

Bathurst U3A Matters...in any language!

Bathurst University of the Third Age conducts forty programs each week for people aged over fifty. There is a class for everyone, with courses ranging from table tennis and yoga to art, craft, book clubs, writing groups, all things musical and just about everything in between! For an annual membership fee of just thirty dollars, U3A members can participate in as many courses as they can manage.

Of course none of this would be possible without U3A's band of volunteer tutors and facilitators, who give their time and skill to the community to enable U3A to provide these courses. The courses are conducted in a variety of venues around Bathurst, many of which are provided free of cost to U3A.

Bathurst U3A courses currently include three language classes, led by expert tutors, conducted at Bathurst Panthers who generously provide facilities for U3A. In fact there is at least one U3A course at Panthers every weekday.

Tuesday French

Every Tuesday a group of twelve students is learning French. The Tutor, Lorraine Ryan brings a wealth of teaching experience to the course. Lorraine is a retired deputy principal of a large country high school and a former teacher of French. While teaching French in Sydney Lorraine was, for 10 years, a committee member of the Modern Language Teachers Association of NSW and, ultimately, state vice-president of that association. During her teaching career Lorraine was chosen to attend a 3 week course for teachers of French in Noumea and a 6 week course in France which included 4 weeks at the University of Montpellier in southern France. Lorraine has travelled extensively in France over the years.

In retirement Lorraine was the tutor for the U3A Advanced French Group in Lismore for a number of years and, more recently, for the U3A French Group in Orange in 2015, before taking on the course this year in Bathurst.

“Participants in our French Group this year have varying backgrounds in their study and experience of French and we are working together to improve listening, speaking and reading skills in particular” Lorraine said. “Grammar is also included as this enables students to manipulate the language rather than just learn set phrases. We use various resources including CDs, tapes, magazine and newspaper articles, and a comprehensive grammar text with written exercises which we use for reference and revision. We sometimes also listen to and study the words of popular French songs. We discuss aspects of life in France and followed the recent French presidential elections with interest. We continue to follow events in France.” Lorraine added.

Wednesday Spanish

Twelve students meet weekly at Panthers under the tutelage of Manuel Pro. Manuel came to Australia from Spain in 1962 and moved to Bathurst in 1986. Manuel's long

career as an educator included many years teaching at Bathurst TAFE. Some of Manuel's current U3A Spanish students have travelled to Spain, others are planning to go there, while some in the group are just keen to learn another language. Some class members have been attending for years, while others have joined this year. "I concentrate on the spoken word" Manuel said. "As an exercise, every week, students each bring three Spanish words, and the group studies these with the aim of constructing sentences. We also participate in role plays, reading from various material first in Spanish, then in English".

Thursday German

Jenny MacLennan has been teaching German to U3A students since 2015. Jenny worked in Germany in the 1970's and later studied German and French at the University of New England, obtaining an Honours degree. Jenny also taught Spanish at Bathurst U3A for three years and is currently studying Mandarin!

The U3A German group includes people with German ancestry, people with German sons in law or daughters in law, or German spouses. Others simply want to learn a new skill. The course includes not only German language but also aspects of German current affairs and culture.

All three tutors reported that the social interaction between members is a real feature of the group, and that long term friendships have been formed within the classes. The benefits of socialising are at least as important as the social as the new skills developed at U3A.

For more information about the more than 40 Bathurst U3A programs visit bathurstu3a.com or contact the Secretary, Sue Lasky on 6331 6968.