



ZONTA

CLUB OF
MELBOURNE
ON YARRA INC

MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL
EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

Yarra Yarns Vol. 9 Winter 2022

Free to explore!



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President Report

Welcome to a new Zonta Year & thank you for allowing me the opportunity of being President. Many thanks go to the outgoing president Julie Pincombe, who steered us through the beginnings of the covid pandemic. Who would have thought 2 years later, Zoom meetings are part of the norm? and, I for one, have become a bit more computer literate.

The majority of committee meetings are now by Zoom. Our Club Zoom meetings, mainly in winter, have afforded us speakers from afar. June saw Vanessa Fowler, based in Brisbane as Chair of the Allison Baden Clay Foundation speak to us about the work of the Foundation. In July, a former Amelia Earhart Awardee – Kalliope Vassilopoulos, gave us an insight how the Award furthered her career as aeronautical engineer & the vagaries of being a woman in a male dominated profession and also that –'cars can fly'!!!

Membership numbers remains strong as the club welcomes two new members in August: Debra Maiden and Lesley Dixon. We wish them many happy, fruitful years as Zontians. Our members are the heart of the organisation so we need to nurture them. We need to celebrate ourselves and the club does that well with the monthly Coffee meetups, Friday night Zoom get togethers, a book club and recently a Movie night when we saw "Where The Crawdads Sing" with about 30 attendees of members & visitors.

Unfortunately, it was not third time lucky for the Design Masterclass which was cancelled due to the presenter contracting covid. Thank you to all those who helped organise the event & the online raffle which together with the proceeds from the cinema night raised around \$1300! Well done!

We have many people outside of Zonta who donate their time to help the Club, such as the stalwart husbands who man the BBQ at the Bunnings Sausage Sizzle and the ladies who sew breast cushions and drainage bags. We hope to say "Thank

you" to these "Honzones" at a social gathering in October. And the younger people help out too, with a recent "Birthing Kit Assembly Day" at Xavier College.

Grants from various sources are helping to propel the club forward. For example, the club is applying to the Community Bank Windsor (Bendigo) for equipment such as banners, a marquee and storage boxes. Also a "Safe & Equal" grant, if successful will help towards the promotion of the 16 Days of Activism in November.

Several of our members travelled to Hamburg for the recent Zonta Convention and we are looking forward to the report from our delegate Jennifer Marriott. We will not have to travel so far next time as in 2024 the ZI Convention is to be held in Brisbane.

Remember our new tag line.... **"Build a Better World for Women & Girls"**.

Gillian Wilton, President



A busy few months for Zontians! From top left - clockwise: Birthing Kit Preparation, installation of District 23 Board, 2021 award winners - Women in Technology (Rifat Shams) and Local Service Project (Shakti Australia), induction of new members Lesley Dixon and Debra Maiden, 2022 Young Women in Public Affairs award winner Mia Solomon.

Birthing Kits project with Xavier College (10 June)

Sharon Karasmanis, Julie Pincombe, Sandra Burns and Sue Lees helped Yr 12 students at Xavier College assemble 200 Birthing Kits. Sue and Sandra explained the history and importance of the project.

The boys volunteered to come on a pupil-free day, and there was a high attendance. Thankyou to Rasika Crowley, Ignatian Service Coordinator, for her excellent preparation and coordination of the activity.

The activity was an eye-opener for the boys who were interested in what each piece of the kit was used for. We did find that the boys had a natural advantage, in terms of strength, in getting the air out of the plastic bags and getting 100 kits into the box, which is always a challenge!



Students at Xavier College were involved with ZCMoY last year for the 16 Days of Activism 'Zonta Says No to Violence Against Women'. Xavier College students have been participating in the 16 Days of activism for a number of years.

The boys at the birthing kit assembly were well aware that educating girls was an economic and social solution to helping poor countries.

We look forward to working with the boys and staff at Xavier College again in the future.

Donation to Ukrainian Refugees

Sharon Karasmanis' colleague Kay Forde, a Bridge tutor from U3A Banyule, had a donation from her class of \$500 for the Ukrainian refugees. They went to the Good Guys in Preston where not only did they give excellent prices for the goods, they donated another \$100 worth of items. These included toasters, sandwich presses, blenders, fryers, rice cooker and a slow cooker. The staff were very generous with their time and enthusiasm. The goods were delivered to Bev Devidas to add to the generous donations as part of the small service project for Ukrainian refugees.



Zonta International Hamburg Convention

Jennifer Marriot attended the 2022 Zonta International Hamburg Convention as the official delegation of ZCMOY. In addition she was the proxy delegate for two Zonta Clubs in Tasmania and you can imagine that she was kept very busy trying to manage three electronic voting devices during the official business of the Convention. Jennifer reflected to ZCMOY club members that the highlight of the convention was that she got to really appreciate and value the work and reach of Zonta at an international level.

There were about 2000 people in attendance at the Convention plus 500 virtual attendees from around the world. The next convention will be in Brisbane 2024 and all are encourage to attend.

Accompanying Jennifer at the Convention were fellow members Kay Stewart, Sandra Burns and Jasmine Koch.

On behalf of ZCMoY, Jasmine received a US\$100 donation from Margot Hoffman for the birthing kits.

Margot is a member of ZC Columbus Ohio and was a member of ZC Melbourne on Yarra for 2 years in the early 2000s when she was transferred to Melbourne for work. We are so excited that Margot has been elected to the International Nominating Committee for 2022-2024!



From Left to Right: Jasmine Koch and Margot Hoffman



District 23 attendees



Jennifer and Kay at the Gala Dinner

Human Rights Day at Ivanhoe Girls Grammar School (27 May)

Sue Lees and Sharon Karasmanis presented two Zonta International workshops for the Year 10 Human Rights Conference, explaining Zonta International mission and projects at international, district and club levels.

This Conference was co-led by Year 10 Human Rights elective students at Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar school, with senior boys from Camberwell Grammar School, and also partnering with Liberty Victoria, Australia's longest-standing human rights organisation. There were also students and staff from Lauriston Girls' School, Star of the Sea, and Kingswood College. Eyes were opened as incredibly powerful speakers, including Julian Burnside AO QC, and Daye Gang, a woman from Myanmar and Jessie Taylor, a former Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar student, shared their expertise, insight and lived experience to ensure the ideals of freedom, respect, equality and dignity are protected in peoples' lives.



Jessie Taylor

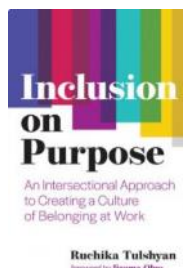
Jessie Taylor, a former student of Ivanhoe Girls' Grammar School and now a barrister with extensive experience in Human Rights opened the conference by sharing **Eleanor Roosevelt's** challenge for each of us to be advocates of human rights, asking us all to consider...

Where, after all, do universal human rights begin? In small places, close to home—so close and so small that they cannot be seen on any maps of the world. Yet they are the world of the individual person; the neighbourhood he lives in; the school or college he attends; the factory, farm, or office where he works. Such are the places where every man, woman, and child seek equal justice, equal opportunity, equal dignity without discrimination. Unless these rights have meaning there, they have little meaning anywhere. Without concerted citizen action to uphold them close to home, we shall look in vain for progress in the larger.

Podcast "Inclusion on Purpose"

Inclusion on Purpose: An Intersectional Approach to Creating a Culture of Belonging at Work is a transformative book.

In it, Ruchika, a journalist and inclusion strategist, centres the experience of women of colour and provides a framework of intentional actions—on both the individual and the organizational level—to neutralize workplace bias and foster environments that are diverse, equitable, and inclusive.



Listen to the episode:

<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/inclusion-on-purpose/>

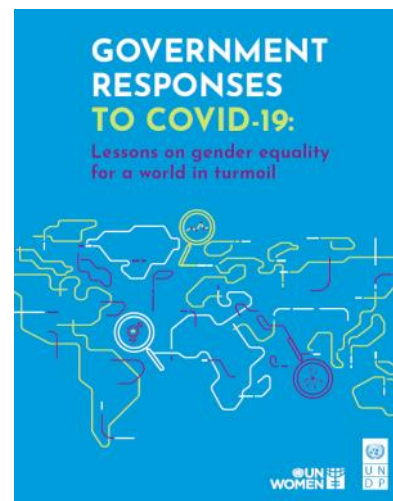
News from Women UN Round Network

The overlapping impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, accelerating climate disasters, and geopolitical conflict are a threat to gender equality and women's rights across the globe. This report from UN Women and UNDP shows what governments can do now to prevent further rollbacks and recover lost ground, while enhancing resilience and preparedness for future shocks.

Drawing on a unique global dataset of close to 5,000 measures adopted by 226 countries and territories in response to COVID-19, the report finds that, overall, government responses paid insufficient attention to gender dynamics. At the same time, instances of innovation and learning hold important lessons for gender-responsive policymaking in times of crisis.

For the first time, the report provides analysis on the factors that led to a strong gender response, generating key lessons for governments:

- In a context of growing threats to democratic and open societies, strong institutions proved critical for an inclusive gender response.
- Feminist movements and women's rights organizations provided an early warning system on the gender impacts of the pandemic, particularly on violence against women and girls.
- Women's representation and leadership in executive positions, parliaments, and public administration was critical for translating feminist advocacy into policy action.
- Countries with robust public services and gender-responsive social protection systems were in a better position to respond, while others had to improvise, under pressure, and with varying degrees of success.
- Digital tools sustained feminist activism online and enabled policy innovations and rapid support roll-out, reaching groups of women often left behind in "normal times".
- Real-time gender data on the impact of the pandemic on women and girls was critical to making the case for gender-sensitive response measures, as was tracking what worked in government responses.



Links to the above article:

Direct Link to Full 172-Page 2022 Report: [Government-responses-to-COVID-19-Lessons-on-gender-equality-for-a-world-in-turmoil-en_0.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/government-responses-to-covid-19-lessons-on-gender-equality-for-a-world-in-turmoil-en_0.pdf) (unwomen.org)

Link to 15-Page Summary: [Government-responses-to-COVID-19-Lessons-on-gender-equality-for-a-world-in-turmoil-Executive-summary-en.pdf](https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/government-responses-to-covid-19-lessons-on-gender-equality-for-a-world-in-turmoil-executive-summary-en.pdf) (unwomen.org)

Homelessness in Older Women

In Victoria on any given night there are approximately 1,100 people sleeping rough, making up around five per cent of the state's homeless population. Rough sleeping is an unsafe situation for anyone to be in – whether that involves sleeping in a car, on the street, in a park, or in a derelict building.

Homelessness can be caused by poverty, unemployment or by a shortage of affordable housing, or it can be triggered by family breakdown, mental illness, sexual assault, addiction, financial difficulty, gambling, or social isolation. Domestic violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Australia. The 2016 Census found that 24,817 people were recorded as homeless. The ABS will release the 2021 Census Estimates of Homelessness in early to mid-2023.

The key message from the 2021 Victorian Government Inquiry into Homelessness states that homelessness is one of the most complex and distressing expressions of disadvantage and social inclusion in our society and requires immediate attention by government. Further, that the Inquiry found that homelessness in women was increasing.



On any given night,
116,000 Australians are
without a home

Support Homelessness Week 2022
1-7 August
homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Currently the sector is crisis focused.

Only large organisations are government funded, and they count beds occupied but only for short term, they are not offering long term solutions.

There has not been a co-ordinated plan for addressing the structural issues that cause homelessness. The situation is particularly impacted by an increasingly casualised, insecure, and competitive labour force work and income support policies. Since the beginning of covid pandemic, we have seen the impact of casualised work related to women, such as in the childcare and hospitality employment sectors. However, the federal government's Job Keeper policy during the first phase of covid in 2020 to early 2021 supported this group in particular.

An emerging and ongoing difficulty of working in the homelessness sector is the increasing problems with locating, maintaining secure and affordable housing in achieving equitable access to housing. Funding has not been expanded proportionately in existing homelessness services such as Supported Assistance and Accommodation Programs, specialist Homelessness Services, Assistance with Care and Housing for the Aged Programs, or the Commonwealth and State Government Housing Agreements.

A 70-year-old woman rang a radio station to share her story of homelessness. She had ceased work, her husband had died, she had had back surgery and was disconnected from friends. Her landlord of 12 years increased the rent from \$350 per week to \$400. She offered to pay \$370 per week but she was evicted. After living in her car, she moved to a motel as she did not feel safe, and she was cold.

There was an outpouring of support for the caller.

But what this story highlights are

- issues around access to technology for older people. Rental agencies and peak housing support agencies require an online application.
- changed demographics- elderly women homeless following divorce or death of spouse, drift slowly into difficulty as social connections disappear
- they are lost with managing living costs, lack of social programs to work with elderly people and thus become part of the poverty experience.

It is a basic human right to have access to secure and safe housing. What we know is that:

- Housing stress directly affects the health, education, employment and emotional wellbeing of individuals and families.
- It impacts upon both their current and future wellbeing and life chances, and an extension of this is the impact on their children.

What can Zontians do?

- Listen to lived experiences of people who have and are experiencing homelessness.
- Understand the reasons behind homelessness and that it is not focused on individual deficits but rather from the perspective of systemic on-going deficits related to government policy, economic market forces, the way communities are structured and function.
- Encourage society to focus on the wellbeing, and safety of vulnerable people and especially elderly women.
- Support local community services who are directly and indirectly working with women through their services such as family violence, mental health services, single parent families and children's services.
- Support services for single elderly people with the hope of providing material support and advocating on behalf of these services for vulnerable women and their children linked into such services and resources.

Area Advocacy will focus on

- Ensuring women are not evicted into homelessness
- Advocating for an increase public housing
- Supportive housing to be the centre piece of government plans to address homelessness.



To end homelessness
we need a plan

- to make housing affordable for all.
- to provide the support people need.
- to end family violence.

Support Homelessness Week 2022
1-7 August
homelessnessaustralia.org.au

Sources: Council to Homeless Persons (CHP)-Parity-Homelessness, Victorian Government Inquiry into Homelessness 2021. Housing Vic, Peak bodies such as Safe Steps, Launch Housing, Everybody's Home.

Article by Glenda Lapsley and Beverley Devidas

Zonta International News

Remarkable Women Powerful Stories

Zontian Sangya Malla, the superintendent of Nepal Police and chief of the MONUSCO Police Health and Environment Unit (which she helped establish in 2020), shares her powerful story .

Find out more at:

https://www.zonta.org/Web/News_Events/Articles/Remarkable_police_officer_shares_her_powerful_story.aspx

Upcoming Events - Save the Date

ZCMOY Bunnings BBQ fundraiser

27 August, 8.30am to 4.30am

@ Bunnings Hawthorn



Women in Afghanistan Forum

8 September, 6.30pm

@ Ivanhoe Library and Cultural Club

Tickets: Adults \$20, Students \$10

Hear from a panel of women from Afghanistan women on the current issues impacting on women and their education, and what we can do to support.

Jessie Taylor, a barrister with extensive experience in Human Rights will be chairing the panel.

All funds raised will go to a women's employment and empowerment centre in Afghanistan.



Movie Night Fundraiser

26 October, 6.30pm

@ Kino Theatre, Collins Place

Tickets: \$25 (Including Lucky Door Prize). Tickets Bendigo Bank BSB 633 00 Acct 162221642 (Ref: Movie/Name)

Mrs Harris Goes to Paris tells the story of a windowed cleaning lady in 1950s London who falls madly in love with a couture Dior dress, and decides that she must have one of her own. She embarks on an adventure to Paris which will change not only her own outlook, but the very future of the House of Dior.

All funds raised support Zonta projects for women and girls.



International & Australia

5-11 September Women's Health Week

7 September Indigenous Literacy Day

8 September International Literacy Day

17-23 October Week Without Violence

25 Nov - 10 Dec 16 Days of Activism

No Words Required...

