

## Zonta Women's unwavering Support

You would have to go a long way to find a more worthy group to be celebrating International Women's Day than the Bendigo Zonta club. The group is an arm of the international organization whose global initiatives include ending child marriage, closing the gender gap, reducing the impact of climate change, and saying no to violence against women and girls. This year the Bendigo Club celebrated IWD with a covid safe family gathering and walk at Lake Weeroona.

Longevity of voluntary service is a hallmark of the club with six women receiving service awards from President Raelene Schmidt at the 2021 December dinner meeting.

Recognised were Sue Brown (40 years), Rosalie Lake (30 years), Dale Little (25 years), Naidene Parry (20 years), Rosalind Deacon (15 years) and Maggie Burke (10 years) clocking up a staggering 140 years of service collectively. Fellow Zontian Gay Hanrahan was unable to be a part of the December celebrations. She too has clocked up 30 years' service having been the backbone of the club's incredibly successful open garden fundraisers during that time.

Club identity Ann Horrocks was also recognized at the dinner for her unwavering contribution to coordinating the club's recent publication "40 years of history" a major project.

The women are some of the leaders among the central Victorian cohort of diverse professional women making up Zonta Bendigo sharing a commitment to making the world a better place by empowering women.

"Knowing we are making a difference to the lives of women and children locally and internationally" said club stalwart Sue Brown on receiving her 40 year acknowledgement. Assembling birthing kits is close to Ms Brown's heart along with her tireless commitment to the breast care cushions used postoperatively for breast surgery patients.

Rosalie Lake, chair of the communications committee, received her 30 year Zonta International pin. Ms Lake's unwavering commitment sees her in her current role ensuring members are kept up to date with all communications which have been of increased importance during the pandemic.

Dale Little first contributed to Zonta back in the 80's and more recently she has completed a 25 year stint of advocacy. She shares the sentiments of other members "Joining Zonta allowed me to be involved in supporting women, both locally and internationally; hopefully making a difference to their lives. It also provided the opportunity to network with women across a range of professions".

It was the ability to give to the local, national and international community in a constructive way that attracted Naidene Parry two decades ago and she is still there.

A selfless volunteer Ms Parry said she had gained more than she had given during her twenty year association which included a term as club president.

Service and advocacy chair Rosalind Deacon has been advocating for 15 years. Getting to know many interesting, inspiring women from all walks of life, and working together to make a positive difference to the women and girls that our projects and scholarships aim to address is what inspires Ms Deacon.

Maggie Burke who's been with the club for a decade is Chair of Fundraising. Ms Burke described the enjoyment she has experienced from the many opportunities to do practical tasks side by side with other members and gaining a greater understanding of the Zonta organisation worldwide from the positions she has undertaken.

During the covid pandemic, mental health and wellbeing became a pressing issue. The Club's fundraising was supplemented by sponsorship from UFS pharmacies to subsidize a very successful accredited Mental Health First Aid course for local women. The next session will run on June 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> with bookings to open on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

<https://www.trybooking.com/BYBBU>

If you are interested in learning more or joining this dynamic club, gaining a greater understanding of the global issues affecting women and girls and playing a role in creating change, contact the club through their website: <https://www.zontabendigo.org>