



ZONTA
CLUB OF
ROCKHAMPTON INC
MEMBER OF ZONTA INTERNATIONAL
EMPOWERING WOMEN
THROUGH SERVICE & ADVOCACY

President's Annual Report

AGM 19th May, 2021

“Oh, the places we’ve been and the things we have seen!” With sincere apologies to Dr Suess, these (modified) words sprang to mind when I started to reflect on the year we have just had in Zonta. These words might seem strange in some ways, given that for several weeks we went nowhere and, for the duration of that time, travel was constrained to a greater or lesser extent. Nonetheless, we have undoubtedly been on a remarkable journey during the Zonta year 2020-21.

As was the case for other Clubs, businesses and organizations around Australia, the first stage of our trip was rapid but take-off was surprisingly smooth. We **‘Zoomed’** into meetings very easily, thanks to some excellent ‘Flight Attendants’, especially **Secretary Berenice Payne** whose travel instructions were always clear and timely. We quickly discovered that the anticipated benefits of such meeting were, in fact, very real – saving time, travel and sometimes expense and enabling members who might have been precluded from participating, because of their circumstances, to come ‘on board’. We have subsequently tried a **‘hybrid’ meeting**, thanks to **Jan Landsberg** and look forward to offering this option again in the future.

We are grateful to the **wider Zonta organization** for the support and inspiration provided at **District and Area level**, for their excellent and regular communication and ‘flight plans’, enabling us to make **ongoing arrangements for Zoom Meetings for the Board and perhaps Committees**, and utilising the potential of technology to provide for us **workshops, conference sessions, leadership training modules, presentations** by guest speakers and even enabled us to consider and **vote** for candidates for representation on **Zonta International**. We have, in a sense, been able to ‘travel’ and be a presence nationally and internationally, courtesy of this excellent ‘carrier’. Those who **actually**, rather than **virtually**, travelled to Bundaberg in April for the **District 22 Meeting** found it to be a very enjoyable and rewarding experience and congratulate the organizers.

On any journey, companionship and refreshments are important and it was with some relief that, towards the end of 2020, we were able to cease ‘Zooming’ for a while and meet face to face for dinner. **“The Stirling” Motel**, our normal venue, had been supportive of our absence during the COVID period so we felt we should reciprocate that courtesy and resume meeting there for a while. We had however identified the Meeting Room was not conducive to socializing and the set meals were often larger than many of us wanted. Our decision to meet in the bar area for a pre-meeting drink, and enable those who wanted to stay for dinner to order from the menu and eat in the restaurant, has certainly enhanced the experience for members. Other venues may also be considered on an occasional basis, such as **“Coco Brew”** for our very enjoyable **Christmas lunch**, and may provide an upgrade from time to time. **Special thanks** are extended to **Elizabeth Acton** for all the **arrangements and bookings** and entertainment provided. Meredith Sutherland and Trish Collins have also provided great assistance ensuring our meetings adhered to the designated flight plan and ‘landed’ on time.

The 'crew' are undoubtedly key to the success of any journey and the excellent work of all Club members, **Committee Chairs and Board members** is gratefully acknowledged. Along with assistance provided by Jenny Baker, Valda Fitzgerald and Trish Collins particularly, the outstanding work of **Jan Landsberg, Advocacy Committee Chair**, has ensured that members have been well informed on Zonta activities and opportunities for Advocacy action; that **16 Days of Activism** continued to be a recognized and respected event on the local community calendar; that the Club has been represented on the **District 22 Advocacy HOWzing and the Capricorn Coast Domestic and Family Violence Committees**; that **candidates for State elections** were contacted and informed on the issue of **homelessness**, particularly as it is affecting women over 55; that women in this situation could potentially **access publications from the Lady Musgrave Trust** to support and advise them; that **International Women's Day** was appropriately recognized; that campaigns such as "Share the Dignity" were supported at a local level and, very importantly, that the Club maintained a current and dynamic social media presence as a means of informing and influencing the community and attracting potential members.

On that note, I thank **Valda Fitzgerald, Chair of the Membership Committee** and able Assistants **Berenice Payne and Elizabeth Acton** who carefully maintained the passenger list and were ever alert to opportunities to add to that list, warmly welcomed those who boarded and ensured that those who had to disembark at stopovers did so safely, had pleasant memories of the journey and would recommend it to others. Thanks to these efforts, **our membership remained at 14**. Even though we lost two valued members, Cara Edwards and Jennifer Loscher, who resigned for personal reasons after a period of extended leave, we were delighted to **welcome Bev Meredith and Sara Barnbaum**, both of whom bring valuable skills and experience to the Club. It was wonderful too to celebrate the commitment of some of our 'crew' and present **'long service' awards to Berenice Payne(25 years, Jan Landsberg(15 years) and Karen Chelepy(5 years)**.

Good service is critical to ensuring the success of a journey and **Chair of the Service Committee, Meredith Sutherland**, certainly ensured that this has been provided, even through some of the 'turbulence' experienced this year. A **grant from the Rockhampton Regional Council**, for which **Trish Collins** provided great assistance, provided the funds that enabled the purchase of clothing and toiletries for the assembly of more than two dozen **Domestic Violence victims' personal packs in sizes 8-22**. These have been delivered to Rockhampton Police Station for distribution to various women's services and Meredith has developed a stockpile of appropriate clothing, sourced at incredibly reasonable prices, for future needs. At the suggestion of the police, clothing suitable to wear to a job interview has also been made available.

Valuable **donations** were also made by members, especially **Elizabeth Acton and Jenny Baker** and **Jenny and Gaylene Weir** have also been incredibly busy in another area of service – the making of **Breast Cancer care cushions**. They have ensured that supply equalled demand, while adding some very attractive decorations to lift the morale of the users and carry bags to add to the convenience. We know these are greatly appreciated.

The Service Committee also ensured that there were good applicants for the **YWPA and "Living Treasure" Awards** presented at **our International Women's Day Breakfast in March** this year at the Frenchville Sports Club. Camille Gallais and Margaret Whitchurch respectively received strong support from the crowd of almost 200 who attended. The success of the event overall is a tremendous credit to the efforts of the entire Club, as members rallied to assist wherever they could and provided very generous raffle prizes rather than approach COVID 19 beleaguered businesses for donations. The raffle prizes were beautifully wrapped and presented by Elizabeth Acton and Berenice Payne and our customers were definitely satisfied.

The generosity and support of members ensured that our fund raising was successful despite the more limited opportunities the last year allowed. Our **Macadamia Nut 'drive', the "Blue Illusion"** event and the **sale of Eco bags** were profitable activities, thanks to our members and community supporters. Our 'brand' is widely respected in the community.

Of course, the **safe and timely execution of a flight** depends very largely on the expertise and attention of those flying and maintaining the plane. **Our Board, co pilot (VP) Trish Collins, Berenice Payne, Elizabeth Acton, Valda Fitzgerald and Gaylene Weir** have discharged their responsibilities capably and efficiently. They have ensured that all aspects of the flight have been carefully planned, financed, executed and reported on. Together, we even managed to reduce the cost of the journey (by reducing Annual Dues) to encourage more to 'travel' with us.

Thank you all. You have been great companions on the journey and, as I vacate the Chief Pilot's seat, I do so with great confidence that those who take charge and those on board will ensure a successful, rewarding and enjoyable journey in the Zonta year ahead.

Catherine Dunbar

President 2019-2021