

# Open Door



Newsletter 220  
6th October, 2022

to healthy minds and healthy bodies



### Contact Details

University of the Third Age  
Armidale Incorporated

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9:30am to midday  
and at other times by  
appointment**  
Website: **www.u3aa.org.au**

### NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

**1st December 2022**

Please email contributions to  
Dorothy Barnes  
dkbarnes134@gmail.com

### The Executive

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## From the Desk of the President — Ray Weston

Your Committee is exploring funding options for urgent and necessary repairs to ASCA House, as well as for some improvements that we would like to have.

Thanks to everyone for their co-operation with the recent water leak problem. Unfortunately this particular problem will not be going away, due to the age of the pipes.

The Coordinators and Volunteers are working on 2023 courses, and the details and Course Booklets will be sent out in December.

Hopefully many of our members will be able to return in 2023 now that Covid has eased off and we are able to enjoy one another's company.

The office will close on Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> December and reopen on Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023 subject to change and the December newsletter will confirm this date.

New Courses are coming, details are on line, or from the office.

RAY



## SENIORS INFORMATION DAY

As a service to the Armidale and surrounding community, the Armidale Branch of National Seniors Australia, will conduct a *Seniors' Information Day* on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022. The event will be held at the Armidale City Bowling Club auditorium from 10am to 7pm. It is planned to have up to 30 booths.

U3AA has been offered a booth and this presents a fantastic opportunity to promote our organisation and its services. A booth together with a table and two chairs will be provided. We are currently preparing some new promotional material for the day.

We would like to have a roster of volunteers to be present at the booth for the day. If you would like to be part of this event and could spare an hour or two (on your own or with a friend), please contact the U3AA office either by telephone on 6772 2752 or email [u3aa@iinet.net.au](mailto:u3aa@iinet.net.au) and let us know your preferred time.

Thank you in advance for your help!

## CALLING FOR NEW COURSES AND ACTIVITIES FOR 2023

Do you have any special areas of interest or skill for which you would be prepared to be a course leader/facilitator? This could be for a semester or any period of time that suits you. You could be the leader or co-facilitator with a friend. You could be an experienced member of an existing group willing to lead a new group.

We will help with organising a venue and provide whatever support you need to get up and running. We all recognise that people have other commitments and may need time off or a holiday break. We do our best to make it easy for you!

Here are some ideas for courses/activities previously run by U3AA or currently run by other NSW U3As:

- Arts & Crafts : Drawing, Painting, Knitting, Bread Making
- Exercise : Birdwatching, Bocce, Scottish Country Dancing, Pickleball, Barefoot Bowls, Heritage Walks, Meditation, Petanque, Line Dancing
- Humanities : History Topics, Philosophy Discussion Group
- Languages : French, Indonesian
- Literature, Film & Music : Singing for Pleasure, Poetry, Creative Writing, Ukulele
- Mind Games : Bridge, Chess, Cryptic Crosswords, Trivia, Cards for Fun
- Science: Insects, Health Topics, Great Ideas & Scientists, Astronomy,
- Technology : BOM Site,
- World Around Us : Armchair Travel,

If you are interested, contact the office to chat with your Course Coordinators, Bron (0438 658 205) or Penny (0408 272 011), or, by email to [u3aa@iinet.net.au](mailto:u3aa@iinet.net.au) We would be thrilled to hear from you!

Transport for NSW

HELP US TO PLAN FOR A BETTER BUS NETWORK FOR ARMIDALE



## Have your say

The NSW Government is committed to planning for better bus services for regional communities by improving bus networks, timetables and the customer experience.

Transport for NSW's 16 Regional Cities Services Improvement program aims to identify gaps and opportunities in bus services, so we can deliver improvements to better meet community needs.

We're seeking feedback from existing public transport users and the wider community across the Armidale area. How is the local bus network being used? Are there unmet needs? We'd also like to know what we can do to get more people in Armidale and surrounds to travel by bus.

We appreciate Armidale is a central hub for the Northern Tablelands region of NSW and encourage feedback from community members from surrounding towns and villages about how the bus network in Armidale can be improved for visitors. This will inform future planning to create a better bus network for the city.

We'll keep the community informed of any decisions and expect to finalise planning in early 2023.

Join our online info session

Date: 12 October 2022

Time: 12.15pm to 1pm

Register using link below

[Eventbrite.com/e/374694490307](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/374694490307)

## Submit your feedback by Friday 28 October 2022

- online at [yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/betterbusnetworkarmidale](https://yoursay.transport.nsw.gov.au/betterbusnetworkarmidale)
- by calling **1800 717 528**
- by emailing [regionalcitiesprogram@transport.nsw.gov.au](mailto:regionalcitiesprogram@transport.nsw.gov.au)
- by post to **16 Regional Cities - Armidale**  
**PO Box K659, Haymarket NSW 1240**

# Smudge it or lose it



You may never have heard of smudging. I hadn't until a couple of weeks ago, when the real estate agent up here on the Sunshine Coast hinterland made it the final act of a long and gritty process of preparing and styling a very large house and property for sale.

Notwithstanding the vast array of plastic plants, even wattle, the unremarkable botanical prints on some of the walls and the hundreds of cushions that had been tastefully arranged on beds, chairs, sofas etc the whole place was purged of negative energy, or evil spirits if you want to be more primitive.

Some of the new cushions hark back to ancient Africa and some to ancient Egypt, where such ceremonies once might have occurred. Some cushions have no such credentials like the fake furry ones that look like little animals perching on chairs and one bed.

Smudging is a sort of smoking ceremony using sage leaves and I, for one could not pick up which evil spirits had left the building. In all my ignorance I did not even know they were there.

The new rituals of selling real estate, contained as they are within the restraints of making a tidy profit, are full of hokus pokus and you are never sure whether the people involved really believe in it or are doing it because it is now the way things are done.

A bit of both, I would suggest, and the result of six weeks intensive renewal has made my brother's place look very spick and desirable rather than the comfortable, middle aged and much loved place it was.

When you love being somewhere you tend not to notice its shortcomings. When you decide to put it up for sale all you notice is shortcomings and they keep coming. The mildew on the walls from all the wet weather, the lights that are not working, the stained floorboards on the deck etc etc.

And the furniture! Most of it had to go including most of the paintings because they didn't match the stylist's new décor. Down to the shed with the ancient furniture and in with the new in large van loads.

Some of the more stunning furniture was allowed to stay which is a comfort and even a few of the familiar paintings. My brother has a lot of really beautiful things and they are now rearranged to mix with the new.

A step too far were the bamboo tea candle lanterns which I hid away and so far no-one

has noticed.

The stylist is a woman of purpose with total control. I liked her but we did not share the same aesthetics in many cases. My opinions were rarely sought and only made traction on a couple of occasions.

She raided the bookcases for volumes that looked impressive when tastefully arranged on desks and tables etc. My favourite was artfully placing a biography of Genghis Kahn on the telephone table near the front door because its cover matches the botanical print above. It might also have been a hint for me to know what fate I could suffer if I ventured too many unwanted opinions. I later discovered neither she, nor the agent had a clue who Ghengis was.

We had cleaners who blitzed the place over three days. A mother and two daughters who scrubbed walls and ceilings and floors and doors accompanied by the loudest music from a boom box I've ever

heard. Cheerful, hardworking and industrious they told me their work was all for the vision to make the place look good for the camera and they knew their stuff. It is now remarkably bright and clean.

My brother and a couple of friends discovered the delights of the gurney, a phallically symbolic activity I did not fail to suggest. Just about every wall and outside surface was pumped clean with gushing water and they did it for hours. It is surprising just how much dirt, mould and mildew disappears within minutes.

Now we are living with instructions to keep everything the way the stylist left it especially when a prospective buyer comes to have a look.

I have learned how to tastefully toss a throw onto the edge of my bed and line up eight cushions of varying size and shape. My day to day bedding goes into a cupboard. I am beginning to think these prospective buyers live in dream world.

It has been an unusual and at times exhausting experience. My complaints about plastic pot plants everywhere and the bland botanical prints are dismissed as a bit precious, especially by my nearest and dearest. Get over yourself they say in so many words or not so many words. The place looks so much better. It's stunning, they say and so it is.

Rosemary Mort

*The new rituals of selling real estate are full of hokus pokus*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## **Losing Face George Haddad**

This story is about Joey Harb, a 19-year-old part Lebanese boy, living in Western Sydney. He is adrift and apathetic, working part time in the produce section of a Woolworths store. He hangs out with his friend Kyri and together they flirt with drugs and meet with unsavoury companions.

Joey's grandmother, Tayta Elaine, is a gambling addict, and indulges him. When a major disaster overtakes Joey, he is conscious that it is Elaine who will be concerned about losing face in the local community. Elaine is the family's moral centre but she is acutely aware of her own failings.

The novel is a multi-layered story set out in roughly alternating chapters between Joey and Elaine with information about Joey's mother and his absent father. It is well written and explores generational trauma, male entitlement and homosexuality, as well as rape and issues of consent.

Court room scenes at the end of the novel are well done and Joey appreciates the problems that his behaviour has caused. He has not yet acknowledged all aspects of the situation which are made clearer in the last section. Despite some soul searching and some ideas about change, he is no wiser at the end of the story. Nevertheless, there is some hope.

I relished the opportunity to read this novel with a different subject and writing style. Set in contemporary Australia it tells the tale of one family's immigrant experience, at the same time evoking life experiences in another country.

Some members of the reading group did not enjoy this book, which led to a lively discussion.

*Marnie French*

## **One Hundred Days Alice Pung**

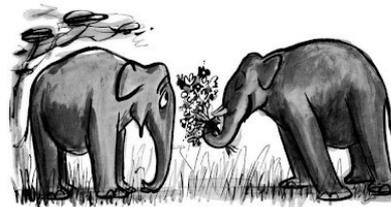
At the age of 16 years, schoolgirl Karuna Kelly is pregnant. Her Philippines-born Chinese mother is over protective and locks her in a 14<sup>th</sup> floor housing commission flat for 100 days to prevent her getting into any more trouble. After Karuna's father leaves the family, he only appears at key points in the story. Following divorce, the relationship between Karuna and her mother becomes a powerful tug-of-war. Karuna is desperate for independence and rejects her mother's different cultural practices and home brewed remedies. In return her mother works two jobs to keep the family afloat, but is fiercely overbearing and strict.

Other themes run throughout the novel. Karuna teams up with her friend "Tweezer" at school as both girls have strict mothers determined to keep their daughters very restrained despite the culture for each being very different. When community workers finally catch up with Karuna, she begins to feel empowered, and her mother eventually makes some concessions. At the end of the novel there is some resolution of their differences, with hope for future happiness.

The book is beautifully written as a long love letter from Karuna to her child, and this device works superbly well. The balance between love and control is explored, as well as cultural and generational gaps. The characters of the mother and daughter are wonderfully drawn with perception and humour. Themes of poverty, co-dependency and emotional blackmail are threaded throughout the story.

This book was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Literary award and it is an excellent read. Members of the reading group particularly enjoyed the use of imagery by the author.

*Marnie French*



*"You remembered!"*

New Yorker Mag

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[www.u3aa.org.au](http://www.u3aa.org.au)**