



Dear Members

This is our third email to you regarding the effect of government 'pandemic' restrictions on our operations. It seems that at least a substantial part of the current restrictions will remain in place for some time. In this context, we are seeking to encourage activities within these restrictions.

You are aware from our last email (on 15 April 2020) and from the content of the [MAY NEWSLETTER](#) that the committee is actively encouraging online or other distanced arrangements. While there is a range of technology for this purpose, it seems that there is a strong focus on 'Zoom' as a popular option. Background on the Zoom approach was provided in the May newsletter. We have also agreed that for leaders who need support in using this option, this will be available through Keith Neaves as course coordinator, supported by Phil Hopley as venues coordinator and Joanne Thompson and Anet McDonald from the ICTWG. We have also decided – with the encouragement of the U3A network – to obtain a single Zoom licence that can be used to run meetings of longer than 40 minutes. If you are a leader and wish to use this licence, you should contact Keith Neaves, Course Coordinator, to sort out the details of how this happens.

There is also a document available which describes ways of proceeding with activities online but without video meetings. This document is available [here](#).

In undertaking these alternative activities, the committee asks leaders to be as sensitive as circumstances permit to the need to offer an opportunity to as many members previously engaged in the activity as is reasonably possible. Both leaders and members need to bear in mind that:

- It may not be possible to adapt to the level of technology available to each member;
- Groups may need to reduce in size in order to proceed in this way;
- Where a member cannot be included in the number proceeding, there may not be an option to allocate a different course or activity – for example, it is not possible for leaders to duplicate their activities to accommodate more members.

It is not practical for the committee to lay down rules for how each leader adapts to these exceptional circumstances. Indeed any attempt at this would fail, due to the range of issues likely to arise and the need for a prompt response to the circumstances, rather than setting up a fully articulated alternative system. The leaders need to exercise discretion and adapt as they feel they can. Others need to be accepting of the outcomes and understanding of the attempts being made to continue activities. In short, we all need to be especially kind to each other to make things work – at some level.

Perhaps surprisingly, we have also been asked whether existing policies apply to these interim activities. The answer, of course, is that they do. As always, to the extent that our usual protocols and policies can sensibly apply, they will continue to. So for example, leaders need to continue to take care to maintain the privacy of members, in accordance with their wishes.

We wish you well in exploring our new, but hopefully temporarily transformed community.

Terry Murphy  
Secretary, U3A Castlemaine Inc