



**28 August – 2 October 2023**

**Venue:** St Christopher's Church, 244 Avonhead Road

Talks are on **Mondays**, except for the second Monday of each month, **beginning at 1.30 pm**, followed by afternoon tea at 2.30 pm.

### **Series 5/23: Transport**

People have always wanted to go further, faster! The invention of the wheel (around 3500 BCE) is regarded as one of humankind's most significant inventions, partly because there are no wheels in nature from which to take inspiration. It forms the basis of most of our transport as many components of engines and motors are still essentially wheels.

#### **28 Aug Managing Traffic Flows under Changing Circumstances.**

**Simon Hodges**, Christchurch City Council. Events, expected and unexpected, disrupt traffic. What are the solutions?

#### **4 Sept The Future of Public Transport in Greater Christchurch.**

**Jesse Burgess**, Environment Canterbury (ECAN).

What is being planned? Who makes the decisions? What are the timeframes?

#### **11 Sept Free bus trip to Rangiora**

Details will be provided nearer the time.

#### **18 Sept Air Traffic Control**

**Bill Graves**, Simulator Pilot, Airways NZ.

Air Traffic Controllers ensure safe separation of aircraft in our airspace and airports.

*Daylight Saving begins at 2am on Sunday 24 September (clocks forward one hour).*

#### **25 Sept Pilot training.**

**Ross Sparks**, Head of Training at IAANZ.

Now including future aviation possibilities such as pilotless aircraft...

#### **2 Oct Supply Chain Challenges and Future Trends**

**Steve Bateman**, Transport and Logistics Consultant.

How is New Zealand adjusting to disruptions in global supply chains? What are our vulnerabilities as a trading nation?

### **Notices**

#### **AGM: Committee nominations**

The AGM will be after the talk on **30 October**. Our Rules require nominations to be called for at least three weeks prior to the AGM and to close seven days before the AGM (Rule 6b). New committee members are always needed! Please volunteer, or at least start persuading others to stand. *The nomination form will be in the next newsletter.*

#### **Interest Groups**

Members will have had an email from Miles Ellery about the possibility of starting Interest Groups.

We are aware that other U3A groups have a range of interest groups for their members.

The purpose of the email is to gather feedback to gauge interest in possible topics and whether there are members who are willing to lead a group.

Please reply to Miles at [miles.ellery@actrix.co.nz](mailto:miles.ellery@actrix.co.nz) or talk to him at a meeting.

#### **Contact changes**

If you have changed your phone number, street or email address since last year, please tell Murray Edlin: phone: 354 3441, or email him ([mredlin@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mredlin@xtra.co.nz)) with the corrections.

#### **New members**

Please continue to encourage anyone interested in joining us to come to a meeting. Imagine if we each invited one person to come... Give them the 'Invitation to join us' brochure, or a newsletter for talk details, or ask them to phone or email the secretary to be sent one. Visitors may attend two meetings at no cost.

#### **Scams**

We hope the TV1 series on scams we mentioned in the last newsletter were helpful. Currently at least \$200M a year is being lost to scams in NZ, but likely to be more as many people are too embarrassed to disclose it. But developing a high level of scepticism in order to protect ourselves from scams may also risk becoming so risk averse we may develop a feeling of distrust in people and institutions generally. It's going to take some balancing ...

To check whether a website is a scam, or to report it, go to: <https://checknetsafe.nz/>

## Artificial Intelligence (AI)

**Mis/disinformation** is likely to be an increasing problem, especially as AI enables increasingly believable print, audio and video items. It's not new, there was well-documented and effective political misinformation back in Roman times. Today the internet and social media can disseminate misinformation to many people very quickly. Think of mis/disinformation as being like a virus to which we initially may have no immunity. We may also have individual susceptibility because we have our own biases. As politicians have learned, repeated false claims eventually feel more familiar and therefore more believable, even when people know it isn't. The mis/disinformation 'virus' is hard to dislodge!

**Artificial intelligence (AI)** is likely to make mis/disinformation (and scams!) more 'believable' as realistic videos and speech, impersonating anyone, can be quickly made with AI on whatever topic anyone wants. To not believe anything we see, hear, or read would make life very difficult. The best approach is to believe only information from trusted sources. And to ask ourselves: why is this a trusted source? Is it because they have a track record of checking that what they say is as accurate as possible, or because they have no vested interest in influencing you (no conflict of interest), or because they are willing to correct previous errors? Our U3A committee do their best to ensure that our speakers are trusted sources of information.

AI has great potential for helping significant advances in many areas, (e.g. fields in medicine and science, weather forecasting, etc.), but as with any tool there is also potential for misuse. It is likely to cost jobs, but more are likely to be created, as has happened with every new technology. AI has been in use for several years: when you take a photo with your mobile phone AI is used; if you "ask Google" for example you will have used AI. But when you "ask" a chatbot AI (e.g. ChatGPT) for answers you need to be sceptical, as it has been shown that its 'answers' are often incorrect, even made-up, and may also reflect any racial and gender stereotypes in the material used in its training.

(**misinformation** is false information which is spread regardless of intent to mislead; **disinformation** is misinformation intentionally and knowingly spread in order to deceive and mislead)

## Understanding public opinion polling

We are in the "political polling" season, like it or not! If you want to know more about public opinion polling in NZ, staff at the University of Auckland have written this guide, downloadable as a PDF from:

<https://osf.io/pjzfb/> (click the Download button)

it is a work in progress, but the authors state: "Here, we identified the key aspects of public opinion polls that readers should identify and have an understanding of in order to appropriately evaluate and interpret their results."

Or for a shorter read, see: <https://theconversation.com/how-to-read-the-political-polls-10-things-you-need-to-know-ahead-of-the-nz-election-208738>

## 2023 Committee

Officers and Committee have yellow name-tags to make it easier for you to identify them and to suggest programme and activity ideas. If you wish to volunteer to welcome new members talk to a committee member.

*President:* Miles Ellery

*Vice President:* Bryan Wright

*Secretary:* Vivienne Mander; email: [u3a.avon@gmail.com](mailto:u3a.avon@gmail.com)

*Treasurer:* Murray Edlin, ph: 354 3441,  
email: [mredlin@xtra.co.nz](mailto:mredlin@xtra.co.nz)

*Committee:* Viv Grant, Chris Kissling, Judith Miller, Gloria Streat, Jonet Ward.

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*Note:* Hyperlinks (*in blue*) are live links, just click on them to go to the website or to your email application. Yes, these links are safe to click on!

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