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Soroptimist International



South East Asia Pacific

ACN 147 990 627



SOROPTIMISTS
EMPOWER CHANGE

SPAN

Soroptimist Programme Action News

Welcome to the February 2025 edition of the Programme Action News

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FROM OUR PROGRAMME CONVENOR

Welcome to 2025. A magic year lays ahead with many reasons for reflection and new energy. We are celebrating UN80, 50 years of CEDAW (principles for anti-discrimination against women) and 30 years since the Beijing Platform for Action. (B+30). It is a special year for women and for all Soroptimists.



This month we:

1. We prepare for International Women's Day, and Commission for the Status of Women 69 with **11 delegates** who are members of our South East Asia Pacific Federation. Connecting the dots webinar is [HERE](#) from CEDAW to B+30 to SDGs. This gives context for the next steps.
2. We at CSW69 are advocating for **protection of adolescent girls** where emerging issues are impacting on their right to a safe, fair and sustainable future. Statement [HERE](#) Please use for your advocacy. meetings.
3. IWD Webinar invitation - free to members and guests, Register [HERE](#) IWD toolkits below.
4. We are finalising annual reports and reviews. Please ensure your club has no more reports **in your drafts** folder, as we can't review them when they're there. You have to press submit. Several clubs have been worried their work has not been counted - because they have not been submitted. We are keen to present a realistic view of your hard work, so please if your report looks a little light - they may be hiding in draft.
5. If you are reading this eSPAN on your mobile, please click for more stories at the bottom of the page, otherwise you will miss club project reports.
6. Last month we produced 2 videos and blogs on **Education Day on lifelong learning**. View on the website [HERE](#)
7. There are SI **podcasts** [HERE](#) and local radio interviews coming to our website soon. Until then, we can send directly to Regional and National Presidents email's to check for cultural sensitivity first.
8. Soroptimists were **acknowledged by Commonwealth Secretary General** Patricia Scotland yesterday after the first CHOGM to be held in the Pacific. The Samoa CHOGM video is [HERE](#).
9. 2025 SDG report card is due for **launch 18 February** for UNESCAP countries, view [HERE](#), UNESCAP B+30 report is [HERE](#)

As we plan for 2025, we have our:

- Signature campaigns: March **International Women's Day** and **CSW69**, **June Environment month**, October **Day of the Girl Child**, and November-December **16 days of Activism**.
- September special tour of Mongolia hosted by 2 clubs (please express your interest)
- In partnerships we are recognizing Dynamic Australian women who significantly contributed to the UN - booklets, presentations and more - during UN80 - the 80th anniversary of the UN charter. More next month. The inaugural coffee table book includes Jesse Street, Robbie, Jennifer Ashton, Narelle Townsend, Gillian Triggs, Gillian Bird, Penny Wensley, Megan Davis, Leanne Smith, Amanda Gorely, and others to come.

Dr Donnell Davis,

Programme Convenor 2024-2026

programme.donnell@siseap.org

ADVOCACY WORK

CSW69

The CSW (Commission on the Status of Women) meetings are an important platform for advancing gender equality and women's rights globally. CSW69 will be a significant event for SISEAP with President Joanne Yeoh and Dr. Donnell Davis leading such a large delegation from SISEAP.

Authorised SISEAP Delegates are:

Dr Senata Tinaiseru Ratumaitavuki - Fiji

Munkhtsetseg Jargalsaikhan - Mongolia

Lindasari Anggorowati - Indonesia

Raelene McMullen - New Zealand

Theresa Lyford - Company Secretary and SI Board member

Cherrie Power - Victoria and National Treasurer Australia

Judy Toll - Western Australia

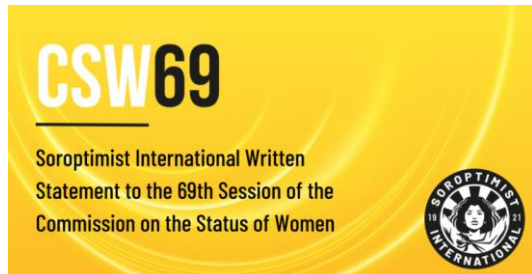
Sarah Barnbrook - Melbourne

We now have one vacancy for a CSW Delegate. Please Contact Programme Convenor Donnell Davis.

[READ THE BEIJING PLATFORM](#)

Dates and times for Soroptimist International events will be published shortly. Please watch for social media updates and mail outs.

Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific NGO Written Statement CSW69. President Joanne Yeoh, will read out the SISEAP written statement to the assembly at the UN building. Read the Statement [HERE](#).



SI's participation in CSW69, alongside allied organisations, represents a unified effort to ensure that the commitments of the Beijing Declaration are not just remembered but actively pursued. As the world reflects on the past 30 years, SI remains dedicated to driving the agenda forward, advocating for a future where every woman and girl can thrive.

[READ SI WRITTEN STATEMENT](#)



12 CRITICAL AREAS OF CONCERN

- | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--------------|---|----------------|---|--------------------------|----|-----------|----|-------|----|----------------|
| 1 | GIRL CHILD | 2 | WOMEN IN POWER | 3 | INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS | 4 | ECONOMY | 5 | VAW | 6 | ARMED CONFLICT |
| 7 | HUMAN RIGHTS | 8 | HEALTH | 9 | ENVIRONMENT | 10 | EDUCATION | 11 | MEDIA | 12 | POVERTY |

12 Critical Areas of Concern flagged in the Platform of Action © UN Women



The NGO CSW Forum is organized by and for global civil society, non-governmental organizations, and feminists to connect them with the official [United Nations Commission on the Status of Women \(UN CSW\)](#) process. With hundreds of events, the NGO CSW Forum informs, engages, and inspires grassroots efforts and gender equality advocacy around the world. While the NGO CSW Forum runs parallel to and complements the UN CSW, it is a separate process with separate organizers. To be a part of the conversation, and to participate in virtual events and workshops

[REGISTER FOR THE EVENT](#)



For ALL women and girls
Rights. Equality. Empowerment.

Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific



International Women's Day

International Women's Day

For ALL women and girls: Rights. Equality. Empowerment

This year's theme calls for action that can unlock equal rights, power and opportunities for all and a feminist future where no one is left behind. Central to this vision is empowering the next generation—youth, particularly young women and adolescent girls—as catalysts for lasting change. 2025 is a pivotal moment as it marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. This document is the most progressive and widely endorsed blueprint for women's and girls' rights worldwide that transformed the women's rights agenda in terms of legal protection, access to services, youth engagement, and change in social norms, stereotypes and ideas stuck in the past. (UN.org)

[IWD RESOURCES - TRELLO BOARD](#)

[IWD TOOLKIT](#)

Soroptimist International
South East Asia Pacific

International
Women's Day
Webinar



For all Women and Girls: Rights Equality and Empowerment

SISEAP IWD online Event Webinar

When: Sunday 2nd March, 3 pm AEDT

Theme : For all Women and Girls: Rights Equality and Empowerment

The theme has universal relevance across our 13 countries, it addresses fundamental human rights and the Beijing Platform for Action, Our expert speakers will share with us their stories and how their Soroptimist work and the work of our members empowers not just individual women and girls but whole communities.

Speakers: President Joanne Yeoh. Programme Convenor Dr Donnell Davis
Dr Saradah Narayanan, Maria (Merry) Guterres and Andrea Murray.

[REGISTER FOR THE EVENT](#)

Children's Rights and Criminal Justice in the Digital Age

The growth of digital technologies offers educational benefits but exposes children to risks like cyberbullying, online exploitation, privacy breaches, and algorithmic manipulation. Legal frameworks often lag, leaving gaps in protection.

Key Challenges: Inadequate legal protections, online exploitation, privacy violations, youth criminalisation, and low digital literacy.

Recommendations:

- **Strengthen Legal Protections:** Update laws to address digital threats, ensuring international alignment.
- **Child-Centric Justice:** Focus on restorative justice and age-appropriate legal support.
- **Data Protection:** Enforce strict privacy regulations and promote informed consent.
- **Combat Exploitation:** Develop specialised law enforcement units and foster global cooperation.
- **Digital Literacy:** Integrate online safety in schools and train professionals.
- **Ethical Technology Use:** Regulate AI and demand accountability from tech companies.

Wendy O'Brien, author of *Children's Rights and Criminal Justice in the Digital Age*, states, "Protecting children in the digital environment requires evolving legal frameworks aligned with technology and child rights."

Wendy O'Brien's *Children's Rights and Criminal Justice in the Digital Age* explores children's rights amid digital changes. It highlights gaps in legal protections, online exploitation, and privacy risks. O'Brien advocates for updated laws, child-focused justice,

data protection, digital literacy, and ethical tech use, urging collective action to safeguard children's rights.

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

The 2025 Best Practice Awards are now accepting entries! Your club's outstanding project deserves recognition. The impact of our grassroots projects on women and girls, largely thanks to the fantastic work of Soroptimist clubs, is significant.



Why not let your project become an inspiration for other clubs? They may be looking for similar ideas to implement in their own communities. To nominate, your project must have been completed in 2024, submitted to the Programme database and have a valid ID number. The Programme Team eagerly awaits your nomination for these prestigious awards, set to be presented in May 2025. Don't miss this chance to shine!

[BPA NOMINATION FORM](#)

PROJECTS & APPEALS



Round 8 is now open & closes on the 31st March

Does your club have a project which requires funding?, consider applying now for funding of up to \$10,000 AUD to bring your club project to life. Read the guidelines document, and the supporting documents and then make your application. Members of the Programme Team are ready to assist you in completing your application.

[READ THE GUIDELINES & APPLY HERE](#)

Watch our video to see how the SISEAP Brilliant Futures Fund winners are shaping the future for women and girls in their communities. Their stories are a testament to the amazing work supported by your contributions.

[BFF GRANT WINNERS VIDEO](#)

Now, we need your help! By donating, you can ensure that even more transformative projects are funded and positive change continues. We are investing in our own projects in our own region.

[DONATE NOW](#)

**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL
FOUNDATION DAY**

10 DECEMBER

An appeal by Soroptimist
International President
Siew Yong Gnanalingam



SI Foundation

December 10th is Foundation Gift Giving Day, traditionally Soroptimists from across the world give up a favourite thing to do, like a cup of coffee, glass of wine, and donate that to the SI Foundation. To make your personal donation [HERE](#)



Listen to Soroptimist International President Siew Yong Gnanalingam's presentation about the projects currently being delivered by the foundation [HERE](#)

UN DAYS

UN Days and their links can now be found on our Members Programme Page on the website. Pauline Glover, Zone Coordinator 3 is writing stories on a few of our special days that also go to our Facebook.

[UN DAYS](#)

International Education Day

The 24th of January was the International Day of Education. The UN sees 'Education is a human right, a public good and a public responsibility. International Day of Education was proclaimed in celebration of the role of education for peace and development. In November 2024, Education was the key to progressing B+30 critical issues.

SISEAP 2024-2026 President Joanne Yeoh shares an inspiring message in honor of the International Day of Education! Education is a powerful tool that shapes our future, and today we celebrate the importance of life long learning for everyone, everywhere

[President Joanne Yeoh's International Environment Day Video](#)

FROM SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

**ANNOUNCING
Soroptimist International's
Director of Advocacy (SIDA)
for the
2026-2027 biennium
Berthe De Vos-Neven**



New Position papers are now available for:

- Human Trafficking [READ HERE](#)
- Child, Early and Forced Marriage and Unions (CEFMU): A Barrier to Equality [READ HERE](#)



[SISEAP EVENTS HERE](#)



Soroptimist International Aotearoa New Zealand, Conference of Clubs.

Theme: Women Shaping the Future

Date: **21-23 March 2025** Invercargill, New Zealand

Soroptimists are cordially invited to attend.

Find more information via the SISEAP Event link above.

SI Mongolia Friendship Tour

Soroptimists are invited to visit Mongolia to attend the 20th Charter Anniversary of SI Darkham, and the 25th Charter Anniversary of SI Ulaanbaatar

Save the date: **19 - 25 August 2025**

Full itinerary and costs will be available shortly.

SISEAP will be publishing a quarterly calendar, to view important dates for action and events, which can be viewed [HERE](#). The calendar is viewable from the front page of the SISEAP website, under the EVENTS tab.

AROUND THE FEDERATION



SI Mandurah Fundraiser for Ovis Community Service

SI Mandurah were approached by OVIS Community Services to assist with organising a fundraiser to help raise much needed funds for the refurbishment of 6 rooms at the DV refuge at Pat Thomas House. This is a very old building and requires complete refurbishment for the rooms occupied by women and children who are in extreme danger.

Government funding does not cover for the replacement of beds, linen, furniture in these rooms. SI has 2 members who are experienced in event planning and organisation. We worked closely with OVIS to achieve the best possible outcome.

Soroptimist International of Mandurah & OVIS Community Services co-hosted The Hope & Dreams Black Tie Gala. The evening was filled with elegance, generosity, and unforgettable memories. We were thrilled to announce that, thanks to the incredible support of our guests, sponsors, and the community, we raised \$45,260 for the refurbishment and expansion of the Pat Thomas Refuge.

This funding will provide essential support for those impacted by Family Domestic Violence, creating a lasting, positive impact on our community. The evening began with the beautiful sound of bagpipes, setting the tone for an elegant night ahead. Guests were then treated to the magnificent performance of an 8-piece orchestra, playing a mix of both classical and modern pieces, creating a sophisticated atmosphere. As the night progressed, the tempo picked up with the incredible 'No Strings Entertainment', who had everyone up and dancing.

The night included silent and live auctions, featuring a range of fabulous items. The night was captured beautifully by Ben Law at Phocused Media, and this preserved the magic of the evening. The CEO of OVIS was able to provide the attendees the depth of DV in the district, how the funds raised will make a difference. SI Mandurah was recognised as the main contributor for the organisation of the event and thus raised the profile of Soroptimist Mandurah.

SI Brisbane Calls for Gender-Sensitive Reforms After Passage of the 'Adult Crime, Adult Time' Bill

The 'Making Queensland Safer Bill 2024' (commonly referred to as 'Adult Time Adult Crime' Bill) has been passed into law, to enhance community safety. However, SI Brisbane remains deeply concerned about its potential impact on women and girls, particularly those within the criminal justice system. As strong advocates for gender equality, human rights, and children's rights, we are committed to ensuring that this law is not only effective in its aims but also fair and responsive to the unique needs of vulnerable women and children.

SI Brisbane provided a written submission (along with 182 others) to the Justice, Integrity and Community Safety Committee during the urgent Inquiry process outlining these key concerns:

1. Victim Support: We call for comprehensive support services for women and girls who

are victims of violence, ensuring they have access to counselling, legal aid, and safe housing.

2. Gender-Sensitive Sentencing: We urge gender-sensitive sentencing guidelines that prioritize rehabilitation over detention, particularly for young women, in line with children's rights principles.

3. Risks in Adult Detention: The transfer of young offenders to adult facilities can expose young women to gender-based violence. We advocate for age-appropriate, gender-responsive detention.

4. Privacy and Victim Information: We stress the importance of privacy protections in the new Victim Information Register, to prevent re-traumatization of survivors.

5. Privacy in Court Proceedings: We call for privacy safeguards to protect young female offenders and victims, respecting their human rights.

SI Brisbane will continue to advocate for gender-sensitive, child-rightscompliant, and human-rights respecting reforms. The law must be fair and inclusive for all, ensuring the safety and dignity of women and girls.

PROGRAMME REPORTING DATABASE

This month's tip sheet assists clubs to run an annual report for the 2024 year [HERE](#)

Clubs are reminded to check that they do not have any report submission in draft. These need to be submitted for review and approval.

[WATCH THE 'HOW TO' VIDEO](#)

DID YOU KNOW?



Be the Change

Click the image to download.

A reminder to report your work as soon as you have completed it. The Programme team love hearing and promoting Club's advocacy and project work. It also helps provide ideas to other Clubs in the Federation. Only documented and peer reviewed reports can be use as evidence for our UN reporting. We report on our 8 objectives and 17 SDGs, as well as find special items through words searches. You can search all that too, anytime.

Downloading and printing eSPAN

If you would like to download copies of eSPAN to print, go to the [SISEAP website](#) and log in using your member login. Go to the **'Members Area'** in yellow at the top left of screen. Or if you are already logged in, [click this link](#). Here you can access all previous copies of archived eSPAN Newsletters.

Copy for the March 2025 eSPAN edition is required by **Tuesday 4 March 2025**. Please email your submissions to programme.donnell@siseap.org Thank you.



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