

Monthly News – February 2026

President's Report

Welcome!

Welcome to the February edition of the Glen Eira U3A monthly newsletter.

I hope everyone enjoyed a relaxing summer break, and I'm delighted to welcome you back as we begin the 2026 calendar year. A reminder that classes commence on **Monday 9 February**.

A particularly warm welcome goes to the **94 members joining us for the first time this year**, in addition to the **133 new members who joined in 2025**. It's wonderful to see our community continuing to grow.

Across the state, U3A continues to flourish. Glen Eira U3A is one of **103 U3As in Victoria**, together comprising **40,205 members**, a **5.6% increase** on the previous year.

Here at Glen Eira U3A, our membership profile continues to reflect the rich diversity of our community:

- **Total members:** 1,095
- **Female to male ratio:** 3 to 1
- **Members born overseas:** 51%
- **Countries of birth:** 76
- **Postcodes represented:** 61

Highlights from this month's newsletter

This month, our Course Management Team provides an update on several exciting new courses now on offer.

You'll also find an article about **Member Wizard**, the new membership management system we will be transitioning to later this year.

A word about volunteering

I'm often struck by the fact that Glen Eira U3A operates entirely without paid staff. While things may appear to run smoothly most of the time, this is only possible because of the dedication of many volunteers: our office team, tutors, committee members and the members of our various volunteer groups. Their contribution is vital, and deeply appreciated.

We always welcome additional helpers. If you're interested in getting involved, please speak with one of our friendly volunteers at the reception desk or email enquiries@gleneirau3a.org.au.

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Join a Volunteering at U3A team

An easy way to get started is by joining one of our **Volunteering at U3A** teams. Information about all ten teams appears at the front of the course catalogue, and new members are warmly welcomed.

This photo shows **John Van Loon, Halina Leitch** and me enjoying the sunshine during a session of *plein air* (outdoor) watercolour painting. Our efforts attracted the attention of a friendly resident who invited us into his home for a chat and a cup of tea.



Mark Rubinstein

President, Glen Eira U3A

Enrolment Day

This year's Enrolment Day took place on Wednesday 14 January. This is invariably a very busy day for us as many of our courses are extremely popular. Although most members enrolled online, well over 100 arrived at our U3A premises in person for assisted enrolment. The enrolment team had made a few improvements to the process, resulting in a smoother, more streamlined flow of members compared with previous years.



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Course Management

Welcome to a very full and exciting year of courses at Glen Eira U3A.

We're delighted to share our current program statistics:

- **164 courses** on offer
- **131 first and second tutors** supporting our learning community

Several courses have already reached capacity and now have waitlists. However, many still have vacancies available. You can explore these by visiting our website at

<https://gleneirau3a.org.au/> and selecting "**Courses with Vacancies.**"

We're also pleased to announce a number of new additions to this year's program:

- **26ART05 – Art: Mixed Media** *Fridays, 10.00 – 12.00 noon*
- **26LANJ02 – Japanese Ongoing: Conversation** *Mondays, 9.30 – 11.00 (Please note: this six-month course is suitable for learners who already have some basic Japanese.)*
- **26SOC04 – Trip to National Gallery of Victoria** *Sunday 19/4, 10.00 – 16.00 (more details below)*

We look forward to welcoming you back for another stimulating and enjoyable year of learning and connection.

Peter Shonberg

Course Management Team

New Excursion

Sunday 19 April

A visit to the NGV (National Gallery of Victoria) instead of the overpriced river cruise which was cancelled. Special exhibitions incur a fee but general entry is FREE. Lunch at 12:00 noon at the famous PJ O'Briens Irish pub at Southbank. We will be travelling by TRAM to the Arts Centre.



Wurrdha Marra
First Nations art from the NGV Collection
Ongoing, free entry



The Joseph Brown Collection
From the NGV Collection
Ongoing, free entry



Australian Art
From the NGV Collection
Ongoing, free entry



International Art
From the NGV Collection
Ongoing, free entry

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Parli italiano?

Do you speak Italian? Would you like to join our Italian tutors and lead a conversation course with a happy and enthusiastic group of adult students. We're looking for someone with a love of the Italian language who's happy to chat with students at an Intermediate level B1, standard Italiano. If required there are lots of resources available from current tutors. Initially every second Tuesday at 12 noon for 1 ½ hours.

Sarebbe unire con i nostri tutor italiani e condurre una lezione di conversazione, con un gruppo di studenti adulti allegri ed entusiasti, a un livello intermedio B1, italiano standard. Le piacerà sicuramente chiacchierare con gli studenti e ci sono molte risorse e supporto disponibili da parte degli attuali tutor. Inizialmente ogni secondo martedì alle ore 12:00 per un'ora e mezza.

Follow Us on Instagram

U3A has just launched a new Instagram account, and we'd love your support!

Our Instagram page will share snapshots of U3A life — activities, groups, events, achievements and the friendly faces that make our community so special. It's a simple and enjoyable way to stay connected, see what's happening across U3A and help us show the wider community how active and welcoming U3A really is. If you already use Instagram, please follow our new account and like or share our posts. If you don't use Instagram yet, we encourage you to sign up and give it a try — it's free, easy to use and a great way to keep in touch with U3A and the wider community.

Every follow helps raise U3A's profile, attract new members, and strengthen our voice when applying for grants and supporting the future of our U3A.

(Find us on Instagram by searching for "u3a_glen-eira" or scan the QR code)



Member Wizard

In July 2024, U3A Network Victoria began rolling out **Member Wizard**, a modern membership management system designed to progressively replace U-MAS. To date, **19 U3As** have successfully adopted the new platform. The transition process, once lengthy, has now been streamlined and can typically be completed within **one week**, following several months of preparatory work.

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The rollout will continue over the coming years, with an anticipated **75 larger U3As** — those equipped to support the system and manage the associated administrative responsibilities — expected to transition by **July 2027**. At that point, U3A Network Victoria will cease support for U-MAS.

Member Wizard offers a comprehensive suite of functions, including:

- Member registration and enrolment
- Member database management
- Renewals and payment processing
- Event management
- Communication tools
- Reporting and analytics
- Website templates
- A dedicated member portal

At Glen Eira U3A, the migration project — scheduled for completion by **mid-2026** — is being managed by a dedicated team of volunteers, capably led by **Scott Gordon**.

U3A Network Victoria President on ABC Radio

U3A Network Victoria President, Annie Grigg joined Richelle Hunt on [The Conversation Hour](#) late last year, alongside Professor Bernardo Figueiredo, an award-winning researcher and educator in Marketing at RMIT who works with industry, government, and communities to drive change, and Martin, one of the 82-year-old citizen scientists who participated in this inspiring project. In this episode, they share what they discovered and how their work with researchers is shaping the future of our streets and cities.

Listen to the full episode here:

["Improving our neighbourhoods for older Melburnians"](#)

U3A Network Victoria resigns from U3A Australia

U3A Network Victoria played a major role in establishing U3A Australia, contributing significant financial and practical support, and originating many of the initiatives now described as national. However, ongoing concerns about governance and financial transparency led the Network to withdraw, followed shortly by U3A Network Queensland. All partner organisations have since been advised that U3A Network Victoria remains the sole body representing Victorian U3As at both state and national levels.

Back Fence

Anyone using the Pink Room or the back entrance to Glen Eira U3A will surely have noticed the poor condition of the back fence separating our premises from the station carpark. During the summer break we engaged a contractor to construct a replacement fence as illustrated.

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Marketing Team

The Glen Eira U3A Marketing Team is chaired by Cheryl Gelfand. Other members are Ian Edmeades and Simone Markus. One of last year's successful achievements was the promotion of Glen Eira U3A at the inaugural Glen Eira Healthy Ageing Expo, held at the Glen Eira Town Hall. We had many queries on the day. The team created a publicity brochure and bookmarks and distributed them to local libraries, other relevant establishments and in our neighbourhood's letterboxes. We regularly submit an item to Glen Eira News for monthly publicity. If any Glen Eira U3A members are interested in joining our team, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us via Reception.

Thank You, Laurel and Sydney!

A big thank you to Laurel Thompson and Sydney Shadid for their wonderful help behind the scenes. They carefully sorted all the cards for our 26GAM02 Bridge Theory and Practice card play classes and even took the time to wash the tablecloths. These thoughtful efforts make a real difference to the enjoyment and smooth running of our activities and they are very much appreciated. Thank you both for your generosity and community spirit.

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A Curious Encounter: Where Fur, Feather and Algorithm Meet

Charlie — the President’s much-loved Cavoodle (a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel–Poodle cross) —and his twin brother, Simba, were recently captivated by a curious noisy miner they spotted in a local park. The moment was snapped on a smartphone, and when an AI platform was asked to re-create the scene as a watercolour painting, the result was this charming image.

