Zonta Australia
Zonta Says NOW Think Tank
JUNE UPDATE

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Shelter in a storm



This month's image beautifully captures the strange contrasts of winter in Australia. Some regions are experiencing drenching rainfall, while others remain parched and waiting. In many ways, it mirrors our climate reality: unpredictable, extreme, and deeply unfair.

It's a vivid reminder that climate justice matters. As we shelter from literal and metaphorical storms, we must also keep working for a future that is safe, just and sustainable for everyone.

Following the recent Federal election, it is pleasing to note that our Federal Parliament has never been more gender equal. When Parliament opens in July, it looks like the Senate will have 42 women (55%) and the House of Representatives 69 women (46%). This means that overall, the Parliament will consist of 49% women and 51% men.

This week, will you be setting the alarm clock for *WECAN's Women's Assembly for Global Climate Justice?* This free event has over 125 speakers from 50 countries including: Christiana Figueres, Mary Robinson, Xiye Bastida, Amy Westervelt, Zali Steggall, Natalie Isaacs and many more! It runs from 23-28 June from 1pm-6pm New York time (1am-6am in Western Australia!). So if you are interested, register now.

In this Update we provide details of Australian and Intercontinental Think Tanks, celebrate achievements, share practical resources, and spotlight upcoming events that keep the momentum going.

Whether you're under an umbrella or wrapped in a scarf, I hope this issue warms your heart, sharpens your advocacy, and reminds you of the power we hold—together.

Keep breathing, keep smiling and have fun!

Kind regards

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June Australian Think Tank



Our June Think Tank was an inspiring deep dive into intergenerational climate justice, led by the passionate and articulate Maya Farmer. Maya is a co-founder of *Generation Justice* and the recipient of Zonta International District 23's 2025 Young Women in Leadership Award. She's also one of a group of young activists who have submitted a formal complaint to the UN Special Rapporteur on Climate Change, highlighting how Australia's weak climate

policies violate the rights of young people to life, health, culture and a safe future.

Maya explained how Generation Justice was formed out of frustration—but also deep hope. With legal advice and broad community support, they're making waves at international levels. Our Think Tank explored how this issue is far more than political—it's personal, and it affects every generation differently.

The conversation then turned to two important bills introduced into the Australian Parliament's last session. Senator David Pocock introduced the *Climate Change Amendment (Duty of Care and Intergenerational Climate Equity) Bill*, and Dr Sophie Scamps MP introduced the *Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill*. Both pieces of legislation were shaped by input from Anjali Sharma, another young leader who previously addressed our Think Tank.

Members shared practical ways we can support the next generation—by connecting with our Z Clubs and Golden Z Clubs, reaching out to local youth climate activists, and supporting policy reforms that embed intergenerational equity.

If you missed this powerful session, you can still catch up. The video and slides are available below—and we encourage you to share them with others in your club or community.

View the video and slides from the June Australian Think Tank

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July Intercontinental Think Tank



On Sunday 14 July, Australians will proudly host the next Zonta Intercontinental Think Tank. The focus? Women on the frontlines of climate change in the Asia and Pacific region—a region already facing rising seas, extreme heat, and displacement at alarming rates.

Our special guest speaker will be Carole Shaw, the CEO of UN Asia Pacific Women's Watch, an organisation that monitors and advocates for women's rights across the region. Carole brings decades of experience at the

intersection of gender and climate and will offer insights into how women are leading resilience efforts, influencing policy, and holding governments accountable.

We'll also learn more about the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), headquartered in Bangkok, Thailand. ESCAP plays a major role in shaping climate and development policies across 53 member states—including Australia. Did you know that Zontians attend ESCAP meetings? We are part of these regional conversations—and it matters.

Register today and share the flyer.

Register for the July Intercontinental Think Tank

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August Australian Think Tank



Mark your calendars for Saturday 9 August, when our next Australian Think Tank will feature a very special guest: Fiona Dorman, President of the National Council of Women Australia (NCWA). Fiona brings a unique blend of scientific expertise and deep community commitment, making her an outstanding advocate for women in all their diversity.

Fiona holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) and has worked in medical research and since July 2021, Fiona has chaired the Premier's Council for Women in South Australia, providing advice to government on policy to improve the lives of women and girls.

She's currently attending the International Council of Women (ICW) General Assembly in Marrakesh, Morocco—a gathering of global women leaders that meets every three years to assess progress and set priorities. The ICW also

provides leadership to the Women20 (W20) initiative, the G20's official engagement group for women's economic empowerment.

At our August Think Tank, Fiona will share reflections from the General Assembly, offer insights into how Australia fits into this global landscape, and explore the power of collective action. We'll also hear how the NCWA amplifies the voices of women across generations and cultural backgrounds through advocacy, consultation and coalition-building.

This will be a session not to miss—so please invite friends, fellow members, and young women leaders in your community.

Register for the August Australian Think Tank

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Honouring Lisa Blair



On World Environment Day – Wednesday 5 June, Zonta International proudly announced Lisa Blair as our newest International Honorary Zontian. Many of you will remember Lisa's passionate and powerful keynote at the 2024 Zonta International Convention in Brisbane. Her story is one of courage, persistence and a deep love for the planet.

Lisa is an Australian adventurer and climate activist best known for her record-breaking solo sailing feats. She holds eight world records, including being the fastest person to sail solo, non-stop and unassisted around Antarctica. Her mission goes far beyond world records.

Her boat, *Climate Action Now*, is more than just a vessel—it's a statement. Lisa deliberately named it to ensure that every headline featuring her achievements also promotes the urgent message of climate action. While sailing through some of the world's most remote waters, Lisa has witnessed the impact of climate change firsthand: plastic pollution, rising seas, and changes to marine ecosystems.

Her next challenge, the Arctic Impact Project, is another bold step. Lisa is working to design and sail a new sustainable yacht made from basalt rock and

bio-resins, around the Arctic Circle, solo and unassisted. The project will further spotlight climate impacts in the polar north and inspire new conversations on innovation, resilience, and sustainability.

Zonta's recognition of Lisa as an Honorary Zontian was championed by Dawn Newman, a dedicated member of the Zonta Club of Perth Northern Suburbs. Congratulations Lisa!

Read more about Lisa's exploits here

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Young Stars, Big Futures



This month, we celebrate the achievements of four exceptional young women who are already making their mark as leaders, scientists, and changemakers. These awardees exemplify Zonta's vision for a more gender-equal, just and sustainable world—and they give us great hope for the future.

First, congratulations to the three Australian recipients of the Zonta International Young Women in Leadership Awards for 2025:

- Maya Farmer, the District 23 Awardee, is co-founder of *Generation Justice* and a passionate climate advocate. She recently addressed our June Think Tank and is taking her government to task through formal UN channels.
- Susanna Allegra Serena, representing District 22, has demonstrated extraordinary leadership in youth policy and inclusion.
- Alyssa Jeffries, the District 24 Awardee, is working to improve mental health support and community engagement for young people.

Each of these young leaders is driving change in their own way—through advocacy, policy, research and grassroots action. We applaud their courage, creativity and commitment.

In further exciting news, Australia is home to one of Zonta's 2025 Amelia Earhart Fellows: Erin Holdorf, a PhD candidate in Astronomy and Astrophysics at the Australian National University.

Erin's research focuses on laser guide star adaptive optics—cutting-edge technology that allows ground-based telescopes to produce images with the

clarity of space-based observatories. Her work helps us understand the universe in more detail than ever before.

These awards are more than recognition—they are investments in a better future. Congratulations to Maya, Susanna, Alyssa and Erin on their well-deserved achievements.

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Australia in the spotlight for COP and Women Deliver



Two major international events are on the horizon—and Australia is in the spotlight for one or both of them.

First, all eyes are on the United Nations as a decision is expected soon about the host of **COP31 in 2026**. Australia and a Pacific Island partner have jointly bid to host the conference in South Australia. The main competitor? Türkiye (Turkey). Discussions are underway at the UN climate meetings in Bonn, and a decision is anticipated later this year.

Hosting COP31 would be a game-changer. It would bring world leaders, scientists, and civil society together on Australian shores to negotiate stronger climate action. It would also give local advocates—including Zontians—an opportunity to shape conversations, raise gender-equality issues, and amplify the voices of Pacific Island nations who are on the climate frontlines.

What is certain is Australia's role as host of the **2026 Women Deliver Conference**. This globally recognised gathering of gender equality advocates will take place from Monday 27 April to Thursday 30 April 2026 in Narrm (Melbourne). The event will attract more than 6,500 participants from over 170 countries and provide an unparalleled opportunity for Australian Zontians to attend, volunteer, or connect.

The themes of the conference are aligned with Zonta Says NOW priorities: climate justice, ending gender-based violence, economic empowerment, and women's health and rights.

Together, these events put Australia at the centre of global discussions about gender, climate, and justice. Let's start thinking now about how we can engage and make the most of this moment.

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What are our allies up to?



This month brings a wealth of learning and inspiration from organisations advancing gender-equal climate justice in their own powerful ways.

If you missed the **Women's Climate Congress** event titled *Compassion and Kindness in Government*, you can still catch the replay online. The discussion featured international and local thought leaders including Jennifer Nadel, co-founder and CEO of *Compassion in Politics (UK)*; Kate Chaney MP, Federal Member for Curtin (WA); and Chloe Spackman, CEO of *Next25*, an independent think-and-do tank promoting constructive public discourse. The panel explored how empathy and evidence-based policy can transform how we govern in a climate-challenged world.

The Women's Climate Congress also runs a book club, and this month's read is *1001 Voices: Everyday Stories of Flood, Fire, Drought and Displacement from Around the World* by journalist Devi Lockwood. For over two years, she biked across countries—including New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, and the US—with a cardboard sign saying: "Tell me a story about climate change." The result is a compelling and human-centred account of resilience and urgency. The next online meeting of the book club is on Sunday 7 July.

Meanwhile, **One Million Women** continues to provide practical, inspiring content. Their latest blogs explore all-electric living—phasing out gas, recycling solar panels, reducing e-waste, and cutting household energy use.

Also, **Women's Environmental Leadership Australia** (WELA) is hosting its next JEDI Learning Circle on Wednesday 17 July, 12:00–1:30 PM AEST. This session, led by Nevo Zisin—a transgender educator, TEDx speaker, and poet—will explore gender identity and climate justice through a First Nations-informed, intersectional lens.

Gender and Disaster Australia delivers some free online training to address the harmful impacts of gendered expectations in disaster. These sessions are

very informative and could save lives.

Lastly, check out the **Climate Council's** new explainers and maps—essential tools for any advocate and remember that next month is **Plastic Free July**!

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Investing in the Future



This year marks the 40th anniversary of the Zonta Foundation for Women, and there's never been a more important time to support its enduring legacy. At the heart of this celebration is the Endowment Fund—a growing source of long-term, sustainable funding for Zonta's global projects and programs.

Unlike other funds, the Endowment Fund doesn't get spent during the biennium. Instead, your donation is invested, and only the interest generated is used to support future programs, awards, and initiatives. This gives Zonta the flexibility and security to plan ahead—something that's critically important in a volatile funding environment.

The Endowment Fund is now tantalisingly close to reaching a milestone of ten million USD. As we celebrate this 40-year legacy, let's come together and push it over the line. Imagine the impact of reaching that threshold—the stronger returns, the expanded grants, and the ability to respond to growing global challenges with confidence.

Every donation, no matter how small, makes a difference. Times are tough financially across the world—but for many women and girls in marginalised or disaster-affected communities, the need is even greater. The Foundation supports scholarships, fellowships, humanitarian projects, and women's empowerment in all its forms.

So let's honour 40 years of commitment with a gift that keeps on giving—for decades to come.

Donate to the Zonta Foundation for Women

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