Countering Violent Extremism (2022-23). He has led major research programmes on immigration, diversity and inter-group relations and been extensively involved in policy development and evaluation, both in New Zealand and internationally. Paul is a Fellow of the Auckland Museum and a Board member and a Visiting Research Fellow at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, Germany.

He was awarded the Science and Technology Medal by the Royal Society in 2009 for cross-cultural understanding and the following year he was a Fulbright Senior Scholar at the University of

California Berkeley. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2025. He is the author or editor of 29 books, including *The New New Zealand. Facing Demographic Disruption* (2021).

Who's Who for Monday 15 JUNE 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: Classic movies 1

Mini Speakers: External Speaker Sandy Millar. Topic: Death Cafes

Guest Speaker: Richard Shaw, Author & Professor of Politics, Massey University

Topic: Small stories of colonization: An uncomfortable settler family history

April Meeting

Birthday surprise

Many happy returns, John!



Gay talking about Dollars & Sense.

Our guest speaker, Rob Campbell talking on "Our place in the future world"



New Members

A big welcome to our new members: Heather Lees, Debbie Willis, Katherine Copland, David Sage and Chris Nicoll.

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

Group News



Books and Authors

Our group, which comprises 13 members, meets every 4th Thursday afternoon at Edmund Hillary Retirement Village.

This week, we had an ANZAC theme and members shared tales of family members who had been active in the war.

Also, each member did a review of a war book they had read. It was a very sad but informative meeting

Foodie Group

In April we bravely tackled Vietnamese cooking. Considering it was our first excursion into this cuisine we were quite proud of our efforts. Here are some of us admiring Ca Tim Nuong [a Vietnamese aubergine dish], Lemongrass chicken rice paper rolls, Pork and Lemongrass skewers, C'om chien...fried chicken and rice and a very refreshing lemon grass drink.

Now we are all off to grow our own Lemongrass!



New Group:

TED Talks

I am beginning a new Group focussed on Ted Talks and would like anyone interested in lively discussions to contact me (email address at bottom)

What is a TED TALK?

A TED TALK is a short, powerful video presentation (usually under 18 minutes) designed to share an “*idea worth spreading*”, eg. A new concept, new research, a fresh perspective.

They were founded in 1984, and TED stands for *Technology, Entertainment, and Design*.

TED looks for engaging, charismatic speakers whose talks expose new ideas based on concrete evidence and which are relevant to a broad, international audience.

There is a huge range of talks available; the most popular so far are:

- Sir Ken Robinson: Do schools kill creativity? (Over 75M+ views)
- Tim Urban: “Inside the mind of a master procrastinator”; (approx. 75M views)
- Amy Cuddy: “Your body language may shape who you are” (approx 74M+ views)
- James Veitch: “This is what happens when you reply to spam email” (approx. 87M+ views in some rankings)
- Simon Sinek: “How great leaders inspire action”.
- Brené Brown: “The power of vulnerability”

Others include:

- My stroke of insight
- The power of introverts
- What makes a good life?
- The danger of a single story

There are dozens of talks on global warming, living sustainably, feminism, etc. And for something quite esoteric:

- *Ingenuity and elegance in ancient African scripts*

So something for everybody!

What do we need to establish a group?

- Any number greater than 2!
- The ideal size is probably about 10 to 12 people so that everyone can be part of the conversation.
- A venue, with access to a screen:

o I am approaching a couple of villages that have offered their facilities.

o Coffee and tea loom large as necessities

Format:

As with other groups, we will draw up a list of participants to volunteer to lead a session. The leader for that session selects and previews 2 talks, then the group views them, with plenty of time to discuss the issues raised after each video.

If you are interested, you can email me, and there are sign-up sheets at the desk in the foyer.

Please include the times of the week you are available, and I'll see where the greatest availability lies.

I am always unavailable on Wednesdays, and I belong to NZ History and Jazz.

Nga mihi

Miles Shepheard

milesshepheard@outlook.com



For the Gardeners among us



Foxgloves

If any members who have an interest in gardening and some space in their garden would like to pot on or prick out some foxgloves, I seem to have plenty to spare (Seeds gathered from the garden and scattered on a seed tray – it appears they all germinated).

Please contact me (022 108 7251, or jgoodman4647@gmail.com) if you would like a plug of foxglove seedlings for your very own.

Something Interesting

Think Talks at Selwyn College, Kohimarama

Think Talks are a series of talks from specially invited speakers. Talented and persuasive presenters are invited to address the audience for one hour on a diverse range of topics, which could include law, medicine, politics, conservation or the media. Called on to be fresh, riveting and original, these speakers will ignite your curiosity and challenge your perspective on matters of substance, before responding to your comments and questions from the floor.

Talks this year include Social Cohesion, Counteracting Global Autocracy, Changing Demography, When Machines rule Markets and The Bicycle Prevents Cancer and speakers include Paul Spoonley, Alistair Woodward, Nikki Harre and Shamubeel Eaqub.

The next talk is 7.30pm – 8.30pm on 19 May, Counteracting Global Autocracy, presenter Chris Ogden. Register online. \$5.00

Wisdom Wears Wrinkles

Wisdom Wears Wrinkles is a New Zealand podcast created to celebrate and preserve the life experiences and wisdom of older people, everyday people with stories worth sharing. Host Richard Potton has always had a natural affinity with older generations and now, in his late sixties himself, wants to explore and capture some of the wonderful stories, insights, and lived experiences that are out there.

There is no pressure to take part, participation is completely voluntary and no preparation required. This is not about presentation skills, public speaking, or having an “extraordinary” life story. These are relaxed, friendly conversations, simply everyday people talking about their lives, the lessons they have learned, the challenges they have faced, and what they have discovered along the way.

Many people don't realise the value of their own experiences, yet these real-life insights can mean a great deal to others, especially younger generations who rarely hear them. By taking part, you have the opportunity to reflect, to be heard, and to leave a small but meaningful legacy by sharing wisdom that may help or encourage someone else on their own journey.

Richard wonders if any U3A Meadowbank members might be interested in taking part.

You can contact him at richard@wisdomwearswrinkles.com or view the project at wisdomwearswrinkles.com.

U3A Auckland Network: Reminder



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 Eaqub](#) - "A Society Worth Having."

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

u3a.nz/event to register

Events in Auckland May 2026



The Auckland Writers' Festival

12 – 17 May

A major literary event featuring national and international writers.

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



Auckland Art Gallery

Chinese Art Now

2 May – 23 August

Image Credit:

Pu Yingwei, Purple King Kong: Red and blue entangled in space, 2022. Courtesy of the artist and Hive Center for Contemporary Art, China.

NZ International Comedy Festival in Auckland

1 - 24 MAY 2026

<https://heartofthecity.co.nz/auckland-events/nz-international-comedy-festival>

- Features over three weeks of comedy, including the Best Foods Comedy Gala at Bruce Mason Centre.

and more

Key Major Events - May 2026

- **Gindulgence Festival (May 8–9):** Held at Shed 10, Queens Wharf, showcasing NZ craft gins.
- **Blues vs. Hurricanes (May 16):** Super Rugby Pacific match at Eden Park.
- **Auckland Festival of Photography (May 29 – June 14):** A city-wide contemporary art and cultural event.
- **NZ Music Month (All May):** Highlights include the Aotearoa Music Awards at The Civic on May 18.
- **The Wizard Of Oz Live In Concert (May 8–9):** Kiri Te Kanawa Theatre, Aotea Centre.
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Performance and Cultural Events

- **Printopia Festival (May 1-3):** A major print fair featuring workshops.
- **Ballet of Lights: Cinderella (May):** A show at SkyCity Auckland.
- **Mighty: A Live Music Experience (May 5–17):** Interactive music event in the heart of the city.
- **Africa Day 2026 (May 23):** Held at Base Spaces & Silo Park.
- **Auckland Philharmonia: Ehnes Plays Mozart (May 14):** Great Hall, Auckland Town Hall.
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Family & Entertainment

- **Big Bike Film Night (May 1, 3, 28):** Bike-themed films.
- **Disney's Beauty and the Beast (May):** Presented by Harlequin Musical Theater.
- **America's Cup 2-Hour Sailing Experience (May):** Available on the Waitemata Harbour.

Split Enz

Forever Enz Tour

Spark Arena

9 & 10 May



U3A Meadowbank meetings May 2026

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 0					1 Jazz 10 am
Week 1	4	5 French 9:45 am	6 Time poor Walkers 9 am Current events 10 am Memoir writing 2 pm	7 Ramblers 10 am	8
Week 2	11 New Zealand History 10 am Science & Technology 10:15 am	12 Shared Reading 1 10 am Art History 1:30 pm Book club 1:30 pm	13 Time poor walkers 9 am Literature 10 am 500 10 am History 10:30 am	14 Dollars and Sense 10 am Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm	15
Week 3	18 Main Meeting 10 am Prof Paul Spoonley Demographics of Auckland	19 French 9:45 am	20 Time poor walkers 9 am Saints and sinners 10 am Shared Reading 2 1:30 pm Music 2 pm	21 Short walks 9:15 Ramblers 10 am Poetry 10 am Modern American literature 2 pm	22
Week 4	25	26 Money matters 10 am Wine studies 2 pm	27 Time poor Walkers 9 am Foodie group 10 am Classic films 1 7 pm	28 Ramblers 10 am Bridge 1:30 pm Books and Authors 1:45 pm	29 Classic films 2 7 pm

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 18 May 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 JUNE newsletter items is THURSDAY 28 MAY 2026.

Expect receipt confirmation.