

MEMBERS LOGIN

Soroptimist
Federation of the



International
South West Pacific



I hope you all had a happy December January festive season and for those that celebrate Chinese New Year I hope it was a happy occasion for you too. I hope you have all completed your club annual reports and remember that those who wish to nominate for Best Practice Awards need to have submitted their nominations for projects to the Programme Database in 2019.

At the start of this new year, our first significant celebration, other than

International Day of Education 24th January,

International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation 6th February and

International Day of Women and Girls in Science 11th February

is **International Women's Day (IWD) March 8th** where many of us will be celebrating what women have achieved. I hope clubs celebrate this significant occasion on the date itself or a closely associated date with members of the public to educate outsiders what has been gained for women but what has still to be achieved. Several of us will be in New York on IWD and attending the Consultation Day which actually occurs on IWD itself March 8th the day before the start of CSW 64.

This year at the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW) in New York there is a 25 year review of those issues identified as 'critical' at the 4th World Congress of Women, a gathering of women from around the world in Beijing in 1995 and which resulted in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA). The 1995 BPFA flagged 12 key areas where action was needed to ensure greater equality and opportunities for women and men, girls and boys. It also indicated concrete ways for countries to bring about change. A review of achievements in the 12 Critical Areas of Concern for Women occurs at CSW every 5 years.

The 12 Critical Areas of Concern identified were:-

- Women and Poverty
- Education and Training of women
- Women and health
- Violence against women
- Women and armed conflict
- Women and the economy
- Women in power and decision-making
- Institutional mechanisms
- Human rights of women
- Women and the media
- Women and the environment
- The girl child

Unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus feature stories which provides some comments on the achievements up to 20 years post the Beijing gathering.

I heard an interesting address recently on '**Difficult Women**', a presentation that Dr Gabrielle Casper an Australian Gynaecological surgeon, and a past International President of Medical Women had provided at CSW last year. Essentially if we as women are to raise an issue, then we need data to accompany the issue presented to government and the consequence may be that we become known as 'difficult women'....such is life! One of her examples was trying to improve the lot of widows in Nigeria where she worked with a colleague to gather evidence on how local villages treated the women who had been widowed .

Catherine Evans

Programme Director 2019

Advocacy Work

What are priorities in your country? What are clubs doing in advocacy?

Advocating on behalf of women is a core Soroptimist function, and this month the programme team is pleased to once again be able to report on Soroptimist Advocacy work.

SI Torrens – Decriminalisation of Sex Work

Over a number of years the SI Torrens has been working with selected female politicians to gain support for a Bill to decriminalise sex work and to ensure safe working conditions for sex workers. This year club member attended a forum and wrote a letter to a number of politicians.

The club's continued advocacy on this issue is determined by what is required according to the progress of a Bill. The Bill had passed the Upper House but needed to pass the Lower House of Parliament. Members attended a forum where female politicians from both major parties spoke as well as sex workers themselves. The focus was on safe working conditions. Some members also wrote and personally met with their local politician. As a result the club hopes to the decriminalisation of sex work achieved as this would enable workers to get the same type of working conditions and controls as other workers. Unfortunately the Bill was defeated by a small margin in the Lower House so advocacy will have to continue when another bill is introduced by a parliamentarian.



Tell us what your club is doing to Advocate on behalf of women. Send us the information or complete a Advocacy Programme Report



Best Practice Award Nominations have been extended until the 29th of February midnight AEDT.

Your club can nominate any project which has been submitted to the programme database for the 2019 reporting period.

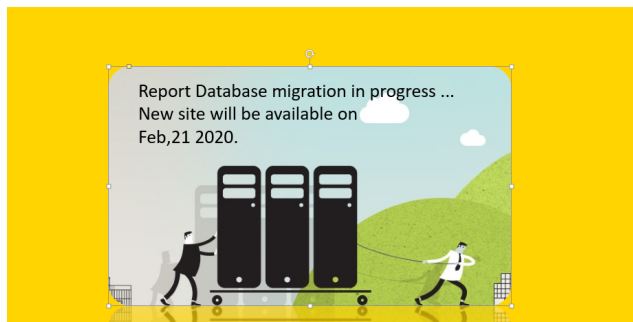
Categories for nomination are:

Any of the eight Objective areas

The SISWP President's special awards.

For further information about the criteria for the awards, and links to the nomination forms, please visit the SISWP website (you must be signed in), and search for BPA [or follow this link](#)

Programme Database



The Programme Database is moving, for the past 6 months, the database has been hosted by the Developers on their servers. It is now time for the database to move across to the SISWP server.

What does this mean: On Tuesday 18th March at midnight, the current database will be closed down and migragrated to the SISWP hosted site. On Friday 21st of March the database will be accessible at the new site.

The new address will be www.reports.siswp.org. All links to the site from the SISWP website will be updated to the new site.

Email notifications will be sent to all clubs informing them of this move. Please pass on this information to your programme reporting representatives.

New programme database site address is www.reports.siswp.org

Annual Reports

Clubs should now start to consider creating their Club Annual report. Clubs can create their annual report from the Programme Database. Using the Annual Reports link from the left hand menu.

The Club Reports are produced from a query which searches the database for any reports submitted to the database which have a Start date of between 1/1/2019 to 31/12/2019 and a End date of between 01/01/2019 to 31/12/2019, and have been approved. The criteria is the same for Region, Country and Zone annual reports.

Reoccurring Projects:

The Programme team have received a few queries on how to handle reoccurring projects. If your project is reoccurring, you should report each year on the activities for that year. Your start date should be inclusive of the current year, and your end date should be inclusive of the current year. Do NOT put in the actual start date or end date of the project, as this will then not appear in your annual reports.

Rejected Reports:

Please take note of the comments received back from the programme team in regards to the rejected reports. To reuse the rejected report, open up the rejected report and use the re-use button, this will create a copy of the rejected report, give the report and title and then make any necessary changes to the report, then either save or submit the report. Please remember to delete the rejected report from your rejected reports list.

NOTE: If the report was submitted as a Activity and it has been suggested that you resubmit as a project, please remember to use the download icon to download a copy of the report, so that you have the information to reuse.

Statistical breakdown of report submitted and approved to the database for 2019

Report Type	Count of ID
Activity	402
Advocacy	103
Donations	394
Project	188
Scholarship	88
Grand Total	1175

Objective Type	Count of ID
Conflict resolution/peace promotion	15
Disaster relief, mitigation and resilience	30
Economic empowerment	107
Education	254
Elimination of violence	120
Environmental sustainability/water and sanitation	56
Food security	23
Healthcare	168
Activity (not assigned to a Objective)	402
Grand Total	1175

Reports submitted by Region	Count of ID
Aotearoa New Zealand North	122
Aotearoa New Zealand South	101
Fiji	24
Indonesia (NA)	1
Malaysia	30
Mongolia (NA)	11
New South Wales	150
North Queensland	45
Papua New Guinea (NA)	15
Singapore (NA)	7
South Australia	149
South Queensland	168
Tasmania	106
Victoria	51
Western Australia	195
Grand Total	1175

SDG Type	Count of ID
SDG 1: No poverty	59
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	38
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communities	15
SDG 12: Responsible consumption, production	13
SDG 13: Climate action	6
SDG 14: Life below water	4
SDG 15: Life on land	14
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	15
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals	2
SDG 2: Zero hunger	16
SDG 3: Good health and well-being	255
SDG 4: Quality education	167
SDG 5: Gender equality	119
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	27
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	20
SDG 9: Industry, innovation, infrastructure	3
Activity Not assigned to a SDG	402
Grand Total	1175

Further indepth analysis of the database can also be harvested. For example here in Australia, clubs utilize Bunnings (a major hardware store) to hold BBQ's to raise funds for their projects, for 2019 this activity raised close to \$30,000 dollars for Soroptimists to spend on projects which benefited women and girls.



The Road to Equality Appeal, 2019-2021, will focus on issues already the focus of much of the SI advocacy work, such as child marriage, FGM/C, the rights of older women, human trafficking, migration, and domestic violence. A grassroots project for each topic will bring stories from the field that we can share, allowing Soroptimists to turn up the volume of our global voice.

The coordinators joining us on 'The Road to Equality' are Ayushi Kundu and Olga Sidenko, who will work within a team that will include a representative from each Federation, to ensure that this appeal is brought to life. **Nora Lam** is the SISWP Representative on the team.

Child marriage is a human rights violation that affects over 12 million girls every year. Global Goal 5 promotes the expansion of gender equality and aims to eliminate child marriage so that young girls everywhere are able to reach their full potential. Read the Soroptimist International position statement on the [Girl Child here](#)

The following articles highlights why the SI President's Appeal is essential to raising awareness and keep the focus on advocacy work and change.

Pakistan's Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929 sets the legal age for girls to marry at 18. But this law is rarely enforced, as the Pakistani courts often apply Sharia (Islamic law) instead, which they interpret as allowing any girls who has gone through puberty to marry.

Recently it has been reported that a high court in Pakistan has ruled that men can marry underage girls, under Sharia law, after they have experienced their first menstrual cycle. The ruling was made by the Sindh High Court on Feb. 3 during the hearing of Huma Younus, a 14-year-old Catholic girl who was abducted, pressured to convert to Islam, and forced into child marriage.

To prove the marriage was invalid and illegal, Younus' parents brought a copy of her baptismal certificate and testimony from her school to the hearing to corroborate her age. Her family cited the Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act, which prohibits the marriage of any child under the age of 18.

The judges, however, ruled that the marriage between Younus and her abductor, Abdul Jabbar, was legal under Sharia law because she had already experienced her first period.

After the high court's devastating verdict, Younus' parents and their lawyer Tabassum Yousaf, announced that they will seek justice from Pakistan's Supreme Court.

"We shall not stop until we get justice," Yousaf told AsiaNews.

What can we as Soroptimists do: Support the SI President's appeal, to enable the appeal to support girls in pursuing education and avoiding child marriage, by providing programmes which educate, empower them with information on the rights of a girl child, and then enable them through economic opportunities.



SISWP will have one of their biggest contingent of members attending CSW 64 in New York. This team will be headed by President Anusha and Programme Director Catherine.

Whereas in the past each CSW has had a major theme for review such as Rural Women. This year The main focus of the session will be on the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcomes of the 23rd special session of the General Assembly. The review will include an assessment of current challenges that affect the implementation of the Platform for Action and the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and its contribution towards the full realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Soroptimist International have represented members at the regionals 25 year review process.

The SISWP team at CSW64 will keep you uptodate with happenings by blogging and social media posts during the 2 weeks.

SISWP will be hosting two parallel events at CSW64

Event 1 - "Transformational Breakthroughs and Educational Innovations to Empower Indigenous Girls."

Date: Wednesday 11 March (New York Time) , Time: 4:30 PM

Event 2 - Vulnerable No More! Security and Resilience of Women After Disaster".

Date: Friday 13 March 2020 (New York time) Time: 4:30 PM

Both events will be live streamed via SISWP facebook page at the following time . Event 1 Australia it will be Thursday 12th of March at 7.00am Sydney Time.

Event 2 - Saturday 14th March at 7.00am. Sydney Time. Please check dates and times for your country.

Resources to assist you with your CSW or International Women's Day events.

Soroptimist International have prepared a [CSW 64 Advocacy Pack](#). This pack outlines CSW, Beijing Platform for Action, SDG's, Soroptimist Position Statements and the SI and Zonta CSW64 written statement, all combined in the one document.

We encourage Soroptimists everywhere to when creating a post to their social media pages whether this be facebook, twitter or instagram, to use the messages that we have produced (see below), tailored for Facebook, adding a photograph of themselves doing the Equal Sign, (this is a image of a women with her arms held bent at the elbows) using the frames provided (these will be available from download frm the SISWP website shortly) – simply use PowerPoint or Publisher to add your photograph.

The hashtags to use are:

#SWPEachforEqual

#SWPGenderEquality

#SWPInspiringWomen.

Facebook tag @soroptimistsouthwestpacific

Create a press release to let your local media know about your campaign.

Social Media Messages

- #SWPEachforEqual Soroptimists call for action now! See what we are doing to change the world.
- #SWPEachforEqual Soroptimists advocate for gender equality, our projects change the world.
- It's #IWD today. Real change to gender equality has been too slow, no country has achieved gender equality. Women & girls work more, earn less & have fewer choices.
- #SWPEachforEqual Soroptimists advocate for Gender equality through proejects which Educate, Empower and Enable Women and Girls

The SISWP web site will release information about CSW and International Women's Day, as well as images, and a facebook frame for you to use.

The SISWP Facebook page and the website will share stories from CSW and club IWD functions over the 2 week period.

UN Women

Your UN Representatives have been active at the Beijing Plus 25 Region reviews.

Linda Witong, Special Advisor to Advocacy attended the Copenhagen Declaration and Program for Action meeting, read her blog on the [Soroptimist International Website](#) Lilliana Mosca, UN Representative attended the 10th International Forum on Food and Nutrition, "Fostering Business and Innovation while preserving Mother Earth" held in Milan. Read her blog here.

In November SI UN Representative and SISWP Member **Theresa Devasahayam** represented SI at the Bangkok Regional Review meeting Beijing Plus 25. Theresa reports that " Some striking issues which were discussed at this forum were the anxiety millennials living in this region felt in the job market and increasing precarity, especially with rising inflation and the emergence of the gig economy; the persistence of degrading depictions of women in the media; rape and sexual harassment in public spaces and the lack of legislation protecting women; lack of access to reproductive health services because of religious injunctions on sexuality and reproduction; and the sense that men and boys are not sufficiently engaged in advocacy for women's rights." Please read Theresa's full report on this meeting on the [Soroptimist International website](#)

How can we as Soroptimists influence and bring about change to the women and girls in our countries, we need to be involved and network with other organisations. Especially as UN Women moves to catalyze collective action, drive increased public and private investment, and deliver game-changing results for women and girls everywhere, through the "The Generation Equality Forum".

Here in Australia, Soroptimists through our National Representative are member of the **ERA** (Equality Rights Alliance), which is Australia's largest network advocating for women's equality, women's leadership and recognition of women's diversity. We bring together 61 organisations with an interest in advancing women's equality. Through this membership we have a voice to advance gender equality.

In the Asia Pacific rim, two organisations [Arrow](#) and [APWLD](#) are critical in organising the people's forums and other CSO meetings held in Bangkok several times a year. They also to some extent work with ESCAP and UN Women. Sivananthi Thanenthiran is Executive Director of ARROW (Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women) and has been appointed as one of the [Civil Society Advisory Groups](#). SISWP Countries through their National Representatives would be well placed to make contact with these organisations.

Around the Federation

The 16 Days of Activism, SI Cobram Barooga sent in the information about their event.

Our Club conducted a State to State walk on Sunday 1st December 2019 in our efforts to put forward the message that Family Violence is not OK. We partnered with our local council – Moira Shire who were able to help with some of our printing, lots of advice and promotion of the event. We also used Facebook to promote the event as well as local media. We have run an event during the 16 days of activism for the past 6 or 7 years and the State to State walk for the past 2 years. We were very happy with the format and hope to continue in years to come. Each year we attract more and more interested parties and it's great that we have had such support from the shire and local media.

Picture below are of the publicity received, walking the swing bridge, Renata Lucas ((Gender Equity Project Officer Moira Shire) gave an informative address on the importance of "Calling it Out" to sexist comments



SI Karratha celebrated International Human Rights Day on the 10th December with a Silent Vigil at our newly completed Walgu (Welcome) Park where our Three purple flower chairs together with the domestic violence information Plaque have been installed by the City of Karratha. The Purple Bench initiative was organised through the Women's Counsel of W.A and todate there are about 8 purple benches in the Perth Metropolitan area and some regional areas but Karratha is unique with our three purple flower chairs made with steel due to our climate in the north west of west Australia.

The Silent Vigil was quite magical under the snappy gums surrounded by the red earth and candle lit area. We held one minute of silence to remember those women who have suffered in silence and we read a poem enhancing our understanding and then our two guest speakers Paul and Kim Tahitahi took us through their journey of domestic violence within their marriage and showed us through their determination and love how they gained the strength to carry on and now they spread awareness to us all.

The photos show our Guest Speakers Paul and Kim Tahitahi sitting in the purple flower chair

The whole group at the Silent Vigil

Nan Williams, Glen Slee and Viv Kamen standing behind Kim Tahitahi



SI Petaling Jaya, recently submitted to the programme database information about this project. **SPOT Community: Women of Worth**, this project is 12 months old, having been launched on International Women's Day 2019. SPOT organised our first event of the year in conjunction with the International Women's Day celebration on 9 March. The event was successfully executed by 20 volunteers and had resulted in 100 new followers on our social media platform Instagram. The event consisted of a SPOT exhibition, a forum discussion titled "Let's Talk About Sex" and the SPOTLINE launch. SPOT Community Women of Worth is a series of events organised with the aim to uplift girls and women and celebrate the achievements and accomplishments of women in society.

The event began with the launch of SPOTLINE, a volunteer-run 24 hour sexuality education textline available via text or WhatsApp at +018 240 4033. The launch was officiated by Puan Sri Siew Yong Gnanalingam, Past Federation President (2012-2014), Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific Federation, and Elmarie Potgeiter, President (2018-2020) Soroptimist International Club of Petaling Jaya. SPOTLINE aims to provide freely available information for crucial, time-sensitive decision making, allowing young people to take charge of their sexual and reproductive health.

The launch was followed by the Let's Talk About Sex Ed Panel, with Dr Hamizah Mohd Hassan, Head of the Reproductive Health Unit at LPPKN, Honey Tan, human rights lawyer and activist; and Chahana Ramesh, a SPOT volunteer. Moderated by journalist, actor and activist Tehmina Kaoosji, the panel discussed the evolving roles of women at home, in their communities and on a national level.



Soroptimists respond to disaster recovery, with the recent fires in Australia, SI Beenleigh jumped into action. January is back to school month after the long summer break and the beginning of a new school year. SI Beenleigh club members were concerned that many farming communities coming out of drought and now experiencing bush fires would not be in a financial position to purchase basic school supplies for their children. A Trybooking Fundraising page was set up, advertising on Facebook and the SISWP club page for donations went ahead. The club utilized a project already in place - Target 10 a library bag complete with essential school items. The Helena Jones Correctional Centre were contacted and they made 400 library bags over 2 weeks, the women were so pleased to be able to help. The State member for Southern Downs was contacted and their office suggested 6 small schools in a farming community which had recently suffered from drought and then the bushfires. These schools were contacted and a date was arranged for a road trip to these schools. Two members set out at 6.30 in the morning to travel to the 6 schools. They delivered 150 Library bags complete with essential school items, crocheted rugs for the sick bays, soccer balls and other assorted balls, along with toiletry items for the women, and additional stationery supplies for the teachers. The schools were very welcoming and were so thrilled that they had been thought of. One small school said several children had not started school yet and she was sure that it was due to not having school supplies so she was going to immediately contact all families to say that they had sufficient supplies at the school for students to use.





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Copy for the March 2020eSPAN edition is required by 8th of March 2020 to swpasstprogrammedirector1@siswp.org

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