DISTRICT 23 RESPONSES TO ZI FIT FOR THE FUTURE – (BLUEPRINT)

JENNY KERR – D23 TREASURER

Currently D23 will run out of funds during the next 2-3 years therefore organisational change is imperative, otherwise there will need to be a huge increase in fees. District 23 needs to address the cost of the current structure.

Need to take advantages of technological options.

Australia has the capacity to be a role model in managing change for a global organisation.

A country-based organisation could alleviate many issues Zonta currently faces regarding governance, policies, finances and requirements for reporting and meetings.

Zonta currently has outdated requirements for a modern global organisational structure.

AREA 1 AND 4 – JOINT SUBMISSION

Raised questions about how the following would be managed –

- face to face contact,
- leadership and development opportunities
- whether larger clubs would be more influential
- whether changes would impact on clubs local community focus

Victorian clubs already reflect some of the proposed changes such as combined Area meetings and use of technology to improve cost and efficiency.

AREA 1 PRESIDENTS

Area 1 Presidents submitted a number of questions which contained answers presumably by Area 1 Director

The questions covered –

What governance structures will be applied to countries/territories with a differing number of members and clubs? How will the level of governance under the ZI Board be structured in an equitable manner?

How will differences such as Climate, leadership style, mileage, and culture be managed?

What will replace district conferences and Area meetings? It is imperative that the benefits of collaboration between clubs is not lost.

How will this all be funded?

AREA 2

Six-page response attached

The following is its summary.

Area 2 supports the need for Zonta to consider how it can be **fit for the future**.

However, the future of Zonta will be determined not only by changes at international level. It will be determined by whether individual members and clubs feel that Zonta is relevant, welcoming, worthwhile and capable of making a difference.

Our recommendation is therefore that the Blueprint should:

Simplify rather than complicate.
Connect rather than create distance.
Develop leaders rather than depend on them.
Welcome new generations rather than expect them to fit old models.
Strengthen clubs rather than add administration.
Encourage partnerships rather than work in isolation.
And, above all, keep Zonta's mission at the centre of every decision.

For Area 2, being **"***Fit for the Future***"** means creating a Zonta where members can say:

"I know why I am here, I know the difference I can make, I feel valued, and I can see a future for Zonta."

ZONTA CLUB OF BUNBURY

Agrees for the rationale provided in the Blueprint and says change is critical.

Supports competency-based Board approach including a younger person on the ZI Board

Supports one Board for country but need to take into account not all clubs are the same in size, funds and structure.

ZONTA CLUB OF PERTH

Supports Blueprint's central objectives of strengthening and modernizing governance, improving membership sustainability, clarifying accountability, enhancing advocacy and fundraising, streamlining communication, and establishing a stronger long-term platform for advancing Zonta's mission.

Concerned about minimizing governance arrangements may cause disadvantage to smaller countries and clubs

CLUB OF PERTH NORTHERN SUBURBS

A separate paper submitted by Irene O'Leary attached

One Zonta in Australia presents opportunities for valuable volunteer time developing resources, campaigns, and communications that could be created once and shared across Australia.

Club proposes two initiatives that would support a Zonta Australia

1. National Campaigns
2. Young Women & Emerging Leaders Network

A separate paper from Perth Northern Suburbs attached

Concerns raised about membership, finances, workload, and how structure will work in practice.

AREA 4 CLUB SUBMISSION

7 Page report attached -wide ranging commentary and questions

ZONTA CLUB OF BENDIGO

Blueprint supported in principle but need to see more detail.

Key requirements -

- must maintain strong connection between ZI and Australia
- clear national leadership
- recognition of Australia's geographical size and diversity
- ensure regional and remote clubs are not disadvantaged

Benefit of Area structure has been collaboration and sharing this must not be lost.

Need to develop pathways especially to encourage young women to join

Would like to see greater clarity on how the new structure will improve membership.

Membership recruitment needs to recognise the importance of diversity.

Suggest four principles to guide change.

- **Connection:** Preserve fellowship, geographical networks and relationships between clubs.
- **Leadership:** Provide accessible development opportunities and meaningful pathways for future leaders.
- **Ownership:** Involve clubs in shaping, implementing and reviewing the new model, with transparency in decision-making.
- **Local relevance:** Allow flexibility to meet the needs of different communities while maintaining a shared identity and purpose.

The key question is:

How can Zonta create a simpler, more responsive and sustainable structure that ensures every club, including regional clubs, has a strong voice, access to support, opportunities for leadership and a meaningful connection to Zonta International?

ZONTA CLUB OF CRADLE COAST

Agree with the logic of rationalising District and Areas

Support a national structure which will have the benefit of reducing complexity improving clarity and making the organisation easier to navigate and understand, especially for new members.

Should bring about greater use of virtual meetings and thus have environmental benefits through reduced travel.

Overall, the proposed changes are logical, practical and a positive step towards a clearer and more streamlined Zonta structure.

ZONTA CLUB OF DEVONPORT

Supports one Zonta entity for Australia on the basis that this is not an additional layer within the Zonta structure and workload must not be pushed down to clubs. Agree that representation at ZI and country level should be based on competency

Clubs must remain at the heart of Zonta. This is where the service occurs – local arrangements need to be protected.

Changes must include a mechanism for State and regional matters to be acknowledged. Also, there is a need to ensure that clubs understand and apply compliance and State based legislative requirements.

Concerns about costs and value for money for clubs/members.

New structure must acknowledge different time zones and seasonal differences between northern and southern hemispheres.

Questions

1.What specific functions will a Zonta Australia board take on, and which of today's district and area responsibilities will be removed?

2. How will clubs in regional, rural and remote Australia be heard, and how will the board stay connected with them?

3. What are the expected costs, and how will funding be shared between Zonta International, Zonta Australia and clubs?

4. How will board members be selected, and how will accountability to members be built in?

5. How will the structure support club growth, new member recruitment and retention, particularly among younger women?

6. How will Zonta Australia work with Zonta New Zealand and Pacific clubs, and secure Oceania's voice in Zonta International?

7. What is the timeline, and what decisions remain open to member input?

ZONTA CLUB OF HOBART

Supports the need for change for Zonta to flourish and grow with flatter structures, transparency and faster decision making.

In acknowledging reducing membership consideration should be given to incentives to attract younger members.

Competency based appointments to Boards is supported but it must incorporate diversity.

A smaller ZI Board must ensure that geographical differences and requirements are met.

Titles of office bearers at all levels should align with modern practices and be gender neutral.

ZI must reduce its USA-centric approach to communication, scheduling, and programming.

WENDY FORREST – CHAIR VICTORIAN ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Expressed concern about impact on proposed changes in the following -

- membership – difficulty in attracting diversity
- availability of future leaders without a middle level ‘stepping stone’ which may also cause informal networks to develop and potential for non-compliance with ZI directions and communications

Whilst congratulating ZI for reducing one level of governance workloads may be pushed down to clubs

Concern about how country structure will ensure equity and whether leaders will emerge who will be prepared to take on a more responsible role nationally.

Concern that there have been no costings applied to proposed changes especially as one of the reasons for change is reducing membership and as a consequence a financial reduction.

JILLIAN REID - ZONTA CLUB OF DEVONPORT

Changes need to ensure –

- workload not pushed down to clubs
- leadership training and succession planning
- protection for local service and traditions
- regional and rural clubs have a voice
- Clear ways for clubs to contribute and see results of advocacy

Recognise different timeframes by rotating times and recorded sessions.

An affordable rotating hybrid national conference