



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

Yarra Yarns

March 2026



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To publicise the 16 days of Activism this year regular postings were made on social media and a number of members attended the Walk Against Family violence. makes several awards. These awards provide encouragement and recognition of outstanding young women.

Our main activity was a screening of the film 'Shayda' a 2023 Australian drama film written, directed and co-produced by Noora Niasari. Inspired by Niasari's childhood experiences. The story follows an Iranian immigrant woman in Australia who raised her young daughter as the two live in a women's shelter in Melbourne, while also attempting to divorce her abusive husband. Yaz, the actual Shayda, answered many questions relating to what happened to her. All those who attended were visibly moved by both the film, and her discussion of the events depicted in the movie. Thanks Sue Lees and helpers for the effort involved in organising the screening.



President's Report

Each Year the Club Congratulates to the winner of the ZCMOY Women in STEM award – Adele Pentland, and runner-up Jasmine Wilson. They were both outstanding applications and very worthy of the award.

The winner, Adele has completed a Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Geology. During her research she described two new Australian dinosaurs – Ferrodraco and Haliskia, which generated more than 325 media items reaching a potential audience of 2.5 million people in just 16 days. Both are on permanent public display, with Ferrodraco viewed by 270,000+ visitors since October 2019. Her long-term vision is to continue advocating for inclusivity and equity in STEM, while mentoring students and fostering international collaborations. She plans to shift her research focus from describing new species to a multidisciplinary approach, examining how past ecosystems have responded to elevated atmospheric CO2 and increased ocean surface temperatures, to determine how current biodiversity may adapt to climate change. The runner up, Jasmine, completed her PhD in immunology. Her research decodes stories about our health using artificial intelligence (AI) to uncover patterns of disease that are too small or complex for the human eye to see.

By revealing these hidden clues, her work helps doctors make more accurate diagnoses and guides researchers toward new targets for treatment and to improve healthcare and patient outcomes.

Our December meeting, as usual, involved members packing 'pamper packs' to support the Salvation Army's Supported Accommodation and After-Hours Crisis Response Services for women fleeing domestic violence. These packs support larger donations of products, such as the underwear provided by Hanes.

Thanks to Sharon Karasmanis and Bev Devidas for their efforts in negotiating with Natio and Hanes for items for Pamper Packing. Sharon has purchased items from Natio at heavily discounted prices and Bev has secured a whole pallet of underwear items from Hanes. This will certainly be of great benefit to women fleeing domestic violence.

Jennifer Marriott, President



Zonta First Nations young Woman's Leadership Award 2025

The Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra was thrilled to present an exciting new award to a graduating student, who has made a significant contribution to the Worawa College community during her years of study.

The Young Woman's Leadership Award is one of many Service and Advocacy awards that Zonta Clubs across the globe support, to contribute to the Zonta International vision to 'build a better world for women and girls.

This inaugural First Nations Young Woman's Leadership award is for a student who has demonstrated service and commitment to the College, exhibited leadership amongst her peers, and shown determination and resilience to complete Yr 12.

The winner receives an initial \$500 and a further \$500 within the next 12 months, to help with her continuing education, employment costs or related expenses, to achieve some of her life goals.

The winner of the 2025 Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra, First Nations Young Woman's Leadership Award is Taleesha Barney. The award was presented on behalf of the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra, by Zonta member Sharon Nelson-Kelly, who has been a passionate supporter and major initiator for Zonta to develop and offer this award. Sharon is Māori, from Aotearoa New Zealand and is committed to supporting First Nations and Māori women get ahead in life.

Contributed by Sue Lees

Ashwood High School Education Encouragement Award

The \$1,000 award is for a student at Ashwood High School who has demonstrated service and commitment, exhibits leadership amongst her peers and shows determination and resilience towards her studies.

The winner for 2025, presented by Di Hillman, is Laura Gosbell.



ZCMOY members Di Hillman (L) and Sue Lees (R), with Laura Gosbell (middle)

We received a very sincere thank you from Laura:

"Hi! My name is Laura Gosbell, I am going into year 12 in 2026 at Ashwood High School and the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra very generously awarded me the Education Encouragement Award. This award will be able to assist me in affording school books, and particularly some VCE subject guides to help me with my final exams, along with the excursions and fun events that will come in year 12. In the future, I would like to go into some sort of media production as media is my best and favourite subject. I am planning on going to university in 2027 so if the Education Encouragement Award is not used next year, it certainly will be to go towards my university fees and education. I want to sincerely thank the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra for this award, as it is not a small sum of money that I have been given and will be invaluable in contributing to my future education. Thank you so much again, I really appreciate the time taken to select and award me!"

Congratulations to Laura for also being selected as Deputy School Captain 2026.

Contributed by Di Hillman and Sue Lees

Cressie Golf Club Breast Care Cushions Assembly

A few years ago, five women from Cressie Golf Club gathered at Jennifer Ray's home to assemble breast care cushions, followed by a shared lunch. They valued the chance to do something practical and meaningful, knowing their time and effort were supporting women during a difficult period. The day also offered an opportunity to catch up on golf news, books, movies and whatever else was on their minds, with lunch adding to the warm, social atmosphere.

Word quickly spread and more Cressie members joined each subsequent assembly day. This February, sixteen women turned up and, with support from club member sewers and pre-bagged stuffing, assembled an impressive 265 cushions in just over two hours. The only challenge? Finding enough seats for everyone at lunch afterwards!



While our club is deeply grateful for the many supporters who help cut, sew, and assemble the cushions (we simply couldn't meet demand without them), it has been wonderful to see the Cressie team spirit and camaraderie that flourishes each time these women come together for such a worthwhile cause.

Contributed by Caroline Kettle

Women Taking Climate Action Award 2025

The District 23 Women Taking Climate Action Award was initiated by the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra and the club continues to do the administration of the award.

The 2025 Women Taking Climate Action Award winner is Sally Quinn, Co-Founder and CEO of [Green Collect](#) located in Braybrook, Victoria.



Green Collect is a social enterprise that is transforming typical approaches to waste management. Based on circular economy principles, it delivers new regenerative practices and services that generate measurable social and environmental outcomes.

Driven by deep care for people and the planet it extends the lifecycle of commercial office and E-waste items, while operating a workplace inclusive of people facing some of life's hardest circumstances.

Green Collect focuses on verifiable data to demonstrate clear, measurable climate action at scale. 1500 tonnes of waste have been reused, recycled, repurposed, saving approximately 1000 tonnes of CO2 each year, combined with benefits to the ozone layer, air and chemical pollution levels.

Green Collect services range across Victoria and the business has built strong partnerships with businesses such as Officeworks, banks such as Westpac, and Local and State government organisations.

There is a strong and sincere commitment to social inclusion with programs focusing on providing employment pathways for refugees, youth and women. This is particularly important in the suburbs around Green Collect, where the unemployment rate for women from refugee backgrounds is over 60%.

Gender equity is fundamental to the organisation's model. The leadership team is 80% female, with more than 50% of its 65 staff being female, which is significant in an industry that has less than 20% representation of women.

The workplace is designed to provide a culture that actively attracts, develops and supports women, with aspects such as training and mentoring central to the targeted employment model.

Green Collect runs circular economy education workshops, publishes data and case studies that are helping businesses and community organisations to take greater climate action. The business is growing, and in doing so providing increased employment pathways and successful climate mitigation.

Green Collect links economics and data with ecological limits, social justice, embeds women's inclusion as an important part of a climate solution.

Green Collect is impactful, innovative and strongly aligned with Zonta as a living model of gender-equal climate action.

Contributed by Sue Lees

Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award 2026 - Calling for Applications (Due 16 March)

Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award recognizes young women, ages 16-19, for demonstrating leadership skills and commitment to public service and civic causes, and encourages them to continue their participation in public and political life. [Access the application forms and award information.](#)

You can read up on our previous winners:

- 2023 Phoebe Bourke - Sacre Coeur College Glen Iris was the winner of the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra (\$1000AUD) and one of 37 international awardees (\$5000 USD). [Read Phoebe's bio.](#)
- 2025 Maya Farmer – University of Melbourne was winner of the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra (\$1000 AUD) and one of 37 international awardees (\$5000 USD). [Read Maya's bio.](#)



For more information, contact:

Sue Lees, Young Women in Leadership Coordinator

Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra

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Women Enabled International

[Women Enabled International](#) is a global organisation dedicated to advancing the rights of women and girls with disabilities through advocacy, education and international collaboration.

They are currently running a survey to help define our collective roadmap for 2026 and beyond. To continue centering your priorities and leadership, they need to hear your truth. The future of gender and disability justice is being written right now - and your voice belongs at the centre.

[Fill out the survey here.](#)



Contributed by Frances Gentle

Zonta Says Now - Australia Think Tank

Saturday 11 April 2026, 3pm - 4.30pm in ACT, NSW, Tas, and Vic

Kate Thwaites, Federal Member for Jagajaga and the Government's Special Envoy for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, will open the event with insights from Canberra on building a renewable, job-creating and resilient Australia — while supporting families, local businesses and communities. She will be followed by Sally Quinn, Founder and CEO of Green Collect, whose circular economy model is diverting millions of items from landfill and creating inclusive employment. From national policy to practical action, discover how women are leading meaningful climate solutions.

Zonta Says NOW Australia
WOMEN LEADING AUSTRALIA'S CLIMATE FUTURE
THINK TANK on Saturday 11 April
1:00-2:30 pm WA | 2:30-4 pm NT and SA |
3pm-4:30 pm Qld, Vic, Tas, NSW, ACT | 5-6:30 pm NZ
Join us for an energising conversation with two women at the forefront of climate action.

- Kate Thwaites**, Federal Member for Jagajaga and Special Envoy for Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience, will share insights on building a renewable, job-creating, and resilient Australia, and
- Sally Quinn**, Founder and CEO of Green Collect and 2025 District 23 Women Taking Climate Action Award winner, will show how her circular economy model is cutting waste, reducing emissions, and creating inclusive employment.

From national policy to community impact, discover how women are leading practical climate solutions.

REGISTER HERE
BUILD A BETTER WORLD FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

ZONTA INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA
green collect
zontasaysnow.org.au/think-tank

[Register for the Think Tank](#)

Waverley Patchworkers Quilt Show

Over the last couple of years, the Waverly Patchworkers has been supporting Zonta's breast care cushion project, with cash and fabric donations.

Waverley Patchworkers will be holding its biennial quilt show on 2-3 May 2026. This year's show will display work produced by members of Waverley Patchworkers which include quilts, art quilts and special displays. Along with the quilt displays, there will also be an exhibition of challenge quilts, demonstrations, a merchant mall and a café,

[Find out more here.](#)

Waverley Patchworkers Quilt Show
2-3 May 2026
Saturday 9.00am-5.00pm
Sunday 9.00am-4.00pm
Mulgrave Community Centre
355 Wellington Road, Mulgrave
(600 metres east of Springvale Road)
Entry \$8
Quilt displays, shops, café
(including morning, afternoon tea and light lunches)
demonstrations, raffle quilt.

www.waverleypatchworkers.com.au

Contributed by Wendy Cameron

Bunnings Sausage Sizzle Fundraiser (17 January)

Thank you to everyone who supported our Bunnings sausage sizzle fundraiser - with approximately \$1,900 raised. It was a nice, warm day, perfect for a snag and a cold drink!

Special thanks to Wendy Cameron for leading the team again!



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



Members' Spotlight: Jennifer Marriott

This month, let's get to know our ZCMOY President, Jennifer Marriott (pictured, left).



How long have you been with Zonta?

I joined in 2019 (7 years).

If you could invite anyone to dinner, living or dead, who would it be?

I would like to invite Marie Curie. She was an incredible woman who made a profound difference to our lives. I would like to tell her to shield herself from the radiation she studied so that she would not contract aplastic anaemia, likely from exposure to radiation in the course of her scientific research and in the course of her radiological work at field hospitals during World War I.

What is your dream job?

I had my dream job/s. I started my career as a community pharmacist. I didn't think I would like working in a shop, but my first job was as a manager of a busy pharmacy in Frankston. Every day was different and I enjoyed feeling part of my regular customer's lives. When they came in to the pharmacy they like to talk, share their lives. My second job was at Frankston hospital at a time when hospital pharmacy was just developing. We introduced all kinds of innovations that are now considered normal pharmacy services – ward rounds, CE for staff, sterile preparations, outpatients, on call, etc. Exciting, challenging and a great group of work colleagues. Then, I found teaching. I completed my PhD when I was 50 and then started work as a lecturer at the Monash Faculty of Pharmacy, lecturing in the same facilities that I was taught in as an undergraduate. I was involved in a review of the curriculum and was awarded a 12 week study fellowship. I got lots of ideas travelling to 20 or so schools of pharmacy in the US and UK. On my return I was appointed Director of Pharmacy at Monash and led several changes to modernise the curriculum and teaching methods and teaching spaces.

What's one of the scariest things you've ever done?

Totally out of character. I was travelling to Ann Arbor, Michigan for the wedding of one of my PhD students. I arrived on time in Chicago and made my way to the gate to wait for my flight to Detroit. After waiting a short while the gate was changed and with everyone else I moved to the new gate only to see a notice that the flight was cancelled flash up and all the staff leave. It was 9pm and my thoughts were what could I do to

get to Detroit. I rang the airline help line only to be told that I could get a flight at 10am the next morning that would get me in to Detroit at about 2pm. I was stranded!

While pondering my options another stranded passenger announced "I am going to hire a car and drive to Detroit. Does anyone want to come with me?" So I put up my hand and said I would go with him!

Long story ... the driver turned out to be an interstate truck driver. He obeyed the road rules to the letter as if he got a traffic violation, he would lose his licence and he couldn't earn a living. He was also used to night driving. His wife and a young Japanese girl were also in the car.

We were told in Chicago that we couldn't collect our checked bags but could collect them from Detroit airport the next day. Along the way, the wife rang her daughter who tracked the luggage and said that it was showing that it was already in Detroit!

We arrived safely in Detroit at about 5am, went to the airport. Our luggage had indeed arrived the day before. We collected it, said goodbye and I made my way to my accommodation in Ann Arbor. I had time for snooze before arriving at the wedding as scheduled.

What's been the best experience in your life to date and why?

It is so hard to choose just one, however if I must I would choose seeing a giraffe being born in the wild. This is such a rare occurrence that our Masai guide had never seen one being born before and he had been a guide for more than 20 years!

When we came across the giraffe we were curious as to why she was alone and then she turned around and we saw the feet protruding. We watched for some time until the baby was born (and yes, the mother giraffe is standing up and the birth sac, filled with fluid, falls to the ground). We watched the baby struggle to its feet and take its first steps.

A real privilege!

