

# FOCUS: CLIMATE CHANGE

## CLIMATE CHANGE IS A WOMEN'S ISSUE

### Globally, women are more greatly affected by climate change

- Due to socio-economic and physiological vulnerabilities, women and girls – especially those in poverty – face higher risks and experience a greater burden of climate change impacts compared to men
- Studies prove that during a disaster women are at greater risk of displacement, experience higher rates of job loss, are more likely to be injured or killed, and are less likely to access help due to concerns for their safety
- Extreme weather events see a dramatic increase in rates of interpersonal violence, and in developing countries this can precipitate early marriage or forced prostitution as a way to survive
- The burden of supporting families and communities after extreme weather events precipitated by climate change often falls to women

### Striving for gender equity will help us tackle climate change

- Girls who are more educated have fewer and healthier children, and actively manage their reproductive health – it is estimated that gender parity in education would sequester 25.8 gigatons of carbon dioxide by 2050 (more than seven times the current annual carbon emission from the entire European Union!)
- Women hold the key to sustainable smallholder farming – if women had equal access to productive resources, yields would rise by an estimated 30% and we would see a subsequent reduction in the need for deforestation
- Women are not well represented in decisions about responses to climate change and need a stronger voice to create a fairer future for everyone

### Women are leading the way – let us be inspired by them!

- See below for a list of incredible women that may be available to talk at Zonta events

## FOCUSING ON PRODUCTIVITY, NOT POLITICS

- All important social issues are inevitably enmeshed with politics, largely because politicians are our gateway to advocate for positive change
- Both globally and in Australia, climate change is increasingly a bipartisan issue
- Instead of focusing on politics, let's focus on bringing Zontians together to create a more sustainable future – one in which our environment is protected, our economy thrives, and fundamental gender equity creates space for trailblazing women

## GLOBAL SUPPORT

- Zonta International: in the 2020-2022 biennial goals, ZI recognised climate change as one of four major issues impacting the lives of women and girls; the aim is to have at least 75% of clubs engaging in a project or activity that addresses this
- The United Nations: climate change mitigation is a key focus for UN Women, which promotes women's empowerment within the broader sustainable development agenda, with a focus on green economics

## ACTIONS

### INDIVIDUAL

#### Energy

- Consider changing to Green Power and/or solar electricity
- Aim to reduce the electricity use in your home each quarter by 10% (or more!)

#### Food

- Compost your veggie scraps (most councils will help with this!)
- Say no to wasteful packaging at supermarkets and [#leaveitontheself](#)
- Reduce your meat intake

#### Shop

- Recycle, but do it properly! Take soft plastics to your local supermarket.
- Research the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of brands before you buy
- Consider vintage clothing & accessories

#### Money

- Change your bank to one that doesn't invest in fossil fuel (e.g., Bank Australia)
- Change your superannuation fund or choose the green investment option

### CLUB

#### Partnerships

- Actively choose to partner with organisations that have thoughtful environmental policies
- Write to the bank where your club money is kept, encouraging more aggressive environmental policies/investments
- Meet with a representative at the venue where your club hosts their meetings to discuss environmental strategies; advocate for food with a lower carbon footprint (seasonal, local, less red meat)

#### Service & Advocacy

- Consider offering a scholarship/award for a woman taking climate action
- Host a fellowship event that does something positive for the planet, e.g., planting trees, making reusable vegetable bags or similar (this could also be utilised as a fundraising initiative)

#### Travel

- Carpool to future in-person meetings & events – also a great way to get to know your club members!
- Consider when a virtual rather than face-to-face meeting would be practical

### AREA

#### Inspiration

- Provide clubs with a list of inspiring women taking climate action in their various fields (see below), who could be potential speakers for meetings

- Provide clubs with recommendations on how to access climate news from credible, reliable sources
  - E.g., ABC, CSIRO, Climate Council
  - Coming soon: *Planting the Seed* – a monthly newsletter keeping you informed and inspired about climate advocacy, brought to you by the Zonta Club of Melbourne on Yarra

### Frameworks

- Encourage electronic (rather than printed) provision of information and resources, utilise online programs such as Google Docs
- Require that meetings/conferences/fundraising events encourage waste reduction
  - No single-use plastics – encourage members to bring their own water bottles, coffee cups, etc.
  - Ensure easy access to recycling points
  - Provide food that has low food miles and/or is plant-based
- Commit to carbon offsetting travel when attending Zonta events such as conferences

### SPEAKERS

- **Linh Do**
  - Director of Leaders for Global Sustainability at the University of Melbourne
  - Board member at Climate Action Network Australia
  - Works across advocacy and engagement, media, and social enterprise, having had her work feature in Al Jazeera, Vogue, the Huffington Post and the Washington Post
- **Nazima Shaheen**
  - Climate change & gender specialist
  - Ensures inclusion of women, persons with disabilities & older people when guiding policy in sectors such as agriculture, community-based disaster risk reduction, water, sanitation & infrastructure
- **Zali Steggal, OAM**
  - Independent federal MP for Warringah, NSW
  - Former Olympian (Alpine skiing)
  - Spearheading the Climate Change Bill for net zero emissions by 2050
- **Nicola Rivers & Elizabeth McKinnon**
  - Co-CEOs, Environmental Justice Australia – a not-for-profit public interest legal organisation that acts on behalf of people and community organisation to safeguard health, protect the environment, and tackle climate change
- **Aimee Marks**
  - Founder and Managing Director, The TOM Co. – a female-founded company that creates organic and environmentally friendly feminine hygiene and baby care products
- **Amanda McKenzie**
  - CEO, Climate Council
  - Expert in climate policy, science, impacts and solutions, and one of the best known public commentators on the climate crisis in Australia
- **Dr Anne Poelina**
  - Indigenous scientist, human and earth rights activist
  - Master of Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Master of Education, Master of Arts, PhD in Philosophy, completing a second PhD in Health Science
  - *Yimardoowarra marnin* (First Nations woman from the Mardoowarra, Fitzroy River)