# Zonta Australia
# Zonta Says NOW Think Tank
# JULY UPDATE

**In this July UPDATE:**


- Working Together For Climate Justice
- What Does The World Court Decision Mean For Australia?
- Mutirão In Action: What Can Zontians Do?
- August Australian Think Tank
- Australia On The Global Stage
- What Are Our Allies Up To?
- Keep Motivated


## Working Together for Climate Justice



Have you ever watched ants build a bridge with their bodies to cross a wide gap? It takes collaboration, determination, and the power of working together – attributes that we all need on our climate justice journey.

These attributes were embodied by 27 law students from the Pacific who, in 2019, launched a grassroots campaign that ultimately led to the UN General Assembly asking the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the world's highest court, to clarify countries' legal obligations regarding climate change.

This week, the ICJ handed down its decision – a global game-changer. We explore what this means for Australia. We also introduce the Brazilian concept of *Mutirão* that means collective action for a shared goal, and how it could power gender-equal climate action here. With major global events on the

horizon, including Women Deliver and potentially COP31 in Australia – now's the time to be like these ants and connect, act, and build our networks.

If you missed the July Intercontinental Think Tank, the guest speaker was Carole Shaw, CEO of the UN Asia Pacific Women's Watch who talked about her organisation's work and its vital role in feeding into gender policy at the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The Asia/Pacific region is home to 60 per cent of the world's population who are on the frontline of climate impacts. Use these links to access all the recordings from Intercontinental Think Tanks and Australian Think Tanks.

Do you know someone that is interested in gender-equal climate justice? Please encourage them to join our Intercontinental and Australian mailing lists.

Keep breathing, keep smiling and have fun!

Kind regards

**Carole**
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Back to top

# What Does The World Court Decision Mean For Australia?



The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has delivered a landmark advisory opinion, stating that countries have a legal obligation to prevent climate harm, not just under climate treaties such as the Paris Agreement, but also under human rights law, the law of the sea, and broader international principles.

Australia argued against this, aligning with fossil fuel exporters like Saudi Arabia and the U.S. But the court disagreed. The ruling makes it clear: failing to regulate fossil fuel emissions, granting new extraction licences, or providing fossil fuel subsidies may amount to an internationally wrongful act.

This ruling puts pressure on Australia, one of the world's largest coal and gas exporters, to phase out fossil fuels and curb new approvals, including Woodside's massive Northwest Shelf project. The ICJ also rejected Australia's

argument that countries can't be individually responsible for climate harms, or that human rights don't require climate action.

It was only last week that the Federal Court ruled the Australian Government did not have a duty of care to protect Torres Strait Islanders from the impacts of climate change. At recent Think Tanks, we have learned about our inadequate environmental laws, which fail to consider climate change, and heard the frustration of Anjali Sharma and Mia Farmer, young climate advocates who are pursuing strategies through Parliament, the courts, and the United Nations to protect future generations. Will the ICJ decision motivate the Australian Government to improve its environmental performance?

Australia will soon set its 2035 climate target. Current advice suggests a 65–75 per cent cut on 2005 levels is needed, but Climate Council modelling shows that only net zero by 2035 aligns with science. The closer we get to zero, the lower the climate risk. The world is watching. So are our children.

Read the Advisory Opinion

Back to top

# Mutirão In Action: What Can Zontians Do?



Later this year, COP30 will be held in Brazil, and the organising team is pushing the concept of *Mutirão* - working collectively towards a common goal that in the climate context, involves everyone having a role, every day, in creating a sustainable future.

For Zontians, this means embedding gender equality into climate justice as described in Zonta International's Statement on Climate Change. This includes closing gender gaps in economic opportunity by pushing for affordable childcare and workplace equality, strengthening protections against gender-based violence, and creating policies that enable women to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of climate change on equal terms with men.

It is about encouraging and supporting women in sustainable decision-making roles, nominating them for climate action awards, and sharing their stories.

A first step is having conversations that matter with your friends, neighbours, and MPs. Discuss the importance of gender-equal climate action and our collective responsibility. Bring more men on the journey with you.

*Mutirão* also means walking the talk – our consumer, transport, and energy choices matter.

Let's be bold: this is our moment to reshape systems, not just tinker with symptoms. We must act now to build a safer, fairer, more sustainable world for women and girls. Climate justice and gender equality are two sides of the same coin.

Let's bring *Mutirão* to Australia with Zonta Says NOW by working with like-minded organisations! The Zonta Says NOW resources and the following articles show ways we can do this.

Zonta Says NOW resources

Back to top

# August Australian Think Tank




Join us on **Saturday 8 August** for a powerful Zonta Says NOW Think Tank session with **Fiona Dorman**, President of the National Council of Women Australia and Chair of the SA Premier's Council for Women. A scientist-turned-policy-advocate, Fiona brings decades of expertise in research, evidence-based advocacy, and feminist leadership.

Fiona will share her experiences from the recent 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.

She will also describe how the ICW provides leadership to the Women20 (W20) initiative, the G20's official engagement group for women's economic empowerment.

**Meeting Times:**
Western Australia: 1:00–2:30pm
South Australia/Northern Territory: 2:30–4:00pm
ACT/New South Wales/Queensland/Tasmania/Victoria: 3:00–4:30pm

This will be a session not to miss—so please share the event flyers (JPEG and PDF) and invite friends, fellow members, and young women leaders in your community.

Register for the August Australian Think Tank

Back to top

# Australia on the Global Stage




Will COP31 be held in Australia in 2026? We don't know yet, but if it is, it will be co-hosted with a South Pacific nation and located in Adelaide. This will be a marvellous opportunity to pursue gender-equal climate action on the world stage. However, we need to start building our local and international networks now so that we can maximise the potential of having a COP in Australia next year.

Where to begin? We have already made a start on building our local relationships with like-minded organisations such as 1 Million Women, Women's Climate Congress, National Council of Women Australia, and Women's Environmental Leadership Australia as well as a host of other Australian organisations through our guest speakers at Think Tanks.

However, we also have an opportunity to build our international connections with the **Women Deliver Conference being held in Melbourne, 27–30 April 2026**. Registrations are now open!

Held every three years since 2007, Women Deliver brings together feminist leaders, youth activists, and policy experts to reshape global gender equality strategies. The 2023 conference in Rwanda drew 6,000 attendees and 10,000 more online. The 2026 conference is advertised as being a space of joy, strategy and resistance!

Women Deliver connects gender equality with climate, health and justice. Their *Collective Action for Change* program supports young climate leaders and advocates for sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR).

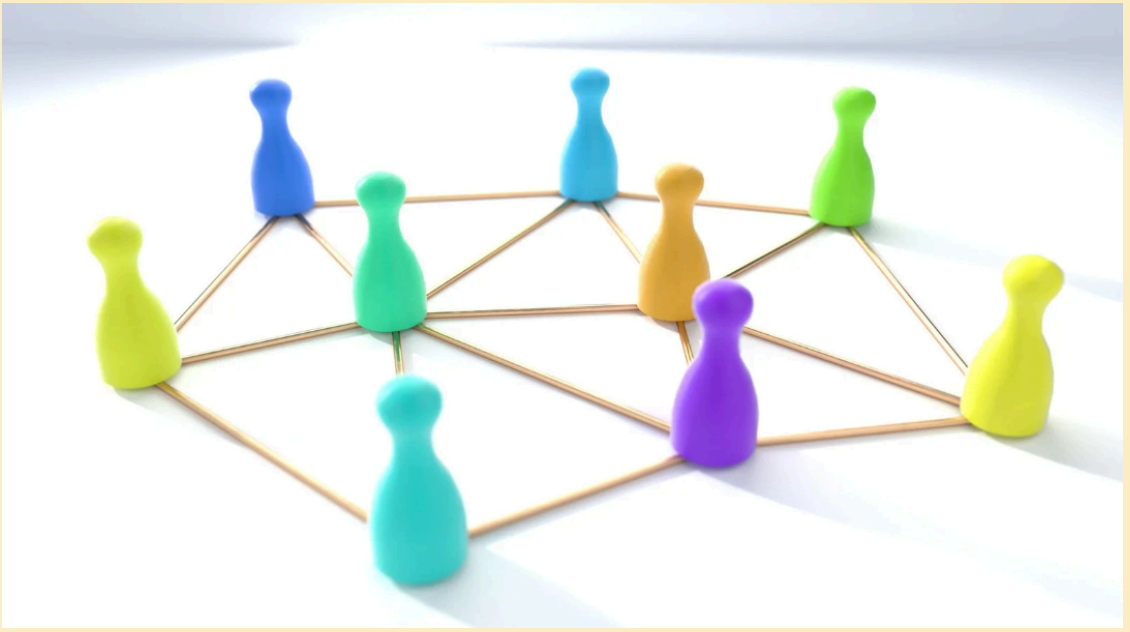
Women Deliver works through the *SRHR & Climate Justice Coalition* to integrate gender into global climate policy. They also advocate at COPs to ensure climate finance, adaptation, and loss and damage include SRHR and gender perspectives.

The stakes are high. The climate crisis is already disrupting access to healthcare, fuelling gender-based violence, and driving child marriage. Working with like-minded organisations helps us to expand our reach and achieve our goals more quickly.

Register for Women Deliver 2026

Back to top

# What Are Our Allies Up To?



We must walk-the-talk of collaboration so it is important that we share the activities of other women's groups working in the climate justice space. This is *Mutirão* in action and here are some of the things that are happening:

- **1 Million Women** are raffling a 2-day Sydney Harbour rejuvenation cruise for 8 people with an onboard chef on Australia's first renewable diesel-powered super yacht! (Raffle closes on 5 August and excludes WA). They're also petitioning the Federal and state governments to electrify one million homes in three years. Join for free here
- **Women's Climate Congress (WCC)** held a July Members' Forum on the 'inner capacities' needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and discussed an initiative to engage rural and regional women in climate action. On 18 August, their members' book club will discuss *Plug In! The Electrification Handbook* by Saul Griffiths, the founder of Rewiring Australia. Join the WCC for free here.

- **Women's Environmental Leadership Australia (WELA)** has a Zoom workshop, *Tools for Changemakers*, on 12 August (12–1.30pm AEST, $45) with climate coach Laurie McGinley. Their next free Zoom JEDI Learning Circle is on 24 September and will examine how movements for justice, equity and inclusion are evolving across different regions and what we can learn from them. Find out more here

Back to top

# Keep Motivated




We all need hope to keep going, and in coming weeks, Zonta International has four events that will inspire you!

- On August 26, tune in to the **Share Your Story Virtual Festival** to hear six clubs present the changes they've made this biennium.
- On 4 September, we'll learn more about our international service project: ***Laaha: A Safe Space for Women and Girls*.** Zontians will hear first-hand from UNICEF program staff on the lifesaving resources that are now available to women and girls - many who reside in conflict settings.
- On 9 September find out ***How Artificial Intelligence is Impacting Gender Equality***
- On 14 September join the ***Zonta Says NOW Intercontinental Think Tank*** and explore the toxic truths about plastics, pollution and health.

Register for all of these events here

These events show what's possible when we take action together. They exist because of your support. Please consider donating to the **Zonta Foundation for Women**. Every contribution helps us build a better world for women and girls. Together, we are unstoppable.

Donate to the Zonta Foundation for Women

Back to top

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