



**ZONTA**  
 CLUB OF  
 MELBOURNE  
 ON YARRA INC  
 MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL  
 EMPOWERING WOMEN  
 THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

# Yarra Yarns

November 2023



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our club, and I look forward to us all doing more 'visibility' next year!

Our club membership has continued to grow. We recently welcomed two new members: Elisa Luu, who has transferred from the Zonta Club of Maryborough, and Caitlin Johns, who has transferred from the Zonta Club of Brisbane. It's a pleasure to have you both as part of our club.

I would also like to celebrate the continued involvement and dedication of our long-standing members who were honoured at our August and October meetings.

- 5 years - Wendy Cameron and Amritaa Singh
- 10 years - Julie Pincombe
- 15 years - Devika Fernando and Sharon Nelson-Kelly
- 25 years - Jasmine Koch and Gillian Wilton
- 35 years - Christine Fitzherbert

## President's Report

A theme running throughout the new Zonta International's Strategic Plan 2023-30 is **visibility**. At both an international and club level, Zonta must increase its visibility to increase Zonta's credibility and visibility on issues facing women and girls in the world. While there's always more we could be doing, this year has seen us make an excellent start on increasing Zonta Melbourne on Yarra's visibility.

By erecting our new Bendigo Bank sponsored marquee and banners twice at the Alphinton Football club over the football season, supporting the Glen Waverly Lions Club by 'manning' their op shop for two weeks (and raising funds for our club while doing so), achieving sponsorship from Calan Wealth for our Young Women in Public Affairs Award, participating in the Safe Steps Walk Against Family Violence, organising external events such as our Forum for Women in Iran, working with schools to pack birthing kits and, of course, cooking sausages at Bunnings, we make connections with different groups of people, get to know allies and create the possibility of future partnerships.

Every time we make a new connection and participate in community activities, we increase the visibility of Zonta and



At our October meeting, we also farewelled one of our longest serving members, Kay Stewart, who is moving to the Gold Coast. Kay was a driving force behind the establishment of Zonta in Australia and has been a key member of our club for many years. She will be sorely missed (more on that in this newsletter).

Our club meetings have been both enjoyable and industrious! Guest speakers included our 2023 Young Women in Public Affairs winner Phoebe Burke at our August meeting, where we also assembled 200 birthing kits.

The November meeting was opened by our 2023 Frances Quinn Arts Encouragement Award winner, cellist Chiara Kelle from the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School. Her marvellous performance was a delight.



*Chiara Kelle - Frances Quin Arts Encouragement Award winner*

Carlton Respects representative, Julie Stoneham, then spoke on the club's schools' program where boys and girls are taught how to manage emotions and respect each other through an interactive online program, supported by footy stars also coming to the classroom.



*Guest Speaker Julie Stoneham (Carlton Respects)*

The December meeting will be our Pamper Pack meeting where we make up pamper packs for the Salvation Army's Mary Anderson Family Violence Service. There's always great support in the way of donations for this event and we are packing more each year!

After that, we will have our summer break and I wish you all a restful and relaxing festive season!

**Caroline Kettle, President**

## Local Project Award 2023

\$1000 has been awarded for 2023 to Friday Night School, and \$1000 will be awarded to Friday Night School in 2024 thanks to the generosity of Bendigo Bank, Windsor Branch, in giving us money to put towards a local community project.

Friday Night School was set up 25 years ago to help students from non-English speaking backgrounds, particularly recently arrived migrant and refugee students. Each Friday evening during term time over 300 students meet at St Ignatius Parish Hall in Richmond and participate in the program.



Friday Night School is a peer-to-peer learning model, which means that students from the participating schools help the Friday Night School students with their studies. Tutors' assistance extends from VCE level subjects, such as Maths Methods, to helping prep students recognise their letters and word sounds. Many Friday Night School students have achieved impressive VCE result, continuing their studies at university and other further education institutions.

Since its inception Friday Night school has evolved to include a Scholarship and Bursary program, FSN Online (particularly relevant during the covid lockdown), Wednesday Night Tutoring, FNS Reading Program, an adult literacy group and an annual camp and an end-of-the-year party.

The ZCMOY small project award will specifically be used to help continue funding the adult literacy group. This program mainly educates migrant women. Qualified teachers provide one-to-one tuition to parents while their children are doing Friday Night School. Very often they have had little education in their home country and language. They are desperate for their children to do well at school but don't comprehend the system and teaching. The women are often the primary caregivers and income earners in the family - helping them with English pays back in improved opportunities for themselves and their families. They also become very driven to try to provide better opportunities for their girls.

The adult literacy classes fit the Zonta effort to 'Build a Better World for Women and Girls'. The English for Parents program allows the women participating the opportunity to learn English, which empowers them in Australian Society, helps them comprehend their own children's education and gives them access to education themselves. The English for Parents program also helps with job seeking.

We look forward to learning more about Friday night School and the English for Parents program at a ZCMOY meeting.

**Article by Sue Lees**



## Farewell to Kay Stewart

At ZCMOY's October General Meeting, the Club bid farewell to long-time club member and District 23 Governor, Kay Stewart. Kay is moving to Queensland where she will finish her biennium term, long distance. Kay will also be joining the newly formed Southern Australian E-Club.



L-R: Kay Stewart, Caroline Kettle and Christine Fitzherbert

### Farewell speech by written by Christine Fitzherbert, Gail Neil and Jasmine Koch

It has been difficult to adequately acknowledge and farewell Kay Stewart.

Jasmine, Gail, and I (Christine) felt that there is so much to say about Kay, but where do we start – perhaps the real message is that Kay has been a wonderful member of ZMoY.

Kay has contributed to Zonta in so many ways – just to give you an idea her bio lists the following:

- Joined Zonta in October 1971 in Brisbane
- 1990's Zonta Melbourne Yarra was fortunate to welcome her as a transferee from QLD

And so, when ZMoY came into being in June 2004 – Kay was very much a strong and involved member. She soon took on so many of ZMoY offices.

- Assist. Treasurer 2004-2006
- Director 2008, 2011-13; 2016-18.
- Secretary 2014
- Joint Secretary 2017

Kay became even more involved at Area and District level.

- ZI D23 Chair Service & Advocacy 2006-08
- ZI D23 Coordinator Young Women in Public Affairs 2012-14; 2016-18
- D23 Area 1 Director 2014-16
- ZI D23 UN Committee Chairman 2016-2020
- D23 Lt Governor 2020-2022
- D23 Membership Chair 2020-2022
- D23 Governor 2022-2024

Kay has given so much to her Clubs, to the Area and to the District. When Jasmine and I were trying to find the right words to speak about Kay, we suddenly realised how difficult that is because Kay has been such a rock to our Club and to Zontians. Kay has presence, warmth, and charisma and when she is

present, we all feel a little calmer and more relaxed, the world feels right when Kay is around. When Kay has been around, things just feel better. She exhibits a calmness, serenity, empathy, and a sense of integrity and loyalty to Zonta, our members, her friends, and mostly us.

We all have shared moments with Kay – I can recall hours trawling through archive material in the Beaulieu Library at Melbourne University as we attempted to put together a cohesive history of ZMoY in preparation for our 50th anniversary celebrations. Her good humour made this bearable whilst I grumped my way through this.

Other moments – sitting around her table as part of a group working through Zonta business, photos, archives, and just enjoying being with each other.

In all of this we must acknowledge Peter, who was always at Kay's back, always cheerfully friendly and who welcomed us as much as Kay did into their home – and whose culinary skills are legendary.

We will all miss Kay, but we will also miss Peter. We will miss Kay as our friend, our Governor, a colleague, and fellow member – and we will miss Kay and Peter who have shared so many good times with us.

Our good wishes go with you.



## Women Taking Climate Action Award 2023

The Women Taking Climate Action (WTCA) award recognises a woman (women) whose climate actions contribute towards climate change innovation and engage with women.

At the 2023 D23 conference it was passed that this award, from 2024, will become a D23 project and all District 23 Clubs will be invited to contribute towards the cost of the award which is usually \$1000.00

For 2023 we have co-winners who will each receive \$1000, due to a generous 'one-off' donation which has enabled each winner to receive \$1000.

Both women share a strong connection to 'caring for country' – the essence of and reason for caring for climate action. Both are excellent role models, emphasise advocacy, community education and add a high level of scientific and academic understanding to their work.

Alana Mountain, from Victoria, is the Campaign Coordinator of the Forest Collective. With her award we can celebrate and acknowledge 10 years of determination and dedication to protect the beautiful flora and fauna of the Central Highlands of Victoria. Her efforts have helped culminate in the decision by the Victorian government to end the logging of native forests by 1st January 2024; a decision that will help protect the densest carbon-rich plant on earth – Mountain Ash.



Alana has encouraged women to become tree climbers, an activity that was largely considered male. This supported the collection of data to show the effects of logging on native wildlife – particularly the endangered Greater Glider. This research was used in a legal case to show successfully that the logging industry had not been taking the necessary studies and steps to protect the Greater Glider. This legal decision managed to ultimately shut down the logging of native forests in Victoria due to the legal, economic, and political ramifications of the decision.

Dr/Professor Anne Poelina is a Nyikina Warrwa woman from the Kimberley Region of Western Australia. She is a community leader, human and Earth rights advocate. She is linked to the land and water of the Kimberley Region and has for many years helped heal country, climate, and communities in this region.



Anne is currently a Professor and Research Fellow at Notre Dame University WA, Charles Darwin University NT, and ANU. She is Chair of the Martuwarra Fitzroy Council and a member and director of the Kimberley Land Council and is involved with the Murray Darling Basin as its inaugural indigenous member on the Advisory Committee on Social, Economic and Environmental Sciences.

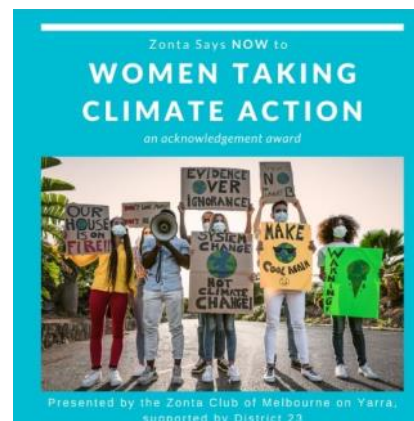
Anne is recognised globally for her work with climate and water justice and with First Nations women – giving them opportunities to have a voice and leadership opportunities. She sees her role as protecting 'Mother Earth' and the importance of indigenous knowledge in being able to do this. She says that traditional women's law is about maintaining and protecting the spirit of the country, and that is central to protecting humanity now. Anne promotes two-way science, which connects Western and indigenous knowledge.

Together they express Alana's ethos on her CV:

'I acknowledge First Nations Justice, gender equality and environmentalism as the basis of my work. I believe in connecting people back to the land to protect and conserve it for future generations. I strive for a healthier planet for all inhabitants.'

As Zonta members we are pleased to be able to acknowledge two outstanding women.

**Article by Sue Lees**





## Zonta Says Now - Amy Steel

From bad does comes good – sometimes!

Psychology tells us that negative experiences can have a larger impact on your life than positive ones. Undoubtedly true, but some amazing individuals can turn their negative life-changing experiences into positive impacts for the world.

Amy Steel is one of these people. Currently the head of office and global subject lead for Climate Risk and Adaptation at Engie Impact, a French based company working to provide sustainable energy solutions and aiming to support a transition to a carbon neutral economy in Australia. Her career has delved deep into both mitigation and adaptation over the last decade.



On the mitigation side she has undertaken numerous projects exploring both an energy optimised mix to decarbonisation and the pathway required to maintain a safe and habitable climate at either a site, city, country, or regional level. On the adaptation side Amy has led the development of a suite of tools to understand, model and quantify the financial impact from a changing climate on site-specific operations.

Amy is immensely passionate about climate change and reducing emissions rapidly to protect the health of ecosystems which she takes great joy from – like coral reefs and snow-covered mountains. Amy does volunteer advocacy work for groups like Sports Environment Alliance and Front Runners as well as the global group Eco Athletes and it is her involvement in national level sport which provoked Amy's interest in climate change.

Amy was a highly talented member of national netball teams. Playing in Adelaide she collapsed after a netball game in 39 degrees of heat.

Even though the match was indoors the cooling system was not working well and Amy suffered a heat stroke collapse after the game. Before and after the game, she had stood in the sun signing autographs and she had played the whole match as goal defense, the physically most intensive position of the game.

Initially she expected to recover quickly but the heat stroke had caused permanent damage to her body, and she was unable to resume any exercise, let alone A level netball. Her daily life was impacted, and everything became a huge chore.

This led Amy to question – 'How much heat is too much heat for the human body? How much will increases in temperature affect the human body and the world?' What can we do to help reduce the impacts of climate change'.

Professionally Amy now works in climate change mitigation and adaptation. Academically, following a commerce degree, she has completed a master's degree where she worked with the Wudjari Noongar people in Southern Western Australia to explore the interrelationship between fire management techniques, catastrophic fire risk and the changing climate. Her current PhD is about 'Managing Threats to Healthy Country in the Recherche Archipelago in WA.'

Amy is on the current cohort for the [Homeward Bound program](#) and hopes to travel to Antarctica with other women in STEMM. The Homeward Bound STEMM leaders' program is creating a diverse group of women leaders with STEMM backgrounds to help create a sustainable world.

Walking the talk, Amy is presently building a sustainable house near Margaret River WA.

It is fantastic to have had the opportunity to hear Amy's personal story and to see how she has since worked towards creating a sustainable future for herself, Australia, and the Earth!

To join in the online Zonta Says Now D23 meetings go to: <https://zontasaysnow.org.au/think-tank/> and send an email to [info@zontasaysnow.org.au](mailto:info@zontasaysnow.org.au) requesting a link for the meeting.

The next meeting is Saturday 16 December 4pm AEST for 90 minutes.

**Article by Sue Lees**

## OPA Information Sessions

The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) OPA runs regular sessions on topics including guardianship and administration, medical treatment decision-making and powers of attorney. Bookings not required; [just join on the day at 10am](#).

Find out more about topics and session times: <https://www.publicadvocate.vic.gov.au/opa-s-work/information-sessions/11-general-content/346-opa-weekly-information-sessions>

### November 2023

Date	Topic
Thur 2 Nov	Frequently asked questions - Guardianship and administration
Tue 7 Nov	Enduring powers of attorney
Tue 14 Nov	Medical treatment decision-making
Tue 21 Nov	Guardianship and administration
Tue 28 Nov	Frequently asked questions - Powers of attorney and medical treatment decisions
Thur 30 Nov	Frequently asked questions - Guardianship and administration

## Women in Afghanistan through the eyes of Women in Neurology

Women in Neurology are a group of female neurologists who support each other, organise learning opportunities and aim to help the world through their own skills and support.

One of the neurologists is from Afghanistan and is gravely concerned about the plight of her family and all women in Afghanistan. Anna Balabanski, a neurologist who attended the ZCMOY women in Afghanistan session (and Women in Iran) decided that the topic was close to the hearts and minds of women in neurology.



On 9 August, the group met together with the same panel as ZCMOY, with Nicki Lees as Chair (Nicki chaired the Women in Iran panel). The panel spoke about the situation of women in Afghanistan, including women's health. Something that I had not realised is that women cannot leave their house without a male escort. Many males have been killed or left. The women cannot go out to access medical services or get medication. There are still a few female doctors, as health is an area where women are allowed to have heavily restricted jobs. The female doctors must always have a male escort. This makes examining patients and other aspects of their work extremely difficult.

**Article by Sue Lees**

## YWPA presentation to Phoebe Bourke at Sacre Coeur

The Young Woman in Public Affairs Award winner for 2023 is Phoebe Bourke from Sacre Coeur Glen Iris. Phoebe is also the D23 winner and an international winner. We had the delight of hearing Phoebe speak about her personal concerns, particularly regarding females, at the August meeting. Phoebe was accompanied on the evening by her mother - Rachel, and Deputy Principal of Sacre Coeur - Caroline Brown. Phoebe will again speak at the D23 Conference in Bunbury.

Each year the YWPA attracts outstanding young women who are great youth leaders of their communities, and who clearly have the ability and ambition to contribute positively to humanity throughout their lives.



Kay Stewart, Julie Pincombe, and Sue Lees attended a Sacre Coeur assembly in July to present the ZCMOY award. Phoebe will receive her international award at the Bunbury conference. Phoebe has received \$A1000 from ZCMOY and will receive \$US5000 from Zonta International.

**Article by Sue Lees**

## Zonta Club of Ballarat 45th Year Anniversary

Sandra Burns and Jasmine Koch joined Zonta Club of Ballarat to celebrate its 45th year anniversary. Past International President (PIP) Val Sarah was the Charter President of the ZC Ballarat and on this day also received her 45 years of Zonta membership badge. Val was International President 1998-2000 and her ZI Convention was held in Hawaii. Val received an AM in 2001 for her work in the community, advancement of women and leadership.



*Sandra Burns and Jasmine Koch attended as ZCMOY representatives*



*L-R: President Catherine Taylor & PIP Val Sarah*

## Vida Goldstein (1869 - 1949)

I was recently on a tour of the Parliamentary Gardens and discovered a small plaque dedicated to Vida Goldstein.

My further investigations led me to some more information published by The Victorian Government website, and reads as follows: "One of the leading advocates for women's rights in Victoria was Melbourne-born suffragist Vida Goldstein. Throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, Goldstein campaigned strongly for women's equality, including universal suffrage and equal pay for equal work."

When Goldstein began her career in the 1870s women had no right to buy property, so Vida lobbied for a change to that law. She also ran a co-ed primary school, founded the monthly publication Women's Sphere, launched the weekly publication The Women's Voter, and was a Founding member of the National Council of Women.



In 1903 Goldstein became the first woman in the British Empire to stand for election in a national parliament. She tried five times over 14 years to be elected to the Senate, with her last attempt at a seat in the House of Representatives in 1917. But while voting numbers showed her increasing popularity, she was never elected to office. Vida refused to join a party but sympathised deeply with the cause of working people." In 1984 a federal electorate in Victoria was named Goldstein and the seat is currently held by Zoe Daniel MP. Zoe has made a submission to Melbourne City Council, for a statue to honour Vida and is waiting for a decision within a few weeks.

**Article by Julie Pincombe**

## 2023 Nobel Peace Prize Awarded to Narges Mohammadi

On October 6 the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded Narges Mohammadi, an imprisoned Iranian human rights activist. The prize was awarded 'for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all.' Her brave struggle has come with tremendous personal and health costs. Altogether, the Islamic Republic of Iran regime has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times, and sentenced her to a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes.

In the 1990s, she studied physics before working as an engineer and becoming an advocate for equality and women's rights as well as campaigning to abolish the death penalty. The 51-year-old is also a writer and deputy director of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre, Tehran.

In 2011, she was arrested for the first time for her efforts to assist incarcerated activists and their families. Accused of 'spreading propaganda', Narges is now serving 11 years in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison: the prison where Australian academic, Kylie Moore-Gilbert, was also held. There, she works to oppose the conditions inflicted on her and fellow female inmates, specifically the use of torture.

When the chair of the Norwegian Nobel Committee announced Narges Mohammadi as the winner of the peace prize, she recited a slogan associated with the Iranian women's rights movement: 'Women, life, freedom'.

In a letter of thanks smuggled out of prison, Narges wrote that the news of her Nobel prize had been met with cries from her cellmates of 'Woman, Life, Freedom' adding 'I am grateful to all of you and urge you to support the people of Iran until the final victory... The strength of this movement lies in the agency of Iranian women. We assuredly know what we want far better than what we do not want. We believe in it, commit to it, and are certain of victory!'



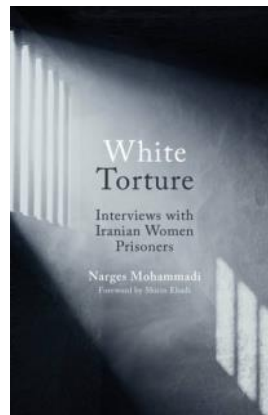
On November 6, Narges sent a message from Evin Prison informing her family that she has started a hunger strike. Days earlier, Mohammadi's family described her as suffering from blockages in three veins and lung pressure. Despite that, they said, prison officials refused to take her to the hospital due to her refusal to wear the hijab. On 10 November, after being transferred to the hospital without wearing the compulsory hijab and returning to the women's ward, she ended her hunger strike.

**Article by Caroline Kettle**

## READ: White Torture

Narges Mohammadi is also the author of *White Torture*, in which fourteen women share their experiences of imprisonment: harassment and beatings by guards, total blindfolding and denial of medical treatment. Angry interrogators threaten their families and lie about their whereabouts.

*'White Torture is a must-read for anyone concerned with human rights in Iran. A gripping, moving and utterly shocking account of the horrific abuse suffered by female political prisoners at the hands of the Iranian regime, Narges Mohammadi's interviews with her fellow detainees provide an invaluable window into the capricious and cruel world of Iran's prison system.'* - Kylie Moore-Gilbert, author of *The Uncaged Sky*.



## LISTEN: No Place Like Home

Many of us have observed a new romance from afar and felt uncomfortable. But what's the difference between simply not liking someone's partner and suspecting something sinister is going on? What about when it's your new partner?

Research tells us that more than half of all victims and survivors reach out to family and friends first.\* Whether you're concerned about the wellbeing of a loved one or interrogating your own safety in a relationship, this season dives into the complex nuances of the warning signs of domestic abuse.

From love bombing and gaslighting to isolation and financial control, season two of *There's No Place Like Home* podcast will become a practical resource helping you interrogate the relationships in your life.

<https://www.futurewomen.com/theresnoplacelikehome/#listen>

**Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra would like to thank the following for their support:**

