

# OPINION: U3A Matters

Alan Taylor 17 Aug 2017, 10:30 a.m.



**SUPPORT:** Bathurst University of the Third Age president Lindsay Cox receives a ClubGRANT from Norm Mann of Panthers Bathurst and Ron Hollebhone of Bathurst RSL at a presentation in the Bathurst Regional Council chambers.

BATHURST University of the Third Age (U3A) conducts 40 courses each week covering a wide variety of subjects.

There is something for everyone: courses which are physical, mental or both, and facilitating social interaction.

## **Think and think again**

PHILOSOPHY is a popular class held each Wednesday at Panthers. Twenty men and women get together for 90 minutes of serious and not-so-serious interaction.

A recent discussion topic, “why am I here on Earth?”, brought forth a wide variety of opinions, beliefs and theories. Tutor/moderator Lindsay Cox led the discussion by reading a thesis.

After each paragraph, participants were invited to comment, with Lindsay ensuring all had an opportunity to speak. As discussion developed, further questions arose regarding God, religion and atheism, including “are we spiritual beings having a human experience or humans having a spiritual experience?”.

This led to more discussion related to “what happened before the Big Bang, and before that?”, along with “what happens at the moment of death?”. Serious business indeed!

Throughout the class, one notion naturally led to another. Invigorating discussions about the legal and religious definitions of the beginning of a child’s life, déjà-vu moments and encounters with mediums arose. Even ghosts got a mention!

Concepts such as “The Goldilocks Zone”, artificial intelligence”, “staging posts”, “thought bubbles” and “consciousnesses” were raised. Sounds heavy? Definitely not! A relaxed and friendly atmosphere prevailed at all times with free-flowing discussion and input by all.

Humour and respect were features of the class. Most of the questions have no defined answers but all there were accepting of the opinions voiced. Discussions nudged the participants into deeper thought about their beliefs and ideas.

Other topics in this term’s program include “what is reality?”, “what is truth?”, “why is there suffering in the world?” and “the relationship between science, philosophy and theology”.

## **Meditation and motion**

TAI Chi, sometimes described as meditation in motion, originated in China where it is known as Tai Chi Chuan or Taijiquan.

The essential principles include movements which are slow, smooth, continuous and circular as if moving against a gentle resistance; maintained postural alignment; mindful foot placement and weight transference. Breathing slows and deepens.

Tai Chi integrates the mind and body to promote mental and physical relaxation. The use of imagery and visualisation helps to improve movement and focus the mind to achieve mental quietness.

Lorraine Griffin, the leader of the two U3A classes in Bathurst, is accredited by the Tai Chi for Health Institute and has taught a range of Tai Chi styles including specialist courses such as Tai Chi for Diabetes and Tai Chi for Arthritis over several years.

The Tai Chi for Health Institute uses standardised worldwide accreditation processes, and instructors are reassessed every two years. Lorraine is in her fifth year leading Tai Chi for Bathurst U3A.

U3A Tai Chi meets on Monday and/or Thursday from 12.30pm-1.30pm for beginners and 1-2pm for more experienced participants.

Regardless of Tai Chi experience, the short programs and breaking down of the Tai Chi into small parts, with lots of repetition, makes the programs easy to learn, enjoyable and safe to do for all.

The benefits of Tai Chi are many, including physical and mental relaxation. Participants can expect improved concentration, posture, balance, flexibility and muscle strength, with reduced pain and stiffness.

Improved balance especially reduces the risk of older people falling. As with all U3A classes, members enjoy the social aspects of the group and long-term friendships have been formed and maintained through participation.

Lorraine's Tai Chi classes have a social afternoon tea once per month. U3A Tai Chi offers fitness, fun and friendship!

In term four of U3A, Lorraine will be commencing a beginners' Tai Chi for Arthritis program.

## **ClubGRANTS Funding**

AT a recent ceremony hosted by Bathurst Regional Council, Bathurst U3A was presented with a grant by Bathurst RSL and Panthers to assist with the costs associated with running its range of courses.

U3A president Lindsay Cox accepted the grant, which was presented by Norm Mann of Bathurst Panthers and Ron Hollebhone of Bathurst RSL.

U3A thanks both organisations for this valued support.

For more information about Bathurst U3A, visit [bathurstu3a.com](http://bathurstu3a.com) or contact the secretary Sue Lasky on 6331 6968.