



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

Yarra Yarns

May 2025



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President's Report

First things first... I would like to introduce our new board for 25-26:

- President: Jennifer Marriott,
- Vice-President: Janet Townsend,
- Treasurer: Melinda Young,
- Secretary: Gail Neil,
- Correspondence secretary: Glenda Lapsley.
- Directors: Caroline Kettle, Sandra Burns, Alex Meagher.



Out-going President Caroline Kettle (L) and in-coming President Jennifer Marriott (R)

Thank you to everyone for agreeing to accept club leadership responsibilities and thanks also to the nominating committee for compiling the slate of candidates.

We had a fantastic start to the year with a presentation from the 2024 District 23 Women Taking Climate Change Award winner, Jane Baker from Mrs Baker's Still House, Elmhurst, Victoria. Six members from the Zonta Club of Maryborough joined the ZCMOY meeting, as well as a couple of potential ZMoY members, to hear Jane's inspiring and uplifting presentation. Jane is a very worthy winner as Mrs Baker's Still House is female lead micro-distillery making award winning gins, liqueurs & whisky. They are a very tight-knit mother-and-daughters team; Jane Baker the founder and botanist, Elizabeth the distiller and Georgette the designer who share a passion for low-impact production methods, sourcing locally grown botanicals and using an award winning 100% solar-powered distillation process.

We also enjoyed a stunning performance by Mahalia Shelton, our 2024 Frances Quinn Arts Encouragement Award winner, who opened our April meeting with a short cello recital.



Fran Quinn Award Winner Mahalia Shelton

Mahalia shares the position of principal cellist in the Melbourne Youth Orchestra. She has attended various Australian Youth Orchestra programs since 2022, performing with the Flagship Orchestra since 2023, where her love for orchestral music thrives. Mahalia was awarded her LMusA with distinction in 2024 and aspires to a career in a professional orchestra. Mahalia performs regularly with many chamber ensembles, notably with the 'Sturt Street Sextet' winning the VCASS Chamber Competition and the Musical Society of Victoria Chamber Competition. A very worthy winner of the Fran Quinn award!

Our Club awards are a way of recognising women who are contributing to our society, and we would like to thank our fundraising committee and sponsors for making these awards possible. It is therefore a pleasure to announce Calan Wealth Management is not only continuing their sponsorship of \$1000 for our club winner of the Young Women in Leadership Award but will also provide an additional \$500 for the runner up as well! Last year was the first time we made both a winner and runner up award so it's great we can continue both with full sponsorship.

International Women's Day is an important reminder of how far we have come, but also, how much we still have to do to achieve gender equality worldwide. There were many activities held across Melbourne - several members celebrated International Women's Day by going to WIRE's Great Debate: "It is time for women to give up on the internet". Each team had three stellar, and extremely amusing, women plus the moderator was fab. The result was NO - it is not yet time for women to give up on the internet, although the affirmative gave up good arguments, the negative team were funnier and had cat memes, so they got the audience vote. Our April club meeting celebrated IWD by wearing suffragette theme colours – green, purple or white.

Our members continue to make and distribute breast care cushions to a number of hospitals. The following message came from a person donating to our breast care cushion production. The description read "My heart swelled after receiving your beautiful gift. It made my journey home and sleeping very comfortable. I will continue to use my cushion and be reminded of your generosity and love. Thank you." This message reinforces the comfort these cushions provide, and the message of support they send, to women at a difficult period in their lives. This a great service project that allows so many members to be involved and spreads the message of Zonta.

The club held the first ever Breast Care Cushion sewing and assembly day at a school. The event was initiated by a student whose mother received one of our breast cushions and all year 11 students learnt about Zonta, our club and our awards. We expected to make cushions with the help of thirty year 11 students at Korowa Anglican Girls School, but more than 90 students were involved in some way or another!

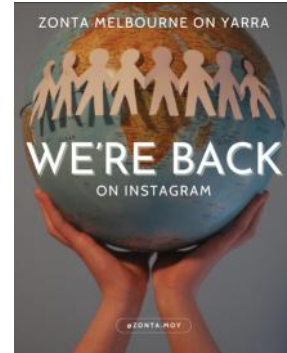
A number of club members met in April for a social outing at the Immigration Museum. In addition to displays about immigration members visited. The special "Notre-Dame de Paris: The Augmented Exhibition". We all agreed it was fab - an impressive, immersive experience (using i-pads), which unravels how the cathedral was made and then restored after the fire of 2019. The special i-pads allowed visitors to switch between the original building of the cathedral and its re-building with some 360-degree views and explanations about building techniques and workers.

The club also has a regular coffee catch up on the last Saturday each month at 10.30 am. We have three locations: Brunetti at 250 Flinders Lane, Laurent Bakery, 139 Upper Heidelberg Road, Ivanhoe and the Norwood Cafe, Shop 33, Eat Street, The Brickworks, 70 Middleborough Road, Burwood East. Everyone is welcome to just show up at 10.30 for a coffee and chat.

To mark the 40th Anniversary of Zonta Foundation for Women, Zonta International is raising US\$2 million for projects supporting women and girls around the world. This has become even more important with the US government's cuts to UN funding as our international service projects rely on UN agency partnerships which may make it more difficult for us to address issues like child marriage. More than 90 international service projects and education programs, focusing on building a better world for women and girls, have been supported through the generosity of donors to the Foundation. The Zonta Foundation for Women has been on the front lines, supporting critical work and programs to promote and protect women's and girls' rights across educational institutions, workplaces, and local communities around the globe. But there is still work to be done. Zonta is asking that you consider making a personal donation to the fund and you can do this by using the link [Zonta Foundation 40th Anniversary](#).

Zonta Australia was formed in June 2024 to be a collective voice for Zonta districts in Australia to advocate at a national level for Zonta International's mission and objectives to build a better world for women and girls and we are already able to see the benefit. Zonta Australia now has a patron: the Governor

General Sam Moysten. This is very good news as having patronage from an impressive and high-standing woman helps all Zonta Australian clubs raise their profile.



As our club's previous Instagram account was hacked, we've set up a new club Instagram account - [Zonta.moy](#). We now need all members and their friends to follow [Zonta.moy](#) as we need to rebuild our following after the hack.

Jennifer Marriott, President

Safe Steps Candlelight Vigil 2025



On Wednesday 7 May, Jasmine Koch and Alex Meagher gathered at the Safe Steps Candlelight Vigil in Melbourne with hundreds of others to mark National Family Violence Remembrance Day. Held during Domestic Violence Prevention Month, the moving event brought together survivors, advocates, and community members in a powerful tribute to those who have lost their lives to family and domestic violence.

As hundreds held flickering candles and buildings across Victoria were lit up in purple, the vigil served as both a solemn remembrance and a passionate call for change. Speakers shared stories of resilience and hope, urging continued action to end the devastating cycle of violence.

This year alone, 12 women and 5 children in Victoria have lost their lives to family violence—a heartbreaking reminder of the urgent need for greater protection and systemic change.

As a reminder, for those affected, support is available through Safe Steps and 1800RESPECT. We stand for hope, healing, and a future free from violence.

Contributed by Alex Meagher

ZCMOY 2025 Young Women in Leadership Award

Maya Farmer is the winner of the Zonta Young women in Leadership award for 2025. Maya is currently a second-year Science student at the University of Melbourne. Maya is an outstanding contributor to society and strong young leader.

During her schooling, Maya was School Captain, Lions Youth of the Year 2023 and an accomplished public speaker. She also started an environment club at school and became involved with School Strike 4 Climate and AYCC (Australian Youth Coalition for Climate).

At the end of 2023 Maya was awarded a prestigious Hansen Scholarship to the University of Melbourne. At university Maya has continued her climate activism. She is one of 9 young people who have made a formal complaint to the that the UN Special Rapporteur for Climate Change that the Australian government lack of action on climate change is breaching their human rights. A project called 'Generation Justice'.

Sophia will join us in person for the awards dinner 14 August.

Runner-up of the Young women in Leadership Award for 2025 is Sophia Amin. Sophia is in Year 12 at Albert Park College and is College Captain. Sophia also has a strong commitment to leadership and service. As well as being a voice for students at school, Sophia sits on a youth committee for her local MP and is involved in the Victorian Student Representative Council (VicSRC) and she advocates for inclusive and equal education. Concerned also for the environment, Sophia is Chair of the Sustainability Committee for Albert Park College.

Zonta Says Now Australia (14 June, 3pm)

Maya will speak at the next Zoom meeting of Zonta Says Now about her work with 'Generation Justice'.

Maya will produce a personal video for the 14 August Awards dinner as she will be in Scotland on a university exchange program in second semester.

[Register for the meeting here.](#)

Zonta Says NOW Australia

IS THIS THE GENERATION WITH THE 'RIGHT STUFF'?

THINK TANK on Saturday 14 June
1.00-2.30pm WA | 2.30-4.00pm SA, NT
3.00-4.30pm ACT, NSW, Qld, Tas, and Vic

Is the Australian government's lack of ambitious action on climate change breaching human rights?
Generation Justice thinks so.

But what can a group of nine young people do about it? A lot - and making a formal human rights complaint to the UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change is just the start. Maya Farmer, a Zonta Young Women in Leadership awardee, is one of the nine young people making waves.

Join Maya and her friends for this not-to-be-missed conversation.



REGISTER HERE

BUILD A BETTER WORLD
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

ZONTA
INTERNATIONAL
AUSTRALIA

WOMEN SAY NOW
AUSTRALIA

zontasaysnow.org.au/think-tank

Contributed by Sue Lees

Zonta Says Now Intercontinental Think Tank (13 July)

Many island nations in the Pacific are fighting rising sea levels, violence, and poverty – all linked by climate change. Hear what is really happening about gender equality in this region from Carole Shaw the CEO of the UN Asia Pacific Women's Watch and Zonta's representatives at UN's Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), based in Bangkok.

Zontians from Oceania and Asia will host the July Think Tank.

[Register for the meeting here.](#)



**WOMEN'S RIGHTS
CLIMATE FRONTLINE**

CLIMATE JUSTICE IN THE ASIA PACIFIC

13 JULY - 3AM UTC

SPEAKER - CAROLE SHAW

Chief Executive Officer of UN Asia Pacific Women's Watch, Co-chair of the Women's Gender Equality Caucus Australia, expert in gender inclusive policy, justice, and empowerment for women and girls

Register at zonta.org/events

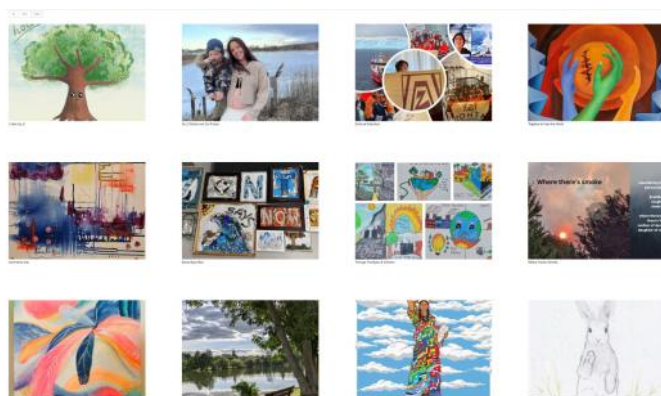
INTERCONTINENTAL THINK TANK




Zonta Says Now Virtual Art Gallery

Check out the new Zonta Says Now Art Gallery collection.
Connect with nature and the reasons why ZI members want
to protect our world.

[See the Gallery here.](#)



Contributed by Sue Lees

Women's Climate Congress 2025 (Castlemaine, Victoria)

I was privileged to represent Zonta recently at the Women's Climate Congress in Castlemaine along with Lyn Symons from the ZC Central Goldfields on 28 – 30 March. There were approx. 90 participants from across Australia, and we were able to attend the sessions on the Saturday.

Founder of the Women's Climate Congress, Dr Janet Salisbury had previously been a speaker at the Zonta Says Now to Gender Equal Climate Action think Tank and invited Zontians to attend this first Congress in regional Australia. Janet gave the keynote address A Chorus of Women, outlining the "her-story" of the WW1 women's peace movement. It was the passion and inspiration of these women in 1915 that has also inspired the WCC Charter for Change to motivate women globally to plan an international Congress of Women and to challenge the status quo of global politics and turn the tide on climate change.



Excellent speakers presented on each panel session. Such as the Women Challenging the status quo panel:

- Victoria McKenzie-McHarg – CEO Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA)
- Sharon Burrow – Global Advocate for Human Rights, Australian convenor – Women Leading on Climate, Climate action and Just Transition. (she was formerly the President of the ACTU.)
- Bec Blurton – MD First Nations Affairs. WCC Steering Committee. Ballardong/Whadjuk woman from Perth.
- Ashlee Streeter-Jones Volunteer founder of Raising our Voice Australia (based in Canberra)
- Professor Susan Harris Rimmer – champion of human rights, climate justice, intergenerational justice and gender equality; Director of the Griffith Uni Policy Innovation Hub.

So many different voices were represented, and we heard from a further 12 experts during the day from such organizations as the Disaster Risk Reduction, Older Women's Network, National Rural Women's Coalition, Action Aid Australia, She Changes Climate, and the National Union of Students.

The day was broken up with Singing – Amazingly a Choir is where the organisation began! Interesting that the catering revolved around all vegetarian food. Avoids a lot of issues with food allergies etc.

I would recommend taking the opportunity to attend future

events they have. [You can join the Women's Climate Congress for free.](#) They also have recordings of the event and run a virtual book club where you can meet up with other members across Australia.

Contributed by Sandra Burns (member of Zonta Says Now – Australian Think Tank)

Members' Spotlight: Amritaa Singh

This month, let's shine a spotlight on the professional achievements of Amritaa Singh, a ZCMOY Club member since June 2018.

The WIIT Awards honour transformative innovations that promote global collaboration, sustainable development, and inclusive progress. As a recognised leader in innovation strategy, policy advisory, and technology diplomacy, Amritaa brings a wealth of experience to the jury, which includes distinguished figures from across international diplomacy, business, and academia.

Through her work as the founder and CEO of Helix Group Global, and her global ambassadorial roles with Singularity University and OpenExO, Amritaa has consistently championed bold thinking and systems innovation to tackle complex challenges. Her appointment to the WIIT jury reflects the Institute's commitment to recognising and supporting initiatives that create meaningful global impact.



Amritaa Singh (right) has served on various juries/ panels throughout her professional career.

Amritaa replaces Robin Eckermann AM, a celebrated telecommunications pioneer who served on the board from its first founding until 2019, representing Oceania.

The upcoming WIIT Awards ceremony will be held in Barcelona later this year, where the jury will evaluate a new cohort of projects shaping the future through holistic and forward-thinking innovation.

[More information about the Diplomatic World Institute can be found here.](#)

Girl Goals: 30 Years of Progress for Adolescent Girls

UNICEF, UN Women and Plan International have released a landmark new report, *Girl Goals: What Has Changed for Girls? Adolescent girls' rights over 30 Years*.

Building on three decades of data since the endorsement of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, it shines a spotlight on both the achievements and the persistent challenges still facing millions of adolescent girls worldwide.

Crucially, adolescent girls' leadership and voices were instrumental in shaping the report, ensuring their lived experiences and perspectives are at the forefront.



Here is a selection of key insights:

- **Education:** Although the number of out-of-school girls fell by 39 per cent in the last two decades, 122 million girls remain out of school globally.
- **Gender-based violence:** Nearly 1 in 4 adolescent girls aged 15-19 who have been married or partnered have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetime.
- **Harmful practices:** The prevalence of child marriage has declined over the past 25 years, but millions of girls (nearly 1 in 5) continue to be married in childhood. Female genital mutilation (FGM) is also declining, but not nearly fast enough to meet global targets.
- **Health & nutrition:** In the past three decades, the prevalence of underweight among adolescent girls has declined only slightly while the prevalence of overweight has doubled.

Despite these challenges, progress is possible. Girl Goals highlights proven approaches to support adolescent girls' rights to education, health and protection from harm, while also underscoring the need for greater investment, especially as we approach the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals deadline. [Read the report here.](#)

Contributed by Frances Gentle

Recommendations

Remarkable Women, Powerful Stories

This month's Remarkable Women: Felicity McRobb

Felicity is the founder of McRobb Consulting, a transformative leadership development and executive coaching initiative based in Hong Kong. Hailing from Wales, U.K., she first embraced the vibrant culture of Asia in 1984, and has since made her mark in Japan, Saudi Arabia, Portland, Oregon, and for the past fourteen years, Hong Kong.



Regarded as a master coach and leadership developer, Felicity empowers individuals and teams across geographies, cultures, genders, and age groups to elevate performance, foster collaboration and enhance teamwork in dynamic environments.

Listen on [Spotify](#) or [You Tube](#).

Really Interesting Women

Conversations with amazing women whose journeys and experiences are fascinating, inspiration and education.

Listen on [Apple](#). *Recommended by Gail Neil.*

Herstoryically - The Stories of History's Forgotten Women

Dive deep into the often overlooked and untold stories of extraordinary women who have left an indelible mark on our world. These are the women who defied norms, shattered barriers, and paved the way for future generations, often hailing from marginalized communities. In each episode, we'll unearth the inspiring tales of fearless leaders, brilliant minds, and trailblazing pioneers, making history not just HIS-story but HER-story too.

Listen on [Spotify](#).

Australian Women Artist

Australian women artist have been (and continue to be) underrepresented and undervalued in this country despite the stunning artist works that have been produced since the mid nineteenth century. This podcast will shine a light on those artists and their spectacular artworks.

Listen on [Apple](#). *Recommended by Gail Neil.*

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

