

Welcome to the March 2019 edition of Soroptimist Programme Action News (SPAN).

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 MEMBERS LOGIN

Soroptimist

Federation of the



International

South West Pacific



I hope you all celebrated **International Women's Day 8th March** in some form or other. I will have spent IWD in New York registering for the Commission for the Status of Women (CSW), obtaining my pass for entry into the UN complex and getting the pass to attend the formal opening session of CSW which will be shared with Kimberly Berem. By the time this eSpan arrives the first week of the CSW will have concluded and many women will be travelling back home including our CSW scholarship winner Kimberly Berem from SI Ramu club.

The first week of CSW is always rather frenetic as interesting side events are located outside the UN building in facilities sometimes 30 minutes walk away from the UN building. The second week is a little less chaotic except for those negotiating the conclusions to be finally agreed by the Member States.

There are many other significant days in March.

20 March International Day of Happiness & French Language Day to celebrate one of the official languages of the UN. Since 2013, the United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world. In 2015, the UN launched the 17 Sustainable Development Goals that seek to end poverty, reduce inequality, and protect our planet – three key aspects that lead to well-being and happiness.

The United Nations invites each person of any age, plus every classroom, business and government to join in celebration of the International Day of Happiness.

21 March - International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination The 2019 theme

is:- Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies.

Racist extremist movements based on ideologies that seek to promote populist, nationalist agendas are spreading in various parts of the world, fueling racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, often targeting migrants and refugees as well as people of African descent. The recent UN resolution on eliminating racism emphasized that the doctrine of racial superiority is scientifically false, socially unjust and must be rejected.

21 March - International Day of Forests The 2018 Theme: Forests and Sustainable Cities. This global celebration of forests provides a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of woodlands and trees and celebrate the ways in which they sustain and protect us.

Some Key messages:

- Forests and trees store carbon, which helps mitigate the impacts of climate change in and around urban areas, helping to save energy used for heating and filtering air to remove harmful pollutants and fine particulates.
- Forests in and around urban areas help to filter and regulate water, contributing to high-quality freshwater supplies for hundreds of millions of people. Forests also protect watersheds and prevent flooding as they store water in their branches and soil.

A particularly good way to celebrate this international day is to plant one or more trees!

22 March - World Water Day 2019 Theme is “Leaving no one behind”

Water is an essential building block of life not only to quench thirst and protect health but it is vital for creating jobs and economic social and human development.

More than 700 children under five years of age die every day from diarrhoea linked to unsafe water and poor sanitation. SDG 6 aims to ensure availability and sustainable management of water by 2030

7 April - World Health Day [WHO] Universal health coverage – the bigger picture. The Day is one of many opportunities to communicate about the importance of equity in health-care services, for not only the health of individuals, but also for the health of economies and society at large.

Catherine Evans

Programme Director

Project Appeal Donations

SISWP is now able to accept online donations for 3 appeals.

[The SI President's Appeal. - Women, Water and Leadership](#)

[The SISWP Federation - Sanctuary Shelter for Women Appeal](#)

[SISWP President's Special Appeal: “Soroptimist Makmur Indonesia” Tsunami & Earthquakes Appeal.](#)

A yellow button with the text "DONATE NOW!" in black capital letters, centered within a light gray rectangular box.

This provides a fantastic marketing tool for members, clubs and regions to promote the great work this organisation achieves. Being able to donate on-line provides an easy avenue for the public and members to donate to any of these appeals. Donations can be made through credit card or paypal payments, with an option to donate using a single or reoccurring donation. Have you been to visit the donation page? Go to <https://www.siswp.org/donate.html>. Remember to update club and region publications with this news and advertise on your facebook pages. Perhaps even update your club or region email signature with the words DONATE and a direct link to the SISWP donate page.

Your donation makes a difference.

Best Practice Awards Nominations



Programme Director Catherine Evans is pleased to announce that the Best Practice Awards nominations are now open.

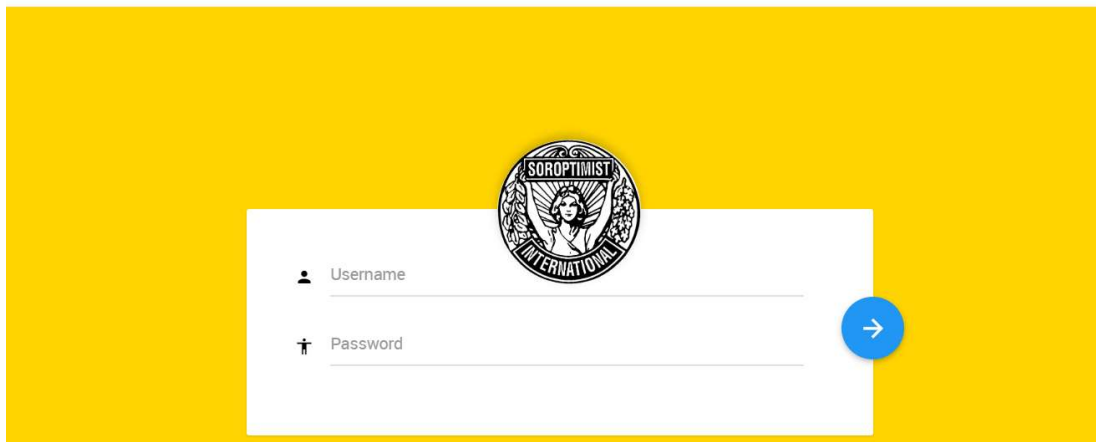
Clubs can submit their nominations via the [Online Nomination Form](#). The link is also available from the SISWP downloads section. Nominations will close on the 31 March 2019, winners will be announced at the Interim Board Meeting in May.

Don't wait, get your clubs outstanding project work nominated now!

Programme Database

Work is well underway for the implementation of the SISWP Programme Database. The programme database access will be via a webpage. Each Club, Region, and National Representative will be provided with a unique username to access the database.

Below is a sneak peek at the log-on page.



Once you have logged onto the website, you will have provision to create, edit, save new reports, submit reports for approval via a workflow. Additionally you will be able to produce your club, region and country reports from the programme reports submitted and approved. Keep alert for communication updates on the progress of the database.

NOTE: the temporary online programme report form has been closed, as the developers had to prepare the 600+ reports received in the temporary database to import into the new programme database, I am pleased to report that this import was successful.

For the next few months until the Programme Database goes live, information about any projects your club / region has completed, along with donations, scholarships, activities and advocacy work will need to be noted so that these can be entered into the new system when it is available.

International Women's Day IWD



March 8th was International Women's Day, which has been celebrated since 1911.

The day is not country, group or organization specific - and belongs to all groups collectively everywhere.

Gloria Steinem, world-renowned feminist, journalist and activist once explained *"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."*

Clubs celebrated in many ways, the traditional breakfast event, workshops and seminars on issues which impact on women, such as financial and elder abuse, singing, and the opening of a community centre. Whatever you did to organise or attend an event we hope that you enjoyed International Women's Day – your day, and you were able to truly make a positive difference for Women.

IWD is a day where we recognise women for their outstanding work, **SI Mount Gambier** sent this information about member Sonya Meziniec, a past President of SI Mount Gambier and current member leads the way for improving the lives of women in Mount Gambier, the club is very proud of this vibrant woman.

A former PhD student who put aside her studies and career to care for her ageing mother, she has proven to us all that a career remains achievable after lengthy periods away from the workforce. Prior to returning to the paid workforce Sonya had a significant input into the National Domestic Violence Conference United Against Domestic Violence – Engaging Men in Prevention convened by Soroptimist International of Mount Gambier in 2011 on the back of the previous local Conference United Against Domestic Violence – for the Sake of the Children in 2009.

[Read more here](#)



Shout out to Kalgoorlie-Boulder super pit gold mine, recognised International Women's Day with a pink blast. .

SI Moreton North incorporate IWD day with their **Inspiring Women Awards**, always a great event to celebrate vibrant women of their community and hear their stories.



Listen to our sisters from SI Albany singing out on the bridge in Albany, [click here](#)

Whilst women in the South West Pacific enjoyed celebrating International Women's Day, we must remember that around the World conditions are not so fortunate, On March 8th, our sisters in Istanbul Turkey took to the streets to protest against domestic violence, demanding change on International Women's Day they did this despite a ban.

[Read the full storey here](#)



Annual Reports

The programme team Zonal Coordinators have been preparing their report based on the reports

sent from regions.



Programme Zone 1 Coordinator - Jennie van Driel, reports:

A big thank you to all the clubs that have sent in their club and region/country reports. It has been a great effort and they make some rewarding and inspirational reading.

Congratulations to Mongolia who were the first to send in all their club reports and country report, including SI Erdenet in which all of their projects were aimed to support and educate girls.

Fiji had some very big projects, including one from SI Nadi which gained a government grant of \$AUD250,000,00 for an electricity project across the country.

The region of NSW in Australia is the biggest region in Zone One and sent in some impressive reports, including one on advocacy from SI Griffith– Exploitation of Overseas Workers, a need felt locally and indeed throughout Australia.

North Queensland had a topical project from Mackay “Value Your Talent, Balance Your Mind!” on mental health in the community,

SI Singapore had an excellent education project to build a hostel for girls attending a school in Battambang Province in Cambodia; girls who required accommodation or otherwise could not receive an education.

Congratulations Zone One, you can be very proud of your achievements; together you have helped 8647 women and 10245 girls.

Read the full statistical report here [Zone Coordinator 1 Annual Statistical Report](#)

Programme Zone 2 Coordinator - Dixie Brown, reports:



Congratulations to all clubs in Zone 2 for completing their Club Annual Reports on time, which in turn enabled the Region Programme/Un Liaison Convenors to submit their reports by the required date.

It is interesting and informative to read about the valuable work that members have initiated to make a difference to the lives of women and girls and to their community. These exciting projects encourage member participation.

Congratulations to SI Fremantle on having 17 Programme Focus Reports approved by the end of December 2018. As you will read in the statistics, we had SI Fremantle and SI Karratha Districts leading the way with their Advocacy. The number of Scholarships presented is outstanding.

The Region Best Practice Awards show case the important work done by clubs. Have they been entered as Federation Best Practice Awards?

I look forward to reading about your work on the new Data Base which will be launched in May at

the Interim Board Meeting.

Have you a list of Projects, Advocacy, Scholarships, Bursaries and Donations that need to be entered on the SWP Programme Data Base? Do members know who will complete it? Have they been trained?

Thank you to all Members, Club Reporters and Region UN/Programme Convenors for their effort and support.

Have a successful, rewarding and enjoyable 2019.

Read Dixie's full statistical report here: [Zone Coordinator 2 Annual Statistical Report](#)

United Nations



Social Protection for Gender Equality, is the theme of a blog written by SISWP member Theresa W. Devasahayam, Theresa is the SI UN Representative for Bangkok. "The theme of the sixty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW63) focuses on social protection systems, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality, and the empowerment of

women and girls. Women's right to social protection systems and access to public services are embedded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and other related international agreements.

You can read Theresa's [full article here](#)



CSW63 Commission on the Status of Women

When infrastructure, public services and social protections are lacking, women and girls are often the ones most impacted. Their needs need to be factored in when policies are designed. Their voices must shape the decisions that affect their lives.

When women are at the table, making decisions, they bring changes that benefit entire societies and nations. (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw>)

SWP Programme Director Catherine Evans and SISWP Delegate Kimberly Berem, are currently in New York at CSW63 as part of the wider Soroptimist International Representation.

Kimberly was invited to address the SI Reception and Orientation evening. Kimberley and Catherine Evans attended the NGO Consultation Day, please read Kimberly's report on the SISWP website [Read More](#). Catherine and Kimberly have a busy week as delegates and more reports will be posted as they are received.



Kimberley Berem, Catherine Evans and International President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen.

Around the Federation

SI Karratha and Districts have partnered with women from the Pilbara area to create “**The Karratha Women’s Place**”.

Living in the Pilbara can be an isolating experience for women who have husbands working 12 hour shifts so the loneliness can impact on family life and cause emotional instability.

The history of The Karratha Women’s Place goes back to two ladies who had worked on this project over a four year period towards the establishment of a place where women can feel comfortable . They were employed by the Pilbara Health Network, a funding submission was provided but unsuccessful at that time.

Soroptimists International Karratha and Districts member Nan Williams, visionary who could see the potential and benefits of a Women’s Place, then set about supporting this project and has formally introduced an incorporated body with Board Members. The Board consists of a group of highly qualified women with a vision to provide a range of programs and services that will maintain, empower and enhance the health and wellbeing of women living in the City of Karratha.

Our mission is to assist women to maintain and enhance their emotional, mental and physical

wellbeing.

Our objective is to offer health education programs and activities that will assist and empower ladies to make their own decisions about their physical, sexual and mental health. We will also act as a resource and referral centre which will result in women being aware of appropriate community resources and encourage women to access them. Counselling services will also be provided.

Our sister organisation in South Hedland (The Women's Wellness Center) is living evidence of how successful we can be once we are established.

Currently "The Karratha Women's Place" is operating out of the Millar's Well Community Center, courtesy of the Karratha Community Association who very kindly agreed to us using the facility two days



President Anusha's call to to produce quality sustainable Cross-Border Project Partnerships / Partnering with Clubs is showcased here where 5 clubs worked together to produce this quality project.

Keep Healthy and Happy Carnival at Orang Asli Settlement Kampung Kuala Masai, JOHOR.

This project spearheaded by SI Club of Bangsar, Project Coordinator Nora Lam, joined with SI Clubs of Singapore, Garden City, Singapore Orchid as well as SI Johor Bahru, they also partnered with Regency Hospital and Newcastle University.

Nora Lam SI Club of Bangsar (SICB) Project coordinator initially visited Orang Asli Settlement Kampung, Kuala Masai, Johor Malaysia to investigate the possibility of educating the villagers and particularly the children about health, cleanliness and the importance of education.

The sight of many obese women sitting around doing nothing in their homes that had been built by the Government, and a few of them cleaning mussels for a living at Ringgit Malaysia 7-8 (Aus\$3) a bucket meant they all earned a meager income. Economic development is an important factor for these women.

From this initial visit and the collaboration with the other 5 clubs it was decided to host a Keep Healthy & Happy Carnival. Please read about the success of the Carnival, the outcomes of the Medical Tests and the planning of Stage 2.

[Please read the full report available here.](#)



The "Healthy Team" , Soroptimists from the 5 clubs along with volunteers from the hospital and university. The smiles tell it all.



SI Helena - Girls in STEM Forum

SI Helena planned a project around encouraging girls entering High School to enrol in STEM subjects.

Planning and forging a partnership with primary schools. They created a one day forum for primary school students entering High School. A program for the day was devised, with club President Fay who is a medical scientist and two other female scientists, one a botanists (Dr Alison Ritchie) spoke about their professions, Dr Ritchie spoke to the girls about the work being done to re-establish Banksia woodlands on the Swan Coastal plain. Alison also explained a revolutionary method of seeding large areas of cleared land with the help of a pasta maker! She was able to share an engineering aspect of her scientific study by describing a project in which she is designing a method to increase the viability of drought tolerant grass seeds for use in Australia.

Students were engaged asking many questions about the work and funding.

Soroptimist International of Helena members presented each participant with a satchel. It is hoped that the shared enthusiasm on the day resulted in some of the girls enrolling in STEM projects at the school



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Educate, Empower, Enable



Copy for the April 2019 eSPAN edition is required by 30th March 2019 to
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