



INSIGHT



Enlightenment

U3A Bunbury Inc.

Vol 02, 2026

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U3A Bunbury would like to thank Ben Small's office for their support in printing this newsletter

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE, BUNBURY. W.A.

In this issue:

- April Calendar
- Barry Green - from Scout to Radio
- Glen & The Regional Men's Health Initiative Talk
- A.G.M. & your new committee
- Countering Loneliness
- May Calendar
- BREC French Films
- Jokes...
- and much more.

It's hard to stay positive some days. The World is changing daily and some days it is NOT for the better. How do we continue to remain positive with some of the world leaders forgetting they are part of a Global community and that many of their decisions affect us all, even if we don't live in their country?

**MAKE POSITIVE
CHANGES HAPPEN**

Top of the list at present, will be the rising cost of our fuel, and we are not the only ones in the world that are feeling the pinch. At the end of the day, many people of our generation, and especially those older than us, will have been familiar with rationing and fuel increases due to global problems after World War 2. It was only about 10 years ago that I found out my mother was still using Food Stamps after I was born.

I do hope none of our members will be inconvenienced by the fuel price hikes. If you feel you may not be able to afford a trip out to join our meetings, please give the Secretary a call and she will see if someone is close by that can pick you up. When the crisis has passed, maybe you will be able to return the favour sometime.

We have had a lovely start to our U3A year, with some interesting speakers already. Further into the newsletter you will be able to recall the talk from Barry Green about his journey from Boy Scout to Radio operator and eventually instigator of Tourist Radio.

Then we had an inspiring talk from the Men's Regional Health Initiative. It seems surprising to me that we have made many advances in the realm of "Women's Health Initiatives", (although there are still some milestones to achieve!), but the same sort of enthusiasm and energy has not come from the men, (excluding of course the wonderful men in MRHI), with health and well-being programmes to implement for their gender. Maybe there needs to be a "Men's Suffragettes" movement to make the Men's Health Policy of 2018 get some funding and some recognition?

Our A.G.M. went very well, and we welcome new U3A members, Angelika Bailey and Anne Foyer, on to our Committee. Many of you will remember Angelika gave us a talk, last year, about her journey with writing her family history. So, now she has come to join us and participate in our programmes. Anne has been a member for 12 months now, and recently bought one of her friends with her who has also joined our happy group. Well done to both of you.

The only limits in life are those we impose on ourselves

Bob Proctor

THE JOURNEY OF BARRY - FROM SCOUT TO RADIO

Our first meeting for the year was “kicked” off by Donnybrook man, (and sometimes U3A Donnybrook participant), Barry Green. His talk really got the “ol grey cells” working as he gave us a run-down of his history as a radio man, which has since evolved into a platform for independent thought. Thank you Barry for a great start to our year.

Early Life & Foundations



Barry Green was raised in Donnybrook during the 1960s, where he actively participated in Scouts, fostering a sense of community and teamwork from a young age, which ultimately led him to an introduction to radio through involvement in (J.O.T.A.) Jamboree of the Air and the mentorship of local Ham operator Jack Kitney. Guided by Jack, Barry’s interest in communications deepened, prompting him to pursue training as a radio technician with the Department of Aviation. This early foundation combined practical technical skills with a growing passion for radio and community connection.

Lions Club Influence

Barry joined the Lions Club of Roebourne in 1980, inspired by a guest speaker who highlighted the powerful impact of community service. When he later returned to the southwest, he transferred his membership to the Lions Club of Donnybrook. Through the Lions, Barry received training and practical experience that would become instrumental in his future community projects. In 1998, he attended a Lions Leadership training course, which inspired him to initiate the Donnybrook Community Expo — held in both 1999 and 2001 - that showcased local initiatives and strengthened community ties.

Tourism & Media Ventures

In 1999, Barry and his wife, renovated a cottage for farm-stay accommodation on their Donnybrook property, introducing them to their first foray into the tourism sector. By this time he was working for the local media at G.W.N. As he anticipated potential job loss at GWN, he began exploring local tourist radio opportunities. This led to the forming of Western Tourist Radio in 2001, which held 23 licences across Western



Australia. Barry sought to create a collaborative WA Visitor Information Portal, centred around reciprocal links between tourism operators and other businesses in the particular towns he promoted on Western Tourist Radio. However, the business faced significant financial challenges that nearly led to its collapse. In 2007, Barry secured FIFO work on the Jindalee over-the-horizon radar project, a role requiring Top Secret clearance, which provided essential income during that pivotal period.



Founding Donnybrook Balingup Community Radio (DBCR)

In 2011, prompted by two local residents, Barry helped establish a community radio station for Donnybrook and Balingup. A public meeting confirmed strong community interest, and the Lions Club provided initial seed funding. DBCR, (Donnybrook/Balingup Community Radio), was incorporated in 2011 and soon secured space in the “Lions Den”, Donnybrook, for its operations. Barry developed a three-stage transmission plan to expand coverage, with Stage 1—a low-power transmitter—launching in February 2016. Lotterywest funding enabled the station to automate 24/7 broadcasts and support live programming. Additional state funding of \$30,000 allowed for

the installation of the Donnybrook transmitter, completed in April 2018 for \$21,000 with the help of volunteers, and the remaining funds were used to complete the Balingup transmitter in February 2020.

Documentary & Media Work

As a member of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (CBAA), Barry extended his influence into documentary production. In 2018, he produced "Healthy Soils, Healthy Communities," a documentary highlighting the importance of regenerative agriculture. He also conducted a notable interview with Dick Smith on Tourist Radio, discussing the value of booking directly with local operators, (as opposed to "booking sites" you see advertised on TV). Barry's work increasingly connected the dots between state government support, regenerative agriculture, and the crucial role of independent documentary work in promoting sustainable practices.



Talk Shows & Independent Media

In 2021, Barry launched a weekly two-hour talk show, "Talk of Our Shire," which later evolved into "Business and Community Conversations." The programme features interviews with local businesses, organisations, artists, politicians, and national figures. Barry used this platform to critically examine mainstream narratives, especially those related to COVID-19, and to provide a space for alternative voices. He ensures all conversations are archived online as oral histories, including the "Doctors and Nurses with Voices" playlist. His interview with Dr Neil Benson even inspired journalist Jerry Roberts to review Benson's book. Barry coined the term "Regenerative Media" to describe this new wave of independent media, with the programme now sponsored by HarvestHighway.com.au.

Community Engagement & Legacy

Barry's commitment to community engagement extended to recording interviews at the Small Town Reinvention Conference in Pickering Brook. He produced a special D.B.C.R. programme based on these interviews, featuring Peter Kenyon and Wendy Trow. The audio and transcript from this project were accepted into the State Library archives, underscoring his focus on preserving oral history and resisting the corporate rewriting of community events.



Lyn Frings presenting Barry with one of our handmade pens, made by member Peter Hicks

In this current divisive world, Barry still choses to live by the Lions Code.....



☐ To be Careful with my criticism and liberal with my praise; to build up and not destroy

.....which I feel is not a bad way of living our lives?

Lyn Frings

In the February's edition of *Have A Go News*, there was an article on Loneliness, citing a 2025 W.H.O. report on the subject. With my curiosity piqued, I thought I would look up the report and then present you all with a summary of it. Here it is below:-

Solutions to Reduce Loneliness & Social Isolation Based on the WHO Commission on Social Connection

What Health Means: The W.H.O. defines health as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being,” not just the absence of illness. This report focuses on **social health**, which has long been overlooked but is essential to overall wellbeing.

Purpose of the Report The report aims to:

- Explain what we know about **social connection, isolation, and loneliness**.
- Identify **solutions** that work at national, community, and individual levels.
- Provide **practical steps** for governments to strengthen social connection, based on research, expert advice, and “*real-life stories and examples*.”

Why Social Connection Matters

- Social health is as important as physical and mental health.
- **1 in 6 people worldwide** felt lonely between 2014–2023.
- Loneliness is linked to **871,000 deaths per year** (2014–2019).
- Social disconnection increases risks of heart disease, stroke, depression, and anxiety.
- It also affects school performance, work, and community cohesion.
- Humans are wired for connection; social interaction shapes brain development across life.
- COVID-19 highlighted how essential connection is, while technology is rapidly changing how we relate to others.



What is Social Connection? How we relate to and interact with others. It includes:

Structure – number and frequency of relationships.

Function – support given and received.

Quality – how relationships make us feel.

What is Social Disconnection? When someone lacks contact, support, or has strained relationships, and includes:

- **Loneliness** – a painful feeling when relationships don't meet emotional needs.
- **Social isolation** – having few relationships or infrequent contact.
- **Culture and life stages** - disconnection from culture and language and differences in what makes a 15 yr old girl lonely, compared to a new mother or a 65 yr old adjusting to retirement.

Who Is Most Affected?

- **1 in 6 people** feel lonely globally.
- Young people (13–29) are the loneliest (17–21%).
- People in low-income countries report higher loneliness (24%).
- Up to **1 in 3 older adults** are socially isolated.
- Higher-risk groups include people with disabilities, migrants, LGBTIQ+ people, and Indigenous or minority groups.



What Causes Loneliness & Social Isolation? Drivers include:

- Poor physical or mental health
- Living alone or lacking close relationships
- Low income or education
- Shyness or anxiety
- Unsafe or unwelcoming neighbourhoods
- Life transitions (moving, retirement, bereavement, job loss)
- Bullying or discrimination
- Mixed effects of digital technology (helpful for some, harmful for others)



Impacts on Health, Learning & Society on Social Isolation & Loneliness.

Physical Health

- Strong social ties help people live longer.
- Loneliness increases risk of heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

Mental Health & the Brain

- Lonely people are **twice as likely** to develop depression.
- Loneliness increases risk of anxiety, self-harm thoughts, and dementia.
- Social connection protects brain health.

Education & Work

- Lonely teens are **22% more likely** to get lower grades.
- Adults who are lonely may struggle at work and earn less.

Communities & Economies

- Connected communities are safer and recover faster from crises.
- Loneliness costs countries billions in lost productivity and healthcare.

WHAT WORKS TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL CONNECTION?

Advocacy, Campaigns, Networks & Coalitions

- Advocacy and public campaigns raise awareness and encourage governments to act.
- Campaigns use TV, social media, events, and posters to spread messages.
- Networks and coalitions coordinate efforts; a 2024 survey found **200+ groups** working on loneliness.
- Success requires **clear strategies, cultural understanding, and lived experience voices**.
- When done well, these efforts *“help change how society sees social isolation and loneliness”* and build kinder communities.

Policies That Support Social Connection

- 8 countries now have national policies on social connection (e.g., Denmark, Japan, UK, USA).
- Policies recommend a **whole-of-society approach** involving schools, health, housing, transport, businesses, and communities.
- Common actions: awareness campaigns, reducing stigma, funding research, and involving people with lived experience.
- Challenges include funding, political support, and limited evaluation.
- More countries should adopt and share effective policies.

Community-Level Strategies

- Communities are where people “*live, work, learn, play, and age,*” so local strategies matter.
- Strengthening **social infrastructure**—parks, libraries, cafés, transport, schools, health centres—helps people meet naturally.
- Spaces must feel **safe, inclusive, and welcoming** for all ages and abilities.
- Activities such as choirs, festivals, exercise groups, and **social prescribing** help people connect.
- More research is needed, especially in rural and low-income areas.
- Community involvement in planning is essential for long-term success.

Individual & Relationship Strategies

Skills Training - Helps people build confidence in communication, joining activities, or using digital tools.

Social Engagement Opportunities - Befriending programs, peer groups, and even animal or robot companions create **regular, meaningful interactions**.

Therapy & Psychological Support - CBT, mindfulness, and emotional-skills education, reduce loneliness and improve mental health. Digital tools (online therapy, chatbots, VR) are growing but need more research.

Tailoring Matters - Strategies work best when adapted to specific groups (youth, older adults, people with mental health challenges). Interventions must be **accessible, culturally appropriate, and supported** by health and social systems.

W.H.O.’s Five Key Action Areas. Recommendations coordinated with global action across:

Policy

- Create national policies.
- Bring leaders together regularly.
- **Build a shared global platform for learning.**

Research

- Strengthen global research capacity.
- Set priority research questions every five years.
- **Launch a “Grand Challenges in Social Connection” initiative.**

Interventions

- WHO to publish clear guidance on what works.
- Create an “intervention accelerator.”
- **Support countries to scale up proven solutions.**

Measurement & Data

- Governments should collect better, more frequent data.
- Create a global **Social Connection Index**.
- **Begin a 10-year global data effort.**

Engagement

- Make social connection a political priority.
- Run large public campaigns with a unified global message.
- Build a long-term, well-funded movement across sectors.



In Summary

Strengthening social connection requires **action at every level**—from governments and communities to individuals. If widely implemented, these strategies can:

- Improve mental and physical health
- Reduce early deaths
- Support learning and employment
- Strengthen communities
- Lower the economic costs of disconnection



As the document notes,

“Everyone has a role to play.”

Together, these actions can create a more connected, caring, and resilient world.

For the full summary - in Plain Language - type the following in your browser to read:-

[/whocsc-plainlanguage-en_comp.pdf](#)



As an aside to the above report, U3A Bunbury, Inc., is in a perfect position to help out in the community with loneliness. Our partnership with the Act Belong Commit programme ensures we keep our mental health front and centre, and with their monthly “themes”, we have choices as to how we manage our own wellbeing.

March celebrated W.A. Harmony Week 16th - 22nd March, and this years’ theme was “Everyone Belongs”. Of course, we don’t have to do things just in this one week, so embrace inclusiveness, celebrate how diverse we are in Australia, and make sure your friends and neighbours are okay.

April is celebrated as Arts April. This is when you, and your friends and family, can make an effort to enjoy something that makes you feel happy. “ARTS” covers a vast area with most of us thinking -Painting; listening to Music; visiting the Theatre or catching a Movie but it also includes little things that make you feel happy, like Doodling or colouring in a children’s picture; doing Origami; taking Photographs that make you happy; reading your favourite book, (again), or starting a new one; Gardening - make a new one or sort out that tired-looking bed.

More and more evidence is showing that “Art” is as good for your health, especially mental health, as sport is, with just 2 hours a week making you feeling happy. So grab that old piano and play a few notes!!

Confucius says "Happiness is not at the top of the mountain, but in how to climb"

Bunbury Regional Entertainment Centre is again holding their French Film Festival. Here is a copy of their upcoming programme. If you find it a bit small, use the QR code below, or give them a call to make your booking. The box office is open Wednesday to Sunday.

ARCO
ANIMATION | PG
In 2075, Iris lives on a ruined Earth masked by augmented reality. When Arco, a boy from a harmonious future, falls from the sky, she helps him find a way home. Their journey through a fragile world reveals its beauty and contradictions, offering a glimpse of what humanity still has left to save.

CASE 137
DRAMA, CRIME | M
Stephanie, an IGPN investigator, takes on Case 137, involving a protester critically injured by a rubber bullet. When she discovers he's from her hometown, the inquiry becomes personal. Facing silence from officers and relying on one vulnerable witness, she navigates institutional resistance, torn between loyalty, truth, and growing isolation.

COLOURS OF TIME
DRAMA | M
In 2025, almost thirty people discover they share an ancestor, Adele Meunier, who has left them an abandoned Normandy house. Four heirs explore the eerie estate, uncovering traces of Adele's life. The story shifts between 2025 and 1895, where Adele's Paris journey reframes how her descendants see identity, legacy, and their future.

A DASH OF LOVE
COMEDY, DRAMA | M
Melanie, a determined lawyer, embarks on a spontaneous road trip to Spain with her old friend Benjamin and Lucas, an eccentric she convinces to drive. As the unlikely trio travel across vast landscapes, their journey evolves from an escape into a gentle exploration of freedom, connection, and the many forms of love.

THE MUSICIANS
COMEDY, DRAMA | PG
In *The Musicians*, heiress Astrid Thompson strives to fulfil her late father's wish to unite four rare Stradivarius instruments for a globally streamed concert. With only six days to rehearse, clashing egos threaten the event, pushing Astrid to seek help from a reclusive composer as chaos slowly gives way to harmony and connection.

THE PARTY IS OVER
COMEDY | M
Mehdi, a newly graduated lawyer, spends the summer at his wealthy girlfriend Garance's family villa in the South of France. As tensions rise between the refined Trousselards and their mistreated caretakers, Mehdi tries to mediate, torn between his modest origins and the prestigious career he hopes to secure—until the conflict spirals beyond him.

THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD
COMEDY, DRAMA | CTC
This dark comedy follows Marianne Farrère, the world's richest woman, whose life is upended by her intense friendship with Pierre-Alain Fantin, a charming younger artist eager to benefit from her wealth. As her family grows suspicious, their private investigation sparks consequences none of them anticipate.

RIDE AWAY
COMEDY, DRAMA | CTC
Mathias, grieving his son, retraces the bike route his child once rode from La Rochelle to Istanbul, accompanied by his loyal friend Philippe. Their journey becomes a heartfelt exploration of sorrow, friendship, and resilience. Through humour, silence, and shared vulnerability, the two men slowly learn what it means to move forward.

TREASURE HUNTERS
ADVENTURE | PG
Christian Robinson, an eccentric archaeologist, becomes convinced that Pharaoh Khufu's lost treasure is hidden in Paris after discovering a mysterious Cairo inscription. Pursuing clues tied to the Louvre's first director, he embarks on a wild treasure hunt through Paris, reluctantly joined by his daughter and grandson in a quest that could rewrite history.

THE STRANGER
DRAMA, ADAPTATION | CTC
1938, French colonised Algeria. Meursault, a detached clerk whose quiet life—marked by his mother's funeral and a brief romance with Marie—unravels after a neighbour's conflict draws him in. A violent incident on a sun-scorched beach soon places Meursault on trial, forcing society to judge his very morality.

BUNBURY
25-29 MARCH

KÉRASTASE PARIS PRESENTS THE 37TH

Alliance Française
French Film Festival 2026

BREC

af
Alliance Française
Perth

AMBASSADE DE FRANCE EN AUSTRALIE

PROGRAMME
25-29 MARCH

WED 25
10:30 AM
ARCO
1:00 PM
A DASH OF LOVE
5:30 PM DRINKS
6:30 PM SCREENING
OPENING NIGHT
COLOURS OF TIME

THU 26
10:30 AM
TREASURE HUNTERS: ON THE TRACKS OF KHUFU
1:00 PM
THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD
4:00 PM
THE MUSICIANS
6:30 PM
CASE 137

FRI 27
1:00 PM
THE STRANGER
4:00 PM
THE PARTY IS OVER
6:30 PM
RIDE AWAY

SAT 28
11:00 AM
A DASH OF LOVE
1:30 PM
THE MUSICIANS
4:00 PM
THE STRANGER
6:30 PM
THE PARTY IS OVER

SUN 29
11:00 AM
CASE 137
1:30 PM
RIDE AWAY
4:00 PM
THE RICHEST WOMAN IN THE WORLD

TICKETS

OPENING NIGHT VIP TICKET
\$30

GENERAL SESSION SINGLE TICKET
\$20

UNDER 18 TICKET
\$17

LIBERTÉ PASS
\$55
1 PASS
3 ENTRIES

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1300 661 272

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bunburyentertainment.com

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS

Here's a lovely piece of prose I came across the other day which you might enjoy.....

May you be given what you need for today, and no more than you can carry.

Remember small efforts count, especially the ones no-one applauds.

Trust that you have not failed, even if things have taken longer than you hoped.

May you feel held, even when no-one is standing beside you and,

May you know you belong, without needing to prove anything at all.

Small Blessings by Victoria Beale



APRIL CALENDAR

DATE	Room/Location	Speaker & Title/Event
<i>(Tuesday, MARCH 31st)</i> TOPICAL TALKING 10-11 am	"Refreshment Area" BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY	Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"
SCHOOL HOLIDAYS START THURSDAY 02nd APRIL until MONDAY 20th APRIL		
GOOD FRIDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY - FRIDAY 03rd APRIL		
EASTER SUNDAY - SUNDAY 05th APRIL		
EASTER MONDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY - MONDAY 06th APRIL		
FRIDAY, 10th APRIL 9.30 - 11.30 am	E.C.U. Building 5/132 & 3	Jacque Ross - Musical Therapy
TUESDAY, 14th APRIL 10.00 - 11.00 am	"Refreshment Area" BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY	Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"
<i>Tuesday, 21st April</i> 10.30am - 12.30pm	<i>Dome Café Private Room</i> <i>Koombana Bay</i>	<i>U3A Bunbury</i> <i>Committee Meeting</i>
<i>Wednesday, 22nd April</i> 10.00 - 11.30 am	<i>Angelika's</i> <i>Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories"</i> <i>Personal History Course</i>
FRIDAY, 24th APRIL 9.30 - 11.30 am	E.C.U. Building 5/132 & 3	Peter Murphy - Fremantle to Freedom
ANZAC DAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY - MONDAY 27th April		
<i>Wednesday, 22nd April</i> 10.00 - 11.30 am	<i>Angelika's</i> <i>Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories"</i> <i>Personal History Course</i>



R.I.P. Joan

:VALE:

It is with deep sadness that our U3A group has lost another of our valued members.

Joan Birkett joined U3A Bunbury in 1999 along with her late husband, George.

They were a formidable pair, always laughing and having fun, with Joan becoming a committee member not long after joining. She loved gardening, and was a regular participant in the "Gardening Group. Along with her friend, who also passed away last year, Gloria Foreman, they visited many beautiful gardens around the Greater Bunbury area. Our photo archives show the two of them at a few of the outings. Personally, I had a great respect for Joan, as she was the Newsletter Editor before I took over. I would not have been able to continue on with the tome if it was not for guidance from Joan. She also held a lot of the archives and Speaker possibilities, too. Both Ric and I have been wiser from her counsel.

Our 2024 "Life Member" recipients, Maureen and John Bowden also remember Joan fondly. Here are some words from Maureen about Joan and George....
"John & I became acquainted with Joan and her husband George when we first joined Bunbury U3A many years ago. They both made us feel very welcome as new immigrants to Australia and invited us into their home on numerous occasions. Joan and her husband were both very interested in learning Mexican Spanish and together we explored the possibility of starting a Spanish language group for the members of the Bunbury U3A. Joan was also a member of the Bunbury Seniors Computer Club, where John & I were members. I will miss Joan".

Those sentiments are echoed at U3A Bunbury by those that knew her, Maureen.

Bunbury, March - June 2026



Get support to complete your Advance Health Directive

Over the course of two, two hour sessions which are held a fortnight apart, we have found most people are able to complete their **Advance Health Directive** ready to share with the people who matter.



BUNBURY LIBRARY
 Tuesday, 31 March & 14 April, 1.30-3.30pm
 Thursday, 16 & 30 April, 1.30-3.30pm
 Thursday, 14 May & 28 May, 1.30-3.30pm
 Thursday, 4 & 18 June, 1.30-3.30pm

Register for these sessions or express your interest in future sessions at acp@comcomnetworksw.com or 0483 802 915



For those of you that attended the talk from Di Tate, you will already be familiar with what Advance Care Planning is all about. Compassionate Communities continue to offer these sessions for the community, and if you are not able to attend any of these, please pass the information on to someone who could.

You are helped the whole way through, so it becomes quite easy to do.

Husband: Did you know that women use about 30,000 words a day, while men only use 15,000?



Wife: Yes, that's because we have to repeat everything!

Husband: What?

What do **Bullet-proof vests, Fire escapes, Windshield Wipers, Airplane "Black Boxes" and Laser Printers** all have in common?

They were all invented by a woman!!

Why does it take one million sperm to fertilise one egg?

Because, like many men, they won't stop to ask for directions!!



MAY 2026 CALENDAR

DATE	Room/Location	Speaker & Title/Event
<i>Wednesday, 06th May, 10.00 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
FRIDAY, 08th MAY 9.30 - 11.30 am	E.C.U. Building 5/132 & 3	Brendan Kelly - AMATEUR ENTERTAINMENT 1875-1895 sex & drugs & Gilbert & Sullivan"
TUESDAY, 12th MAY 10.00 - 11.00 am	Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY	Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"
<i>Wednesday, 13th May, 10.00 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
<i>Wednesday, 20th May, 10.00 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
FRIDAY, 22nd MAY 9.30 - 11.30 am	E.C.U. Building 5/132 & 3	Christine Penny - ECU & SCENIC Study Cancer Fundraiser for Solaris Cancer Care
TUESDAY, 26th MAY 10.00 - 11.00 am	Programme Room BUNBURY CITY LIBRARY	Join John McKernan talking about all things "Topical"
<i>Wednesday, 27th May, 10.00 - 11.30 am</i>	<i>Angelika's Australind</i>	<i>"12 Stories" Personal History Course</i>
FRIDAY, 29th MAY, 10.30 - 12.00 pm Lunch 12 - 1 pm	USA OUTING	Meet at King Cottage, then walk to the Bun- bury Bowling Club for



What a wonderful talk we had from Glen Dunkerton, (pictured) on behalf of the Regional Men's Health Initiative, (RMHI), on February 27th, 2026.

I was a bit hesitant in inviting Glen to speak - being called "The Regional **Men's** Health Initiative". Would this mean some of our ladies would stay away, thinking it didn't apply to them? Would our male members stay away, not wanting to hear things about their health? In fact we had a good turn out of 23 members attending, 11 of whom were our male members, so I needn't have worried.

Glen started his presentation with an overview of the organisation, and some interesting facts about who the main contacts were - would you believe 75-80% of the initial contacts are from women wanting to learn about health for their menfolk! See - we learn something new every day!!

RMHI focuses on 3 main areas:-

- * **Warrior education sessions** delivered in communities.
- * **Topic-specific talks** at men's sheds or community groups (e.g., prostate cancer, disaster recovery, mental health), and
- * **School sessions** on mentors, life transitions, and wellbeing.



Some of these sessions include community talks, like ours, across all of W.A. They also do visits to Country Shows and the like, where they hold a "**Fast Track Pit Stop**". This is a more practical health-engagement event where they encourage men to talk about their health and use the "vehicle" as an illustration to have a bit of a check-up - **Oil Change** = a blood pressure test; **Chassis check** = waist measurement; **Shock Absorbers inspection** = to find out about their coping skills. How clever is that? RMHI just want men to learn to talk about their health, rather than their "usual" conversations on farming, fishing and footy!

W.A. has endorsed a Men's Health Policy, **IN 2018**, but as yet there has not been any funding produced. Women's Health has long been used with a "gender" approach, (e.g. breast cancer, pap smear reminders, etc.), but men's health has not had the same approach. Usually men's first health contact is with **bowel screening mail-outs in their 50's**.

RMHI sees itself as an Advocacy organisation, with referrals to appropriate services to help men take control of their own health problems. Glen stressed they were not counsellors, but they can match people to services, and in the bush this could be things like financial stress = **Rural West**, and mental health concerns = **referring to local counselling**. Their organisation has a team of four who travel the State, in their VERY recognisable red utes, covering up to 460 separate visits per annum. Their education model, delivered in all the different communities they visit seems to be the best way of communicating their message. They find that education helps people make informed decisions about exercise, diet, risk-taking, and habits.

Their focus is on the "**Three Pillars of Wellbeing**",

- * Physical wellbeing: the "mechanical" side — movement, function, inputs/outputs.
- * Mental wellbeing: coping ability, resilience, managing demands, bouncing back, and
- * Social/spiritual wellbeing: whatever gives meaning and strength — community, volunteering, music, country, faith, hobbies.

Around 90% of Australian men strongly believe that winning is what matters, and for some men, this mindset extends beyond sport into relationships, business, parenting, and life success. Consequently, when life areas start failing (relationship breakdown, business stress, losing access to children), this "winning = worth" mentality can place men in dangerous emotional territory.

It was an interesting fact that Glen then told us about men's health being "on the wrong side of the ledger", with such statements like, "*there is no biological reason why men die at a higher rate than women from Bowel cancer*". **The reason for the difference is that men don't engage with the screening process.** They ignore the mailed test kits, or leave them until they expire.

Glen went on to add a few more of these alarming facts re men being over-represented in:

Prostate cancer mortality; Stroke and heart disease; Workplace injuries (86–90%); Workplace deaths (96%); Suicide, including single-vehicle accidents. Risk increases with distance from metropolitan areas, partly due to attitudes around invincibility and risk-taking.

RMHI recognises four highlighted areas of concern with men's health = **eating habits, harmful behaviours, neglect, and keeping active**, and Glen then went into these in a bit more detail.

Eating Habits:

- * Men often overindulge, especially when younger and highly active, but as life becomes more sedentary, many men don't adjust their food intake, leading to gradual weight gain. Cultural habits can contribute: for example finishing everything on the plate/leaving food decisions to partners/choosing large portions by default with those men that do a lot of travelling using roadhouse food is often unhealthy, but planning ahead can help.

Harmful Behaviour: Alcohol use

- * The message isn't "don't drink" — it's about reducing their overall load. This can be achieved by taking one or two nights off per week, or drinking a lower alcohol style. This lowers total alcohol intake thereby demonstrating you're not dependent on alcohol.

Smoking/Vaping and Drug Use

- * Smoking remains a major contributor to cardiovascular disease, and Vaping may be equally or more harmful, but long-term studies are still emerging.
- * Around 40% of men use drugs experimentally, but up to 60% use them to self-medicate underlying stress, pain, or emotional issues, which raises the question, what are people trying to cope with? This, in turn, points toward the need to address root causes, not just the behaviour.

Neglect

- * Prostates enlarge with age, (double in size every 20 years) but PSA testing helps establish a baseline. Because symptoms often appear late, waiting for symptoms is risky. Modern diagnosis often uses PSA = MRI = biopsy (DRE less common).
- * Testicular lumps should never be ignored.
- * Skin lesions and slow-healing sores need checking.
- * Bowel screening saves lives — men die more only because they don't return the kit.
- * Men often go years without seeing a GP because they "feel fine", but after age 40, they should aim for a yearly service visit, just like maintaining machinery, and they should ask for checks relevant to family history (e.g., PSA).



Keeping Active

Things men can control: aim for a 94 cm waist. Get a regular check-up, especially after age 40. Treat it like a scheduled servicing for your vehicle — once a year, even if you're feeling well. Stay physically active for both mental and physical wellbeing, and take responsibility for noticing changes and seeking help early.

Understanding stress and the body's response

Stress triggers the "fight-or-flight" response — which is very useful in danger, but very harmful when constant. Excessive or prolonged stress leads to dysfunction, not just discomfort. Life pressures (relationships, finances, drought, illness) can accumulate into situational distress. Healthy functioning means bouncing in and out of distress and recovering.

More than 50% of male suicides arise from situational distress, not diagnosed mental illness.

Men often mask their problems to avoid appearing weak. This increases their **Internal** isolation (feeling alone) and their **External** isolation (others don't know to help). Men struggle to seek help by often avoiding or showing they have a problem. Masking distress which in turn makes them feel more isolated, AND actually isolates them, because others don't know they're struggling. This then creates a feedback loop that increases their risk. They try to look like they're coping, even when they're not, with many becoming

very skilled at showing no outward signs of struggle. This silence reinforces isolation, others don't know they're struggling, so support doesn't arrive.

RMHI uses their Fast Track Pit Stop to engage men in their health conversations. This, as said before, is often at Country Shows, where the men are "having a day off", so to speak. In those relaxed surroundings they will make the time to take a **stress-measurement** test, where they rate and reflect on their past fortnight with a 1 (almost never) to 5 (most of the time) assessment of their health. Here they also get to learn to recognise patterns in their personality like, irritability, anger, feeling trapped or having intrusive thoughts such as self-harm. These signs can then be explained as signals to reach out, not push through. Recognition and putting these signs in context (e.g., irritability caused by work stress), or others that are unexplained or persistent, (which may indicate deeper distress), can help men seek support before things escalate. When distress is noticed early, people can talk, seek help, and reconnect. Ignoring early signs increases isolation and reduces perceived options. Talking breaks the cycle of silence that keeps men feeling alone.

Glen then moved on to talk about the Fridge magnets he gave out to us, "Talk To A Mate". Men need to identify their **real** mates — not hundreds of online contacts, but the 2–3 people they can genuinely open up to.

They need to recognise the three types of supportive relationships:

Peers — similar age and life stage.

Mentors — older, wiser voices who offer perspective.

Partners — provide stability, maturity, and emotional grounding.

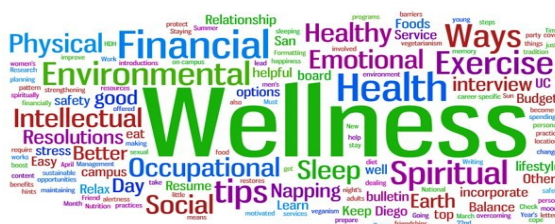


These groups change over time, so it's important to nurture new connections as life shifts. Men often lose their friendships through job changes or moving towns and don't maintain long-term networks the way many women do. Maintaining social opportunities is vital, because withdrawing into isolation makes distress worse. Men often define themselves through several "labels" - Being a provider; a protector; through their job or trade; as their role as father or husband. Women tend to form identity through deeper questions of meaning, purpose, and relationships. When identity is tied too tightly to work or role, major life changes can be destabilising. This can include, but is not exclusive to, Relationship breakdowns; Parenting struggles; Job losses; Retirement ("If I'm not a mechanic/driver/boilermaker anymore, who am I?"). Common crisis points across life can also be added here; Adolescence — transition from child to adult; Mid-life — questioning purpose and direction ("Is this what I want to keep doing?"); Retirement — loss of their work-based identity and Parenting challenges — when their self-worth is tied to family roles.

Finally, Glen explained what RMHI meant by **Social/spiritual wellbeing**. It's basically knowing your own identity and being able to recognise yourself for who you are, not just what you do, and enjoy doing things that make you happy. This could be within your culture, your personal passion or even your faith. Men need to be willing to talk about the real stuff in life, and acknowledge that everyone has a spiritual or meaning-based side, whatever form it takes, and there are no Right or Wrong beliefs. They need to allow themselves to be passionate about things they enjoy, and remember they are more than their job. Let go of isolated independence — connection makes them more effective and resilient.

Resources and ongoing learning

For more information, podcasts and videos go to their website and subscribe to their monthly newsletter talking about all things "MEN'S HEALTH" <https://regionalmenshealth.com.au>



Many thank to Glen for a very entertaining and useful presentation.

"WORKING WITH WARRIORS", "FAST TRACK PIT STOP", AND "TALK TO A MATE" are all registered trademarks of WHEATBELT MEN'S HEALTH (Inc.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MARCH 13th 2026.

Our A.G.M. for 2026 was held in March this year, due to the fact that our normal February meeting was the Friday before a long-weekend. We had 26 members attend which is always a great sight for your Committee members to see. All the decisions we make at the committee level are all designed to make our group a better one and give all members an enjoyable time.

Before we started proceedings we were joined by Prof Natalie Lloyd, Director of Regional Development. Natalie has taken on the task of trying to sort out the parking problems we are having at present. She explained E.C.U. Joondalup doesn't seem to realise the unique "systems" we have in the SW campus, so she will be trying sort all of those out. At present U3A members are able to park free until the problem is solved. Thank you Natalie for taking the time to sort this out. As soon as we know what will be happening, we will let you know.



All of the Committee members from 2025 were re-elected, with a change of positions for our previous President and Vice President. Tyril and Jo both vied for the Presidents' position, and after a secret ballot, Jo narrowly won the position of President from Tyril by 14 votes to 12. Tyril will still be around as our Vice President, so her experience will be able to help with any problems we may have as a committee.

We did welcome a two new committee member to our throes. Angelika, who only joined us this year, and Anne have kindly put up their hands to give us their valuable insights. We always welcome new members to our very well-functioning committee, as we are open to new ideas and inspirations. We welcome you Angelika and Anne and look forward to some exciting times ahead.

Here is a list of the 2026 Committee Members and their emails:-

PRESIDENT	Jo Williams	jocelyn_mary_williams@hotmail.com
V. PRESIDENT	Tyril Houghton	houghton@westnet.com.au
SECRETARY	Lyn Frings	u3abunbury@gmail.com (also Newsletter Editor)
TREASURER	Elwyn Harries	elwynharries@optus.net.au
SPEAKER COORD	Lyn Frings	u3abunbury@gmail.com
WEB/PUBLICITY	Ric Stacey	rstacey.migration@gmail.com
M/T COORDS	Jennie & Allan Staines (J)	buick81937@gmail.com (A) allanchev30@gmail.com
COMMITTEE	Jen Blandford	jen-28@live.com.au
	Angelika Bailey	angelika.bailey@hotmail.com
	Anne Foyer	bobbacat12@hotmail.com

Tyril also presented some Thank You Certificates to two of our valuable members who donate items for our Speakers. Peter Hicks makes our hand-made pens and John Hamlin etches glasses - both at no charge to our group. Very talented gentlemen, and we sincerely thank you both for helping the group out with your donations.



Unfortunately, the films that Lyn had organised to show at the end of the A.G.M. failed to appear on the screen. We could hear the audio, but had no picture, and the 2nd film was a very "visual" comedy. Ce la vie as they say.

If anyone is interested in the in the Ageism talk, that we could hear but not see, here's the link for it

https://youtu.be/WfjzkO6_DEI?si=3Ro8RNoctFygqYff

Previously in this Newsletter, I have spoken about our partnership with the Act Belong Commit programme. Those members who attended the 2024 WA Network State Conference may remember Rodney Glossop coming and giving us a talk about the programme, and how other U3A groups could join the programme, (I believe U3A Naturaliste (Busselton) went ahead and joined).

Rodney and I keep in touch and I try and remember to add some activities to the Activity Finder on the Act Belong Commit website. The ABC team also have a hand in a weekly event called **PARKRUN**. This is held at The Big Swamp, run by volunteers and is a great way to walk, jog or volunteer.

Rodney is coming down to Bunbury on Saturday, 11th April as the guest Run Director and wondered if any of our U3A members would like to join him on the walk/run. His Mum, who is 70, is coming down to be the “barcode scanner” for the day. To participate in the event you have to register each Saturday. This is the registration address:



<https://www.parkrun.com.au/register/?section=form&eventName=bunbury&e=bunbury>

Anyone who wishes to volunteer on the 11th April, will need to let Rodney know, and he has also suggested we could even organise a “U3A takeover” promoting our group, too. If anyone is interested please let me know and I can give you Rodney’s email address to contact him. If we have enough people interested I will take names and I can send all our names in one email.



U3A WA Network Gathering 2026 Celebrating Achievement

14-15 September, ANZAC House, Perth



Last, but certainly not least, here is another reminder about the next WA State Conference. I did send out notification a couple of weeks ago, but in a nutshell, the Early Bird Tickets are available for country people who wish to attend the event. The cost of the event is \$70 until 31st of May and \$90 thereafter. This price includes a buffet lunch on day 1 and a sit-down meal on day 2. A happy hour at the end of day one will include a drink and canapés. Gluten-free options are also available.

There are only 50 places reserved for country members, so it will be a case of first come, first served. Information together with accommodation options close to Anzac House and the possibility of home hospitality will be forwarded by email following your registration. To register go to the U3A Perth website at u3aperth.au and click on the Gathering - Country Members button.