



Newsflash

Biennium 2024-2026

Build a better world for women and girls

February 2026 Edition



District 23 Governor
Debbie Schmidt

Welcome to our first District Newsflash for 2026.

Thank you for the dedication, passion and service you bring to Zonta every day.

I hope you have had a break from Zonta over the Christmas/New Year period, and you are well rested. Your efforts in advocacy, service and fundraising continue to make a meaningful difference in our communities and beyond.

As we move into 2026, there is much to look forward to. This year provides many opportunities for us to strengthen our impact, raise our collective voice for gender equality, and reconnect through club, area and district activities. I encourage you to stay engaged, support one another, and take advantage of the opportunities ahead to promote Zonta's mission and values.

If you missed the December 2025 issue of The Zontian during the holiday period (emailed on Boxing Day), I encourage you to take some time to read it. You can access it here: [Zontian_December2025.pdf](#) It includes extensive international news, including an update on our 2024–2026 International Service Projects.

While it was disappointing that there were no Australia Day Honours awarded to

Zontians this year, we remain proud of the outstanding contributions our members make every day in service, advocacy and leadership. I encourage you all to nominate a worthy Zontian in future award rounds. <https://www.gg.gov.au/australian-honours-and-awards/order-australia/nominate-someone-order-australia>

Please also note the following important dates and activities:

- 11 February – International Day of Women and Girls in Science
The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed each year on 11 February to recognise the critical role women and girls play in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The day highlights the importance of equal access to education, training and careers in science, and calls for the removal of barriers that limit participation and leadership opportunities for women and girls in these fields. It is an opportunity to celebrate achievements, promote role models, and advocate for policies and programs that support gender equality in STEM—aligning strongly with Zonta’s commitment to education, empowerment and equality.
- March – Zonta celebrations including International Women’s Day and Rose Day, to be recognised throughout the month
- Upcoming Area Meetings and Club Office and Leadership training – please save the dates and make every effort to attend, as these meetings are a valuable opportunity to connect, share ideas and stay informed. Dates are below.
- Club Banner Grant – reminder to Clubs that you have until the end of this biennium (30th June) to apply to have up to \$200 returned to your club on updated/new banners.

Thank you again for all that you do. I look forward to working with you throughout the remainder of this biennium.

Warm regards,
Debbie Schmidt
District Governor 2024-2026

Leadership & Training Survey

Leadership & Training Survey – Summary of Results

The District leadership and training survey was emailed to approximately 590 members in November 2025, with a reminder issued in December. A total of 61 responses were received (10.33% response rate), with input from all five Areas. Responses were strongest from Area 1, followed by Areas 3 and 4.

Of the respondents, 13 members had attended leadership training, representing a

range of roles including Presidents, Treasurers, Secretaries, Directors, Committee Chairs and an Area Director. Feedback from attendees was very positive, with members valuing the practical guidance, opportunity to ask questions, sharing of processes, and increased awareness of Zonta resources.

Members who did not attend training most commonly cited prior experience in roles, timing issues, caring and family responsibilities, or the perception that training was only relevant to specific office bearers.

Key themes emerging from the survey included:

- Strong support for ongoing training, including refresher sessions
- A clear desire for mentoring, particularly mentors outside the member's own club
- Requests for clearer role expectations, time commitments, and nomination processes
- Interest in face-to-face or area-based training, improved notice of sessions, and flexible delivery options
- Recognition that training is valuable not only for office bearers, but for all members to better understand leadership roles

Encouragingly, five members requested follow-up from the District Nominating Committee, indicating an interest in future leadership pathways. The 2026-2028 Nominating team will be in touch when they take over their new roles.

Overall, the survey confirmed that leadership training is highly valued across the District and highlighted opportunities to strengthen mentoring, communication, and support to encourage members to step into leadership roles with confidence.

Due to feedback, we have changed to a weeknight training sessions so hopefully more members can attend.

Please see dates below for 2026 and keep an eye out for further information and registration process.

I encourage experienced Zonta members to also attend our training sessions as exchanging experiences and passing on your knowledge is a valuable part of the training process and encourages discussion.

Thanks to all that participated.

Debbie

2026 Area Meetings

Victoria	Area 1 & 4	Saturday 21st March
Tasmania	Area 5	Saturday 28th March
Western Australia	Area 3	Saturday 18th April
South Australia	Area 2	Saturday 2nd May

2026 Club Office Training Sessions
May 2026 - WA 6pm, SA 7.30, Vic/Tas 8pm

Topic	Presenter	Tuesday	Thursday
President	Donna Fabris	12th	
Secretary	Naidene Parry	19th	
Treasurer	Chris Frick		14th
Committee Chairs	TBA		20th
De-mystifying Zonta Leadership	Gov Deb & PDG Jane A	26th	

Membership Update



I have not long returned from the Zonta International Incoming Governor Training in

a very chilly mid-winter Chicago.

It was an exciting and inspiring time meeting the Incoming Governors from the 32 Districts around the world, meeting the very busy people in our Zonta International headquarters and having the opportunity to get to know our next International President Fernanda Gallo Freschi and begin to learn a little about her vision for the next bi-ennium. We will all learn more about this in the lead-up to the International Convention.

One of the earnest topics of conversation is Zonta Membership. Around the Zonta World Clubs, Areas and Districts are continuing to face serious challenges with recruitment and retention of members. Our current District membership stands at around 620 members which is about 10 short of our target. Well done to Clubs and Areas in our District. Membership must continue to remain an important area of focus for all of us. I will say more about this in each of your upcoming Area Meetings.

The more we add to our collective voice; the more impact we have to build a better world for women and girls.

A couple of key things to bring to your attention at this time are;

1. The release of the [2026 Add Your Voice toolkit](#) on the ZI Website including the information about this year's program on the [campaign webpage](#)! The toolkit has heaps of new resources and templates for Clubs to support recruitment at this time of the year. Once again new members who join in April will have the benefit of 14 months membership in their first year. There is also a continuation of the prizes for Clubs of different sizes who are the most successful in their recruitment. Check it out through the link.
2. Club Presidents, Membership Chairs and any Zontians interested in new ideas for membership recruitment and retention are invited to join our D23 Membership Think Tank being held on the 24th February at 7.30pm Australian Eastern Summer Time via the following Zoom link.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/824a-44c4-b693-e15587808323>

Meeting ID: 897 4465 1874

Passcode: 874290

Facilitated by Donna Fabris, Fiona Macdowell and myself.

Looking forward to seeing you in person at our 2026 Area Meetings

Wendy Quinn

Lt Governor and D23 Membership Chair

Zonta International Convention, Vancouver 10-14 July 2026



The pre-convention club mailing is issued to clubs in March 2026; this will include information on 2026-2028 Biennial Goals, elections, bylaws, voting methods and more.

Bylaws and Resolutions Committee Report

As we wind down towards the end of the biennium, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the District Bylaws and Resolutions Committee for their hard work during the biennium.

We are still available for any questions you may have about constitutions, voting etc. Please be in contact via email to me, or speak to one of the committee members at upcoming area meetings.

A Convention business email will be sent to all clubs detailing, among other items, the process for registering club delegates (credentialling). The credentialling form will be accessed via the club profile by the club president (through My Zonta).

Please ensure you have access to My Zonta now, so when the time comes the

registering of delegate details should run smoothly.

Zonta International ask that clubs credential the same delegate for elections and voting at Convention if possible. Credentials will re-open for a two-week period in May for changes, but we would like to limit changes as much as possible.

Clubs who are not attending Convention in person can designate a proxy during that two-week period.

Voting at Convention will look a little different in 2026.

You may have read that all voting for candidates will be done prior to Convention. Candidates will be making recorded presentations that will be available for clubs to view. These will be published on the Zonta International website towards the end of March. There will also be “meet the candidate” virtual sessions. Voting will take place at the end of April.

All other voting for Zonta business will take place at Convention.

As members of Zonta International all clubs in good standing are entitled to a vote, or votes (depending on member numbers) at each Convention. This allows all clubs to participate in the decision-making process of our organisation.

Information around voting will be discussed at club meetings. Whilst all members are permitted (and encouraged!) to attend Convention, we know that this is not possible for many reasons.

If your club will not have an in-person delegate in Vancouver in July, please plan for another club to act as a proxy, to ensure your vote is counted. (More information on the appointment of proxies will come from Zonta International/Governor Debbie at the appropriate time).

ZI Bylaws and Resolutions Committee for consideration.

At the District 23 Conference in 2025 clubs moved to support a resolution regarding the Birthing Kit Project. In accordance with Zonta International requirements, this resolution has been forwarded to the

Area 5	Veronika Maddock
Area 3	Jo Wittorff
Area 2	Sandy Nicholson
Area 1 & 4	Christine Fitzherbert

Jane Adornetto
Chair

The 2024-2026 Zonta Excellence in Service and Advocacy Award deadline is **28 February 2026**. [Click here](#) for the complete award guidelines. (You will need to log into the ZI website)

News from Zonta International

COMING SOON: New Online Member Community

After much thought and consideration, the decision was made to discontinue the Zonta International mobile app. However, don't be discouraged. We have found a more robust and user-friendly platform to replace it that we believe will better support engagement and connection with and between members around the world. We are working now on a timeline for implementation of this new platform. Please watch for more information to come soon!

Something is Blooming this March!

We are expanding our celebration of Zonta Rose Day to encompass the entire month of March. International Women's Day will remain a key focal point for our global causes and visibility efforts, but now the entire month will serve as a time to honour Zonta and the remarkable women who deserve recognition. Essentially, nothing will change. We celebrate **8 March** as International Women's Day and all of the month for Zonta! More information is coming soon!

Zonta International Foundation

Zonta Foundation for Women 2024-2026 Giving Totals*



Rose Fund

407%

US\$1,812,551.32
US\$445,000.00



Amelia Earhart
Fellowship

45%

US\$246,418.19
US\$552,000.00



Zonta Young Women
in Leadership Award

56%

US\$208,761.02
US\$370,000.00



International Service
Program

54%

US\$1,752,937.43
US\$3,250,000.00



Biennial Goal

87%

US\$4,020,667.96
US\$4,617,000.00

*As of 31 January 2024



Founded in 1919, Zonta International is a global organisation of professionals empowering women worldwide through service and advocacy.

This is the official newsletter of Zonta International District 23.

Governor: Debbie Schmidt

Our email address is: info@zontadistrict23.org.au

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