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**President’s Report 2013 – 2014**

Another successful year has passed for the strong Maroochy Zonta team; continuing its efforts towards improving the status of women, locally and internationally.

Six hundred birthing kits were assembled once again, in July. Many helpers have been volunteering their time for a number of years. The amazing afternoon tea is becoming widely acclaimed.

The number of breast cushions and drain bags being delivered to local hospitals, has increased quite dramatically. Since June last year 93 breast cushions and 106 drain bags have been supplied by our club. We remain indebted to Lin & Sylvia Simpson, along with their helpers, for the sewing of these items. Both of the recipient hospitals have asked that the ‘Breast Care Packs’ be disassembled, for ease of distribution. The DVD ’Side By Side’ remains included with the breast cushions.

Dinner meetings have had added interest provided by a wide variety of guest speakers. Speakers have included members of the Australian Himalayan Foundation, a welfare worker with Uniting Care, a midwife working with an African community, a young woman from Vietnam; coping with the effects of Agent Orange, and a representative from the Guide Dogs Association. We have been left in awe of the amazing achievements of these women and the difference they make to the lives of others.

October saw another extremely successful *Sunday of Style and Stalls* held at Chevallum State School. After a night of wild storms a couple of days before the function, the day was blessed with beautiful weather. With six visiting stallholders and three stalls manned by our members, guests were spoilt for choice of goods to purchase. Carly Bennett entertained the crowd once again, with her beautiful singing and guitar playing. Many guests happily left laden with winnings from the multi-draw raffle and the flower centrepiece auction. The lunch provided, once again, by chef John Dargie was sumptuous and delicious. Fashions were supplied by Madleine Rose of Nambour, for a second time. As well as being a social success, the day proved to be a huge financial success; providing a profit in excess of $6000.

The packing of Christmas hampers was the focus of our November meeting. This was our main activity towards the *Zonta Says NO* campaign. Representatives from SunnyKids, Sonshine Sanctuary and Nambour Lions Emergency Accommodation Centre were our guests for dinner and gratefully received the huge hampers; comprised of groceries, toiletries and gifts. The generosity of members was unsurpassed, as three large cars were loaded to the roof. Several members wore their campaign t-shirts and a publicity photo and article appeared in the local press.

A successful *Information Night* was held in February, with eleven guests attending. Guests were given information by a long-serving member and a relatively new member; both sharing their Zonta experience honestly and passionately. Three of those guests have since joined the club, with another two expressing firm interest.

Marion Frederick, along with a band of helpers, once again organised a wonderful morning of fellowship at the *International Women’s Day Brunch* at the Palmwoods Hotel, on 8 March. Guest speakers included Trudy Cooper, who shared her journey as an aboriginal woman coming to terms with her culture; Kerry Neil, who entertained us with his Welcome to Country; and three ladies from Kitchen Carnivale who shared their cultural backgrounds and their planned community activities.

Lyn Cosgrove organised another very successful *Movie Night* for March 14, at the Nambour Arthouse Cinema. The movie *Mr Morgan’s Last Love* provided avenues for discussion and the amazing spread of delicious food, provided sustenance, once again. Donations of goods for the gourmet raffle, led to generous ticket sales; enhancing the financial success of this function.

As a result of our successful fundraising activities, we have been able to continue to further the ideals of Zonta. Our support for victims of domestic violence continues through financial assistance to SunnyKids and Sonshine Sanctuary. Three members of our club, along with their families, took part in the Zonta Says NO Walk which was held in Brisbane, in November. We also continue our support for the Coolum Vietnam Support Group who sponsors disadvantaged women and girls in Vietnam; having had the pleasure of meeting Hoan and hearing her story, in March.

Through the members’ profiles, delivered during our dinner meetings, we have been able to gain an insight into the lives and achievements of the amazing women who make up Maroochy Zonta.

Membership numbers have fluctuated during the year. Whilst four new members have joined since June 2013, we have seen three members resign as a result of the pressures of work and life in general. One of our new members has recently acquired a position overseas: we are sad to see her go. Another two members are currently on leave: both travelling extensively with their work commitments. Currently, the club has twenty-four members. Our faithful band of HonZons continues to support every venture and for this, we are extremely grateful.

Our club’s website is now in the capable hands of Petra Ladwig and we continue to improve communication through this avenue. We are lucky to have Petra as our delegate at the 2014 Convention in Florida.

My vision for the next twelve months is to see our committees taking on a more pivotal role in the running of the club. This, I feel, will increase the number of eyes that we have ‘on the ball’, thus disseminating knowledge and information on a broader spectrum.

And so, as my first year as president comes to a close, I would like to thank Jenny Garde for her unwavering support and guidance, as a director and a friend. To the members of the executive, I also say ‘Thank you’ for your support and understanding: Vice-president Diane Faulkner for sharing her knowledge and experience, Secretary Susan Howard for lending a listening ear in times of my uncertainty, Treasurer Barb Clyde for her meticulous work and sharing of knowledge, Directors Helen Gibson, Mary O’Dwyer and Uli Hosang for their never-ending positivity and hard work. ‘Thanks’ must also go to all other members; you are an amazing group of women and I am very proud to be working with you.

Sandy Gray