

Port Macquarie Hastings U3A – Annual Report 2010 – dated 30 June 2010

Port Macquarie Hastings U3A has had a successful year. We have our own premises and an office, membership has grown, number of courses has increased, we have had a number of successful special events such as the launch, the new improved website is up and running, we have increased our inventory of equipment, we have established contacts with other U3As, and among other initiatives a library has begun. Read More Here are some details: PREMISES Through the generosity of Father Donnelly and the Catholic Diocese we found a home at Warlters Street now known as the U3A Centre. We moved from the original building across the courtyard to our current home, which includes one large room for larger classes and special occasions, two other classrooms and an office. We can now conduct all U3A business through our office, we have a place for our growing stock of equipment and the majority of classes are held at the centre. Many members have worked in the gaining, refurbishing and operation of the Centre but special mention must be made of Vice President Brian Tolagson who has acted as the manager and supervisor of the whole enterprise. At the open forum following this AGM we will reveal some further developments and discuss the next stage. MEMBERSHIP Our membership has grown dramatically, especially since the opening of the Centre. We now have over 500 (350 this time last year) and can anticipate topping 600 by this time next year. Some have wondered whether we want to grow any larger but if you believe as I do that the U3A is a valuable community service then the more people of the third age we can serve the better. COURSES The number of offerings have grown e.g there were 17 long courses (6-8 weeks) Offered in term 4, 2009 as against 24 in term 4, 2010. Many members are testing themselves with one day presentations and some are expanding their experience. Convenors and presenters are learning to create powerpoints and are making increasing use of them, with our acquisition of data projectors. Significant new courses have been in Modern History, in languages, and a book club. Established courses such as Australian history and the many discussion courses have remained popular as have activity courses such as Folk Dancing, Tai Chi and Yoga, and now line dancing. There are still some significant gaps, e.g in music making and art, and we are still encouraging members to come forward and offer courses. Ursula continues her indefatigable quest for new courses. FINANCES Treasurer's Report on Annual Finances has been tabled and can be read in the office. It shows a net deficit on the year of \$5219, primarily the result of the extra expenses incurred in setting up the centre and the office. Our credit balance is still a healthy \$27110. However, on the Treasurer's advice we have adjusted course registration fees. Several years ago these fees were halved from their original level. We have increased them for the coming year by 50% and will reassess them at this time next year. SPECIAL EVENTS Launch: A very successful launch of our new home was held in March with leading speakers our patron Robert Oakeshott, state member Peter Besseling, shadow minister Anthony Mann, Eric Graham on the history of the U3A, and a special poem for the occasion by Bessie Jennings. Post event mingling and refreshments were enjoyed by all. History Day: Also in March was a well-attended History Day with guest speaker, well known historian Keith Windschuttle. 98 members and friends heard his address on the controversial topic "Historical Truth, Postmodern Theory and the Fabrication of Australian History". Convenors Conference: Another successful convenors' conference was held on September 28th, with useful suggestions for development in this area. Cluster Meeting: On August 7th we hosted a meeting of 19 representatives from North Coast U3As at the centre. Represented were Forster/Tuncurry, Manning Valley/Taree, Kempsey, Nambucca Valley, Coffs Harbour and ourselves. Apologies and expressions of interest were sent from seven other U3As from Port Stephens to Byron Bay. Ideas and newsletters were exchanged, common problems discussed and an agreement reached to meet again in March 2011. U3A NETWORK We have renewed our membership of the U3A Network (an association of all U3As in NSW and itself part of a national body) I attended the very interesting Annual State Conference in Penrith in April and was elected to the Management Committee. Over 200 delegates were in attendance. The Conference for 2011 will be held in Sydney in April. All members are eligible to attend. We have been invited to host the 2012 Conference and the Committee has accepted the invitation. We will be planning the event and calling for volunteers throughout 2011. NEWSLETTER Sue Clifford continues to do a brilliant job as editor and producer of the newsletter. She welcomes contributions including photos, articles, letters and items. WEBSITE Nick Ogbourne has created for us a remarkable and comprehensive website. It is a valuable communication medium and its interactive features make it even more valuable. Workshops and classes in its use are held from time to time. WELFARE OFFICER Last term we appointed a welfare officer to advise members needing support such as transport. Judy Baker has taken on the position and will be assisted by Maggie Smith. EQUIPMENT We have had two further grants this year for equipment purchase, one from the Federal Volunteer Support program of \$4585 and one from Port Macquarie Hastings Council of \$2416. We now have two complete systems for data projection, several computers, two PA systems, a DVD player and a TV. We also have donated gift of very valuable sound system for the music appreciation groups. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS I must acknowledge the work done for our U3A by many people: Brian Tolagson I mentioned above for his leadership in premises management, Robyn Morgan for her work as Secretary and Office Manager, Ursula Bruce for her continuing dedication as Course Coordinator, Kevin Pike who has streamlined our accounts and given us a budget to measure our progress against, Bob Gerdes and his helpers who keep all records and service the membership, Del Hatton who is getting us lots of publicity, Sue Clifford for the newsletters, Nick Ogbourne for the Website and for maintenance and advice on equipment, the remaining committee members Eric Graham, Frank Jennings and Marie

Thompson for stepping up to a variety of responsibilities, Warren Scott for maintenance and Ray Stace for some useful construction, the many volunteers and members of sub committees who keep the Office working and the Centre operating in what has become a very complex and busy organisation depending entirely on volunteers, and last and most important the Course Convenors who provide the central function of every U3A. They have all made my second year as President a rewarding and pleasant experience.

Des Davies, President