

2025 District 23 Recipient

ZONTA WOMEN IN BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD



Pema Chentsho



CONGRATULATIONS TO PEMA, OUR 2025 DISTRICT 23 RECIPIENT

The winner of the 2025 Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award, Pema Chentsho, is a remarkable young woman who epitomises the values and achievements inherent in the scholarship.

Pema is a telecommunications engineer, community advocate and supporter of groups that empower women. She was the first in her family and her village in Bhutan to pursue higher education, completing a Bachelor of Engineering. She studied abroad at Portugal's University of Lisbon, a Master in Telecommunications and Informative Engineering, and recently completed a Master of Project Management at Edith Cowan University (ECU) Perth, Australia. Her journey has taken her from designing radio infrastructure and leading optical fibre network deployments to championing student leadership, inclusion, climate justice and empowerment of women in Australia and Bhutan.

Pema is a co-founder of Edith Cowan University's Women in Business (WIB), recognising the under-representation of women in leadership, and will strategically support women and gender-diverse students through industry workshops, mentoring and peer networks, fostering confidence, visibility, and collaboration. Starting with minimal resources, WIB is quickly becoming transformative, empowering students to actively lead rather than wait until graduation.

Beyond the ECU Campus, Pema founded the Druk Support Network, responding to policy changes impacting Bhutanese international students and organising access to legal, financial, and mental health support services for, predominantly, women navigating new environments alone.

Pema's advocacy includes climate justice. As an Enactus ECU member, Pema co-organised annual climate action festivals engaging hundreds in sustainability awareness in Perth. In Bhutan, Pema partnered with the Tarayana Foundation on projects supporting rural artisans,

creating targeted promotional campaigns that expanded their access to broader markets and improved their livelihoods.

Responding to her recognition as an **Area 3 Awardee** on 6 August, Pema delivered a moving and powerful talk entitled *"Beyond Borders: A Daughter's Journey from Sacrifice to Global Impact"*—a tribute to her mother, Ugyen Wangmo, whose sacrifices laid the foundation for Pema's success. *"She was denied an education. Worked from the age of 8. But never stopped believing that her daughter's life could be different. She moved mountains so I could rise beyond them."*

Pema also said that *"Being recognised by Zonta means carrying forward the quiet strength my mother showed when she moved us across mountains in Bhutan so I could go to school. It reflects the values she taught me—courage, empathy, and a belief in the power of opportunity. This award uplifts not only my story, but the voices of women and girls I continue to advocate for. I accept it with gratitude and a renewed sense of purpose to keep building spaces where others can thrive."*

Pema was the recipient of the District 23, Area 3 Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award, supported by all five clubs in Area 3 and coordinated by Linda Tinning of the Zonta Club of Perth Northern Suburbs.