

Read and Share: Broadening horizons

U3A (University of the Third Age) fare on Tuesday afternoons includes the popular Read and Share book clubs. One group, led by Allison Aspden meets on the third Tuesday of each month and the other, led by Denise Payne on the fourth Tuesday. Generally both groups discuss the same books at different times of the year which allows some sharing of books. The books for reading and sharing are chosen by the groups at the beginning of each year, and the selection includes members' suggestions. Fiction and non-fiction are included in the wide variety of books enjoyed. Copies of selected books are obtained from the Library, local book stores and by sourcing them online, including Kindle and other electronic readers.

The participants enjoy the analysis of plots, settings and characters. Writing styles, structure and historical and social issues also form a large part of discussions. Recent books reviewed include Stan Grant's "Talking To My Country" and "All The Light We Cannot See" by Anthony Doerr, a Pulitzer Prize winner set during the Second World War. "The Boat" by Nam Lee is another topical offering sure to provide plenty of discussion.

Many participants have been attending the meetings for several years and enduring friendships have been formed. Social catch-ups before and after the meetings are a feature of Read and Share, and indeed all U3A programs.

Crime Fiction: Did the butler do it?

"I was sitting in my office when a tall blond walked past the window. I knew she was tall because my office is on the first floor" This style of private-eye fiction is passé nowadays and modern crime fiction is more serious and a lot more sophisticated. Bathurst U3A has two Crime Fiction groups, meeting on the first and second Tuesdays each month, and in a light-hearted way they take their Crime seriously!

Coordinators Libby Tink and Jenny Walker include the best of Australian, British, American and Scandinavian crime fiction in the book of the month studies. The groups hold an end of year meeting to suggest books for the following year's reading and Libby and Jenny select books from the suggestions made, ensuring a range of authors and styles.

Authors studied this years have included Americans Sara Paretsky and Ross MacDonald, British writers John Lawton and Jacqueline Winsport and Scandinavian Jørn Lierhorst. Favourites such as Ian Rankine, Peter Robinson, Michael Robotham and Henning Mankell are of course held in high regard by the group having featured strongly over the years.

Discussions are always lively, and everyone has an opportunity to give their opinions. Plot, characters and writing styles are always a talking point, and very often social and moral issues arise, such as in novels set during the Second World War. The group

meets for coffee afterwards. Many participants have been involved since the classes started more than eight years ago, and solid friendships have been formed and maintained.

Extending terms

Currently Bathurst U3A terms extend for just six weeks. Whilst some courses such as the four book club courses meet throughout the year, it is not always possible to extend all courses, depending on factors such as tutor and venue availability. The U3A Committee is exploring ways of extending term times where possible.

Bathurst U3A offers over forty courses for people aged over fifty. There is a wide range of programs for the mind, body and spirit. For an annual fee of just thirty dollars members can participate in any number of courses. For further information about Bathurst U3A, visit bathurstu3a.com or contact the Secretary, Sue Lasky on 6331 6968.