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Soroptimist International



South East Asia Pacific

ACN 147 990 627



# SPAN

## Soroptimist Programme Action News

**Welcome** to the April 2026 edition of the Programme Action News

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## FROM OUR PROGRAMME CONVENOR



April has come so quickly. We celebrate World Health Day, assess your Best Practice applications, prepare for World Environment month toolkit, seek your applications for Brilliant Futures Fund before the end of the month, and prepare for the Federation meeting and AGM to be held in Kota Kinabalu (KK).

Thank you for your valuable contributions from so many clubs when we look back over a year of highlights and achievements across our countries. More importantly, we positively changed the lives for so many women and girls, families and communities.

We wrote the last espan during the revitalised CSW70 sessions, so there have been some updates and reforms after that. I need to make special mention of women in stem and cyber harms, values of AI, view [HERE](#) with **Sarah Barnbrook** and **Chris Skipper-Conway**. The second week of CSW70 was different and better in other ways. We are so proud of all of our delegates including **Joanne Yeoh, Wendy Logan, Filomena Pingiaro** (who also spoke at SOWN yesterday), **Cherrie Power, Aray Saniyazova, and myself**. On our website we have some blogs, videos and stories. However, we are partnering with other groups for our collective lessons learned, as major changes are occurring, and the future will not look the same.

- 14 April 1pm AEST is a reflection session with Asia Pacific focus. View [HERE](#)
- 15th April is the SI review online 11pm AEST. View [HERE](#)
- 16th April is the new Ambassador for Gender Equality Michelle O'Byrne in conversation. View [HERE](#)

We look towards our adventures in KK and the new Programme Team starting after the AGM as we transition to the future. We are seeking new Zone co-ordinators and the roles and responsibly statement can be viewed [HERE](#). You may be interested in what we do, so please check out our annual adventures [HERE](#).

It has been an honour to work with such dedicated women across the Federation,

where I have been warmly welcomed on every visit. It has been a privilege to work with our Programme Team(s) over the past 4 years as each has been so professional, compassionate with a wonderful a sense of humour. Their willingness to tackle awkward situations and develop innovative solutions has been inspiring. The team changed composition - so I need to acknowledge: **Cesarina Gigante, Rhonda MacCormack, Dr Saradha Narayanan (retiring), Robyn Cain (retiring), Noorani Yasin (retiring), Anne Allen (retiring), Elizabeth Harrison, and Pauline Glover.** **Nerida** stays for a short while. Our youth representatives were **Lauren Johnson and Elizabeth Harrison**, and now we welcome **Petrice Pesick**. We are thrilled to welcome **Sylvia Heywood and Oyrongeral Rentsen**. A special thanks goes to our database, technical, website, Facebook and webinar teams. (**Anne Allen, Christine Johnstone, Sue Latta, Cesarina, Jess and Pauline**). We have been so fortunate to work so closely with **President Joanne Yeoh** and immediate past President **Christine Johnstone**. I wish our new team well.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

*Dr*

**Programme**

[programme.donnell@siseap.org](mailto:programme.donnell@siseap.org)

*Donnell*

**Convenor**

*Davis,*

**2024-2026**

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**ADVOCACY WORK**



## World Environment Day, SISEAP Environment Month

**Soroptimist International Theme: Women Leading Green Futures** Climate change affects everyone, but not equally. Women and girls are often among the most impacted, while also being powerful drivers of change. For World Environment Day, Soroptimist International will showcase how women and girls are leading environmental action through education, advocacy and community-based initiatives.

**Key message:** When women lead on sustainability, communities become stronger, more resilient and more sustainable.

**UN Environment Program (UNEP) World Environment Day 2026: A Global Call for Climate Action**

World Environment Day 2026 will rally the world around the urgency of climate action. With rising temperatures, collapsing ecosystems, and disruptive weather extremes, humanity stands at a tipping point. But we are not powerless.

The 2026 theme underscores that climate action is not just about reducing carbon emissions—it is about rethinking the systems that power our economies and repairing our relationship with the climate. By doing so, we can secure a safer, healthier, and more just future for all.

**The toolkit and resources will be available via the trello board by 18th April. Remember to check trello board regularly as items will be added as they become available.**

[\*\*SISEAP TRELLO BOARD\*\*](#)



Soroptimist Advocacy Actions, now that CSW 70 has reached the Agreed Conclusions. The "Agreed Conclusions" are supposed to be a global roadmap for gender equality. But this year, that roadmap is under threat. SISEAP Youth Ambassador Petrice Pesick, was in NY for the reading of the 'Agreed Conclusions' read her commentary on this and other events at CSW70.

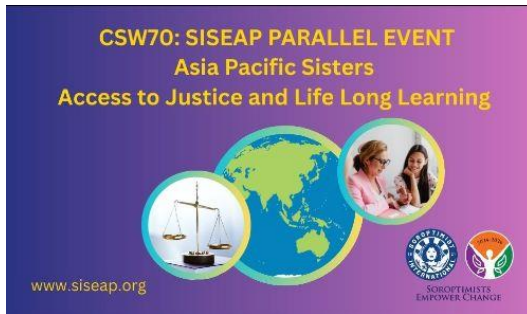
The U.S. has challenged the very definition of "gender" and sought to weaken language on reproductive rights and diversity, equity and inclusion. (DEI) While their amendments were rejected, the pressure to "roll back" the clock continues. We could be quite fragile. Soroptimists need to reinforce support for the standards already adopted. Soroptimists cannot let a single country set a precedent for undoing decades of hard-won protections. Read **SISEAP Youth Ambassador's** commentary on the Agreed Conclusions on the [HERE](#).

**What Action can/ did Soroptimists take!**

Soroptimists can take strategic action now to protect the agreed conclusions. (We prepared homework on lack of process and lack of merit of 8 proposed amendments.) Write a formal letter to your country's Permanent Representative to the UN, or their ambassador in New York. Request a formal meeting with your country's minister for Women or equivalent such as the Head of National Gender Equality. Part of your message should include that as Soroptimists we urge the <name> to formally reject any attempts to reopen the Agreed Conclusions adopted on the 9th of March. That you defend the 'agreed' language on 'gender' and 'access to justice' against any late stage procedural challenges or weakening amendments. Remind them that Soroptimist globally are monitoring the outcomes. Join fellow Soroptimists to be a 'global voice for women'.

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136 Global Soroptimists attended CSW70 in New York, read a selection of their blogs on sessions they attended. Click on the image on the right to go to the Soroptimist International website.



### **Asia Pacific Sisters : Access to Justice and Life Long Learning Webinar**

This webinar was presented live from New York. If you missed the session live you can now watch it on the SISEAP YouTube site. Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific explores the topic through the ASEAN lens.

The session visits the transection of access to justice in its legal form and how our grassroots projects deliver justice, economic independence enabling women to claim their seat at the table and their day in court. This is achieved through our belief that access to life long and life wide learning for All age groups, all levels of education and all modalities. Soroptimists this belief into reality to reskill, upskill, create economic empowerment opportunities and promote tolerance.

### **Healthy, Dignified, and Prosperous: Older women thriving through better laws, policies and practices (CSW70 Side Event)**

Rhonda McCormack - Assistant Programme Convenor 1. Read what Rhonda learnt from this event [HERE](#).

**SISEAP IMPACT FOR 2025**

## Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific

Every day members make a positive difference to the lives of women and girls by providing opportunities to Educate, Enable and Empower.

**SISEAP contributed AUD \$8.6 M value to society in volunteer hours**  
**SISEAP donated AUD \$986,000 to 3rd parties**

## 2025 Impact On Women and Girls

- Strengthened **FOOD SECURITY** by providing training and food to **1680** women and girls
- Contributed **AUD\$9740** to **DISASTER MITIGATION**
- Assisted **10,000** women and girls from **VIOLENCE** through **1555** advocacy hours and expending **AUD\$70,458**
- Provided **AUD\$43,785** project funds to **ECONOMICALLY EMPOWER**, **2231** women and girls
- Tackled **CONFLICT RESOLUTION** through **675** service hours assisting **1650** women and girls
- Expended **AUD\$6750** on scholarships and **AUD\$211,000** in donations to improve the **HEALTH** of help women and girls
- Contributed **AUD\$15,000** to **ENVIRONMENTAL** projects which assisted **2400** women and girls.

**EDUCATIONAL** opportunities given to **25329** women and girls  
**AUD\$150,000** Scholarships  
**AUD\$510,000** Projects

Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific  
www.siseap.org

# BEST PRACTICE AWARDS



## SISEAP Best Practice Awards

Thank you to all the clubs who nominated one of their projects. There were 34 nominations. The programme team are currently reviewing the nominations and are looking forward to sharing and celebrating your hard work at the Federation meeting.

# PROJECTS & APPEALS

Learn more about the projects and appeals and to make a Donation please click on the image. SISEAP values and encourages you to support our projects and appeals, your donation DOES make a huge difference to the lives of women and girls.





## FEDERATION PROJECTS



### Brilliant Futures Fund

Our Federation Project, the **Brilliant Futures Fund** (2021–2026), is at the heart of our mission to **educate, empower, and enable**. By pooling our resources, SISEAP clubs can fund high-impact initiatives that a single club might not achieve alone.

From digital literacy for refugees to maternal health and vocational training, this fund transforms lives across our 13 member countries. Your support ensures we can continue funding grassroots projects that provide real, lasting change. Every donation helps a woman gain independence or a girl access the education she deserves. Let's work together to build brilliant futures—please donate today!

**Round 12 now open.** Nominations close April 30th 2026. [Apply via the button below.](#)

[APPLY FOR THE BRILLIANT FUTURES FUND](#)

[READ HOW BFF PROJECTS HAVE CHANGED THE LIVES](#)

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## Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific Federation Public Speaking Competition 2026



**Federation                  Public                  Speaking                  Competition                  2026**

Clubs are invited to consider participating in the public speaking competition for girls in 2026 through their Country/Region Representative.

Public speaking is more than just delivering words—it's about owning your voice, sharing your perspective, and stepping confidently into spaces where ideas matter. For girls, the ability to speak publicly isn't just a skill; it's a catalyst for empowerment, leadership, and self-expression. In a world where female voices have often been sidelined or underestimated, teaching girls the art of effective communication helps them challenge stereotypes, advocate for themselves and others, and inspire change.

Countries/Regions (Australia) are encouraged to hold heats to determine finalists who will represent them in the Federation level of the competition. A maximum of two finalists for each category are permitted from each country in the Federation. Australia is permitted two finalists, per category per Region.

### **Theme**

"The Power of My Voice" encourages young people to explore how individuals and communities can make informed, ethical, and bold decisions that support a more sustainable and equitable future. It also gives Soroptimists the opportunity to hear for themselves the thoughts and aspirations of these leaders of the future. The finals this year will coincide with the International Day of the Girl Child Sunday the 11th October.

The competition invites girls from 12 years to 19 years (age as at 31 December 2026) to participate. There are two categories: Category 1: 12-15 years, Category 2: 16-19 years. The theme this year is **'The Power of My Voice'** with the following topics:

**Category 1:** Describe one change that would help make life fairer for girls — and explain why this change benefits your community

**Category 2:** Why a girl's opinion matters in creating change for the future.

Please indicate your Countries/Regions participation using the following form [HERE](#) by the 30th April 2026.

Information can be found on the Federation Website [HERE](#) for Countries/Regions/Clubs.

Heats and sending of finalist information to Federation is to be completed by the **8th September 2026**.

## [PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION INFORMATION](#)

## FROM SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Have you meet the new SI Director of Advocacy - Berthe De Vos-Neven.

Berthe leads Soroptimist International's global advocacy efforts with passion, clarity and deep commitment. Through her representation of our organisation in international policy arenas — including at the United Nations — she ensures that the voices, challenges, and achievements of women and girls in our global network are brought to the forefront of global decision-making.

In the message below, Berthe reflects on this year's International Women's Day theme — *Rights. Justice. Action. For ALL Women and Girls* — and reminds us of the work still ahead to ensure that the rights promised to women and girls are not only recognised, but truly realised in their everyday lives.

## LISTEN TO BERTHE'S IWD ADDRESS

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**Important Update: Company AGM, General Meeting and the Federation Meeting have transitioned to Hybrid Meetings.**

Please be advised of a significant update regarding our upcoming Company AGM, General Meeting and Federation General Meeting scheduled for Friday 1 May 2026. To ensure greater accessibility for all our members, the meeting has been transitioned from an exclusively in-person event to a hybrid format, allowing you the choice to attend either in person at The Pacific Sutera Hotel in Malaysia or virtually from your own location.

This change means that all Soroptimists can join the meetings as silent observers or club representatives. The Programme team encourages all Soroptimists to join the Federation meeting for the Programme Session, where we will be announcing the winners of the Best Practice Awards across the 8 objectives.

Visit <https://www.siseap.org/events/company-federation-meetings.html> to register to attend the meetings.

**SISEAP EVENTS HERE**

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# AROUND THE FEDERATION

**International Women's Day Events across the Federation**


Soroptimist International Brisbane Water

## International Women's Breakfast

Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> March 2026

8.45am - \$55 pp

Guest Speaker



Air Commodore Jennifer Lumaden CSC and Bar juggled two nursing careers, one in the civilian health system and one in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). Her many roles included deployment to East Timor, Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Breakers Country Club**  
Dover Road, Wamberal

To book: <https://events.humanitix.com/si-brisbane-water-wd-breakfast>



Soroptimist International of South Perth invites you to join us in celebrating

## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

Theme: Give to Gain

Guest Speaker  
**Dr Jacinta Vu**

Tuesday 10 March  
6:45am for 7:00am - 9:00am  
Royal Perth Golf Club  
Labouchere Road, South Perth

An experienced Oral Medicine Specialist, Dr Vu holds key positions in the field, and is committed to advancing oral healthcare, education, and community service. Her leadership in dental health and advocacy for survivors of family and domestic violence has earned her the title of **2025 WA Local Hero** from the Australian of the Year Awards, as well as being the winner of the Soroptimist International Award for Achievement in recognition of her contribution to her chosen field and to the community.

Ticket price \$40.00 includes a buffet breakfast.  
<https://events.humanitix.com/international-women-s-day-celebration-breakfast-2026>  
or contact Julie Ham [julie.ham@biopond.com](mailto:julie.ham@biopond.com) 0416 941 648

BOOKINGS CLOSE 12 noon 6 March








**ONE WOMAN. ONE STORY. ONE IMPACT.**

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2026

celebration of IWD 2026, ROM invites clubs to join a national storytelling initiative.

Here is the story from Soo Suat Pheng, Soroptimist since 2003.



Just a snapshot of the many events hosted by Soroptimist clubs across the Federation. Events bringing together communities to celebrate Women and also to advocate for Justice. Advocacy, Information and student engagement.

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### **SI Lautoka, still keep up the Saturday of Service**

SI Lautoka club members decided on an environmental activity as a service to the City for this year's Saturday of Service program on Saturday, 1st March. The club collaborated with the Lautoka City Council to provide services for a cleanup program on one of the city's busiest streets.

Members and well-wishers started the clean-up along Drasa Avenue from 7 am to 9 am. The Lautoka police station and a prominent high school are located along this street, and it is the main entry to Lautoka City from Ba and Nadi.



SI Lautoka members and their families picked up rubbish and cans along the street, which had become an eyesore. Mr Ajay Kumar, thanked the members for their initiative and hoped to see many more such initiatives for the city in future

SI Lautoka club President Sarita Kumar was happy with the turnout for the clean-up and thanked the members and well-wishers for their time. The club plans to carry out more environmental projects this year, such as mangrove and tree planting, as well as 3R projects like Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.

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**SI Albany partners with other Women's Organisations to showcase the WA Women's Hall of Fame touring photographic exhibition.**

SI Albany partnered with Inner Wheel Albany to host the 2025 WA Women's Hall of Fame Exhibition as a touring exhibition in Albany. This marked the 15th Anniversary of the WA Women's Hall of Fame since its inception on International Women's Day in 2010. We held a launch on Tuesday 2 August, with catering provided by the CWA Albany. The exhibition was launched by WA Women's Hall of Fame Committee member Marie O'Dea from Mt Barker, a neighbouring rural town and was attended by 28 invited guests. Former Inductees from Albany Annette Grant, Celia Waugh and Asha Bhat attended the launch. The Exhibition had both SI and Inner Wheel members on roster each day to greet and engage with visitors to the exhibition. Our plan was to show visitors to the exhibition the range and depth of amazing women in WA who were inducted in 2025, encourage them to consider other rural women who could be nominated for 2026 and beyond and promote our respective women's organisations.

SI Albany and Inner Wheel Albany set up display tables with photo and story boards, pamphlets, and information about their projects and activities which attracted a fair amount of discussion with visitors. Also this year we began a mini display of former inductees to the WA Women's Hall of Fame and the Roll of Honour from the Albany area, which comprised 9 photographs and storyboards. This also invoked a great deal of interest and discussion.



## **SI Rockingham**

SI Rockingham recently held their International Women's Day Sundowner. A popular community event the club has been hosting for over 10 years.

Over the years our guest speakers have covered a variety of topics. In 2016 we heard from Lawyer and lecturer Anna Copeland about the establishment of Murdoch University School of Law, Clinical Legal Programs (SCALES) and in 2025 invited long time Managing Director of the SCALES Community Legal Centre, Gai Walker to update us and talk about the growth of this service.

In 2018 we heard from local councillor and deputy mayor, Deb Hamblin (who later became Rockingham's first female elected mayor) talk about her role.

In 2026 we were pleased to have the newly elected Rockingham mayor, Lorna Buchan, another strong woman leader for our community. Over the years all our speakers have generously given their time and shared incredible stories of their impact in making the world a better place. In doing so they have shown by example our women leaders transform our world.

We do not charge attendees an entrance fee, instead ask them to bring a donation of personal hygiene items for us to distribute in our community. We were able to distribute over \$600 worth of items to SCALES, The Crew (supporting disadvantaged and homeless people in our community) and Babbingur Mia Aboriginal health service.

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**PROGRAMME REPORTING DATABASE**

## DID YOU KNOW?

### Programme

### Members

### Page

Have you explored the updated Programme Members website page? All the information you will need is contained here.

*Click the image below to access the page*

### Quick Links

There are now dedicated articles to assist members in all aspects of programme. Use the quick links to quickly jump to the page.

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Futures  
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CSW  
Information



Programme  
Committee



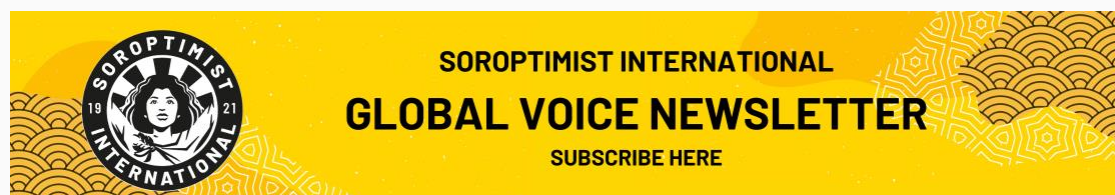
Best  
Practice  
Awards



Goals &  
Objectives



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.



SI

Global

Newsletter

Stay connected and informed from Soroptimist International! Click on the image above to subscribe and receive the SI Global Voice monthly updates directly in your inbox. Don't miss out—subscribe today!

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## 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.

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Copy for the May 2026 eSPAN edition is required by **Friday 1st May 2026**. Please email your submissions to [programme.donnell@siseap.org](mailto:programme.donnell@siseap.org) Thank you.



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This email was sent to all Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific Clubs

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