



## U3A is in great spirits!

Kia ora koutou, I hope your winter is going well; it seemed our summer went on forever. We were very fortunate having such settled days when some of our country was suffering from so much rain, storms, and flooding.

U3A is in great spirits. As it is national volunteer week, 18 -24 June, this is a perfect time to celebrate and thank all those who volunteer for U3A. We are fortunate to have several teams of committed volunteers who are passionate about our organisation. The list is extensive: the Board, the Programme Committee, the Interest Group convenors, and those who convene and develop courses based on their passions, drawing on an incredibly wide range of personal and professional contacts. Some of you have facilitated great courses, others have offered them for the future, and many are convening stimulating Interest Groups. We also have web support people and newsletter editors who freely use their time and talents to support our fabulous organisation. I am also aware of many of our members who volunteer for other worthwhile organisations. Well done to all of us.



**Linda Kinniburgh**

Since the previous FORUM, Andre Smith has taken on the role of Interest Groups coordinator, and he has already met with many groups to understand your work, and to support as needed. His report is directly to the Board. Convenors will benefit from the closer communication.

A continuing challenge for U3A is ensuring equitable venue access for all members. Those with walking support aids, wheelchairs, or are of limited mobility generally need to be prioritised for closest parking at our two venues. We are working on some solutions. At the same time, we are pursuing a community grant to trial recording a course that could be accessed in real time from home, as well as in person, with the ability to view it online

later. We still feel the presence of COVID and from time to time we do not feel well enough to attend a chosen course. The application has been submitted; we await the outcome.

Considering the constant challenges in society today, we have been fortunate to have lived in the 50's, 60's and 70's. We learned to live more sustainably from necessity. We have one of our Programme Committee putting together a course with practical advice for coping with climate change. We look forward to these presentations. A current course on 'Demographics' illuminates the decreasing populations in many countries, including New Zealand and suggests reasons why our current workforce is depleted.

On a personal note, on a recent trip to Northern Queensland, Australia, I saw a cauliflower in the supermarket for \$A9.90. We are not alone.

Kia ora, noho ora, stay safe and well.

**Linda Kinniburgh**  
**Chairperson,**  
**Board U3A Dunedin**  
**021 735 614**

## Programme Committee Report

# Mid-Winter

Now mid-winter the Programme Committee is in the thick of our annual cycle of courses.

Simultaneously we are looking back at Series 1 Autumn one. What went well and what didn't. There were a few snags, including the loss of speakers at short notice which is always challenging to manage. But by and large it was a good and well appreciated series judging by the feedback received. At the same time, we have Series 2 Winter well under way at its halfway point, so far without any reported difficulties. And our eyes are now firmly fixed on Series 3 Spring for which enrolments will begin shortly. These will very shortly if not already be advertised on our website.

As ever we try for variety. Some may be quite demanding, such as the one on quantum physics; others will find Musicians on Music more to their taste. For topicality, it would be hard to beat the four-session special on MMP, thirty years in the making, neatly fitted in before October's general election.

As ever, some courses have been well sorted months in advance and others struggle to get over the line in time, giving us all an anxious time. There is great variability in the ease with which courses can be put together. Easiest are those with a single speaker on one topic. In the middle are those with speakers from a single source, such as a university department. Most problematic are

courses which require a range of speakers from different organisations, sometimes in other centres. A developer's task can be far from easy. However, our eyes are now fixed even further ahead, looking towards Autumn 2024. For that series we already have two historical courses mapped out, on transport and education. We will also be offering at least one science course and probably another music one. Two more contemporary areas under consideration are environment and the law, and housing. But that could change.

Amazingly, even for us, we already have one fully developed course, Art in Dunedin, for Winter next year. That is about as good as it gets. Travel writing, too, is almost ready. Other ideas floating around for development at some stage are: Anton Chekhov, Pharmacy / Pharmacology, AI text generation, food and society, current trends in education, and more.

Through all it is extremely gratifying to be able to report that attendance is holding up very well if the figures for Series 1 and 2 are a guide, with 446 and 458 enrolled respectively. Over winter can see a drop off, but perhaps the changed start time to 10.30 am for morning courses is having a beneficial effect.

Meanwhile, we are also actively investigating recording at least some of our courses for online streaming and later remote access as part of an archive, perhaps trialling one course in our upcoming Spring

**Stuart Strachan**



series. This will be of special interest to those with limited mobility. Watch this space!

**Stuart Strachan  
Linda Kinniburgh  
Co-Chairs,  
Programme Committee**

### U3A Email Directory

Sending email correspondence to U3A Dunedin? Using addresses below will take your messages to the person who can assist.

**General information:**

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**Membership:**

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**Forum:** [newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz](mailto:newsletter@u3adunedin.org.nz)

### U3A Phone Directory

To discuss any problem with U3A Dunedin please phone the appropriate person:

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467-2594

**Membership :** Lynda Jackson  
473-6947

**Interest Groups:** Andre Smith  
022-024-0088

**Programme Committee**

Stuart Strachan 482-2339

**Courses:** Phyll Esplin  
467-2594

## Science &amp; Climate

# Addressing Climate Change

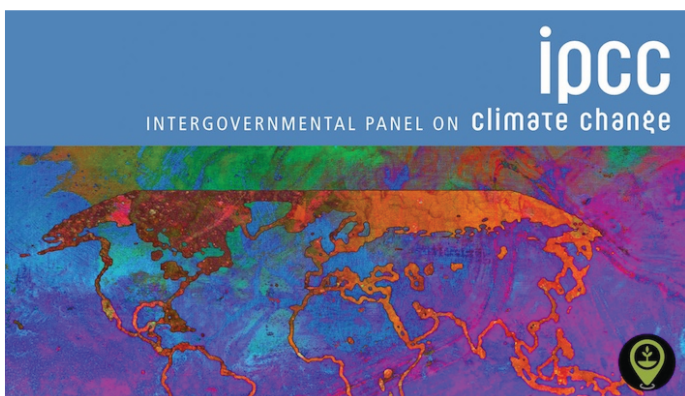
The traumatic events of the past year worldwide -- fire, flood and cyclone -- have alerted nearly all of us. 'Once in a 100-year' events happening monthly in Australia, in Germany, in Brazil and many other places -- and here in New Zealand -- have many of us wondering "what can we do"?

The excerpt from the article that follows gives an account of what is happening, and is focused on the most recent report by the IPCC, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The report stresses that action must be taken to avert global temperature rises much above 1.5°C; and must be local, urban and at council level, and must attend to human rights and equity.

But what can we do? Our Chair, Linda, has suggested that in Series Three this year there could be a course on measures to address climate change, in which group participation would be fundamental: "a free course offered for any great responses of 'solution focussed' ideas?" Watch this space!

## IPCC report: the world must cut emissions

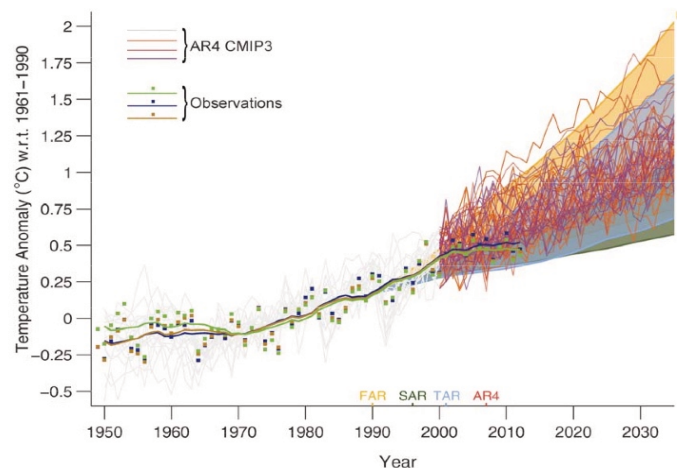
This decade is the critical moment for making deep, rapid cuts to emissions, and acting to protect people from dangerous climate impacts we can no longer avoid, according to the latest report by the IPCC.



It reiterates that the world is now about 1.1°C warmer than during pre-industrial times. This already results in more frequent and more intense extreme weather, causing complex disruption and suffering for communities worldwide. Many are woefully unprepared.

The report stresses our current pace and scale of action are insufficient to reduce rising global temperatures and secure a liveable future for all. But it also highlights that we already have many feasible and effective options to cut emissions and better protect communities if we act now.

Many countries have already achieved and maintained significant emissions reductions for more than ten years. Overall, however, global emissions are up by 12% on 2010 and 54% higher than in 1990. The largest rise comes from carbon dioxide (from the burning of fossil fuels and industrial processes), followed by methane.



The world is expected to cross the 1.5°C temperature threshold during the 2030s (at the current level of action). Already, the effects of climate change are nonlinear and every increment of warming will bring rapidly escalating hazards, exacerbating more intense heatwaves and floods, ocean warming and coastal inundation. These complex events are particularly severe for children, the elderly, Indigenous and local communities, and disabled people.

But in agreeing to this report, governments have now recognised that human rights and questions of equity, loss and damage are central to effective climate action. The report points to solutions for climate-resilient development, a process which integrates actions to reduce or avoid emissions with those to protect people to advance sustainability. Examples include health improvements that come from broadening access to clean energy and contribute to better air quality.

But the choices we make need to be locally relevant and socially acceptable. And they have to be made urgently, because our options for resilient action are progressively reduced with every increment of warming above 1.5°C.

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Feature Article - John Hale

# Birds over Breakfast

There must be some shy and retiring birds in the enormous countryside of Australia, but it is the noisy blatant ones you notice.

First, at the coast it was a kookaburra. This fat stubby kingfisher-bird hung around the frontroom window, regularly, clearly with intent. What could it possibly be? I went out on the balcony to see how close I could go, to meet and greet before deciding on further action. At three feet away we looked at one another. So I fetched some spare raspberries that were lying handy on the draining board. He took one and squished it and pecked it, so I gave another, and so on. Photos were taken, clickety-click.



I left it at that. If only we could have spoken together. I just didn't know what he liked, or of course what was his best / usual / right diet was, and all the rest of it, the eco-future conundrum.

With regrets, I left him to it.

And I say "he" meaning he/she. For one thing, I didn't get a good enough look at my friend's undercarriage to choose my pronoun. What's more, I no longer know the approved way to say "he or she" or "she or he," — or how to pronounce "s/he" — and I shudder to say "they" when I mean one sole individual being. More of our modern Angst.

Then, up here on the Tablelands, just now, twenty minutes ago, after breakfast and wondering what to do first today, it was magpies.

I call them "magpies," because they were dazzling black-and-white, with the white showing in configurations quite new to me—that is, not like the NZ magpies (even though those had once been Aussies).

And I say "magpies" because another two birds were huge ravens but with white intrusions, "pied" in the word's true sense of piebald — mottled or splashed by nature with black-and-white. It's the "pied" beauty, which Hopkins saw and praised. Sometimes it hits you, that a monochrome beauty is the best of all.



A single magpie came first. He had perched on the wing-mirror of our car, parked across the back lawn. He flew from there straight at the kitchen window. I flinched, expecting the glass to break or the bird to be stunned. But no, he flew back and did the same thing again. It was a manoeuvre not a mistake. He flew till just before the moment of impact; then he flapped and braked in mid-air. This was done in order to put out both feet and scratch the glass, quite delicately but decisively. The flick or rasp, by sound, was signalling "breakfast time." He did it again, three more times.

By then I was wide awake myself, and got moving to find some crusts. Too late! (said to be the saddest two words in the English language). Too late, because our hero's antics had alerted a colossal raven, first one then a second. They took over the bread, the lawn—and the whole show. They were like no raven I had seen before. Not total black, but black with white round their back end, legs and feet, maybe more.



I haven't yet consulted the marvellous handbook of Australian birds which sits ready in the kitchen here. I have been told anyway that the first bird was a magpie lark, and the pair who took over were not ravens but currawongs (which throng up here and are deemed a locality pest).



As for me, I was spellbound.

Then thoughts ousted the wonderment. Is feeding bread to birds, or these birds, actually bad for them? Or not to their liking, since they seemed to enjoy flinging the crusts around instead of gobble-and-go? As for the impulse of responding to nature's beauties by feeding them, what was my moral duty? I didn't know.

So I sought informed guidance, over breakfast next day, in the *Field Guide to the Birds of Australia*, by Pizzey and Knight. Magpie larks (p. 444) are *Grallina cyanoleuca*. *Cyanoleuca* is Greek for "black-white." So now we know. Ornithologists used to learn Greek at school. My kookaburra (p. 294, "Laughing jackass" or *Dacelo novaeguineae*) should have been out hunting "in pairs or territorial groups." But he was a suburban lone ranger even before I led him astray. And the currawongs (p. 426, *Strepera graculina*) are "tame around settlement," which explains a lot.

Like the kookaburra moment, however, I'm glad of such chances to respond and share, maybe even communicate, across the species-gap. The author of *Pied Beauty* had it right. Follow my musing back to p. 424, Australian Magpie = *Cracticus tibicen*: a page of clustering wonderful monochrome illustrations will stun you. The name itself is onomatopoeic. *tibicen* means a flautist. Gerard Manley Hopkins got it right, seeing divine glory in "All things counter, original, spare, strange;/ Whatever is fickle, freckled (who knows how?)."

## Pacific News

# Bikini Trust Fund

The golden sand of Bikini Atoll is laced with plutonium. The freshwater is poisoned with strontium. The coconut crabs contain hazardous levels of cesium.

In the 1940s and '50s, the U.S. government used this coral reef, in the Pacific nation of the Marshall Islands, for testing nuclear weapons. Radioactive residue has left Bikini uninhabitable to this day, forcing those whose families once lived on the atoll into exile on a handful of other Marshallese islands and in the United States.

Recognising the damage its testing caused, the U.S. government established two trust funds in the 1980s to help pay for Bikinians' health care, build housing and cover living costs.



In 2017, after a campaign by Bikini leaders for greater autonomy, the US administration announced that the government would lift withdrawal limits and stop auditing the main fund, then worth \$59 million. Six years later, only about \$100,000 remains, and the Bikini community is in crisis.

In 1946, the United States relocated the 167 inhabitants of Bikini to clear the way for nuclear tests that it said would "end all world wars." It then left them virtually alone on a small, desolate island, where many nearly starved. In 1948, the islanders were moved again.

Over 12 years, the United States tested 23 nuclear bombs in Bikini. In 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson announced that the Bikinians would return home. But after scientists found that radiation levels remained dangerously high, the United States in 1978 evacuated the almost 150 people who had chosen to go back. The Marshall Islands gained independence from the United States the next year.

Earlier this year, the Biden administration promised to provide the Marshall Islands \$700 million in one-time aid and to continue underwriting much of the government's budget. Under a treaty, the United States controls the country's defense policy, which the American government considers crucial to countering China in the region. The aid has not yet been approved, meaning Bikinians' future remains uncertain.

## Tech Edge

# Scammers target older people

## Here are the 3 warning signs to watch for

Online financial scams are running rampant, leaving many people out hundreds if not thousands of dollars.

According to the [US] Federal Trade Commission, consumers lost \$9 billion to online scams last year. Where older people are concerned, the FBI reported that almost 89,000 people over the age of 60 years old lost \$3 billion to online scams in 2022.



Older adults can be some of the most vulnerable people online because as a group they are the least versed in the digital sphere.

There are a variety of online scams to look out for. But according to the FBI, the most common scams

- pretend to offer tech support
- assert that a package was not delivered
- fake personal data breaches
- fake romance
- involve investment fraud

Here are three warning signs of a scam, for you or your loved ones to watch out for.

### 1. Scammers want you to act now

Scammers are notorious for creating a sense of urgency. It's a common tactic for scammers to move the situation along faster than you can think about it. Scammers may threaten immediate consequences if you don't offer up your personal information.

Tell your family members to be wary of fear mongering, and if they are contacted by someone they don't know who's urging them to act immediately, it's probably a scam. Scammers may contact someone via phone call, text message, or email, so it's important to verify the phone number or email address that's contacting them.

### 2. Scammers present a problem or reward

Scammers often contact older family members with either a huge problem or a huge reward. Huge problems could be that your loved one will be arrested, owe lots of money, or that someone in your family is in danger.

To get you to solve this arbitrary problem, scammers will demand your account details. On the other hand, a scammer may sometimes present an unsuspecting victim with a huge reward. They might give you a backstory saying they have a wonderful business proposition.

### 3. Scammers pull on your heartstrings

Romance scams can spread through social media or dating sites. These types of scammers will talk to someone for days and build a relationship with them and will usually offer some sort of sob story. These scammers will also act with urgency to get as much money as they can from someone. They will ask for money on gift cards, money transfer apps, or through wire transfers.

### What if your loved one gets scammed?

If you suspect your loved one has been scammed, encourage them to stop communicating with the scammer immediately. Close all bank accounts and cards that the scammer could have access to. Then, contact your local police department!

## U3ADUNEDIN CHARITABLE TRUST

Website: [u3adunedin.org.nz](http://u3adunedin.org.nz)

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**Chair:** Linda Kinniburgh,  
Phone: 021 735 614

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## Feature Article

# Snapshot of a Vanished World

At the icy northern tip of Greenland, far into the Arctic Circle, a deep bed of sediment beneath the mouth of a fjord has lain frozen and undisturbed for 2 million years.

Known as the Kap København Formation, this relic of a vanished world dates to a period when Earth was much warmer than it is today. The sediment built up in a shallow bay over a period of 20,000 years, before being buried beneath ice and permafrost.

Our team... has extracted and analysed the oldest DNA ever recovered from samples of this Greenlandic sediment. It reveals the plants, animals and microorganisms that thrived in an ecosystem unlike anything in the modern world. This DNA is more than a million



years older than the previous record. We can now recover and directly study molecules that were made inside plants and animals 2 million years ago!

Two million years ago, northern Greenland was a very different place. Average winter temperatures were more than 10°C warmer, and there was less carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere. We pieced together minuscule fragments of DNA and matched them to sequences of known species. We found genetic traces of ancestors of modern reindeer, hares and lemmings, as well as mastodon – extinct elephant-like creatures which were not previously known to have lived in Greenland.

We also found DNA traces of plants including birch and poplar trees, as well as algae and other microorganisms – and a large proportion of DNA fragments we could not match to any known species.

But it is not just the specific species that are of interest but also how they co-existed in the same prehistoric ecosystem that was much warmer than

today. This can tell us a lot about the possible impact on the biodiversity during warming periods and how it may drive their evolutionary response.

We know that the DNA inside cells of all living organisms mutates slowly, as environmental changes drive adaptation and evolution over many generations. However, we very rarely have a “time machine” to go back and look directly at the old DNA molecules. The possibility of studying DNA that is millions of years old means we will be able to directly observe the deep-time process of molecular evolution, instead of being restricted to the current genetic “snapshot” in present-day species.

The DNA of the ancestors of modern species may show how they adapted to conditions that are very different from the ones they face today. We

don't gain those insights in this study, but if we can study those prehistoric genetic adaptations in detail in the future, it may allow us to predict if species are able to adapt to changes such as the ongoing global warming.

DNA doesn't last forever. It decays steadily over time – though the

rate of decay depends on circumstances like temperature. However, the new research shows something quite surprising. It seems that DNA can actually survive much longer as free molecules in sediment than in the bones of the animal it originally belonged to. DNA molecules can bind to the surface of particles of clay which somehow protect them from the ravages of time.

We do not know exactly how long DNA can survive in sediment, but if the preservation conditions are ideal, there is no reason to believe that we have found the limit here at two million years. Once we know more about what kinds of sediment preserve DNA best, we will be able to hunt for it all over the world – though we are unlikely ever to realise the dream of examining 65 million year-old sequences of dinosaur DNA. I would be very happy to be proven wrong though!

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Poetry piece

# Polynesian Haiku

The great print maker Hokusai has a famous picture of a red dragonfly, an 'aka tonbo':



This image was probably in the mind of a modern Haiku poet, Laurent Mabeoone (Seigan), who composes a rather telling haiku:

**Porineshia ni aka-tonbo ari genbakuki**

Literally:

**In Polynesia - red dragonflies - Abomb remembered**

As with much Japanese verse, elements are missing in translation: aka-tonbo echoes one of the Japanese expressions, a loan from English, for 'atomic bomb' (atomikkubomu)

The poet will be thinking not only of Hiroshima, but also of the effects of the nuclear testing in the Pacific – of the half forgotten, terrible things this involved, some of which are noted in the article above here.

[From "Haruka Naru Marukiizu Shoto" (*The faraway Marquesas Islands*)]

Member's notice

## U3A User Names

Everyone, a reminder from Lynda Jackson, our Membership Secretary: **where can we find our User Name & Membership number?**

The most immediate place these are stored is on the inside of your name tag in the pocket of your lanyard (and it is U3A Dunedin policy that your name badge is to be worn at all U3A Dunedin events).

If you have misplaced your name tag, and neglected to save your User Name in a secure place like 1Password, you'll need to post a request at our website at <https://u3adunedin.org.nz/?Enquiry>:

Your name:

Your membership number:  (if possible)

Your email address:  (if you want a reply by email)

Your enquiry: (please include other contact details if you don't want a reply by email)

Give the value of 9+13:  (anti-spam question)

Please, do take care of your name tag!

Member's notice

## Travel tip

*TRAVEL TIP.*

*Next time you are travelling through the Catlins, take time to visit The Catlins Country Store in Owaka. If the friendly owner is playing raucous, head-banging music, and if he asks you what you think of the music, then tell him seriously what you think, and then ask him if he has any Mozart !! He will quickly find some beautiful Mozart for you to enjoy while you are browsing around the store.*

*If you visit the Store again, at a later date, remind him that you enjoy Mozart, and he will remind his young assistants that they will need to play Mozart's music for you !!*

*T Janet York*

*(after the Mozart Course)*

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