

Welcome to the April edition of Soroptimist Programme Action News (SPAN).

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Soroptimist International
Federation of the South West Pacific



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One of the major events of the Soroptimist year has gone. The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has finished and while we may not have made progress in some desired areas that thin line which marks progress has been held and at least there were Agreed Conclusions unlike some years.

As a virtual CSW, it was unusual and it offered opportunities for up to 25,000 registrants to have an opportunity to watch discussions live on UN TV, attend side events sponsored by different nations and have a choice of over 700 events into which to choose to Zoom it was over-whelming in some ways and the time difference in our countries did make it difficult for those who work. For those of us who pursue extensive unpaid work it was still exhausting and I know that after several days of extremely early starts my ageing body refused to continue. It recalled when CSW was actual and you could focus more easily as your usual life was thousands of kilometres away and you could sleep more regularly.

Nevertheless it was its usual eye-opening self where attendees saw many cultures, heard differing views of issues and recognised the passion and commitment of many women through-out the world who fought, often at personal risk, to make a difference for women and children in their community and beyond. All this made the importance of advocacy far more real.

For more reflections on CSW65 see Chris Knight and Michelle VanderLinden-Enfield articles below.

To read the CSW65 agreed conclusions [click here](#)

During our Soroptimist year our clubs focus on special campaigns. Our next one is based around World Environment Day on June 5. A package of possibilities for clubs to consider will be out shortly and issues you may choose include protecting our air, the earth or the waters of this world. Some clubs may choose to focus on biodiversity such as vegetation or animals. Others may decide that they will focus on our 100 trees per club being planted.

I hope that clubs will give the same enthusiasm and commitment to the environment as they dedicate to the prevention of violence. Our future generations select climate change as a major issue and this may be an opportunity to work with them.

Di Lockwood
Programme Director



Advocacy Work

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.

Is your club looking for some Advocacy ideas?

Showcasing a number of clubs who have undertaken a variety of Advocacy activities including:

1. **SI Port Pirie** - contacted 4 Ministers of Parliament who are members of the Food Forum of Australia and New Zealand, encouraging them to endorse an evidence-based warning on foetal alcohol syndrome on alcohol containers.
2. **Jobseeker:**
 - a. **SI Torrens** - Raise the Rate: COVID 19 saw a temporary increase in a JobSeeker payment which improved the lives of women and children. There was concern that when this was stopped that the original payment would tip recipients back into poverty.
 - b. **SI Southern Districts Adelaide Inc** - Advocacy to Federal Government to maintain extra COVID-19 jobseeker entitlements: Letters sent by club members to Federal Members of Parliament to address concerns about future proposals to scrap the current amount in Jobseeker entitlements and return to the original Pre Covid 19 Newstart payments. Members sent 15 letters and one phone call was made to the local Federal Member's Office.
3. **SI Adelaide** - Wicked Campers is a business which hires out campervans across Australia. These vans are covered with disrespectful language directed towards women and girls. Some jurisdictions have taken action on banning Wicked Campers in their state, but South Australia has not yet done this.
4. **SI Southern Districts Adelaide** - Advocacy to continue the Federal Government focus on the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody: Members signed a petition circulated by SI Beenleigh to refocus the attention of the Federal Government on the issue of Aboriginal deaths in custody. This petition asked that these matters be returned to the current agenda as a key issue at the next meeting of the National Cabinet in the light of circumstances in the USA and the black lives matter movement.
5. **SI Southern Districts Adelaide** - Advocacy to remove the presumption of equal shared parental responsibility (ESPR) from the Family Law Act: Letters sent to the

Prime Minister, the Australian Attorney General and the Minister for Women, asked for the removal of presumption of Equal Shared Parental Responsibility from the Family Law Act. Several high-level reports have recommended that presumption be replaced and not linked to equal time. This was being inappropriately applied in cases involving family violence putting children at risk of further abuse. Members also signed a petition prepared by the Women's Legal Services Australia.

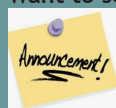
Tell us what your club is doing to Advocate on behalf of women. Send us the information or complete a Advocacy Programme Report

Programme Reporting Database

A global voice for women SWP Programme Database



Want to search the report database?



Do you wonder what other clubs are doing? Are you interested in projects for a specific SDG? Just curious about what advocacy is happening? Exciting news Soroptimist members now have READ access to the database. Using a generic username and password, to log on, will enable you to search and see what other clubs, zones or regions are doing. You can download these. It will enable you to look at specific projects or look at examples of advocacy.

The Keys to this possibility are:

User name: SWP5002

Password: Pr0gObj3ctiveSWP

when you are logged in, you only have READ rights. What does this mean?. You can:

- View any reports submitted to the database
- View any Annual Reports Created
- View and Download individual reports
- Search across Reports submitted to the database from the Reports Table
- View and Download a Search you have created to a Excel Spreadsheet.

If you have never visited the Programme reporting database, and now wish to do so, please make yourself familiar with some of the resource documents on the website.

You will need to be logged onto the website to view these documents. <https://www.siswp.org/downloads/412-resources/programme-reporting-database-help-documents.html>

There is also a webinar on the use of the Programme Database available to [view here](#)

If you should need further assistance please contact your Zone coordinator.



HAVING PROBLEMS with the DATABASE?

Anyone having problems with the report database please contact Di Lockwood, Programme Director. Di's email is swpprogramme2020@siswp.org

Please do not ring HQ



Nominations close 23 April via electronic application [Click here to go to the application form](#)

The Best Practice Awards are presented by our Federation to acknowledge outstanding projects by member clubs. Our next acknowledgement is during the Interim Board Meeting in May this year. Awards are given in each of the Goal 2 Objectives i.e. Education, Elimination of Violence, Economic Empowerment, Food Security, Healthcare, Environment and Conflict Resolution.

Eligible projects are those implemented and completed during 2020. All projects must have been approved and published on the report database. The ID number required can be found on the report, either on the database or on the summary returned to the club. Any project which won at the last round of awards at the conference of Clubs in 2020 is not eligible this time.

The Programme of Service team reserves the right to not give an award in any category if the project is not considered to be of sufficiently high standard even if it is the only nomination in a category.

Programme of Service Meeting at the IBM

Are you a Region Programme/UN Liaison representative, a National Representative of a non-region country or a proxy delegate for either of these positions? If you are, you are part of the extended Programme of Service team.

You are required to attend this Programme meeting at the IBM. You will need to register to become a panelist who is thus able to speak. [Click here](#) for the link for the form you need to complete.

Others are able to attend as silent observers who will not have the option to speak. Any club can ask a question but it must be raised by the appropriate person who is a member of the extended programme of Service. A form to register as a silent observer will be sent to all clubs shortly.

100 Acts of Kindness for the Earth

Our next campaign in our federation is related to 5 June, [World Environment Day](#).

One easy action, amongst the many I am sure you are planning, is to have 100 clubs have their members turn off their power for one hour at 7pm on the 5th of June. The earth would benefit from this no matter how brief it sounds. Chat to your club about this and we will ask you to register some time next month. You could choose the time to meet and have a chat or just talk to your family.

Which Sustainable Development Goal?



The SDGs are extremely wide ranging and at times you may find it difficult to decide which SDG or target best defines your project. Take Education for example, your best fit for what you have done may not be a target in SDG 4. It may belong in another SDG target.

The Programme of Service team has produced several documents to assist you with this. The latest document titled 'Which SDG?' It explores targets for 8 particular areas in which projects are held. They are Education, Elimination of violence, Economic empowerment, Food security, Healthcare, Environmental sustainability/water and sanitation, Conflict resolution/peace promotion and Disaster relief and mitigation.

Clubs need to be sure about the overall purpose of their project, advocacy or action when planning it. Some parts of a project may fit different SDGs but the overall goal determines this and it is under that SDG that you enter your report. Your target should be from this Goal. You are not able to use a target from any other SDG. You can locate this document in the HELP section on SDGs in the report database, or [Download here](#)



CSW65 - Reflections from Chris Knight

Having been to New York for the UN CSW twice experiencing CSW65 on virtual platforms via live streams from the UN and the NGO Parallel Sessions was by far the best experience of CSW. Despite time zone issues it is possible to survive on very little sleep when attending the virtual events. One of the many positives was that more Soroptimist members could be part of the NGO CSW65 Parallel events than ever before. Chris reports that there are many more amazing women (and men globally who have been staunch advocates working within the UN/CSW space for more than 30 years and are still there. That our Pacific island nations need more assistance and support and there were some amazing speakers especially from Fiji. Whilst we still have a long way to go to achieve 50/50 equality, more people are willing to accelerate their advocacy and actions, especially the younger generation who really want their own seat at the table.

[READ MORE](#)

CSW65 - Michelle VanderLinden-Enfield

A lively and insightful parallel event prompting gender equality by educating men and boys on being gender equality allies. Sharing control of resources, decisions and participation in care work, contraceptive education, domestic labour and women's empowerment. Educating men and boys on the need for paid care for children, elders, early childhood development and frontline health work is vital to move toward gender equality.

[READ MORE](#)

CSW65 - Christine Johnstone

One of the most sought after events at CSW is the Town Hall Event with the Secretary General, it is always booked out, but the Virtual experience at CSW meant that we all could get a seat at this event. And best of all, it is still available for viewing from the UN TV website page, by [following this link](#). If you wish to read my notes from this event, which was moderated by UN Women Executive Director, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, address by the Secretary General António Guterres, along with questions from the members of the civil society.

[READ MORE](#)

UN SDG Work

New York

CSW65 was the main focus during March information and blogs can be found on the SI International site, including blogs from the Generational Equality Forum Mexico 2021. [Follow this link](#)

One such blog is by Francesca Fletcher Williams: Negotiating at CSW65: Struggling to Stop the rollback of Women's Rights. [Read more](#)

The United Nations Web TV site, has many of the parallel events available for you to view, [follow this link](#)

The NGO CSW_New York group, have many of the conversation circles and the side events available to view through their TV website [follow this link](#)
If you also registered as NGO CSW delegate, many webinars will be available to view as well.

April

21 April [World Creativity and Innovation Day](#)
22 April [International Mother Earth Day](#)
22 April [International Girls in ICT Day](#)
24 April [International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace](#)
28 April [World Day for Safety and Health at Work](#)

May

3 May [World Press Freedom Day](#)
15 May [International Day of Families](#)
16 May [International Day of Light](#)
16 May [International Day of Living Together in Peace](#)
20 May [World Bee Day](#)
22 May [International Day for Biological Diversity](#)
23 May [International Day to end Obstetric Fistula](#)
29 May [International Day of UN Peacekeepers](#)

Around the Federation

International Womens Day was celebrated by many clubs throughout the federation we know this because many clubs have posts on Facebook showing some great events that have been arranged and attended. **Please don't forget to enter your activity in the Programme Database so the programme team can access information about your work.**

SI Randwick & Eastern Suburbs Inc joined in the 'Clean Up Australia Day' to clean up a local beach and surrounding parkland.

During the Covid-19 lockdown, being able to get outside and enjoy meeting with friends and family in these public areas has been very important.

The Club became involved in the 'Clean Up Australia Day' to remove as much plastic pollution as possible, preventing this from going into the ocean and affecting local wildlife. They found a lot of cigarette butts and a surprising amount of confetti. Given these areas are also maintained by the local council the group were doubly surprised to find so much litter.



SI Suva

Club members used their deferred Saturday of Service to plant mangrove seedlings as part of the defence of their country's foreshore. Fiji is threatened by rising sea levels and mangroves are a vital part of the 300 plus islands' defences. This action brings the total of seedlings planted over 3 years to 23,000 of which 18,000 have been planted this year.

The club invited other citizens to join them in the activity which was widely promoted. Their commitment is to the environment and securing the future for the next generation. The photo shows the club President hard at work.

SI Murray Bridge, South Australia

The club had a novel approach to their International Womens day event. They decided on a film festival. Films by South Australian women which illustrated the Road to Equality for women and girls through Empowerment and Education were sourced. The topics covered were:

- Child and forced marriages
- Rights of older women
- Mental health in our communities
- Modern day slavery
- Migration and cultural awareness

This involved a laborious search through over 50 films, contact with the producers and adaptation to the technical requirements. This free film festival attracted 74 women ranging in age from 17 to late 70s. So involved were the women that many stayed afterwards to discuss these issues from their local community and talk about ways in which they might be able to help. If you would like any further information about the films used please contact Carol Bath at simurraybridge@siswp.org



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Educate, Empower, Enable



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