



**ZONTA**

CLUB OF  
NORTHERN  
RIVERS INC

MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL  
EMPOWERING WOMEN  
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

## Zonta Club of Northern Rivers Newsletter April 2022

***MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE ALSTONVILLE BOWLING CLUB @ 6pm Every THIRD Wednesday of the Month***

So much has happened since our last Newsletter.

### **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary brunch – 5 December 2021**

Although it was a very wet day (little did we realise this was a sign of things to come) the day was a resounding success with a good number of current and past Zonta members celebrating 25 years of Zonta Northern Rivers. We welcomed local politicians Catherine Cusack and Janelle Saffin to the celebration and they contributed greatly to the success of the event. Some wonderful presentations from Zonta members also highlighted the many valuable contributions the club has made to the lives of many diverse women and girls in our community of the Northern Rivers in the past 25 years.

### **Club Projects and Activities**

#### **Older Women's Homelessness and Housing Issues : Zonta D22 Advocacy Campaign**

In November 2021 our Club received a much welcome boost in funding for this activity from the Southern Cross Credit Union following on from the submission we made for a grant. The Chair of the North Coast Community Housing ("NCCH") Board (Robyn Hordern) attended our October 2021 meeting and the Club subsequently agreed that funding for these women was an appropriate way to contribute to this project. The \$2,500 was received in early December.

Since then we have provided the 20 women with a Christmas gift. The feedback from the women on this small starter activity was that they *"were overjoyed and teary with gratitude"*. Further gifts of manchester, writing materials, vouchers (phone and coffee) and personal care items are planned to follow.

Sadly, the February March flooding crisis in the Northern Rivers has worsened the plight of these women and others in terms of the housing shortage in our area. According to NCCH 115 of their houses were flood damaged and rendered uninhabitable.



Following an urgent request from NCCH for immediate assistance Women's hygiene packs, baby essential packs and Woolworths/Coles vouchers for their tenants was provided. Whilst this assistance did not fall within the older women's assistance category it was deemed important to provide for the female tenants of the NCCH organisation.

### **Bunnings Activity – Ballina Bunnings Thursday 9 December 2021**

An invitation to participate in the Bunnings Christmas Market was taken up by Rosalie and Stephanie on 9 December. This raised our profile in the community and resulted in a generous donation from Bunnings which we utilised in the Open Garden raffle.

### **2022 Major Fund Raiser – Open Garden 12 and 13 February 2022**

A very successful open garden was again held at Lvn and Bronnie's home at Uralba.



The event was attended by over 300 people with funds raised from the Open Garden utilised in Zonta's current projects focussing on older vulnerable women as well as a donation to LAM Australia.

### **Our advocacy role**

#### **Wollongbar Affordable Housing**

In February 2022 it was reported that a local council (Ballina Shire Council) had failed or was stalling to approve an affordable housing project for older women in Wollongbar where the founding body had received a substantial start up funding grant. Zonta NR sent a letter to the Council expressing support for this older women's housing initiative and urging Council support the planning and building of affordable housing for older and vulnerable women on Council land. An email to the same effect was also sent to each of the councillors.

**International Women's day events (8 March)** were cancelled this year due to the weather event impacting the area at the time.

### **Natural Disaster Activities.**

The impact of the flood event that has devastated many parts of the east coast of Australia and our region of the northern rivers began on 28 February when Lyndal sadly passed on the news that her son's home in Brisbane had been flooded. What followed for the northern rivers was equally disastrous as homes in many areas were flooded by rivers or overland storm water. Our club members carried out many and varied roles in response. Some took in or offered their homes to flood evacuees; some manned evacuation centres; or helped out at food and clothing distribution centres.

Many thanks to Zonta Perth Northern Suburbs for a donation to our club of \$3,000 to assist with flood work for women in our region.

### **Ukraine Appeal**

At our March 2022 meeting individual Zonta NR members made a donation to a "Ukraine Appeal" and subsequently \$1,250 was sent to our District Treasurer.

### **What is happening world wide?**

Upon opening the ZI March Newsletter the following opening paragraph resonated:

*'One of the many things that makes me proud to be a Zontian is that we do not wait to act when someone needs us, and we ensure that no one stands alone in the face of adversity'.*

This was a reference to the ZI initiative supporting women and Zonta clubs in Ukraine and is an example of Zonta's commitment to supporting women worldwide.

The ZI site honours women who are leaders in their fields of activity each month and this month's chosen woman is **Nahid Shahalami**, an author and human rights activist now living in Munich but born in Afghanistan.

Nahid says she had a great childhood in Afghanistan which she terms "the golden era of Afghanistan". Her father was a parliamentarian in Afghanistan. He was "a huge feminist" being the father of 4 daughters. Her father died when she was 8 years old. She says overnight "all hell broke loose", as only women were left behind in her family, they were very wealthy and there was no male heir. As Sharia law prevailed a male relative had to take over the families' wealth and manage the family. Nahil's mother decided to take the children out of Afghanistan to Pakistan after receiving a threat from these relatives that unless she paid over a substantial portion of the families' wealth her daughters would make "*good little wives for the warlords*", which I understand to be a reference to the Russian invaders/occupiers. This set Nahil on a path in life to do all she could to promote gender equity. The video interview can be found on the ZI website.

### ***Diary Dates for 2022***

April 20- Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
April 30. 11.30am – Alstonville Quota High Tea  
May 17 - Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
May 21 – D22 Conference Wynnum Manly  
June 15 - Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
July 20- Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
August 17 - Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
September 21 – Monthly meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6 pm  
October 19- Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
November 16- Monthly Meeting Alstonville Bowls Club 6pm  
December 21 - Christmas Dinner Meeting

### **Zonta Northern Rivers Board 2021-2022:**

**President:** Lyndall Smith

**Vice President:** Ellen McGirr

**Secretary/Treasurer:** Julie Burton

**Board Members:** Lynne Shailer, Anne Flanagan, Lyn Crehan