

MALA ASSOCIATION NEWS

JULY 2020

from Suzanne Higgs

THIS YEAR IS OUR 40TH ANNIVERSARY ... AND CELEBRATIONS ARE YET TO COME.

However, I thought you may be interested in how we came to where we are now, so follows a brief history of the evolution, from Perth MALA onwards. As you are aware, new branches were subsequently formed until we became the three currently operating (Perth / Peel / Rockingham.)

This is the beginning of that process.

In **1980** a group who were associated with the WA College of Advanced Education in Mt Lawley, and who came from a community services program of WACAE. They thought it may be a good idea to create an organization (then **School for Seniors**) that would meet their future non-vocational education needs, and thus provided a program including much of the same kind of lectures we do these days. Between 1980 and 1988 they also undertook tours to Bali (Pottery and Landscape) to China (China History) and also to the Middle East as the history class went to the Mediterranean Sea area.

In **1987** there was a tour to China and Mongolia, after which things had changed at WACAE, and a new location was required. Thus, the **School for Seniors** moved to Claremont Campus of WACAE, and in **1988** they changed to the new name of **New Directions**.

In **1989** WACAE officially became Edith Cowan University, and in **1992**, we became **Stepping Out..** yet another change of name. (I have yet to find out why so many changes!)

In that same year, we became a body independent from any tertiary connection.

1993 saw the name change to **Mature Adults Learning Association Incorporated** and we relocated to Meerilinga Young Childrens Foundation in Hay Street, West Perth, and this was our home for 6 years.

In **1995** we undertook a tour of Turkey, and another to Canada. In **1999** after the ceiling fell in at Meerilinga (literally!) we moved for a short one year (1999 to 2000) to the School of Philosophy in Beaufort Street, Perth.

The year **2000**, having made politicians aware of MALA (with thanks mainly to Hazel Butorac) and its belief of adult education in a friendly atmosphere, saw us invited to the Constitutional Centre (Havelock Street, West Perth) where we remained until 2014. The Constitutional Centre significantly raised the amount we required to hire the facilities, and they also had the concept of involving different groups on the Fridays on which we met, so our tenure became too difficult to remain, and we needed another place to meet.

2014 then saw us focus our activities in the new venue of the George Burnett Leisure Centre located in Karawara, and many of our former students followed us there – but it was a little too far for others to come, and there followed a successful publicity effort, mainly south of the river, to garner interest in our program. However, MALA is still very welcoming to anyone from any area, and many still travel quite a distance to attend.

2020 finds Perth MALA remaining at this venue, although 2020 has been an ‘unusual’ year with the corona virus (COVID19) restrictions interrupting our program, and stopped our ability to present topics, when the Centre itself closed for an extended period of time.

BRANCHES:

MALA is committed to the provision, promotion and valuing of mature aged non-formal, lifelong learning opportunities, and with this in mind, the following branches were formed.

2007 MALA Peel Campus commenced under the guidance of former Perth members (the Butoracs)

2014 MALA Rockingham Campus commenced.

For this information, I acknowledge ‘The MALA Story : A Social and Cultural History of the Mature Adults Learning Assoc. Inc. 1980 to 2004’ by Peter Reynolds, who was invited to write our history up to that point. Peter Reynold’s book was published May 2005 and is copyright © MALA Inc.