



(L-R) Rita Kerr, Lyndel Grant, June Robson, Petra Ladwig, Margy Henderson, 2024

"We are founding members of Speak Up Now, an inter-service club collaboration which is very active in working towards a society free from the scourge of domestic and family violence," shared Margy.

Their achievements include the signs displayed on the backs of toilet doors (including Men's toilets), school workshops pushing the message of respect, booklets to assist the older generation know their rights, forums on Elder Abuse, and several ceremonies throughout the year in memory of those who have died at the hands of family members.

As shared on page 3 of this issue, there is a Speak Up Now fundraising and awareness event happening with *Wuthering Heights of Mapleton* later this month.

"We also financially aid several Sunshine Coast Refuges every year, advocate for safe phones, and financially support the Teacher in a Box program to assist with girls' education in refugee camps in Kenya," added Margy.

The Zonta Club of the Blackall Range recently had their annual Changeover Dinner at picturesque Stonebridge Gardens in Palmwoods.

The event included the presentation of donation cheques to local organisations including Sunshine Sanctuary, Lily House, Mapleton Community Library, and Breaking Thru, supporting their important work in the community.

These donations are made possible through the Club's active fundraising initiatives, and a major raffle was launched on the night, with a captivating painting by acclaimed watercolour artist, Michele Retschlag, as the prize being drawn in October.

The Club President honoured retiring member, Gillian Allen, for her remarkable 24 years of service with the Zonta Club of the Blackall Range, and significant contributions including as a past president. Five new members were also warmly welcomed and inducted.

Petra Ladwig, Lieutenant Governor of Zonta International District 22, officiated installation of the Club's Office Bearers: Margy Henderson (President), with Lyndel Grant (Vice President and Correspondence Secretary), Rita Kerr (Treasurer), Alison Huth (Director, Parliamentarian and Archivist), Linda McElrea (Minutes Secretary), and Eva-Marie Seeto (Director).

"Everyone in the Blackall Range Club is excited to expand their impact in this coming year, and advance Zonta's mission of building a better world for women and girls," smiled Margy. 🌟

*If you are interested in becoming a member, please email [president@zontablackallrange.org.au](mailto:president@zontablackallrange.org.au)*

## The importance of Zonta

Here on the Sunny Coast Hinterland, the Zonta Club of the Blackall Range works tirelessly for women. But some of you may ask, what does Zonta do and stand for?

"Zonta International works internationally, nationally and locally to realise our vision of a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential," explained Blackall Range Zonta President, Margy Henderson.

"A world where women have access to all resources and are represented in decision-making positions on an equal basis with men, and where no woman lives in fear of violence."

Zonta is focused on ending gender-based violence, which affects women, their families, communities and countries. It knows no national or cultural barriers; it takes place at home, in the workplace and in open spaces, and affects millions of women and girls in peacetime and in conflict.

Gender-based violence includes psychological, physical and sexual violence, and harmful practices

such as intimate partner violence, cyber violence, child marriage, female genital mutilation and human trafficking.

These truly shocking and distressing statistics show how vital organisations like Zonta International are:

- In 2022, around 48,800 women and girls were killed by their intimate partner or family - an average of about 133 women or girls a day.
- 41% of women worldwide have experienced either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime.
- Approximately 59% of all female homicide victims in 2021 lost their lives by an intimate partner.
- The first sexual experience of some 30 percent of women was forced. 45% of those under 15 at the time of their sexual initiation report a forced experience.

It's sobering to read.

The Zonta Club of Blackall Range is a small club – but growing in numbers rapidly – whose members are active in this space.