

A word from your President



Hi everyone!

With **Lesley Andrew** taking some extended health leave and in my role as Vice-President, I have taken up the position of Club President until the end of May 2026. Again, I know we all wish Lesley a complete recovery and look forward to welcoming her back into the fold. I am well supported by a great Board who are enthusiastic and encouraging, and I believe your Club is in good hands.

I am sure, like me, that you are all looking forward to spring after what feels to be a long, cool and wet winter. I know we need the rain desperately, but after walking in the sun today with Ross in Wireless Hill, we could feel Spring in the air—within a few weeks the wild-flowers will be in full bloom.



Despite the cold snap we have been experiencing, our Club has been busy in many areas. We have had two excellent and inspiring dinner meetings. July saw **Jaclyn Smith** from **Bush Heritage** talk about one of this group's projects of returning the **Fitz-Stirling** biodiversity hotspot back to good health.



It was very interesting to see the incredible work BH does around Australia and the huge number of volunteers who help with revegetating and caring for these endangered landscapes.

August saw us host the **Area 3 Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award**, credit going to member **Linda Tinning** (**Area 3 District 23 Coordinator of this Award**) for her excellent organisational skills in pulling this together for us.

With 37 guests and members in attendance, it was an extra special evening culminating in a very deserving and inspirational **Area 3 Award** winner in **Pema Chentsho** sharing her incredible journey (see some pics below and read more about this later on).

We also awarded **Franca Sala Tenna**, **Founder of EEO Specialists**, a certificate from the Birthing Kit Foundation Australia. Franca has donated \$15,000

over the last three years, enabling our Club to assemble 3000 birthing kits—incredible generosity! **Alison Martin** was delighted in being able to present the certificate to Franca on behalf of the BKFA.



We have further kit prep and assembly days on **26 and 27 September**, details for which have been advertised and posted on our [webpage](#).

Sue Pertile and I recently visited **Albert Jacob**, **Mayor City of Joondalup** and **James Rowe**, **Deputy Mayor City of Wanneroo**, to discuss the possibilities of holding e-Safety workshops in their respective areas later this year.

more over...

ZWBLA Area 3 Winner Announced

After months of preparation and coordination of the **Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award**, Linda was delighted to introduce the **Area 3 Awardee—Pema Chentsho**—to us at our Club's dinner meeting on 6 August.

What an amazing and inspirational young woman she is having been brought up in Bhutan where her dear mother literally "moved mountains" to ensure Pema had an education, and therefore a future. How proud she must be now to see how her daughter has flourished. Here's Pema with Linda and some of her friends from Edith Cowan University.



cont'd from p.1

We were sad to learn that our enthusiastic member, **Shanaz Lambat** is leaving our Club to move to New Zealand to be closer to her family. We will miss her willingness and ability to organise wonderful events for us but know, once settled, she will soon become involved with one of the kiwi clubs. We wish her every happiness with the next chapter of her journey and we hope to keep in touch.

However, on the membership front, I am pleased to report that we have



several women who are very interested in joining, so our numbers should remain very healthy.

Thank you to our 'Cushion Queen' **Kath** for arranging another sewing bee at her home on 28 July. Six members made 39 breast cushions using a new style which should brighten up any patient's life following the trauma of surgery—a wonderful effort ladies.



I am now looking forward to spending a few days in early September with one of our sons and his family in Melbourne en route to the District 23 Conference in Devonport, Tasmania. I'm looking forward very much to sharing this event with Zontians from around Australia.

Thank you one and all for your contributions to our wonderful Club and I leave you with this thought—

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart"



More on the ZWBLA

Pema was so humble and honoured to receive the **Area 3 ZWBLA** and gave a heart warming speech dedicated to her mother. Here's what she shared—



My name is Pema Chentsho, and I come from a small, quiet town nestled in the eastern part of Bhutan. I stand before you today not because I did something extraordinary on my own, but because of many extraordinary women before me—for being that powerful force and a trailblazer, empowering and creating opportunities for young women like me, the first in the family to go to school and later higher education—and also first in the family to study abroad!

And now, to address the elephant in the room—or more accurately, the cat who is almost being strangled in this picture—yes, that is 2-year-old me! And next to me is my mother, Ugyen Wangmo, whom I'd like to tell you a little bit about.

When I was filling out my application form for this award, I hesitated to write the usual line 'My mother changed my life.'

I thought that's too cliché. But it didn't take much to realize that—if she hadn't done what she did I wouldn't be standing here today. So, cliché or not, it's my truth and it is my story.

If you haven't heard of Bhutan, Bhutan is a small Himalayan country, sandwiched between the global giants China and India. We only opened our doors to the modern world in 1971, and television came to us in 1999. Yep—1999!

My mother was born in a remote village where the idea of luxury was having rice for all three meals. Naturally, she never went to school and of course, there was no TV either.

As one of the eldest daughters of nine siblings, she began working at the age of 7, tending cornfields, babysitting siblings, and working full-time in a local restaurant where she earned 25 kilograms of rice a month. And when I was 7, I was busy playing house and wondering why I had to go to school.

But despite her hardships, my mother understood something vital: the power of education! Not just as a way to escape poverty, but as a way to open doors to a life she never had the chance to live. She begged to go to school—but despite education being free in Bhutan, her family couldn't even afford a school uniform

and \$1 a year for student amenities fees. More importantly, they couldn't afford to lose a labourer, so she was told 'no' again and again.

But when the time came for me, she gave me everything she didn't have. She moved across literal

mountains so I could attend school. She never made us feel the weight of our poverty; she never pressured us to succeed for her sake—she just made it possible.

My mother FACED not only financial challenges, but also social scrutiny. Our neighbours couldn't understand why she was sacrificing so much to send me to school when I could be home helping her, like every other girl in our community. But she knew better!

Because of her, I became the first woman in my community to finish high school. I was the first woman

more over..



"Good evening everyone! Thank you Linda for the warm introduction; I extend a thank-you to Zonta and the great women in the audience. I would also like to thank two other inspiring women leaders that I get to work with every day—Lisa Dwyer and Liz Beresford for writing their kind recommendations for this award, and all the incredible women in my life who have made this moment possible. Your belief in me brought me here, and I will never forget that.

Now, you might be wondering who this random woman with a strange dress is standing at the podium?

cont'd from p.2

to earn an undergraduate degree in engineering in another region of the country, and later earned a full scholarship to pursue a Master's Degree in Telecommunications and Informatics engineering in Portugal—a whole different continent.

Now I stand here, sharing her story. I tell this story not because I want you to pity her or ask for sympathy, but to offer the deepest admiration for the leadership with vision that didn't come with a post or a title. In many unofficial ways, my mother still continues to talk to her friends and people in the neighbourhood to ensure that everyone can go to school.

Her legacy isn't just in me, it's in every woman in my community she inspired—women who were told they belonged in the confines of the kitchen and later became architects and engineers who built those 'damn' walls (sorry for the language!). Women who were told their only value was raising children, and who went on to raise both families and businesses! And women who chose to be homemakers by choice, not by default.

With that spirit I co-founded the 'ECU Women in Business and Leadership Association' so that I can do what my mother did for me, to open doors for other women and non-binary students and leave them open for future generations. Today, our student women's association is a team of six volunteers, fuelled by only grit, passion and a sense of responsibility. Two members of my team are here tonight (below)—Christelle (right), President, and Tegan (left), Vice-President, both very inspiring and committed to building a kinder and equal world for all women, girls and non-binary students.

And we have BIG dreams.



They are all powerful. It's because of women like my mother and many other powerful women that I can stand here today and become a leader who is unapologetically emotional, resilient, ambitious, and not be reduced to outdated expectations!

When I was elected as President of ECU Student Guild in 2024, I represented over 30,000 students from 93 different countries. I co-designed policy reforms, advocated for mental health support, and helped create inclusive systems to remove as many barriers to education as possible.

Coming back as a student after working in both the technical world at Nokia as a Radio Engineer and the huge corporate world like BNP Paribas, I have realised



L-R: Cr Teresa Olow, Pema, Cr Elizabeth Re and Wendy Dowling AM, President ZCPNS

that modern education sometimes fails to prepare students for real life after graduation, and leadership doesn't need to start after graduation. It can start now, in the classrooms, in extra-curricular activities, in conversations like this.

Leadership doesn't require fancy titles. It can look like a mother leaving her village to give her children a better future. And it can look like a student choosing to take charge of their own life and showing young and the underprivileged that there is a way.

more below

First, Mentorship Programs

We aim to connect students with kind-hearted industry professionals and alumni to help them become confident and career-ready. Through panels, events and real conversations, we want to help them start building their futures before they graduate.

Second, Wellness & Leadership Programs

We'll create programs that go way beyond resumes, interviews and predatory networking. We want to create meaningful connections focusing on emotional well-being, confidence and peer support networks.

We have already talked to different companies and alumnae and their responses have been incredibly encouraging and positive. The foundation is already being laid.

This Zonta Award means the world to me—not just as recognition, but as a promise. A promise to keep removing barriers. A promise to keep walking through doors so I can hold them open for others. A promise to never forget the women who paved the way—women like my mother.

Because my mother didn't just change my life, she changed my direction. She built a bridge where there was none and

walked me across it with bare hands.

And now, because of her, I can say—

She moved mountains
so I could rise;
Now, I build ladders so
others can rise.

Thank you, thank you so much for tonight!"



Pema's thirst for excellence is evident, not only from her academic achievements and leadership qualities, but so much of her previous work in Bhutan, and now here, to make life better for others. The title of her address epitomises what she's all about -

"Beyond Borders: A Daughter's Journey from Sacrifice to Global Impact"

There is more detailed information about Pema's background in the official announcement on our website [here](#).

Pema's Area 3 application will be sent to District 23 for judging and if successful at that level, submitted to Zonta International to be considered for one of the ten \$US10,000 International Awards.

Area 3 members wish Pema all the best during this process and look forward to hearing, hopefully, of more successes!

More exciting news!



District 23 Governor, Debbie Schmidt, has just announced that the renowned sailor and climate advocate, **Lisa Blair OAM** and awardee of a **Zonta International Honorary Membership**, will be joining our **Conference in Devonport on 6 and 7 September**.

If Zontians were unable to attend the ZI Convention in Brisbane last year, this will be a fantastic and rare opportunity to meet and hear Lisa speak. Over the last year she has been extremely busy working on her Arctic Circle Project as well as being invited to speak at various environmental symposiums and events in the UK, Europe and New Zealand.

The Conference Committee has been working extremely hard to bring us the best program, as outlined in the last Conference Newsletter. However, if you had hoped to attend and not registered by now, unfortunately, you've missed the closing date of 15 August!



Biodiversity 'hotspot' in our South-West!

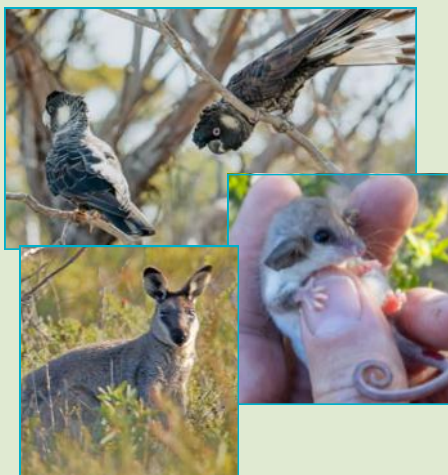


Did you know that we have one of the world's most amazing biodiversity 'hotspots' right in our own backyard?

Yes! **Jaclyn Smith** from **Bush Heritage Australia** spoke at our July meeting and introduced us to the work BH are doing in the Fitzgerald-Stirling area.

Jaclyn has a Bachelor of Behavioural Science, majoring in psychology and biology, and a PhD with a focus on behavioural ecology. Since her PhD, she has worked in a variety of roles within the not-for-profit sector, always being guided by the desire to create a positive impact for people and planet, and connecting people with the natural world.

area, propagated and re-planted. They are not any tree or shrub but plants that will sustain the wildlife like malleefowl, black cockatoos and other birds, pigmy possums, the black-gloved wallaby, and all manner of native creatures.



Here's a quote from BH's website—

"Every year at least 500,000 hectares are cleared in Australia. With it, we lose thousands of birds, reptiles and mammals and make climate change worse. When we protect the bush, we protect the carbon it stores."

Bush Heritage -

- * Buys land to restore, connect and protect native habitats.
- * Works in partnership with Traditional Custodians to protect and heal Country.
- * Works with farmers and other land holders to deliver outcomes beyond reserve boundaries.

This map shows the BH areas across Australia. The properties in WA are:



This picture shows a property which has been transformed from an open farming landscape to its natural state. Seeds were collected from the same

How could you not agree that the work being carried out isn't critical when you see beautiful birds and little critters like these returning to their newly restored habitats?

Dodge Downs Reserve, Eurardy Reserve, Charles Darwin Reserve, Chingarrup Sanctuary, Yarroweyah Falls, Wunambal Gaambera, Red Moort Reserve, Monjebup Reserve, Kojonup Reserve, Karajarri Partnership, Biriliburu Partnership, Bunuba Partnership, Beringa Reserve, more over..

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Chereninup Creek Reserve, Ediegarrup Reserve and Hamelin Reserve.

One of BH's latest programs concerns 'Conservation Futures' which aims to build an Integrated Knowledge System for safe storage of cultural knowledge, reshaping conservation into the future. It is dedicated to building, trialling and implementing a knowledge system that will bring together the widest array of available and new datasets to inform decisions on land and water use and investment in natural resources and climate-ready futures across Australia.

Based on this, their goal is to help guide the transition from declining health of

Country and environmental values in Australia to thriving, resilient landscapes that protect our nature and support prosperity in regional communities. Through their dedicated scientists they are already investigating types of climate resistant plants able to be grown in arid regions.

As you will realize, BH's work is all scientifically based which augers well for our future. Much progress has already been made to restore some of the most neglected landscapes.

Jaclyn's talk entitled '*Bush Heritage Australia: Returning a global biodiversity hotspot to good health*' was so informative and interesting. Many of us don't

realise what a 'jewel' the Fitz-Stirling area is and the amount of restorative work taking place. If you wish to read more about Bush Heritage Australia refer to their website [here](#).

BH has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion among their staff and partners. They actively foster a culture of respect and learning, and have a policy of zero tolerance for discrimination and harassment. They accommodate opportunities for post-grad students and welcome volunteers.

You can see why Jaclyn loves her job and why you might like to become involved in some way!

From Healthy Country to Healthy Women!



For a mere 30 years, **Kath Mazzella OAM** has been 'grinding' away to bring women's health to the fore, lobbying around the world, particularly when it relates to vulva health awareness!

Kath is well known to many Zontians having been *Area 3's 2005 'Woman of Achievement'*, at that time being the Founder of the *Gynaecological Awareness Information Network* (G.A.I.N. Inc).

Since then she has joined a number of organizations, travelled extensively and received many awards and honours, including an *Order of Australia Medal (2009)*, *Induction into the WA Women's Hall of Fame (2011)*, *Senior Australian of the Year WA (2018)* and in 2023 *Ambassador for the Australian Gynaecological Cancer Foundation*.

Kath contacted me in June thrilled that the *Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists* had printed an article about her work in their "O&G" magazine. She said—*"Here it is—30 years in the making. I guess my job is done!"*

Here's the lead-in, but the full article can be read [here](#).

THE VULVA

Vol. 27 No 2 | Winter 2025

The Winter 2025 edition of O&G Magazine centres on the vulva—anatomically vital, often misunderstood, and still burdened by stigma. This issue explores the diagnosis and management of vulval conditions across the lifespan, including lichen sclerosus, benign lesions, paediatric presentations and postmenopausal changes. It also considers the social and psychological dimensions of vulval health, with contributions from psychosexologist Chantelle Otten, artist Jamie McCartney, and advocate Kath Mazzella OAM, whose personal story as a vulval cancer survivor underscores the importance of open dialogue to support earlier diagnosis. Together, these voices highlight the need for clearer language, greater cultural sensitivity, and more inclusive, confident care in a frequently overlooked area of women's health.



[Kath Mazzella – Changing the landscape for women with Gynaecological, Sexual and related Mental Health Issues](#)

In 2022 some of our members joined Kath in King's Park which was a lot of fun with various parts of the female anatomy displayed in red which made



Something related to this that Kath is passionate about, and instigated, is '*International Gynaecological Awareness Day*' (IGAD) annually on **10 September**. She's tried to make this more of a fun day to promote awareness, as shown in this [You-Tube](#).

Events are held in various venues including King Edward Memorial Hospital which has been supporting Kath for 9 years! Many of the previous days can be found in the following link.

quite a spectacle for all to see! We were certainly out their 'girls'!

So, well done and *congratulations Kath* on your incredible persistence, courage and determination in advocating on this issue in the women's health domain. We realise there's more to be done, but in the meantime, *"Viva la Vulva!"*

Around the Club

'Homelessness' - sadly, we hear about this every day in the news. **Ruth** has shared this snippet to show that the smallest action can mean so much—

"As you know, on a Tuesday I help serve food at 5pm at Moore Street in the City to around 150 people with Perth Homeless Support Group. We serve a hot meal (in takeaway containers), ie

soup, fruit, sweet things, boiled eggs and whatever else we may have. We receive bread donations (sometimes lots). After a few weeks I thought butter would be great, so now the bread has the cheaper margarine on it—this has been so welcomed by all the clients. A couple of weeks back it was suggested we add some JAM and vegemite to our offerings

which has been so well received. Something as simple as this seems to put a big smile on the faces of people and makes their day—or perhaps it's just my smiling face! Who knew that jam could be so special!"



(Talk to Ruth if you'd like to donate or give a hand and put a smile on your face.)

more over...

More from around the Club

Board Adjustment

As mentioned in Wendy's Message, our former **President, Lesley**, has had to step back from this position. As a consequence, **Vice-President Wendy** has taken up this role for a year and **Sue Pertilé** has kindly filled the VP role.

Our 'new look' Board is shown at right. We wish them well for their respective terms and look forward to working with them. Despite all the upheaval over the last six months, we remain in great shape, so thank you ladies for volunteering your time and talents!



President—Wendy Dowling AM



Vice-President—Sue Pertilé



Secretary—Nola Hackman



Treasurer—Sue Sofoulis



Directors:

Chris Findlay



Chris Tapley



Liz Wason

September Reminders

Firstly, because many of our members will be attending the D23 Conference in Devonport 5-7 September, we have cancelled our general meeting on 3rd. If members, not heading to Tassie, would still like to meet for a **casual fellowship dinner at the WA Golf Club in Yokine on 3 September**, give Jan McNaught a ring.

Secondly, our next **Birthing Kit Prep and Assembly days** are happening on **Friday 26 and Saturday 27 September**. **Franca Sala Tenna** from **EEO Specialists** has again generously sponsored 1000 kits so we will need all hands on deck. The flyer for this will be emailed shortly but if you wish to register now, the link is on our website [here](#). We hope family, friends and community members will be able to join us.

If any members have been watching **Carole Theobald's 'ZONTA Says NOW' Think Tank** webinars, June's took 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.

In a similar vein, the work of another group of young climate activists has been documented in the film **'Future**

Council'. Elaine and 'yours truly' took the opportunity to see this with Carole at the Luna in Leederville earlier this month. It is well worth viewing and can still be seen at various Hoyts cinemas so check it out [here](#).



Regarding donations of household goods to the **North Balga Primary School**, **Liz** will let us know when and what we need to supply, other than toothpaste and brushes, adequate quantities of which they have.

The Clubs's **Sponsorship Committee**, ably chaired by **Anne**, will be meeting shortly to further progress how this will operate and be managed.

Zontians around the world celebrated **International Friendship Day** on 30 July and were asked by ZI to share their **#ZontaHearts** photos, particularly with a home town landmark. Here are some of the pics our members took.



More from around the Club

Across more than 60 countries, Zontians are united not only by a shared mission to build a better world for women and girls, but friendship. Through service, advocacy and connection, lasting bonds are formed that transcend borders and inspire change.

Our Toast for August was on this topic when we raised our glasses and paid tribute to the many community friendships we have made over the years, all of whom have helped us to achieve our goals and aspirations.

The **Fundraising Committee** are fostering much friendship! They held their meeting in Fremantle at the Gage Roads Brewery and saw a 3D viewing



of **The Great Kimberley Wilderness** at the Maritime Museum. (*I think I'll have to join this committee! Ed.*)

While on this committee, **Sue Sofoulis** is seeking help with transporting some of our Club merchandise to Devonport as she won't be able to handle it all herself. If you have space in your luggage and can assist by taking a few items, please let her know pronto. We're on count-down now for the Conference which is looming up very soon and looks like it's going to be a 'cracker'!

SOME OTHER DATES TO NOTE

Mental Health First-Aid Training (MHFA)

We are seeking to gauge interest in the above training. This training equips participants with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to recognise, understand, and respond to adults experiencing mental health problems or crises. It teaches participants how to offer initial support and guidance, encouraging individuals to seek professional help or other support systems.

If interested, please contact us with your preferred dates at—

secretary@zontaperthns.org.au

NOTE: Only respond if you are interested in participating.

Date options:

Saturday, 25 October & Sunday, 26 October 26 (2 days)

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Venue: ECU Mt Lawley Campus

or

Saturday, 25 October & Saturday, 1 November (2 days)

Time: 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

Venue: ECU Mt Lawley Campus

In essence, these courses empower individuals to—

- * **Recognise a mental health problem or crisis.**
- * **Provide support and guidance until professional help is available.**
- * **Promote positive mental health and well-being in their communities.**

We have run these training sessions previously, they have been well supported and have proven to be very effective.

Indigenous Literacy Day - 2 September

We have been invited by **Soroptimist International Maylands Peninsula**, to join their members in acknowledging this special day. Participants will learn how their Club will support Indigenous education and literacy by collaborating with community organisations dedicated to this important work. Their mission is to empower women and girls to achieve their aspirations by promoting gender equality through access to education, both locally and globally.

Education is a fundamental human right, and literacy is an essential life skill.

During the event, speakers will share their experiences, enhancing an understanding of their work with remote Aboriginal communities in the areas of education, culture, and language. Organisations represented will include the **Kate Mullin Association** and **FISH (Foundation for Indigenous Sustainable Health)**.

This is a **FREE** event; however, in support of FISH, guests are invited to bring an appropriate culturally sensitive book to donate to their "Books for All" program [fish.asn.au/books-for-all-program/]. These can be new or pre-loved, in good condition for all ages.

When: Tuesday, 2 September
6.30pm - 8.00pm

Where: Forrest Park Croquet Club
[66 Harold Street, Mt Lawley](https://www.google.com/maps/place/66+Harold+Street,+Mt+Lawley,+WA+6006)

RSVP: by COB Friday, 29 August to Jane Jones—

simaylandspeninsula@siseap.org

D23 Conference—Devonport 5-7 September 2025

Less than 3 weeks to our Conference. We're now at the 'pointy end' of the planning, Issue 4 of the Newsletter has been distributed along with an overview of the Program, and registrants have been asked to convey their Friday night preferences for '**Dining Around Devonport**'.

Along with our own **Zonta Spirit**,

Devonport is also a **City with Spirit**, and has been named **Australia's Top Tourism Town 2024** and **AGAIN this year!** It's all looking very exciting!

Besides attending Conference, there will be so much to see and do. One of the 'must sees' in Devonport will be the light show!



In signing off on the newsletter, **D23 Governor, Debbie**, remarked—

"I am so looking forward to welcoming you to Devonport, to share in the learning, laughter, and friendship that make Zonta so unique. Safe travels, and see you very soon!"



ZONTA
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