



# Wesley School for Seniors

## Newsbites

Term 4 – Issue 1  
5 October – 17 December 2021  
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## Wesley School for Seniors update

**By Jeannie Mathews**

After a few months of lockdown and adjusting to a new reality, we are all seeking a reset and a new beginning in the coming months. The season of Advent brings a message of hope, joy and peace.

Over the last few months, I am grateful to all our online volunteer tutors who have kept the school for seniors online Zoom classes running remotely. We saw an increase in the number of online students this term and would like to continue this into the new year. We were also lucky to have an online guest speaker session this term, bringing clarity to legal matters. If you missed this session, you can watch the recorded version on our social media channels.

As we plan to re-open our in-person classes in 2022 alongside our online classes, we will keep you updated with all the details. Term 1 enrolments will open from Monday 17 January 2022. Have a blessed season!

## Message

**By Jim Wackett**

General Manager, Wesley Communications & Partnerships

In 2018, the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said something in a speech that I found both insightful and frightening in equal measure: “The pace of change has never been this fast, and it will never be this slow again”. The last two years have borne this principle out in ways we could never have imagined.

In November 2019, after a record drought, the east coast of Australia was experiencing the beginning of the nation’s worst ever bushfire season that would rage into February the following year. The next month, we went in to our first lockdown in response to COVID-19, and the pace of change – already fast – accelerated ever more. Eighteen months and one further lockdown later, the way we work, the way we live, the way we interact with one another in community has completely altered and while we are beginning to open up again in NSW following a successful vaccine roll-out, the normality we will begin to settle into in 2022 will be a far cry from the normality of 2019.

With all these changes and challenges, Australians are understandably experiencing increasing levels of anxiety along with other mental health issues. Last year research company Roy Morgan found that **8.5 million Australians aged over 14 reported suffering from a mental health condition during the nation-wide lockdown in mid-2020, up from 7.7 million in March 2020 – an increase of around 800,000 people.**

In the past, when Australia has passed through a global, seismic shift due to world

wars, depressions, or massive cultural changes due to migration or shifting social values we are never quite the same as before. We are different, but never in purely negative ways. Wars and depressions made us more united and more resilient as we rebuilt in the 40's and 50's. Post-war migration in the 50's, 60's and 70's blessed our nation with wonderful, multi-cultural diversity. Shifts in social values in the 60's and 70's saw growing equality for women, and recognition of the citizenship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. In all these areas, there is still much to do, but so much has already been achieved.

Coming out of COVID-19 over the coming year we will have certainly lost something of what life was like before. Hopefully though, we will have also gained something new, or perhaps regained something that we thought we had lost long ago.

Over the last two years, Australians have lost, or risked losing, many of the things we have built our identity on over the last 30 years: career, international travel, our homes, our sport... the list goes on – it has exposed the fragility of the individualism and so-called self-reliance of the materialist culture ours has dangerously become.

Perhaps, as we leave 2020 and 2021 behind us and move into what will hopefully become a more 'post-COVID' world in 2022 we will look to recapture what we have really missed: strong, connected, local communities; knowing our neighbours and being there for each other when times get tough; volunteering more; recognizing and valuing the social glue that clubs, associations, schools and churches are in our communities.

I recently re-read Victor Frankl's wonderful book, 'Man's Search for Meaning'. Frankl was an Austrian Psychiatrist, and a Jewish survivor of the Holocaust. The book recounts his time in a number of labour and concentration camps, and the way he developed a range of psychological coping mechanisms that enabled him to maintain and increase his resilience whilst enduring brutal captivity.

I've always been inspired by this reflection from Frankl's book: "Everything can be taken

from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way." We will have lost some good things moving ahead. However, there are some good things to reclaim or rediscover as we 'choose our way' in our communities and in our workplaces in the months ahead.

### Christmas appeal



Before COVID-19, more than 116,000 Australians were already experiencing homelessness and 17 per cent of them were children under 14.

By Christmas, many more Australians will experience homelessness. Behind every statistic, every number, are real people with real stories and they urgently need our support.

As you know, Wesley Mission serves the community in many ways, connecting vulnerable people to the support they need. Donating to our Christmas Appeal can change lives and give hope in times of crisis – which is exactly what happened to Bianca when she found herself homeless when pregnant with twins after escaping a violent relationship.

Thanks to caring donors – people just like you – we could offer comfort and hope to people who are most especially vulnerable this Christmas season.

Just \$50 can give a food pack to a person sleeping rough this Christmas and \$100 can feed one family for a week. Donate today and you can help people experiencing homelessness find safe accommodation and access support services to rebuild their lives.

With greater numbers of people likely to turn to Wesley Mission this Christmas, can we

count on your support? To donate, visit [wesleymission.org.au/christmasappeal2021](http://wesleymission.org.au/christmasappeal2021) or call 1800 021 821.

### Wesley School for Seniors Online Upcoming Term 1 2022 courses:

Guitar (Beginner)  
Spanish (Beginner/ Advanced Beginner)  
Chinese Proverbs and Poetry  
Mandarin (Absolute Beginner)  
Shakespeare  
Money Matters  
History comes alive  
Tablets and Smartphones  
Guitar (Intermediate)  
Piano (Intermediate)  
Latin (Beginner 1)  
Latin Intermediate  
Mysteries of the universe  
Italian (Beginner)  
Strength, Mobility and Balance online

### Wesley School for Seniors training support for students and tutors

*To join the below courses, email [schoolforseniors@wesleymission.org.au](mailto:schoolforseniors@wesleymission.org.au)*

#### **Zoom for Students**

**Mon 10<sup>th</sup> Jan - 10 to 11.15am**

Zoom gives you the opportunity to participate in our wonderful online classes. Learn the basics of zoom plus latest tips and tricks. Suitable for beginner to intermediate Zoomers. All welcome.

#### **Zoom for Tutors**

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> Jan - 4 to 5.15pm**

Increase your zoom knowledge. Suitable for those interested in becoming a tutor, new tutors plus our current tutors. Latest tips and tricks. Q and A. All welcome.

### Wesley School for Seniors Online student testimonials

"The online course is great, convenient, saves time and as good as face-to-face class[es]," says student, aged 69.

"Always interesting and well presented," says student, aged 72.

"It's great to teach/learn from home. There is better control over student participation. It's easy to distribute course materials via the internet (no photocopying). It's easy to record

each week's class via Zoom and the online process itself."

### Tutor column

#### **By Leonor Marrone**

Tutor, School for Seniors

Hello everyone: it has been a very long and difficult year, but we must have faith that from now on we will rise above all the challenges 2021 gave us all.

The isolation of the lockdown was very hard for some more than others, but we all very fast learned to appreciate what freedom means, and most importantly what loved ones and friendship means for everybody.

I can't wait to start classes face to face to continue our beautiful relationship of tutor and student.

I miss the School, I miss you all and I hope that you miss me too!!!

#### **By Raj Asawa**

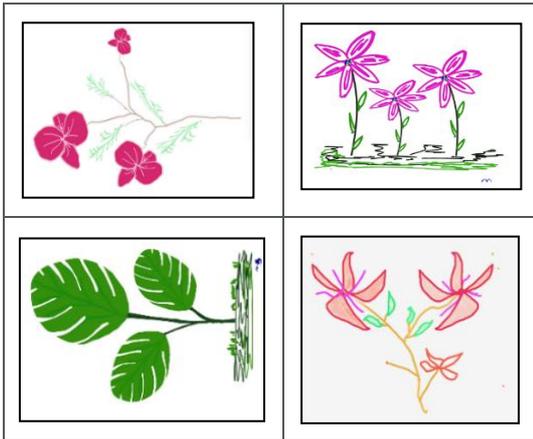
Tutor, Drawing and Painting on iPad and PC

In the painting and drawing on iPad and PC class, we explore the idea that while passive consuming like watching television is often depressing, creating is almost always joyous.

The digital art is different. Unlike physical art, the digital art is very forgiving. Make an error or want to change your mind, few clicks and all is forgiven. The extra carbon footprint is very low – you are not consuming real canvas, paints, water colours, erasures, and brushes. Collaborate with others with ease, move from device to device and not lose a brush stroke. You can travel and paint and not worry about weight limits, fantastic.

You get almost everything you would want – canvas of any size, all the brushes, rakes and mixers, pens, pencils, graphite and crayons, all the colours, erasures and blenders. There is lot more – layers to make composition easy, masks to get the details right, copy, transform and paste to create a lot from little. Sharing is few clicks away.

My students are a teacher's delight. After 3 classes, the below images would make you green!



**By Kathy Martin**

Tutor, Mysteries of the Universe

### Ode to Zoom

Zoom, Zoom, wonderful Zoom!  
 We can talk to our friends while we're safe in our room.  
 Your bright faces greet us, we happily chat.  
 Of shopping and movies, of this and of that.  
 And just like the newsreaders on our TV  
 Our top-halves look great, (and the rest you can't see!)  
 While on cold winter days it's a bet you can't lose.  
 That some feet are snuggled in slippers, not shoes.  
 Now good as it is, Zoom has glitches, I fear.  
 When strange quacks and bangs often come to our ear.  
 Some have problems joining, and then when they do.  
 They cannot be heard – has it happened to you?  
 But we soldier on bravely – let nobody waver  
 -In the dark days of lockdown Zoom was a lifesaver.  
 So, while we look forward to next year, it's true,  
 Let's hear it for Zoom and our great IT crew.

### Mysteries in the Days of Zoom

We are now in our second year of doing a Zoom version of **Mysteries of the Universe**. The first session in August 2020 presented a few challenges. Although we had rehearsed the session in our personal meeting room, when the time came for our Zoom debut not everything went according to plan! Nevertheless, we muddled through and thought that it couldn't get any worse, it had to get better! And it did. Now 53 sessions later, using Zoom is largely automatic.

While it would have been possible to directly transfer what we had been doing face-to-face to the Zoom environment, we felt that this would not have made the best use of this new technology. Our Zoom presentations are markedly different from our face-to-face sessions. Benefits include being able to interact with little physical effort – just turn on a computer, login and we're there. Presentations can be made more flexible and can include media that would be difficult to present face-to-face.

During Zoom we have explored numerous aspects of the Universe, including the Planets, Exoplanets, Black Holes and Dark Matter/Energy. Back on Earth we have discussed the Vanishing Dead Sea, the Great Kelp Forests, the Microscopic World, Maths in Nature, Cryptocurrencies (BitCoin), Metaverses (The New Internet?) and the Brain. Also, we have touched on the use of Hydrogen and Nuclear Energy in a post fossil-fuel world.

We try to keep up to date on recent space events of significance, the race between the Space Barons, what is happening in NASA and the European Space Agency, the ISS and missions to Mars and beyond. Participants are welcome to suggest topics of interest! Thanks to all those who have attended our classes.

#### School for Seniors Christmas service

**Join us on Zoom and bring your festive attire for an online Christmas service.**

**When:** Wednesday, 15 December 2021

**Time:** 10 – 11.30am

**Meeting ID:** 919 1594 6318

**Passcode:** 300701

#### Christmas in the Park

Join us in Hyde Park for a picnic lunch with friends and share in the joy of Christmas.

**When:** Saturday, 25 December 2021

**Time:** 11am–2pm, with lunch served from 12–12.30pm

**Where:** Hyde Park, Sydney (near St James Station)

Register to attend at [wesleymission.org.au](http://wesleymission.org.au)