



## **SYDNEY U3A**

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18-Aug-02

Mr. Adam Cunningham  
The Inquiry Secretary  
Standing Committee on Ageing  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Adam

Thank you for your invitation to make a submission to the inquiry.

Your invitation to contribute was discussed at our management Committee last Friday, and we feel we do not have the time to make a formal submission, as active members of Sydney University of the Third Age (U3A) are all volunteers already spending a large proportion of their time running our association.

Sydney U3A has some 5,000 members in the age range 55 to 95 years. We are currently running about 200 daytime courses across Sydney, in subjects ranging from the sciences to the humanities. All this is done on a self-help, voluntary basis so that the members pay only \$35 per year, and a dollar or two for course materials, for as many courses as they choose to attend. Our goals are to provide intellectual stimulation for our members, through courses given by our members, and the social contacts which come with this. The only assistance we get, or seek, from any level of government, is the use of local government community facilities at the "non-profit" rate, and the use of state government "seniors" rates on public transport. The benefit to our members is a marked improvement in quality of life due to the intellectual stimulation they receive and the friendships they make.

Many of our members are self-funded retirees, and all are fiercely independent and determined to look after themselves and enjoy life as long as they can. They resent being seen as a "problem".

Incidentally, some of our most informative and interesting courses are given by members in their late seventies and early eighties – one member is still organising courses at the age of ninety!

There are some 150 independent U3As in Australia, with an estimated 45,000 members, doing much the same as Sydney U3A, but generally on a smaller scale. Most of these operate as incorporated associations under state acts. Some do seek small government grants for special functions. There is a company called "U3A Online Resources Ltd", operating through the Internet, but this does not claim to be a U3A in the generally accepted sense, and is not part of the U3A movement.

I attach a copy of our information brochure. You may treat this letter and the attachment as an informal submission if you so wish.

Yours sincerely

John Webb  
President, Sydney U3A

**Sydney U3A Incorporated**