



Newsflash

Biennium 2024-2026

Build a better world for women and girls

June 2026 Issue



District 23 Governor
Debbie Schmidt

Governor's Report...

Final Wrap-Up – 2024–2026 Biennium

As I reflect on the 2024–2026 biennium, I do so with immense pride, gratitude and optimism for the future. Together, we have demonstrated what can be achieved when Zontians unite with purpose, passion and a commitment to improving the lives of women and girls.

Throughout this biennium, District 23 has remained focused on sustainability, success and standing up for human rights. We have strengthened our clubs, supported our members and continued to build a District that is resilient, engaged and future-focused.

One of our greatest achievements has been our commitment to advocacy. Every club participated in the 16 Days of Activism campaign, demonstrating a united voice against gender-based violence and in support of women's rights. Clubs embraced opportunities to advocate locally and nationally, raising awareness of issues affecting women and girls and reinforcing Zonta's position as a respected voice for gender equality.

A significant milestone during this biennium has been the formation and growth of Zonta Australia. For many years, Australian Zontians have aspired to strengthen our national presence and advocacy efforts. The establishment of Zonta Australia has provided us with a stronger, coordinated national voice, enabling us to engage more effectively on issues impacting women and girls across the country. Its early success is a testament to the vision, commitment and collaboration of Zontians throughout Australia, and it positions us well for even greater impact in the years ahead. A more detailed report is included in this Newsflash.

Leadership development has also been a key focus. Through training sessions, workshops and mentoring opportunities, we have encouraged members to step into leadership roles at club, area and district levels. We have worked to demystify leadership, build confidence and create pathways that will support the next generation of Zonta leaders.

Our commitment to the Zonta Foundation for Women has been outstanding. Clubs and individual members have generously supported international projects, scholarships and educational programs that empower women and girls around the world. This strong commitment reflects our belief that lasting change is achieved when we invest in opportunities that improve lives and create pathways to equality.

This biennium has also been marked by collaboration and connection. Whether through district conferences, area meetings, leadership training, advocacy campaigns or informal networking, we have strengthened relationships across our District and reinforced the value of belonging to a global organisation united by shared values and purpose.

Membership and club sustainability have remained priorities throughout the biennium. While service organisations continue to face changing community expectations and volunteer challenges, our clubs have shown resilience and adaptability. The success of our e-Club has demonstrated that innovation and flexibility can help us engage members in new ways while maintaining strong connections to our mission and values.

As we celebrate our achievements, we must also acknowledge a significant and bittersweet moment in the history of District 23. On 31 May 2026, the **Zonta Club of Ballarat** concludes its journey as a club after nearly five decades of dedicated service. Since its charter in 1978, the club has made a remarkable contribution to Zonta, its local community and our District. Generations of Ballarat members have championed the advancement of women and girls through service, advocacy and leadership. On behalf of District 23, I extend our sincere gratitude to all past and present members of the Zonta Club of Ballarat. Their legacy will endure through the lives they have touched, the leaders they have developed and the lasting impact of their work. We thank them for their commitment, friendship and years of devoted Zonta service.

None of the achievements of this biennium would have been possible without the dedication of our club presidents, club boards, area directors, district committee chairs, district board members and every member who has volunteered their time, expertise and energy. Your commitment has strengthened District 23 and positioned us well for the future. To the 2024-2026 Board, you are amazing and thank you for your support of me and what we set out to achieve together.

Serving as your Governor has been both an honour and a privilege. I have been continually inspired by the passion, generosity and determination of our members. While this biennium is drawing to a close, the impact of the work we have undertaken together will continue for many years to come.

Thank you for your support, your friendship and your unwavering commitment to Zonta. I leave this role confident that District 23 is well placed to continue empowering women and girls, advocating for equality and building a better world for all.

Together, we have made a difference. Together, we have achieved much. And together, we have laid a strong foundation for the future.

Yours in Zonta

Debbie

Debbie Schmidt
Governor 2024-2026



A small snap of some of the members who joined us on Saturday 13th June to thank our outgoing District Board and welcome in the 2026-2028 Board who will officially take office at the conclusion of the Convention in Vancouver.

I would also like to sincerely thank those clubs and members who have chosen to make donations to the Zonta Foundation for Women in honour of District leaders and volunteers. These generous gifts not only recognise service but also help advance Zonta's mission of building a better world for women and girls.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your friendship, encouragement and commitment throughout this remarkable journey. It has been an absolute privilege to serve as your Governor.

AREA NEWS

Tasmanian Area 5 Director 2026-2028



It is with great pleasure that I announce the appointment of Tasmanian Area 5 Director 2026-2028, Veronika Maddock.

Veronika joined the Zonta Club of Storm Bay in Hobart in 2003 and served one term as President and one term as Secretary.

When that Club merged with another club, Veronika resigned to pursue other interests rejoining Zonta in 2016 as a member of the Zonta Club of Hobart and has served 2 terms as President and one term as Secretary. She is a current Director of that Club.

Veronika has chaired the District 23 By-laws and Resolutions Committee for the biennium 2020-2022 and was a member of that Committee for the biennium 2024-2026. She has attended the International Convention in Brisbane in 2020 and the District Conference in Devonport in 2025

Veronika is a retired lawyer, having worked for the Government of Tasmania as Deputy Chief Parliamentary Counsel, drafting Government legislation.

Congratulations Veronika on your appointment.

ZONTA AUSTRALIA



National Advocacy Progress Report:-

As Zonta celebrates 60 years in Australia, with the Zonta Clubs of Sydney and

Melbourne marking this significant milestone during May, it is a timely opportunity to reflect on both our legacy and our future.

Since launching in June 2024, Zonta Australia has made a strong start in bringing together a more coordinated national voice — ensuring the work of clubs and districts, including District 23, is more effectively connected to advocacy at both national and international levels.

Zonta Australia was established to better connect local insight with national influence, so that what we see and do in our communities can more effectively shape policy, partnerships and decision-making. At its core, it is about ensuring our collective voice is not only heard, but heard where it matters most.

Over the past year, Zonta Australia has become established as a recognised national advocacy body, supported by Patronage from the Governor-General, Her Excellency the Hon. Sam Mostyn AC. Our voice is increasingly part of key national conversations on gender equality, with advocacy priorities now aligned across the country and connected to global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals. Engagement with the Office for Women and other stakeholders is helping to elevate Zonta's perspective on gender equality, climate justice and the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Zonta Australia has also contributed visibly at the international level. At CSW70 in New York, a well-received parallel event on justice and access highlighted the importance of addressing barriers that persist even within strong systems. Through Zonta International's presence at Women Deliver, Australian perspectives are being carried into global conversations, while partnerships with UN agencies and civil society organisations continue to strengthen.

This has included a developing relationship with the Persephone Network, helping strengthen the role of youth voice in advocacy and ensuring the perspectives of young women are more directly reflected in both national and international engagement. These conversations have reinforced the growing importance of intergenerational leadership, strategic partnerships and locally informed advocacy within global gender equality discussions.

Importantly, there is now a more consistent and coordinated national advocacy approach across districts. Local initiatives, such as the 16 Days of Activism, are increasingly being amplified into a broader national narrative, while collaboration with organisations such as the National Council of Women Australia has strengthened both the reach and impact of our advocacy work.

Looking ahead to 2026–2028, the focus will be on consolidating this strong foundation and positioning Zonta Australia for sustained impact. This includes strengthening governance arrangements through review of the current Terms of Reference and consideration of future operating models as Zonta Australia continues to evolve, deepening strategic partnerships, and continuing to build

Zonta Australia as a trusted, credible and influential national voice.

This work also aligns with broader discussions occurring at Zonta International level through the Governance Blueprint for the Future. The proposed reforms recognise many of the challenges facing international membership organisations globally, including governance complexity, leadership succession, changing membership patterns and the need for more agile and contemporary structures. Importantly, these discussions are not simply about organisational design, but about ensuring Zonta remains sustainable, relevant and impactful within a rapidly changing global environment.

The Blueprint discussions also reflect many of the themes emerging through CSW70, Women Deliver and broader international advocacy conversations — including the importance of intergenerational leadership, stronger partnerships, contemporary governance, strategic advocacy alignment and ensuring women’s organisations remain responsive to evolving global challenges such as climate justice, digital transformation and growing pressure on gender equality globally.

Strengthening governance at both national and international levels will help maximise Zonta’s collective impact — ensuring that local insight, national advocacy and global influence are more effectively connected into the future. At a time when progress on gender equality, human rights and climate justice is increasingly contested globally, a strong, credible and coordinated advocacy voice has never been more important.

For District 23, Zonta Australia provides a genuine opportunity to scale the impact of local work — ensuring that what happens within clubs and communities contributes to broader national and global change.

Zonta Australia has had a purposeful and productive first phase, and the next stage will focus on strengthening how we operate, expanding our reach, and continuing to advocate effectively for women and girls both nationally and internationally.

Bridget Maher
Chair 2024-2026

2026 Zonta International Young Women in Leadership Awardee

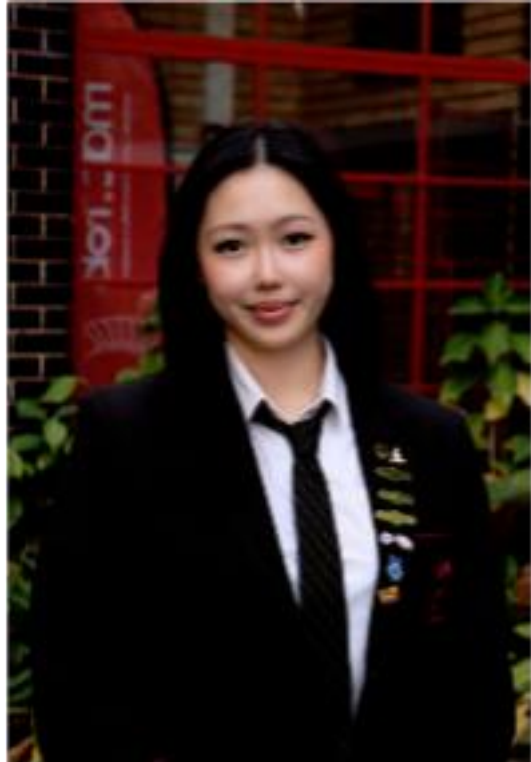
Introducing Mackenzie Li, nominated by the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra.

Mackenzie Li is an exceptional young leader, advocate and changemaker dedicated to advancing health, education and equity for women and girls. A student leader, researcher and community activist, Mackenzie combines academic excellence with a deep commitment to service, driven by her vision of creating more inclusive and equitable opportunities for young women from diverse and historically marginalised communities.

Inspired by her Rohingya heritage and personal experiences witnessing barriers faced by women in healthcare and education, Mackenzie founded **The Aletheia Project**, an international initiative

promoting health literacy and advocacy that has reached more than 23,000 young people across six countries. She also established **Brighter Minds**, providing free tutoring and mentoring to girls from migrant and low-income backgrounds. Her leadership extends across public service, youth advocacy and international engagement, including roles with the Red Cross, Youth Parliament, UNESCO and various health and research organisations.

Mackenzie aspires to study public health, international relations and science, with the long-term goal of working with the World Health Organization to improve health outcomes for women and girls worldwide. Through research, advocacy and community action, she is already demonstrating the power of youth leadership to create meaningful and lasting change.



AREA 1- VICTORIA

The E-Club of Southern and Central Australia have finished the biennium with an increase in their membership numbers. Members have attended Area workshops, District conference and have 2 members attending the Zonta International convention in Vancouver.

Fundraising efforts through containers for change, special guest speakers via Zoom meetings and raffles at conference continue to raise money for the club and the Zonta Foundation for Women. Christmas giving was undertaken by members to their own local or preferred charities, donations of quality clothing were made to organisations such as Groomed to Go, Clothes4U and Dressed for Success and during March Share the Dignity campaign members made donations of period products to this Woolworth's supported program.



The Zonta Club of Geelong have continued to support both the Birthing Kit and Breast Care Cushion district projects. Advocacy and support for the 16 Days gets bigger each year with the club turning Geelong orange through yarn bombing, orange lighting, signs on the back of a bus and the orange ladies.



Together with ZC Peel and the Alcoa Foundation, Zonta Geelong presented 5 Women in Engineering Scholarships to 5 amazing young women from various universities around Victoria.

The



Zonta Club of Melbourne's West continue to have fantastic community engagement with members attending the Wyndham City Council Volunteering

Expo with new club promotional material, providing an information session about Coercive Control and Family Violence to a community group and both the club and president being nominated for two Hobsons Bay Community Volunteer awards where Irena was announced as the City of Hobsons Bay Community Leader for 2026.

Successful grant applications from local councils, Toyota etc have allowed the club to produce promotional materials and support local community programs such as Home Starter Packs, Coercive Control Information session, financial empowerment sessions etc.



The biennium has culminated in another successful Fashion Parade and Auction as their main fundraiser for the year with guest speakers including the Honourable Melissa Horne MP and Mayor of Maribyrnong Cr

Mohamed Semra, together with outgoing D23 Governor Debbie Schmidt.

Zonta Club of Melbourne on

Yarra have provided a number of awards throughout the biennium with many of them presented at their March meeting. The Local Project Award for 2025 was awarded to the Lighthouse Foundation's Freedom Program, Maya Farmer was awarded the 2025 Young Women in Leadership Award and was not only the ZCMOY winner and but was also the Zonta International winner. The 2025 District 23 Women Taking Climate Action Award was presented by D23 Governor Debbie Schmidt to Sally Quinn, co-founder and CEO of Green Collect (Braybrook and Yarraville). Sally was encouraged to apply by the Zonta Club of Melbourne's West and, finally, Adele Pentland was awarded the ZCMOY Women in STEM Award (2025). Adele has taken up the club's offer of a year's Zonta club membership and will join the District 23 E-club.





The major highlight for the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra was the celebration of its 60th Anniversary with a luncheon at the Amora Herencia hotel in Richmond. It was an afternoon of reflection, reminiscing and 60's fun. The club appreciated messages of acknowledgement and congratulations from ZI President, Salla Tuominen; The Governor of Victoria, Professor the Honourable Margaret Gardner AC; Christine Dersch, Zonta International Director - D23 Liaison, and also ex-member and PDG Kay Stewart among many other Zonta clubs and individuals. The presence of ZI Vice President (and incoming President Elect) Sandy Venn

Brown, D23 DG Debbie Schmidt, D23 Lt Governor Wendy Quinn and D23 Area 1 Director Fiona McDowell as well as representatives from the Yarra City Council and the Bendigo Community Bank

Zonta Club of Melton through fundraising and grants have been able to secure amazing guest speakers for their International Women's Day dinners which is well supported by members, their families, local service groups and council members. Other local service projects and activities have included the making up of dignity bags to be supplied to Orange Door, local Foodbanks and police stations and also emergency women's clothing packs and footwear slides, in various sizes, have been provided to the local police station.

For
the
16



Days of Activism the club held an Orange Stumps event with Melton Women's Cricket team where the Zonta banner was displayed and President Annette gave short speech to the two teams on ways everyone can help in the fight against family violence.

This is just a very small snapshot of the amazing fundraising events, service and advocacy work, projects, events, scholarships, awards and incredible Zonta Spirit that has been happening over the last 2 years. It has been an honour and a privilege to be the Area 1 Director over that time and I thank the club presidents and members for their support.

Fiona MacDowall
Area 1 Director 2024-2026

AREA 2 - SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Zonta South Australia – A Lot to Celebrate

The end of a biennium is both the opportunity to celebrate what has been achieved in our fight to make the world a better place for women and girls and also the time to look forward with anticipation to what the new biennium will look like for our worldwide organisation.

The theme of the Zonta South Australia area meeting held last month was **“Let’s Celebrate – Our Passions, Our People and Our Projects”** and on reflection we have much to celebrate in South Australia. The theme for the biennium was collaboration, and we have achieved so much by working together collaboratively rather than against each other in competition. We have cemented the concept of Zonta SA and in addition to the Area Meeting there are now additional events on our calendar which are held as area events.

While we are all individuals, we are all united in our desire to change the world for those who follow in our footsteps. Whether that is through engagement with local service projects in our own communities, or whether it is through the support that we all provide to the projects which are run internationally.

The United Nations largest annual gathering on gender equality and women’s rights - CSW70 – was held in New York in March. The rights of women and girls are being rolled back in plain sight, while the justice systems fail to protect them. Legal inequality has long and deep consequences, spanning lifetimes, generations and impacting whole societies. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stated **“not a single step forward for women’s rights has ever been given – it has been won.”** We have all been put on notice by the Secretary-General that these rights are not going to be given without a fight.

Despite the monumental task that we have ahead of us, there is cause for celebration when we reflect on everything that we are doing and have done to make the world a better place for women and girls.

CELEBRATING our PEOPLE

As with any successful and effective organisation, our people are our greatest asset and worthy of celebration.

Celebrating team members boosts morale, strengthens collaboration and fosters a positive culture – all things which are important for the health and wellbeing of Zonta International now and in the future.

At our biennial District Conference, we recognise our members who have given 20 years or more service, but we used our Area Meeting as an opportunity to acknowledge our members who have given 5, 10 or 15 years of service.

CELEBRATING SAYING NO!


We launched the “Why Orange” initiative which aligns with the “Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women” campaign. These business cards allow us to effectively share the message about why we wear orange – important currently to distinguish ourselves from the One Nation political party.


ZONTA
TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Why Orange

The signature colour of the United Nations Campaign to End Violence Against Women is **ORANGE**

As a bright and optimistic colour, orange represents a future free from violence against women and girls.



 **ZONTA**
INTERNATIONAL

BUILD A BETTER WORLD FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

CELEBRATING YOUNG WOMEN

Part of the role of our leaders is to plant seeds – and the relationships that we are forming with our South Australian Young Women in Leadership awardees (six in 2026) has germinated an idea.

In Zonta SA we have an opportunity to provide a pathway for tertiary students to engage with Zonta – we have a cohort of exceptional young women who want to change the world that they are inheriting, and they want to do it by collaborating with Zonta. We can provide the pathway for them to engage with Zonta via a Golden Z e-club. This would allow tertiary students from across South Australia to join us – medical students from The Riverland, TAFE students from Port Lincoln, Nursing students from Mt Gambier. An e-club allows us to remove the

geographical barriers to engagement and involvement.

Let's harness their energy and add their solar panels to our grid.

CELEBRATING the SHOES we have FILLED

I am thrilled to announce that our amazing Zonta SA team have collaborated to fill 23 shoes since our Zonta SA meeting last year which I think is an amazing achievement. Combined with the 27 shoes filled the previous year, we have filled 50 shoes in 2 years!

Synergy is the superpower we all need to harness – synergy is where different elements combine to produce a better result than they could by working alone. Consider if each of us had a tiny solar panel on the top of our head the result would be that we each produce a tiny trickle of energy which would hardly be noticed, but if all of our individual solar panels were connected together the energy created would explode the SAPN network.

Effective advocacy is all about synergy resulting in our voices being amplified – we are excited that these new members have joined their solar panels to the Zonta network and join the fight for Women's rights.

CELEBRATING 20 years – BIRTHING KIT FOUNDATION of AUSTRALIA

What started as a casual conversation in 1999 has grown into something extraordinary and it was a pleasure and a privilege to celebrate 20 amazing years of the Birthing Kit Foundation Australia at the Zonta SA Workshop. From just 100 kits packed for Papua New Guinea to more than 3 million Clean Birth Kits distributed around the world, the impact of those early conversations continues to ripple across generations.



CELEBRATING YOU!

The world is a better place because of the energy that each member contributes to Zonta – not the time, not the money, but the energy. Whether you contribute energy to Birthing Kits or Sustainability or Young Women in Leadership, your energy makes a difference.

Energy is defined as the capacity or ability to do work. It is the force that causes objects to move, change, or grow.

We are trying to effect change in our world – which is a form of movement. By definition - movement requires energy.

But the impact is much greater when that energy is focused – like a lightning bolt. The impact of a strike of lightning is only noticed because that electrical energy is all focused on a point – if that same amount of electrical energy was dispersed over a 10 km radius it would not be noticed.

We need to make sure that our Zonta energy is focused like a lightning bolt, not dispersed in such a way that it goes unnoticed.

Albert Einstein defined energy with his famous $E = MC^2$

Einstein described mass as essentially “congealed energy” that is packed very tightly. Mass can be converted into energy, and energy can be converted into mass, which is the fundamental principle behind nuclear power.

If you could completely convert 1 kilogram of mass into energy it would release roughly the same energy as 21 megatonnes of TNT. Think of the mass that is contained within Zonta Worldwide and that gives you some idea of the potential energy we can harness to **make the world a better place for women and girls. It is time to explode some of that latent energy and create a tsunami of change in our world.**

Jenni Foreman – Area 2 Director 2024-2026

Lindy Berketta – Vice Area 2 Director 2024-2026

AREA 3 - WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Western Australia Clubs Deliver Impact, Leadership and Growth Across the 2024–2026 Biennium

Throughout the 2024–2026 biennium, Western Australia’s Zonta clubs have demonstrated outstanding commitment to empowering women and girls through leadership, advocacy, education and service. Across Bunbury, Peel, Perth and Perth Northern Suburbs, members have strengthened communities, expanded youth engagement, celebrated significant milestones and increased Zonta’s visibility and impact.



The Zonta Club of Bunbury celebrated an extraordinary milestone with member Ellen Cox reaching 50 years of Zonta membership. The club also marked 30 years of supporting International Literacy Week and successfully chartered the new Manea Senior College Z Club. Bunbury's three Z Clubs continued to flourish, engaging young people in birthing kit assembly, leadership development and community service projects. The club welcomed 15 new members during the biennium and achieved significant recognition at the District 23 Conference, where Jo Wittorff received the Governor's Award and was added to the Heide Taylor Honour Roll.

The Zonta Club of Peel continued to strengthen its community presence through advocacy and remembrance activities. The club hosted the 2026 Area 3 Meeting and continued its annual Missing Persons Memorial Service, providing support and recognition to families affected by unresolved disappearances. Peel also expanded its awards program with the introduction of new recognition opportunities for young women and inspirational leaders. The formation of a Greater Visibility Committee and the induction of five new members further positioned the club for future growth.

The Zonta Club of Perth maintained its strong focus on education and empowerment through longstanding partnerships and award programs. The club continued its support of Marr Mooditj Training and presented a range of educational awards, including the Young Women in Leadership Award, Post Secondary Education Award and Women in Business Award. Members collaborated with the WA Women's Hall of Fame, supported vulnerable women through donations to RUAH, and promoted gender equality through presentations to secondary school students. The club also celebrated Amelia Earhart Day for the first time and honoured founding member Margaret Medcalf on her 100th birthday.

The Zonta Club of Perth Northern Suburbs continued its proud tradition of leadership development and service. The club celebrated its 45th anniversary and strengthened its advocacy efforts through the establishment of a Coercive Control Committee and Sponsorship Committee. The annual Youth Leadership Awards and the Lucy Bowen Nursing Bursary continued to support emerging female leaders, while members assembled 600 birthing kits to mark the Birthing Kit Foundation's twentieth anniversary. Dawn Newman was recognised with the Governor's Award and added to the Heide Taylor Honour Roll, while the club also established an international twinning relationship with the Zonta Club of Bad Bergzabern.

Across Western Australia, club membership remained strong, youth programs expanded, and partnerships continued to grow. Members actively supported Z and Golden Z Clubs, promoted climate action and gender equality, celebrated leadership achievements and created opportunities for women and girls to thrive. Collectively, Western Australian clubs have exemplified the Zonta mission, delivering meaningful impact within their communities while strengthening the future of Zonta throughout the region.

Kimberley Robbins
Area 3 Director 2024-2026

AREA 4 - VICTORIA

I am pleased to say it has been a busy first half of the year for the Zonta Clubs in Area 4 with International Women’s Day campaign events and celebrations, D23 Area 1 +4 meeting, and club board change over’s for most of the clubs. Most clubs participated in the May Birthing Kit anniversary campaign. Breast cushions continue to be a popular service project for all clubs. Most clubs took up the D23 grant for a new banner.

This is a snapshot of Area 4 clubs activities:

Bendigo

A busy club with fundraisers and campaigns most month’s including a stall at the Bendigo Sustainability Festival in May.



In March the club held there annual

International Women’s Day Dinner with guest speaker Diana Williams – Owner and Founder of Fernwood Fitness. This major club event also highlights and celebrates the winners of their various awards. Pictured below are the winners of the Women of Achievement award who this year came from the emergency services and health sector.

Bendigo have inducted new members over the last 6 months and have had their club board change over.

Bendigo is in full swing planning the 2027 D23 Conference in Bendigo, so stayed tuned for more information over the next 6- 12 months.

Kyneton



The Kyneton Club have inducted 4 new members this year, and recently had their club board change over (pictured).

In March they celebrated International Women’s Day with their annual dinner with special guest speaker Sarah Barnbrook – Volunteer of the Year 2025, and International advocate for digital safety.



A breast cushion stuff and stitch night, and in May a successful community birthing kit assembly day.

Central Goldfields



A busy 6 months for the Central Goldfields Club inducting an amazing 5 new members (4 members seen below inducted by Area Director Donna Fabris), and a recent change over of the clubs board.

The club was honoured with a silver Club Certificate of Appreciation from the BKFA for hosting 15 birthing kit assembly workshops since 1999, with an estimated 6000 assembled. The club hosted another birthing kit assembly in May.



The club has been successful in receiving another community bank grant for their 2026 16 Days “RESPECT” Coffee Cup campaign where the cups are used at local coffee shops during the 16 Days campaign.

Mitchell

Mitchell Club enthusiastically hosted the combined Area 1 + 4 Meeting in March this year at Trackside Kilmore. Over 60 attendee’s from every Area 1 and 4 Club were present, including the D23 Board. Inspiring speakers and fabulous program. Great work by the whole club.



In May the club hosted a community birthing kit assembly morning where 400 kits were made by club members and community attendees, with club member Kaye Blake receiving a Certificate of Appreciation as club champion from the BKFA.

Mitchell have 2 club members attending the upcoming ZI Convention which is fantastic. I am sure on their return we will hear all about their exciting travels and ZI learnings.

Wangaratta



In March, Wangaratta Club hosted their annual International Women's Day Year 11 student breakfast's (one for boys, one for girls), bringing together inspiring speakers, students, teachers and mentors. Now in its 20th year, this event highlights and supports the potential of the next generation of leaders.



Recently the club celebrated their boards change over and congratulated several club members for their many years of service. They presented the local Women of the Year award to Jenny Chivers in recognition of her outstanding

contribution and dedication to their community (pictured below).

Albury-Wodonga

In March the club held their International Day lunch event with an informative speaker panel with guest speakers Sandra Blake (financial counsellor) and Innocent Tshilomna (social tech entrepreneur).



The club recently held a workshop with the Centre Against Violence with fifteen participants learning how to look at certain situations and develop skills.

The club continue to have vibrant club meetings,



attendance at the area meeting, with a recent change over of their board

Ballarat

It is with great sadness that I write to inform you that the Zonta Club of Ballarat held its final dinner meeting on Wednesday 27th May 2026.



Pictured from left are – Raelene McPherson, Val Sarah, Stella Coffey, Maria Sozanski, Helen Eyres, Carmel McCormick and Hilary Pope

After nearly **48 years** of Service and Advocacy to the Ballarat Community, the club members voted to disband the club (for now), and held its final get-together with a dinner meeting tinged with sadness. However, they also celebrated the Club's achievements, in which they can all take enormous pride.

Some Achievements:

- Many hundreds of Breast Cushions and Toiletry Bags
- Food Donations
- Cash Donations to the Salvation Army and other organisations
- Many Advocacy Projects
- Involvement in Ballarat's Great Women (since 2008)
- Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award (since 1991)
- And many more.

Before they headed off, the club held one last birthing kit assembly with the teachers and students from Ballarat Grammar to assemble 600 birthing kits.

This partnership started with one of the club members, Sharelle and her husband David, a teacher at Grammar. It has continued for four very rewarding years. The students have held cake stalls and a variety of other activities to raise funds each year. David and Sharelle have also been involved with the Wendouree Cricket Club and their members have also contributed to the Birthing Kit fundraising, with the assembly taking place in early December each year.

Club President Catherine Taylor presented David with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Birthing Kit Foundation of Australia.



So, where are their members heading? Some will join the e-Club, one is joining the Zonta Club of Geelong and others are considering the other ZI membership options.

We thank them for their hard work and dedication of nearly 48 amazing years of service and wish them well. I know we will continue to see them in Zonta Fellowship.

Please continue to follow your fellow clubs on their social media. It all helps with our combined reach.

As this biennium comes to a close, it has been my absolute honour to be on the D23 Board as the Area 4 Director for the last 2 years. I have learnt a lot, made new friend's, travelled to the various clubs and area's, and joined in on many club milestones and celebrations. Thank you for warmly welcoming me. I am extremely proud of the Area 4 clubs and the amazing work they do.



As I say farewell as Area 4 Director, I know the clubs will be greatly supported by our incoming Area 4 Director Naidene Parry. I wish her all the best in the role

around.

Thank you again and see you

Donna Fabris
Area 4 Director

AREA 5 - TASMANIA

Zonta Club of Devonport

The Devonport club continues its active engagement with community through the

following events –



- Celebrating Earth Day by engaging in a beach cleanup
- Laying a wreath at the local Anzac Day service
- Attending the Candlelight Vigil held in May each year to honour the lives taken due to family violence

The club has identified several events for engagement in the coming months, including participation in Devonport’s “Expo of Everything” which it attracted a number of new members at last year’s event.

Zonta Club of Cradle Coast

Cradle Coast hosted the annual Area 5 meeting on 28 March 2026 with a theme of “Strategies for Engagement and Growth”. This provided members with an opportunity to share ideas about engagement with their local communities and identify opportunities to pursue grants and sponsorships as a means of funding service activities. The club has scheduled an active program as it moves into the latter part of the year.

Zonta Club of Hobart

Following the Club’s annual STEMM award event held at Government House in February, the club has been planning its activities for the remainder of the year which will feature support for the Kennerley Kids “Moving on Program”. This program provides accommodation and support for young girls who wish to continue with their studies but are unable to live at home. The Club continually monitors situations that may impact on the lives of women and girls and recently

wrote to the Tasmanian Government urging them to cap the number of guns available to any one person under the revision of the gun laws.

Zonta Club of Hobart Derwent

Hobart Derwent continues to supply breast cushions to the Royal Hobart Hospital and is in the throws of planning a birthing kit assembly day. The club has recently been focused on increasing its membership and has invited several potential members to its June meeting where a prominent guest speaker will be featured.

Thank you

Finally, I would like to thank all the clubs in Area 5 for the support they have given me as their Area Director. It has been a tough biennium in Area 5 with the loss of the Launceston club. I would like to thank Veronika Maddock for stepping up into the role of Area Director and wish her all the best for the next biennium.

Jill Taylor

Area 5 Director 2024-2026

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD -

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD - Jenni Foreman – Area 2 Director 2024-2026

The world in which we live is a noisy place which makes it challenging to ensure that the important messages are heard – both within our local communities and more broadly at a national level.

When I checked the Advertiser headlines last week the lead article in the World News section was titled “Rolling into madness for the love of cheese”

Apparently, thousands packed an English hillside as daredevils risked broken bones and humiliation to chase a rolling wheel of cheese in one of the world’s most bizarre traditions.

While I appreciate that this might be entertainment, I would contend that its value as the lead world news story is questionable.

The second headline read “Trump shows off plans for a drone port on top of White

House ballroom” which I would also contend is not news that is of any relevance. It was further down the page that a headline of “Five patients recover from rare type of Ebola virus as Brazil monitors suspected cases” tweaked my interest as being significant for our world.

From my perspective the “news” noise which constantly surrounds us is akin to the static that used to be part of listening to the radio with a rotary dial as a tuner. There was so much background noise and unless the dial was finely tuned you couldn’t hear the clear message.

As a group of passionate women who are determined to make the world a better place for women and girls how do we make sure that our message is heard through all the static that exists in the world.

Cheese rolling is static

Donald Trump’s plans for the White House is static.

Zonta says NO to Gender based violence is NOT static.

The Zonta International definition of advocacy is:

an action taken in the public interest or for the greater good with respect to advancing the status of women and girls and their human rights

Effective Advocacy is about amplifying our voices. Consider the following - is the best way to ensure that our important messages are heard above the static to use one voice on the end of a megaphone or 100 soft voices having random conversations?

Let’s consider how we use our Zonta voices in Australia and the potential for impact we have if we collaborate.

What role does Zonta Australia have in amplifying the voices of our members?

Zonta Australia is a collective voice for advocacy at a national level and represents the voices of over 2000 members in more than 100 clubs across our wide brown land.

While advocating within local communities is very effective when carried out by individual clubs, to have impact at a national level we need a strong voice which will cut through the static and communicate directly with decision makers at a federal level.

In my experience it is very difficult for individual clubs to have impact at a federal level, not because the message is not important but because it gets lost in the static.

For individual clubs to impact at a federal level would require all 100+ clubs to communicate the same message to the same decision maker at the same time. The likelihood of that happening is slim.

Instead of trying to co-ordinate 100+ clubs (equivalent to herding cats), the role of Zonta Australia is to effectively join all our voices together and deliver a loud and strong message to those who need to hear it.

The most recent Zonta Australia submission to the Treasury consultation on Perpetrators and Victims’ Superannuation Death Benefits delivered a clear

message.

That submission stated that “Zonta Australia supports the principle that individuals responsible for family or domestic violence leading to the death of a victim-survivor should not be permitted to benefit financially from that person’s superannuation death benefits.

Allowing perpetrators to receive financial gain in such circumstances is inconsistent with community expectations of justice and risks compounding the harm experienced by victim-survivors and their families.

Family and domestic violence disproportionately affects women, and the economic consequences of such violence can be profound and long-lasting. Economic abuse is increasingly recognised as a key component of coercive control, often leaving victim-survivors financially vulnerable both during and after abusive relationships.

Policies governing superannuation and financial benefits should therefore ensure that perpetrators cannot benefit financially from violence and that the financial security of families affected by violence is protected.

The conclusion to this submission stated that Zonta Australia is committed to eliminating violence against women and advancing women’s economic security, we welcome policy measures that strengthen justice, accountability and financial protection for families affected by violence.

Knowing that Zonta Australia is merging over 2000 voices at the Federal level, what is the impact of Zonta SA in South Australia in terms of advocacy.

Zonta SA represents 200 members, and we are currently focussing on the *Termination of Pregnancy Amendment Bill 2026*. This amendment proposes to ban abortions after 24 weeks and 6 days, except in cases where the pregnant person's life is at risk.

Whilst the bill differs from previous proposals, it nevertheless seeks to impose further restrictions on access to abortion and raises broader concerns about the ongoing politicisation of reproductive healthcare.

This issue is fundamentally about the right of women to make decisions regarding their own healthcare, supported by qualified medical practitioners and guided by evidence-based clinical advice. These are often complex and deeply personal circumstances and should not become recurring political battlegrounds.

Regardless of our individual opinions and beliefs, we are reminded that behind every legislative debate are real women facing complex and often deeply difficult circumstances.

We are creating resources to distribute to the 10 South Australian Zonta clubs to ensure that we are all sharing the same message at the same time to cut through the static.

In addition to what is happening on the national and state stage, individual clubs have a long history of advocating for women in their local community.

The Zonta Club of Gawler collaborates with the Gawler Domestic Violence Network to raise awareness of the need to end violence against women and girls, especially Gender Based Violence.

“Men Leading Change” and the “Remembering Courageous Women Vigil” are examples of the effective advocacy undertaken in the Gawler community.

I believe that as an organisation we are effectively “cutting through the static” which means that we are working to eliminate the noise, eliminate the distractions and eliminate the confusion to focus on what truly matters – and for us what matters is making the world a better place for women and girls.

Regardless of how many voices we combine, remember that as an individual your voice matters – your voice is a powerful tool and must be used with safety, precision, and leverage.

Jenni Foreman – Area 2 Director 2024-2026

ZONTA D23 WEBSITE

District 23 website: Club landing pages on the District 23 website are available for all clubs especially those without a webpage. Please have a look at our website to see examples from the Tasmanian clubs.

Zonta District 23 History: A little-known part of our District website. For those interested in how we came about, this link is an interested read.

<https://www.zontadistrict23.org.au/who-we-are/history/>



VICTORIAN ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

In response to a request by the **Victorian Advocacy Committee**, please see below an awareness document that highlights the symptomatic differences between Menopause and Gynaecological Cancers that they wish to share with all members of District 23.

It is easy to attribute all changes in menstrual cycles to Menopause, and particularly to Peri-menopause, when cycles are particularly erratic. You should not ignore the possibility however that changes could be due to developing pelvic cancers of the Cervix, Uterus (Endometrium), or Ovary.

Menopause

Most Common Symptoms:

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Trouble sleeping
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Mood changes
- Vaginal dryness
- Pain during sex
- Weight gain
- Belly bloating
- Joint pain
- Osteoporosis

Cancer of Cervix

Most Common Symptoms:

- Bleeding after sex
- Heavy or Irregular Bleeding

BUT often there are no symptoms, so regular Cervical Screening is VITAL

Cancer of the Uterus (Endometrium)

Most Common Symptoms:

- Bleeding between periods
- Frequent bleeding
- Heavy or prolonged bleeding

This is especially difficult to define during Peri-menopause, so always speak to your GP about changes.

Cancer of the Ovary. Common Symptoms:

- Abnormal swelling or belly bloating
- Nausea or difficulty eating / finishing meals
- Shortness of Breath

However, there are often no symptoms of early ovarian cancer.

Always speak to your GP if you are concerned.

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION - VANCOUVER JULY 11-14 2026



Convention Update – Zonta International Convention 2026

A few quick updates regarding Convention:

- 35 District 23 members are registered to attend.
- 1,520 members have registered worldwide, including 1,260 attending in person and more than 300 first-time Convention attendees.
- Monday 13 July is **Wear Orange Day** at Convention, supporting Zonta Says NO to Violence Against Women.
- Pre-Convention virtual webinar sessions for registered members commence on Monday 16 June. Further information is available at <https://www.zontaconvention.com/virtualsections>.

President Salla would like to see at least one member from every Zonta club around the world participating in Convention. If your club does not currently have a member attending, please consider registering a member virtually so your club can be part of this important global Zonta event.



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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