



## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

FEBRUARY 2014

Welcome back everyone after our Christmas break. I wish you all a Happy New Year. I also wish to thank all our members who have generously given their time and support during 2013 to enable this club to continue to grow from strength to strength.

The report from Judith, our District Governor, that was included in our last Reef Talk, outlined how successful the "Zonta Says No" to violence against women campaign had been and this spurs us on for the coming year to make sure our voice continues to be heard.

With that thought in mind, we have progressed further regarding a "Women's Assist Card". The purchase of these cards resulted from our November dinner meeting where our guest speakers, Rowena Lacey (Area Police Supervisor for Domestic Violence) and Catherine from Mackay Domestic Violence Resource Service, outlined the progress against Domestic Violence in the Mackay area. The assist card that is used in Mackay are handed out to women who may need assistance for urgent aid or further contact numbers regarding community assistance centres and services. "In other words, to let them know that they are not alone and help is available". The card is being designed jointly with Whitsunday Crisis & Counselling Service and our club is donating the money to print these cards from the proceeds of Ann's Fashion Parade last October.



The organization of our International Women's Day on March 9th is progressing very well under the guidance of Pammie.

Our very special event on March 20th is the 15-year anniversary of the formation of our Zonta Club. Contacts were made to a long list of previous members in order to invite them to celebrate with us. It will be a very memorable night! Thanks to Wendy, Sue and Joan.

Good news! Joanne Richardson, who joined our club in 1999 shortly after our club formed, has rejoined. Her membership lapsed due to her extensive travels overseas (refer to last month's Reef Talk) but has always kept in touch with us to let us know all her news. She has plans to attend the Zonta International convention in Florida June this year and wishes that some of us would join her.

Noelene has followed up on the Pregnancy Loss Project for women who have lost babies in childbirth. The Head Midwife at Proserpine Hospital has advised her that they have a plentiful supply of these kits now. We will check later in the year. The kits include a teddy bear gift and information for the parents giving comfort and help if needed.

Let us continue to make a difference!

**Angela Spicer, President**

## FEBRUARY MEETING ALERT

Have you ever wished you had a teenager living next door to help you with your IT problems? Are you having difficulties with your apps, downloads, uploads, I Tunes and Siri? Have you unlocked only half the potential of your smart phone? Well, we have the solution for you!!! Bring along your ipads, tablets, smart phones, notebook and netbooks to the February general meeting and you will have your very own teenager there to answer all your questions.

Jesse is gathering a team of grade 11 and 12 students from the high school to attend the meeting to do a reverse mentoring session with us all. It will be so beneficial to all involved. The girls will be introduced to our wonderful club and Zonta members will benefit by becoming more literate in a world where internet technology is advancing at a breathtaking rate.

Sounds like a lot of fun and a huge thank you to Jesse who has come up with the idea and is responsible for organizing it.

**Roz Jennings, Vice President**



## ADVOCACY

### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT LYNN MCKENZIE

Message from Zonta International on 1/24/2014 10:55:00 AM

#### Gang Rape Ordered by Village Leader in India – Zonta Says NO

Dear Zontians,

As you may have heard, a 20-year-old woman is currently being treated in a West Bengal, India hospital for injuries resulting from an alleged gang rape.

While violent crimes have been in the spotlight in India since the fatal December 2012 gang rape and beating of a young woman riding a bus, this recent crime was not simply a random act of violence. This victim was attacked on orders of the head of her village – a punishment for having a five-year romantic relationship with a man from another tribe. When the man visited the woman's village to propose marriage, the couple was captured, tied to a tree and ordered to pay a fine. When the woman's family could not afford the fine, the village leader ordered that she be enjoyed by the community.

As we take some time to keep this young woman, who is now in stable condition, in our thoughts, let this horrific crime be a reminder of why we must continue to say NO to violence against women. Our Zonta Says NO campaign mobilised more than 60 percent of our clubs to stand up and say NO to violence against women. It is more important than ever that we raise our voices for those who are silenced. We must also not lose sight of the progress that is being made. Anti-rape laws have been tightened and society is discussing cases of violence against Indian women. In connection with this crime, 13 suspects – including the village leader – have been arrested and we hope they will be prosecuted under the full extent of the law.

We also know that violence against women is everywhere and not restricted to a particular country or community- it's in our backyard. Check out [Zonta's website](#) to see, hear and read the preventive initiatives (ZISVAW) to stop violence against women Zonta is funding through UN Women and the UN Trust Fund in Samoa, Honduras, Nigeria, Bangladesh and 10 other countries in Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

I hope you will join me in keeping this young woman in your thoughts as you persist in stopping these crimes and ending violence against women.

Lynn McKenzie



## INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Plans are going beautifully for IWD to be held on 9 March. Our theme is Orange, this will be our last, and probably most important community function that will highlight the ZONTA says NO to Violence international campaign, which has been so successful. A quote from 'Half the Sky', a brilliant and positive must-read book about women and oppression states: "Decades from now, people will look back and wonder how societies could have acquiesced in a sex slave trade in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century that is BIGGER than the transatlantic slave trade was in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century." Our guest speakers will be making us aware of this very issue.

Donna Bright has called her presentation "Human trafficking; Modern Day Slavery". She will talk about her experiences supporting these women in Australia. She will be followed by Lynn Brett and Anne Eaton from the Proserpine Hospital who are presenting a joint information setting on "Living the Experience and Bringing it Home" about experiences with young girls sold into the sex industry, often by their parents, in Cambodia.

We have been successful in getting a sponsorship of \$500 from Wilmar, who own the Proserpine Sugar Mill. Funk and Tall will be supporting us with artwork for our brochures and Melody Cross (Beachside Optics) has once again agreed to help with advertising costs. All women of the Whitsundays, from Proserpine to Island communities will be invited to attend and funds raised in the main are going this year to Proserpine Hospital, the health facility that we all rely on.

It would not be a ZONTA function without fun and the sensational food that Reef Gateway will prepare for us. A welcoming glass of bubbly on arrival and live music will greet our guests. Of course, lucky door prizes, raffles, silent auctions will also entertain.

Our tickets will be \$45 head and will be available online from [www.whitsundaytickets.com.au](http://www.whitsundaytickets.com.au) by early February.

**Pammie Harrison, Advocacy Director**

## BREAKFAST SESSION MARCH

Our first breakfast session of the year will be held on Tuesday 11th March at Coffee Club at 7a.m. for a 7.30 a.m. start.

Our subject will be "BraveHearts" and we will start the morning with a short film describing the origins of the Bravehearts organisation and one of its founders, Hetty Johnson, her motivations and passions. Bravehearts has been set up to spread awareness of child sexual abuse and to provide counselling support for victims and their families. Mandy from WCCS will be talking to us after the film about the Bravehearts workshop she has attended, how to talk to children about abuse awareness and the signs to look for if you fear a child is being abused followed by a Q and A session.

As mothers, grandmothers, carers, teachers and community members, we all love and cherish the children in our community and want to keep them safe. With the Royal commission into child sexual abuse so much in the news at the moment, it is will be an educational morning for all of us.

**Roz Jennings, Vice President**



## SERVICE

Books from Birth is in recess for several months although donations of books and magazines are still welcome. With such a busy finish to last year, it was decided to put a hold on the fixing, sorting and packing until after the wet season.

International Women's Day Breakfast is on again at the Reef Gateway Hotel on 9th March 2014. Please talk to your friends and try to get as many along to this wonderful event as you are able.

The Aqua-babes are back splashing around with only a small break over Christmas. We meet Tuesday and Friday mornings.

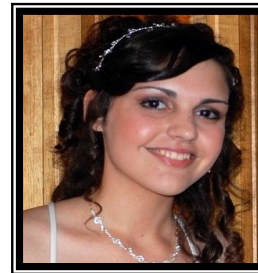


Our AFADU knitting group will recommence in March. If you or you know of someone who would like to join our group, please let me know. We meet on the last Monday of each month at 10 am.

Dawn Green, Service Director

The Birthing Kit Foundation has provided a link that shows some of the great work that Dr Luc of the Mission in Health Care and Development is doing in the Democratic Republic of Congo in partnership with the Birthing Kit Foundation. He has distributed over 70,000 kits for us and trained over 850 traditional birth attendants. PLEASE cut and paste it to your browser and have a read. It will break your heart and make you happy to be part of this wonderful work at the same time: [http://www.birthingkitfoundation.org.au/lib/pdf/News20130912\(PygmyTrainingDRCongo\).pdf](http://www.birthingkitfoundation.org.au/lib/pdf/News20130912(PygmyTrainingDRCongo).pdf)

Young Women In Public Affairs: Hi, I am Stacey Miotto and I am currently studying Business at the University of Queensland in Brisbane. Whilst applying to the YWPA, I not only had the opportunity to be a part of an inspiring community of women who had previously applied but also learn about the progress of women in all elements. This has then urged me to continue my participation in the community and open up more opportunities in the future. (Stacey was the runner up last year (2012-13))



## Date Claimers

5 February: Board Meeting

20 February: General Meeting 6.15 PM – Reef Gateway—Reverse Mentoring Workshop

26 February: Book Club – 5 PM – Roz's

5 March: Board Meeting

9 March: International Women's Day Brunch—Reef Gateway

11 March: Breakfast Meeting/Talk—7 AM – Coffee Club

20 March: 15th Anniversary Celebration of Zonta Club of the Whitsundays—

6.15 PM— Reef Gateway

26 March: Book Club—5 PM

31 March: AFADU—10 AM



# BIRTHDAYS

Member Birthday: 9<sup>th</sup> February -Marlene Reiffel



**ZONTA CLUB OF THE WHITSUNDAYS TURNS 15**

this year and it's time to celebrate: Save the date – 20<sup>th</sup> March. It is hard to imagine that our club has been in existence for 15 years, giving enormous support to so many women through the ideals of Zonta, both locally and internationally. With just 12 ladies making the decision and the commitment to start a new club in the Whitsundays in 1998, our numbers have grown to an average of 30+ every year, with a couple of years at 40+. Only four of the 26 charter members are still with the club – Pam Graham, Wendy Downes, Joan Watson and Sue Hansen, all having served in various board and/or committee positions. Pam and Wendy are both past presidents and Pam has also served as Area Director. More information will be forthcoming at our February meeting. Wendy Downes

**Zonta Club of the Whitsundays Contact Details**

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Noelene celebrates her 80th with her lovely family



## PROFILE

### S'ZANNE MARIA BYRON



**Born and Educated in Melbourne. Early career in the Australian Air Force. Later married and travelled the world in search of adventure for 9 exciting years before returning to Australia and opting for a reclusive life in remote Tasmania.**

**Divorced at 30. 5 Years later found renewed faith in a very special relationship with my late John, who sadly died in 1991.**

**Have one musician/actor son, Yana (25), who currently resides in London.**

**Passions in life are - swimming, kayaking, travel, music, theatre, the arts, design, animals, the environment, helping people and quality time spent with good friends.**

*Photo taken at the beautiful Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Abu Dhabi, Dec. 2013*

After leaving the Air Force and Australia, I held executive roles in five star hotels in NZ and later Toronto. After Canada I ventured back to London and for the next five years I worked as PA to the executive of an Arab Airline in London; a most privileged time in my life during the early 70's, broadening my education and taking me on a huge cultural and political learning curve around the Middle East region.

Whilst in the UK I also studied horse management with the British Horse Riding Society, with a futuristic view of working within the family race horse breeding business in Tasmania.

I returned to Australia in 1976 and commenced the restoration of an 1828, 22 room, convict built manor house I had purchased some years earlier in the middle of Tasmania. I was to spend the next 25 years working like a slave to the property, breeding and breaking in race horses, performing track work and travelling some 250k each day to and a from work. The years spent in

Tasmania taught me some valuable lessons:

- I never wanted to chop fire wood again as long as I lived
- never fall in love with bricks and mortar
- and, only put your money where there is mass population.

During my 25 years in Tasmania, I spent five years as the state training manager for Avis, during which time I represented Tasmania overseas and interstate at various tourism expos, conducted familiarisation tours for visiting agents and media and worked with some really great people who are still friends today.

I moved on to become the marketing and interior design manager of a luxury hotel chain in Tasmania, running two departments, during which time I managed to do some very significant and creative work.



I made yet another major career move along the way, to become entertainment manager for the newly built Hotel Casino in Launceston, Tasmania. Those were the days of big production shows in Australia and I found myself working with some very high profile entertainers, dancers and major acts from all over the world. Life was busy and at a personal level, I remained on my own until I met my late John, a senior executive with ANZ, based in Melbourne. I had known John in earlier years in Melbourne, before going overseas. We spent some very lovely years together and were so fortunate to have our only son, Yana.

I eventually moved with the entertainment company to Melbourne to look after events and live entertainment for the various Casinos around Australia and found myself always on a plane heading somewhere, prior to the birth of our son Yana, in 1988.

My uncle continued to manage the Tasmanian property, raising the race horses we bred. With John busy and always travelling, I later returned to the property when Yana was 3 months so I could help my uncle who was by then slowing up. John and I commuted between Melbourne and Tasmania for the next two years before acquiring a home in Brisbane where we intended to relocate.

John came down with the first stroke whilst in Brisbane checking on the house we had recently purchased. He was admitted to hospital in Brisbane for tests and I flew up with Yana and just a few belongings for what I thought would be a short stay. The next stroke hit just after I arrived and 120 strokes and 7 months later, having gone blind and with brain damage, John died in February, 91.

I had taken a hard fall in torrential rain 3 weeks prior and had broken my leg in two places. So with a dying man, a 2 year old, a broken leg and out of location away from family and friends, I felt my life had suddenly been thrown into a blender. I thank God for the wonderful female neighbours I had!

Upon finalising matters after John's death, I returned to Tasmania to face it all again. By then my uncle, (*my mother's favourite brother who had never married*), had become ill with bone cancer, so I knew after speaking with our local country doctor in Tasmania that I was heading back to face a similar situation all over again. My Uncle died in December that same year and I had to set about breaking in the yearlings, dealing with a super active three year old, running the property and a ridiculously large house with virtually no support systems.

Around the same time, the local Council came head hunting me to set up tourism in a vast rural region under their control. After some persuading, I ventured into nine years of heading up community development, as tourism director for the region. I worked from home for the first two years before setting up a state wide travel and tourism centre in the region's major country township, some 20k from the property. I designed the fit out to meet global standards, found and trained staff and wrote tourism training programs to deliver into the two regional high schools ... all of this surrounded by volatile red necks, factional infighting amongst locals, neighbouring groups and hideous political game playing between councillors, bureaucrats and state politicians. Tourism development has the ability to bring out the worst in people, particularly in rural communities. I suffered many blows along the way and the more successful the project became, the worse things got ... and the more determined I became. I soon discovered that most pioneers end up with arrows in their backside! However, despite the many drawbacks and blockages, the project was incredibly successful and I finally left with a solid foundation in place. A near fatal car accident was the final turning point and I sold my property, antiques and horses and returned to family and friends in Melbourne.

Meanwhile my son Yana was blossoming. I had started him into violin studies from the age of four and with everything going on in our lives, I somehow managed to religiously drive him some 250k. every week for classical lessons. He later joined the youngest private string orchestra in Australia at five and went on to win several scholarships for private schools along the way, another for years 11 & 12 at the Tennis Academy in Melbourne and after that a full scholarship for Washington DC College. It was during a futures tennis tournament in 2010 that he was deliberately poisoned in Venezuela and was extremely lucky to survive.

## 7 Zonta Club of the Whitsundays - member of Zonta International



Upon my return to Melbourne I started back into interior design, buying, renovating and selling apartments in the inner city Southbank area, as well as taking on outside contracts.

Creative and rewarding work until the down turn hit Australia's economy and real estate market.

In early 2013, I decided that I was again ready for change. So with my son overseas, I said goodbye to everyone, packed up the car complete with my little Aboriginal camp dog 'Spiderman' and started driving north ... stopping to visit various friends and family along the way, before making my destination, the Whitsundays.

My mother, (*Ada Belle*) had passed away four years earlier at 98. She was great right til the end and so damn sensible in life. I still miss her to talk to. (*I come from a very long line of strong, pioneering, convict, Irish women.*) So with Mum gone and Yana heading out on his own journey in life, I decided it was time for me again.

So there you have it!

Isolation on my own at various stages along the way has been good for me offering breathing space to soothe the soul. Everyone should have that luxury at least once in their life; to discover who they really are, to enjoy their own space and to know who they want to spend time with. I am happy and yes, still do very much have the spirit of adventure in me.

Over the past few years I have taken myself off to Thailand to work on a conservation program with elephants, trekked Orangutans in the wilds of Borneo and travelled into remote parts of Arnhem Land and the central desert region of Australia, to work with Aboriginal people.

In 2013 I commenced a new chapter in my life, when I renewed an old relationship and travelled to Istanbul and Abu Dhabi to meet up with my former airline boss after a 35 year gap.

2014 is bound to bring about more adventures and may very well see me move out of Australia to live overseas.

Meeting Wendy Downes and becoming a member of the Whitsunday Zonta Club has given me a wonderful opportunity to meet such a lovely group of women; each with a fascinating story to tell.

Thanks for your interest in my life.

*S'zanne Byron*

January, 2014

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