

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
SOUTH EAST ASIA PACIFIC

NATIONAL PRESIDENT'S  
ANNUAL REPORTS 2025



**SOROPTIMISTS  
EMPOWER CHANGE**

Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific

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**NATIONAL PRESIDEN AUSTRALIA  
REPORT TO THE FEDERATION MEETING  
2024-2026 BIENNIUM**

Name of country:	<b>Australia</b>
Name of National President / author:	<b>Terry Maunsell</b>
Reporting period:	<b>May 2024-March 2025</b>
Date of Report:	<b>15 March 2025</b>
No of clubs in country/ region:	<b>61</b>
No of members in country/ region:	



*NOTE : Please state references and links to webpages / sites where relevant*

### SECTION I – NATIONAL UPDATES

#### a) Important Laws and Conventions affecting rights of women and girls:

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was signed by Australia in 1983.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (cth) (the SDA)<sup>1</sup> is the key legal mechanism Australia uses to implement the rights enshrined within CEDAW.

The Australian Human Rights Commission<sup>2</sup> is responsible for receiving complaints about breaches of the SDA. Unlawful discrimination under the SDA includes:

- treating a person less favourably (for example, dismissal from employment) based on one of the protected grounds
- practices, conditions or requirements applicable to all but which have a discriminatory effect (for example, the requirement that all staff must work full-time)
- unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, known as sexual harassment.

All States and Territories of Australia have anti-discrimination laws that also prohibit sex discrimination. These laws are administered by equal opportunity or anti-discrimination bodies in each of these jurisdictions.

The Australian Government recognises coercive control as a pressing issue that requires a coordinated national approach. The government has collaborated with all State and Territory



governments to develop the National Principles to Address Coercive Control in Family and Domestic Violence (the National Principles).<sup>3</sup>

From 1 July 2024, coercive control has been made a criminal offence in New South Wales<sup>4</sup> and from 26 May 2025, coercive control will be a criminal offence in Queensland.<sup>5</sup>

## **b) Status of and recent development to the National Gender Policy:**

The Australian Government's *Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality* was launched on 7 March 2024. This Strategy outlines the Australian Government's vision for gender equality.

It focuses on five priority areas namely:

- gender-based violence
- unpaid and paid care
- economic equality and security
- health
- leadership, representation and decision-making.

Data points have been set to monitor the impact of the strategy and the progress to gender equality over the next ten years.<sup>6</sup>

## **c) Is it mandatory to implement gender-based policies at work?**

Under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012,<sup>7</sup> employers with 500 or more employees are required by law to implement policies and strategies addressing each of the six gender equality indicators.

GEI 1 - gender composition of the workforce

GEI 2- gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employers

GEI 3 - equal remuneration between women and men

GEI 4 – availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities

GEI 5 – consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace

GEI 6 – sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination

The Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023 is expected to be a significant step forward in encouraging employer action to close the gender pay gap

## **d) Is Gender Budgeting mandatory in your country's national budget planning process and what is the latest position on this issue?**



Yes. Gender Responsive Budgeting is a core Australian Government commitment to drive gender equality and give decision makers information about the gendered impacts of Budget proposals.

Australian Government departments are required to undertake gender analysis for New Policy Proposals and Cabinet Submissions. The level of gender analysis completed is targeted and proportional to the potential impact, value and scope of the policy.

Victoria became the first jurisdiction in Australia to legislate gender responsive budgeting requirements. The amended [Financial Management Act 1994](#)<sup>8</sup> came into effect on 5 June 2024.

## 2. Socio-cultural situation affecting women & girls [100-300 words per item]

### a) Educational opportunities:

In 2024 according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Education and Work 2024, slightly over 12 million individuals (61%) aged 15-74 years were fully engaged in work, study, or both. Among them, 51% of women were fully engaged compared to 71% of men. The percentage in each age group being:

Age	Female %	Males %
15–19	86.6	86.3
20–24	74.8	75.4
25–29	65.8	82.1
30–34	57.9.	83.8
35–39	52.3	84.1
40–44	53.1	84.2
45–49	57.6.	81.5
50–54	53.9	78.1
55–59	45.6	68.2
60–64	26.8	50.0
65–74	7.0	18.1

The fields of study for persons aged 15-74 years who were studying for a non-school qualification were as follows

	Female %	Male %
<b>Natural &amp; physical sciences</b>	4.2	4.5
<b>Information technology</b>	2.3	5.1
<b>Engineering &amp; related technologies</b>	3.1	10.6
<b>Architecture &amp; building</b>	1.6	5.2
<b>Agriculture, environmental &amp; related</b>	1.7	1.7
<b>Health</b>	21.0	15.5
<b>Education</b>	11.0	7.8



<b>Management &amp; commerce</b>	17.6	17.7
<b>Society &amp; culture</b>	26.3	22.3
<b>Creative arts</b>	5.1	4.3
<b>Food, Hospitality and Personal Services</b>	3	2.8

This indicates that women and girls remain underrepresented in STEM fields while being more prevalent in traditional nurturing areas such as health and education

#### b) **Health, hygiene, and wellbeing:**

Sex and gender are key determinants of health and wellbeing, and women have very different experiences of **mental and physical illness** and the healthcare system to men in Australia.

Around one in 3 women experience trauma in childbirth, with one in 8 of these women experiencing symptoms of post-traumatic stress <sup>9</sup>

Approximately one in 7 women by the age of 44 to 49 are diagnosed with endometriosis – with diagnosis taking on average between 6 to 8 years. <sup>10</sup>

One in 4 women aged 45-64 years report that symptoms attributed to menopause make it hard to do daily activities

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 23% (2.3 million) of women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous partner while 16% (1.6 million) of women have experienced economic abuse from a current or previous partner. <sup>11</sup>

The impact of family and domestic violence on women's illness, disability and premature death is particularly prevalent for young women and pregnant women. <sup>12</sup>

Mental health conditions, substance use disorders and injuries contributed the most health burden for young people aged 15–24 with anxiety and depressive disorders being the leading specific causes for females

Source: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2023b <https://www.aihw.gov.au/>

The latest Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed life expectancy for Indigenous women in Australia is almost 8 years shorter than that of non-Indigenous <sup>13</sup>

Single mothers face particularly high poverty risk and would also benefit from more robust arrangements around child support payments from non-custodial parents. <sup>14</sup>

#### c) **Social and Economic Development:**

The national gender pay gap according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics is 11.9%.



As of November 2024, the full-time adult average weekly ordinary time earnings across all industries and occupations were \$2072.7 for men and \$1826.40 for women i.e. for every dollar on average men earned, women earned 88 cents.

The gender pay gap varies from State to State being highest (20.2%) in Western Australia which has a larger share of the mining and construction workforce industries which have relatively high earnings and low representation of women.

The gender pay gap plus other factors including time out of workforce and part time work women means women generally have less superannuation than men when they retire. The median superannuation balance being 25% less for woman than men.

While 90% of large private sector employers have a policy or strategy to support gender equality in the workplace when comparing full-time equivalent total remuneration of private sector employees, which includes superannuation, bonuses, overtime, other payments but excluding CEO remuneration, the average gender pay gap is 21.1%<sup>15</sup>

31% of retired women relied on their partner's income to meet their living costs at retirement (compared to 8% of retired men)<sup>16</sup>

More than 40% of women have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years according to the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#) with 26 per cent of women who recently experienced sexual harassment experienced it at work.

#### **d) Impact of environment and climate change:**

Australia is constantly affected by bushfires, floods and cyclones.

Evidence shows women have more of the emotional and psychological burden during and after disasters. They are more likely to prioritise the care of others at the expense of their own physical health, social and mental wellbeing

Family violence and violence against women increase in the aftermath of disasters.<sup>18</sup>

This is particularly concerning as research shows that changes in the weather and climate are happening at an increasing pace; the past decade has seen record-breaking extremes contributing to natural disasters that are exacerbated by anthropogenic (human-caused) climate change.<sup>19</sup>

### **3. Impact of current economic situation on women [100-300 words]**

Australia's economic outlook is expected to improve in 2025, after a period of subdued growth in 2024. GDP growth rose slightly in 2024, and the inflation rate has slightly decreased. Interest rates have eased slightly.

While unemployment rates are relatively low, higher unemployment rates are likely to occur to curb inflation.



Political instability in the Middle East and the Ukraine and the introduction of tariffs by the US government are all likely to impact on economic growth.

The ageing population will result in substantial fiscal pressures from increased demand for government services and rising health costs.

Women are affected in a tightening economy. The unemployment rate is low and while that of females is slightly lower than for males, the underemployment rate of women is higher than that of men. Accessibility and cost of childcare, unpaid care of children and the elderly and gender-based violence can limit the number of hours worked and the promotion prospects of females.

#### 4. Topical/current national issues

##### a) International Women's Day (IWD), 16 Days of Activism or similar celebration:

IWD -Australian Clubs held many events to celebrate International Women's Day 2025 and posted their activities on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. The SI Australia Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/siswp.org/> reposted many of these thus increasing the reach of the posts.

The resources such as banners, cover photos provided by SISEAP were used by most clubs for their social media.

16 Days of Activism. Similarly, during the 16 Days of Activism clubs participated in marches / walks, hosted and attended numerous talks and other events. Social media posts were at an all-time high and again the resources provided by SISEAP were excellent and widely used.

Several clubs "don" the orange on the 25<sup>th</sup> of each month to "Orange the World"

#### 5. Women Leaders

##### a) Women in key leadership positions: include:

- **Sam Mostyn** :Governor General of Australia
- **Governors of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia**
- **Jacinta Allan**: The Premier of Victoria.
- **Lia Finocchiaro**: Chief Minister of the Northern Territory.
- **Vanessa Hudson**: CEO of Qantas
- **Vicki Brady** CEO and Managing Director of Telstra
- **Natalie Davis** : CEO Ramsay Australia, a major private hospital operator
- Women hold 54.4% of Australian Government board positions, up from 39.1% in 2015.
- The percentage of women receiving Order of Australia awards has been trending upwards
- The Present 47<sup>th</sup> Federal Parliament is the most gender equal in Australia's history with 45% female representation The Senate having a majority (57%) female representation. While The



Australian Labor Party, The Greens and The Independents have high numbers of female representatives, the Liberal Party is lacking in female representation.

- Women account for 45.1% of overall positions in State and Territory Parliaments in Australia

**b) Notable developments to promote women leadership:**

Priority area 5 of Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality<sup>6</sup>: is Leadership, representation and decision-making, the Australian government has undertaken several investments and reforms to improve representation and leadership by providing funding and grants for leadership programs and set targets for gender representation on Australian Government Boards

Women and Leadership Australia<sup>20</sup> deliver specialised leadership program, for individuals, organisations and schools.

## 6. Violence Against Women and Girls [100 – 300 words]

**a) Current statistics<sup>21</sup>**

- 23% of women have experienced violence by an intimate partner since age 15
- 1 in 4 women have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous cohabiting partner since age 15
- 1 in 5 women have experienced sexual violence since age 15
- 49.3% of the burden of intimate partner violence for females aged 15 and over is attributable to homicide and violence
- one woman is being killed every four days
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately represented as victims of intimate partner homicide
- In addition, women with disabilities, refugee and migrant women and members of LGBTIQ+ communities are more likely to have experienced violence.<sup>22</sup>

**b) Key forms of violence:**

Violence against women includes sexual, psychological, physical, and financial abuse. Sexual violence involves unwanted activity, harassment, and coercion.<sup>23</sup>

**c) Existing & recent government action measures:**

The National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032:<sup>24</sup>

- **Vision:** To end gender-based violence in one generation.
- **Focus Areas:** Prevention, early intervention, response, and recovery and healing.

On 1 May 2024, The Commonwealth agreed to deliver a range of new measures to address violence against women including establishment of this Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches (the Review)<sup>25</sup>



## 7. Soroptimist Engagement [100 – 500 words]

### a) Engagement at government, NGO and community level:

Many clubs and Regions across Australia have been active in advocacy with their local Members of Parliament at both State and Federal level in areas of interest in their local communities including homelessness, domestic and family violence, maternity services in rural and remote areas, permanent visas for asylum seekers, better rebates for pathology services and changes to age of criminality.

All States are represented on the SI Australia Advocacy Committee which has supported Single Mother Families Australia in their “Fix Child Support” campaign and also a Private Members Bill requiring current and future governments to develop, implement and maintain a 10-year National Housing and *Homelessness*

SI Australia has long been a member of the Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), one *of the six National Women's Alliances* funded to advise the Office for Women on gender policy in Australia. A new round of funding in October 2024 has resulted in changes to these Alliances. Working with Women Alliance brings together work previously led by two separate Alliances representing gender-based violence, and women’s economic equality and leadership. It is expected that The Working with Women Alliance will carry on the important work which has been led to date by the Equality Rights Alliance. SI Australia hopes to be a member of this Alliance.

### SECTION II – NP BIENNIUM PLANS

#### National President’s plan to:

- a) Strengthen Soroptimist clubs:
- b) Promote key events on equality and women’s rights:
- c) Improve and increase membership:

<u>NP’s planned activities</u>	<u>Extent achieved</u>	<u>State reason, if not achieved</u>	<u>Budget / Actual expense</u>
Attend Region Meetings across Australia to discuss SI Australia to determine future activities	New South Wales Queensland Attended	Timing of meetings have clashed	<u>0</u>
Worked with pro-bono Lawyers in New South Wales to update the SI Australia Incorporated Constitution -	Final draft completed and to be presented at meeting in first half of 2025	<u>Pro bono work takes</u> longer, and many comments received on previous draft which need to be discussed	<u>Hours</u>



<u>NP's planned activities</u>	<u>Extent achieved</u>	<u>State reason, if not achieved</u>	<u>Budget / Actual expense</u>
Advocacy Committee revamp with representation from each State	Meetings held every two months and advocacy of clubs has increased		<u>Hours</u>
Revamp Website	Not yet achieved	Cost and time	
Commence an Australian wide project similar to SIANZ Ovarian Cancer	Not yet achieved	Project Subject to be determined.	
SI Australia Conference	Not yet achieved ? Convene a hybrid meeting with the 2026 SEAP Conference	Increase in cost of living and subsequent financial constraints of both SI Australia and members	
SI Australia logo to increase identity	Not yet achieved	Consensus on need Cost	

### SECTION III - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF NP WORK

#### A What are the key challenges?

(Your answer may include any / a combination of the following factors)

##### i) Time Management:

The time required for meetings with not only Federation, Regions, Executive and other bodies is quite significant. The tyranny of distance in Australia compounds this as at usually two days are needed to attend meetings held in other States.

Executive members have been extremely accommodating and attended numerous interstate meetings in my stead.

The lack of paid personnel does mean that there is a substantial volume of work to be done and in reality, we are volunteers.

##### ii) financial constraints

Membership fees are only \$5 per member and thus financial resources are limited. The executive is unable to attend in-person meetings, but modern technology facilitates meetings every two months. Visits to clubs are not possible unless it is for a Charter or a significant birthday, so the NP does attempt combine such visits with personal holidays/ business.



See above re Conference

### iii) Knowledge and skills in NP work:

It is important that the NP is able to rely on previous NPs as it is a steep learning curve. Even though one will have been a Region/ State President, there is much to learn not only about how the other Regions/ States operate but of all the other responsibilities that must be undertaken e.g. convening of AGM or other General Meetings.

The NP needs the ability to educate clubs/ members on the role of the national association and the differentiation between it and the Federation and the responsibilities of each.

### iv) Support from Federation or country:

Technical support from Federation is important with website etc. It is hoped that the new website for SI Australia will be able to be integrated with that of SISEAP and avoid some duplication.

### v) Stagnant or falling membership:

This stagnant and aging membership is likely contributing to the difficulty in encouraging people to take on positions at all levels of the organisation and the flow on effect of not being able to have applicants for NP position.

### vi) Others, if any

## B. Solutions undertaken / planned

Increase Membership Fee (Fee has not changed for several years) to allow for website expenditure., conference subsidy etc

Encourage more Regions/ State to undertake the Thriving Futures Program to increase numbers willing to take on positions.

## C. Recommendations and Activism

### i) Key recommendations that a NP can make:

- Advocacy on matters relevant to the mission and objectives of Soroptimist International.
- Collaboration with other organisations on projects relevant to programme

### ii) Who can the NP consult before sharing recommendations:

- The SI Australia Committee.
- Advocacy Committee



- Individual Regions/States
- SISEAP

iii) Participation in key national consultations:

- Working with Women Alliance
- National Council of Women
- UNWomen Australia

## References

<sup>1</sup> Sex Discrimination Act 1984 [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

<sup>2</sup> The Australian Human Rights Commission [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

<sup>3</sup> [www.ag.gov.au](http://www.ag.gov.au)

<sup>4</sup> Crimes Legislation Amendment (Coercive Control) Act 2022

<sup>5</sup> Criminal Law (Coercive Control and Affirmative Consent) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2023

<sup>6</sup> [www.genderequality.gov.au](http://www.genderequality.gov.au)

<sup>7</sup> [www.legislation.gov.au](http://www.legislation.gov.au)

<sup>8</sup> [www.legislation.vic.gov.au](http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au)

<sup>9</sup> University of Sydney, '[Birth-related PTSD is 'strangely overlooked' in Australia](#)', University of Sydney, 2023.

<sup>10</sup> Australian Institute Health and Welfare (AIHW), [Endometriosis](#), Australian Government, 2023.

<sup>11</sup> [www.genderequality.gov.au](http://www.genderequality.gov.au)

<sup>12</sup> Department of Health and Aged Care, [National Women's Health Strategy 2020–2030](#), Department of Health and Aged Care, Australian Government, 2019; AIHW, [Family, domestic and sexual violence, Pregnant People](#), AIHW website, Australian Government, November 2023.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-life-expectancy/2020-2022>

<sup>14</sup> [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au)

<sup>15</sup> [www.genderequality.gov.au](http://www.genderequality.gov.au)



<sup>16</sup> [www.superannuation.asn.au](http://www.superannuation.asn.au)

<sup>17</sup> Australian Human Rights Commission: Time for respect: Fifth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces November 2022

<sup>18</sup> [www.respectvictoria.gov.au](http://www.respectvictoria.gov.au)

<sup>19</sup> "Bureau of Meteorology, *State of the Climate 2024*, and [bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/2024/](http://bom.gov.au/state-of-the-climate/2024/)

<sup>20</sup> [wla.edu.au](http://wla.edu.au)

<sup>21</sup> [www.pmc.gov.au](http://www.pmc.gov.au) Unlocking the Prevention Potential: accelerating action to end domestic, family and sexual violence

<sup>22</sup> Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network (ADFVDRN) and Australian National Research Organisation for Women's Safety (ANROWS), *Australian Domestic and Family Violence Death Review Network data report: Filicides in a domestic and family violence context 2010–2018*, Research report, 06/2024,

<sup>23</sup> [www.ourwatch.org.au/types-of-violence-against-women#types-of-violence-glossary-of-terms](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/types-of-violence-against-women#types-of-violence-glossary-of-terms)

<sup>24</sup> [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au)

<sup>25</sup> [www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/womens-safety/rapid-review-prevention-approaches](http://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/womens-safety/rapid-review-prevention-approaches)

<sup>14</sup> [www.oecd.org/economy/australia-economic-snapshot](http://www.oecd.org/economy/australia-economic-snapshot)



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND  
REPORT FOR 2025 FEDERATION MEETING  
2024-2027 BIENNIUM**

<b>1</b>	Name of country:	<b>Aotearoa New Zealand (SIANZ)</b>
<b>2</b>	Name of National President / author:	<b>Melanie Plaisted</b>
<b>3</b>	Reporting period:	1 January 2024 – 31 December 2024
<b>4</b>	Date of Report:	<b>April 2025</b>
<b>5</b>	No of clubs in country/ region:	<b>Eighteen</b>
<b>6</b>	No of members in country/ region:	<b>Two hundred and seventy-six</b>

*NOTE : Please state references and links to webpages / sites where relevant*

**SECTION I – NATIONAL UPDATES**

**a) Important Laws and Conventions affecting rights of women and girls:**

New Zealand has several important laws and international conventions that protect and promote the rights of women and girls.

Key domestic laws include:

- Human Rights Act 1993 – Prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and family status.
- Equal Pay Act 1972 – Ensures equal pay for men and women performing the same work.
- Employment Relations Act 2000 – Provides protections against workplace discrimination and harassment.
- Domestic Violence Act 1995 – Offers legal protections for victims of domestic violence.
- Family Violence Act 2018 – Strengthens protections for victims of family violence.
- Parental Leave and Employment Protection Act 1987 – Grants paid parental leave to eligible parents.
- Sexual Violence Legislation Act 2021 – Improves legal processes for victims of sexual violence.

New Zealand actively reports on its progress under the following international conventions. The Ministry for Women oversees many of these commitments, but it is acknowledged that we are not progressing as well as we should.

- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) – New Zealand ratified this in 1985, committing to eliminating gender-based discrimination. 1 ①
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – A global framework for advancing gender equality.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) – Protects the rights of girls as part of broader child rights.



- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) – Ensures equal rights for women in political and civil life.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) – Guarantees equal access to education, healthcare, and employment.

#### **b) Status of and recent development to the National Gender Policy:**

New Zealand does not have a single, unified "national gender policy," but it has various initiatives and laws addressing gender equality and related issues.

1. Human Rights Act 1993: This prohibits discrimination based on sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
2. Gender Pay Gap Initiatives: New Zealand has been working to reduce the gender pay gap, which currently stands at 8.2%. Tools like the Gender Pay Gap Toolkit help businesses address this issue. ①
3. Family Violence and Sexual Violence Strategy: This national strategy aims to eliminate family and sexual violence, with initiatives to strengthen support systems and prevention measures. ①
4. Proposed Gender Definition Bill: Very recently, a bill has been introduced, by one of the government coalition partners, to define gender based on biological sex. This is sparking debate about its implications for transgender rights and human rights laws.

#### **c) Is it mandatory to implement gender-based policies at work?**

New Zealand has taken steps toward gender equality in the workplace, but the specifics depend on the type of policy you're referring to, broader gender-based workplace policies—such as hiring quotas or mandatory diversity training are not universally required by law.

The Labour government had planned to introduce mandatory pay gap reporting, but the current government has not yet followed through with that plan.

Additionally, a bill that aims to **increase pay transparency** by allowing employees to discuss their wages freely is currently before a select committee. The Employment Relations Act currently allows employers to include clauses in employment agreements that prevent employees from discussing their pay with others, including colleagues.

Supporters of the bill argue that this would help to address pay inequality and discrimination, as employees would be more able to identify and challenge unfair pay practices. The bill would align New Zealand with countries like the UK, Canada, and Australia, which already prohibit pay secrecy clauses.

#### **d) Is Gender Budgeting mandatory in your country's national budget planning process and what is the latest position on this issue?**

Gender budgeting is not mandatory in New Zealand's national budget planning process, but it is gaining traction. The Ministry for Women and the Treasury introduced gender budgeting in 2021 through a pilot program, which expanded in subsequent years. This approach aims to ensure that the needs of women, men, and gender-diverse people are considered in budget decisions. ①

While gender budgeting is not yet a formal requirement, it is promoted as best practice by international organizations like the OECD and the United Nations. New Zealand's efforts include



initiatives to track the impact of budget decisions on women and girls and improve gender analysis capabilities across government agencies.

## 1. Socio-cultural situation affecting women & girls

### a) Educational opportunities:

The socio-cultural landscape in New Zealand has a significant impact on educational opportunities for women and girls. While New Zealand is recognized for its commitment to gender equality, challenges persist in a number of areas.

1. Socioeconomic Disparities: Women and girls from marginalised communities, particularly Māori and Pasifika, often experience higher rates of poverty. This economic disadvantage limits access to educational resources such as technology, extracurricular activities, and tutoring.
2. Gender Stereotypes: Traditional gender roles and stereotypes can influence career aspirations and educational choices, discouraging women and girls from pursuing fields like STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).
3. Policy and Advocacy: New Zealand has implemented policies to promote gender equality in education, but gaps remain. Efforts to address these disparities include targeted programs and initiatives to support marginalized groups.

Despite these challenges, New Zealand continues to make strides in promoting inclusivity and equal opportunities for women and girls in education.

### b) Health, hygiene, and wellbeing:

The socio-cultural landscape in New Zealand presents both opportunities and challenges for women and girls in terms of health, hygiene, and wellbeing.

1. Health Inequalities: There are significant disparities in health outcomes between Māori women (indigenous population) and non-Māori women. For example, life expectancy for Māori women is lower compared to non-Māori women. Addressing these disparities requires culturally sensitive healthcare approaches and targeted interventions.
2. Socioeconomic Factors: Social, cultural, and economic determinants play a crucial role in shaping health outcomes. Persistent health inequalities are often linked to socioeconomic factors, which may be worsening over time. Strategies to address these issues include improving access to education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for women and girls.
3. Cultural Considerations: The unique cultural-historical context of New Zealand, including the significance of Māori traditions and values, influences the wellbeing of women and girls. An intersectional approach is essential to address the diverse needs of different ethnic groups.

In 2020 the first schools in a scheme to reduce period poverty received funding, and in 2024 the Coalition Government has committed \$2.9 million to ensure primary, intermediate and secondary schools continue providing period products to those who need them. This funds the scheme through until June 2028. As the Minister of Education stated in the announcement: "This is an issue of dignity and ensuring young women don't have to miss out on school because of something as simple as having access to period products. The University of Otago has estimated that up to 95,000 young New Zealand women could be missing school because of a lack of access to period products. Young women deserve equal opportunities in education, which is why continuing this initiative is so important."

### c) Social and Economic Development:



Challenges remain in New Zealand achieving full social and economic equality for women. They include:

1. **Gender Equality Progress:** New Zealand has made strides in promoting gender equality, with 88.9% of legal frameworks supporting gender equality under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) indicator. Women hold 45.5% of parliamentary seats as of February 2024. ②
2. **Economic Participation:** Despite progress, gaps persist in areas like the gender pay gap and women's access to assets such as land. Women also spend significantly more time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to men. 1
3. **Violence Against Women:** Addressing violence remains a priority. In 2018, 4.2% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical or sexual violence by a partner in the previous year. ②
4. **Education and Employment:** Women in New Zealand have high levels of educational attainment, but challenges in employment equity, such as representation in leadership roles and wage parity, continue. ①
5. **Cultural Context:** The Treaty of Waitangi plays a crucial role in shaping policies that impact women, particularly Māori women, ensuring their rights and cultural heritage are respected. ①

While in the 2024 SDG Gender Index Aotearoa New Zealand ranked fourteenth with a score of 83, categorised as 'good' regarding gender equality, the statistic alongside that showed that since 2019 our score has essentially stayed the same, so progress with overall gender equality is not progressing at a great rate.

#### **d) Impact of environment and climate change:**

The impact of climate change on women and girls in New Zealand is deeply intertwined with socio-cultural factors. Women, particularly indigenous Māori women, are disproportionately affected by environmental changes due to their roles in communities, economic structures, and traditional practices.

Climate change has led to rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and biodiversity loss, all of which threaten livelihoods, food security, and mental health. Many Māori communities, which often reside near coastal areas, face risks such as erosion and flooding, endangering sacred sites and traditional ways of life. Additionally, changing seasons affect mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), disrupting practices like traditional food gathering and healing.

Women and girls are also more vulnerable to economic instability caused by climate-related disruptions. Loss of livelihoods and uncertainty about the future contribute to increased stress and mental health challenges. However, women are also leading climate action efforts, advocating for gender-responsive policies and sustainable solutions.

New Zealand has committed to addressing these challenges by increasing climate finance and supporting gender-inclusive climate policies. The government recognizes the importance of ensuring women's voices are central in climate discussions and decision-making processes.

## **2. Impact of current economic situation on women**

There is still much work to be done to achieve economic equity for women in New Zealand. Efforts are being made to address these challenges, such as promoting pay transparency and implementing



tools to measure and reduce pay gaps but progress is slow. Existing inequalities and ongoing challenges are:

1. **Labour Market Disparities:** Women are more likely to be underemployed or underutilised in the workforce. As of late 2024, 13.8% of women were underutilised compared to 10.6% of men. Women also face higher unemployment rates, particularly among wāhine Māori, whose unemployment rate is nearly double that of all women. ①
2. **Gender Pay Gap:** The gender pay gap remains a pressing issue, with women earning 8.2% less than men on average. This disparity is even more pronounced for Māori, Pasifika, and disabled women. ③
3. **Unpaid Work:** Women disproportionately shoulder unpaid caregiving responsibilities, which limits their ability to participate fully in the workforce. A report found that if caregiving and household responsibilities were shared more equally, New Zealand's economy could grow by \$1.5 billion annually. ①
4. **Systemic Barriers:** Conscious and unconscious biases contribute to the gender pay gap and limit women's economic opportunities. These systemic issues account for a significant portion of the disparities. ③

### 3 Topical/current national issues

#### a) International Women's Day (IWD), 16 Days of Activism or similar celebration

The above along with environment month, Anzac Day and Suffrage Day are acknowledged by clubs. Other 'world days' may also be recognised.

#### b) Observance by Soroptimist clubs

These are acknowledged by the clubs in SIANZ with the choice being at what level. For some this is as simple as recognition at a club meeting, others acknowledge with social media posts through to clubs hosting events which can be for fundraising and/or membership.

#### c) Any other issue

SIANZ clubs adopt a national project to support for a two-year period. In September the clubs voted to continue with the current national project support for increased awareness of ovarian cancer. This is an area of women's health in Aotearoa New Zealand where there is a lack of knowledge regarding symptoms and treatment. There is underfunding for awareness and detection.

This has been the national project for the last three years with magnificent support from clubs. Clubs decide at what level they are able and comfortable to support the project, whether this be from awareness events through to fundraising for the three chosen charities – Ovarian Cancer Foundation of New Zealand; Talk Peach or K9 Medical Detection.

### 5. Women Leaders

#### a) Women in key leadership positions

New Zealand has made significant strides in promoting women in leadership roles, particularly in the public sector. As of December 2023, women held 53.9% of public sector board and committee roles, and 46.2% of public sector board chair positions. Women also occupied 56.7% of senior management roles in the public sector, including 49.4% of Tier 1 roles.

In the private sector, progress has been slower, with women holding 31.0% of director positions across NZX-listed companies and 36.4% of S&P/NZX50 company director positions.



New Zealand's history of female leadership is notable, with three female Prime Ministers and women currently occupying high offices such as Governor-General and Chief Justice.

Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong tradition of empowering women, dating back to 1893 when it became the first self-governing nation to grant women the right to vote. Historically we have had three female Prime Ministers. Currently the office of Governor-General is held by Dame Cindy Kiro, the fourth woman to hold this office. Dame Cindy is the first Māori woman to hold the office and the third person of Māori descent. Also, the current Chief Justice of New Zealand is The Right Honourable Dame Helen Winkelmann. She is the second woman to hold the position.

#### **b) Notable developments to promote women leadership**

As mentioned above Aotearoa New Zealand has a strong tradition of promoting and empowering women in leadership.

1. **Historical Milestones:** New Zealand was the first self-governing country to grant women the right to vote in 1893, thanks to the efforts of suffragists like Kate Sheppard. This laid the foundation for women's active participation in leadership roles.
2. **Government Initiatives:** The Ministry for Women actively supports women in governance through programs like the Nominations Service, which helps women secure roles on public sector boards and committees. They also provide training and resources to enhance leadership skills.
3. **Public Sector Representation:** Women hold over 50% of public sector board and committee roles, showcasing significant progress in gender diversity.
4. **Private Sector Efforts:** While women are underrepresented in private sector leadership, initiatives are underway to increase their presence in governance roles.
5. **Cultural Recognition:** Inspirational figures like Dame Whina Cooper and Helen Clark have paved the way for future generations, demonstrating the impact of women leaders in politics and social movements.

Other, but not all, notable women in leadership roles are:

Liz Dawson who is the current president of the NZ Olympic Committee. A female holding high office in the area of sports management is an area open for much growth. Liz has most recently chaired the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2022 Local Organising Committee, one of 3 World Cups hosted in New Zealand during 2022 and 2023, she served as a director of New Zealand Cricket, a director and shareholder of the Hurricanes, and a director of the Racing Industry Transition Agency and Chair of the new TAB during the appointment of the new board.

She sat as an Independent Appointee to the St Kilda Football Club's Integrity Committee (Melbourne) and has served on and continues to do so, a number of independent review panels and board appointments panels, particularly in relation to sport.

Ngāwai Hono i te Pō Paki, was announced as the new monarch of the Kiingitanga in September 2024 following her father's death. Te Puhī Ariki Ngāwai Hono i te Pō Paki is the eighth Māori monarch and the second woman. And at 27, Ngāwai Hono i te Pō Paki is also the second youngest Māori monarch to be appointed.

## **6. Violence Against Women and Girls**

### **a) Current statistics / status**



In 2024, violence against women and girls in New Zealand remained a significant concern. The figures highlight the ongoing challenges in addressing violence against women and girls in New Zealand.

- Prevalence: Around 4.2% of women aged 15-49 reported experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months. ②
- Disparities: Wāhine Māori were 3.8 times more likely than the general population to experience family violence. Similarly, LGBT+ women and disabled women faced disproportionately higher risks. ④
- Reporting and Convictions: Only an estimated 7% of sexual violations against adults were reported to the police, with less than 1% of cases resulting in convictions. ④
- Youth Impact: Rates of childhood sexual abuse remained alarmingly high, with 1 in 5 women born between 1981-2001 reporting such experiences. ④

## b) Key forms of violence

In New Zealand, women and girls face various forms of violence, including:

1. Intimate Partner Violence (IPV): This is one of the most common forms of violence, involving physical, sexual, or psychological harm by a current or former partner.
2. Sexual Violence: This includes any non-consensual sexual act or behaviour, often leaving long-lasting emotional and psychological scars.
3. Economic Abuse: This form of violence involves controlling a person's financial resources to make them dependent.
4. Online Harm: With the rise of digital platforms, online harassment and abuse have become increasingly prevalent.

## c) Existing & recent government action measures

New Zealand has implemented several government measures to address violence against women and girls. Some of these are:

- Te Aorerekura – National Strategy for the Elimination of Family Violence and Sexual Violence: A 25-year strategy launched in 2021 to create a coordinated approach to tackling violence. ①
- Legislative Measures:
  - Family Violence Act 2018: Strengthens protections for victims and improves legal responses. ①
  - Sexual Violence Legislation Act 2021: Aims to reduce secondary harm to victims within the justice system. ①
  - Domestic Violence – Victims' Protection Act 2018: Provides workplace protections for victims of domestic violence. ①
- Government Funding: Nearly \$1 billion was allocated to family violence initiatives between 2017 and 2023. ⑤
- 

While progress is being made, there are also ongoing concerns for the implementation of the strategies and legislation. During 2024 the police announced an intention to a managed withdrawal from what it considered non-crime social problems. This has brought forward comments from many agencies and advocates for women and families.

[<https://www.rnz.co.nz/news/national/508917/concern-over-police-plans-to-pull-back-from-family-harm-callouts>]

A positive step in enhancing legislation is that public submissions have been called for the Crimes Legislation (Stalking and Harassment) Amendment Bill.



The bill seeks to address stalking, which can pose a threat of serious harm to victims. This is an omnibus bill that proposes to:

- create a stalking and harassment offence in the Crimes Act 1961
- introduce new aggravating factors that recognise the unique circumstances associated with stalking and breaching a restraining order in the Sentencing Act 2002
- expand the definition of psychological abuse to include stalking in the Family Violence Act 2018
- prevent self-represented defendants charged with the new offence from being able to personally cross-examine alleged victims.

## 7. Soroptimist Engagement

SIANZ members attend and contribute to the International Women's Caucus meetings which are facilitated in conjunction with the Ministry for Women. Those who choose to attend do so, either face to face or online, depending on the timing and venue. This is a great opportunity to engage with government and other NGO's.

SIANZ is also a member of the National Council of Women (NCW). We are working on forming a stronger relationship with the various sub-groups that are available within NCW. We are looking to take part in more training and workshops that they offer.

Strengthening alliances with women's organisations and/or NGO's in Aotearoa New Zealand will also be investigated.

## SECTION II – NP BIENNIUM PLANS

### National President's plan to:

#### a) Strengthen Soroptimist clubs

A challenge has been issued to all clubs to have at least one club member on one of the national executive teams – membership, programme or communication. This is one way that information and ideas can be shared amongst members of the national association. This also gives us the opportunity to be able to enact succession planning so that the national association, and by extension clubs, can strengthen their links.

Regular contact has been initiated by the membership team between team members and clubs so that messages can be delivered in person and support be made available to clubs regarding meetings, voting and other key messages.

Regular newsletters are issued by the national association, the membership team and the programme team. The membership and programme teams also instigate Zoom meetings to connect club convenors and webinars to help with training.

#### b) Promote key events on equality and women's rights

Any promotion via social media, when it is appropriate, is undertaken.

The club contact being undertaken by the membership team will give opportunity for any events to be shared in addition to emails.

With increased contact with other NGO's other events will be able to be shared (in both directions), along with any information from Federation or International.

#### c) Improve and increase membership:

SIANZ experienced a sharp decline in membership at the beginning of 2025, which unfortunately was not helped by the closure of one club. As a result, for many clubs we are entering a phase of rebuilding and looking to increase our visibility.



A mentioned above in (a) we are looking for an increase in membership of the committees for the national executive. We are hoping that ideas from more participation will assist in these being able to be communicated to the clubs in the national association.

The membership committee are also looking at ways to assist clubs with low membership before it becomes too late. This is where the communication links will be valuable as we need to identify vulnerable clubs before it becomes too late so that there is time to look at ways to rebuild.

Another methodology for increasing membership and visibility is to continue work on our national association webpage. This went live at the end of 2024, see [www.sianz.co.nz](http://www.sianz.co.nz).

Our visibility is also being increased by involvement in supporting national organisations. In September clubs voted to continue our current national project – support and awareness for ovarian cancer. A new national project management team will be in place from 1 May 2025, and they will look to build on the work of the outgoing team achieved over the last three years. Club involvement has been great, both from an awareness and fundraising perspective. When out promoting awareness or running a fundraising event, it gives a great side benefit of an opportunity to talk about the other work of Sorooptimism.

At the same meeting in September, it was also agreed to have a national activity for those clubs who wished to undertake this. This the Chip Packet Project NZ: <https://www.chippacketproject.org/>. Once again this is another way to connect with communities and make Sorooptimism more visible.

### SECTION III - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF NP WORK

#### A. What are the key challenges?

There are times when having enough time to give to the role is challenging and then there is also finding that balance between holding the position and other aspects of your life and commitments to other volunteer organisations. It is not insurmountable but the knowledge to give yourself grace during periods when you feel overwhelmed and having a great support network assist.

Support to and from the Federation is an area to consider expanding. It is unfortunate that the bi-monthly meetings of national presidents are not better supported. Do we need to ask how to make these more accessible for attendees and also if there is there the opportunity of having something on the agenda that enhances leadership learning and skills.

Pressure regarding a decreasing membership is ever present, however having a team that works on this is of critical importance. The national president is not solely or personally responsible for membership, is requires ownership and contribution from the executive team and committees through to every member.

#### B. Solutions undertaken / planned

As mentioned, a support network is one of the best tools anyone in a leadership position can have. Knowing that you work with and are supported by a team is essential to the role. Working as a team helps more than just the national president achieve goals for their country and in turn, the Federation.

#### C. Recommendations and Activism

It is important that clubs in the national association can feel that they can ask for support or make requests of the national president, and by extension the executive. This can be from a simple level of providing direction for obtaining information or providing assistance with training to supporting an advocacy issue and taking that issue and commending other clubs in the national association to support the originating club.



SIANZ are developing systems and protocols which the national association will work within. The national president has an executive to consult with before sharing recommendations. Also, within Aotearoa New Zealand are many Soroptimists who have, or have held, positions at many different levels and their experience and wise council is also utilised.

To be able to participate in key national consultations it is important that SIANZ be a more prominent figure in discussions. Promoting ourselves is an area in which we are lacking, however, more involvement with the International Women' Caucus (IWC) meetings is helping to achieve this. In 2024 Sylvia Heywood (SI North Shore) represented SIANZ on the selection committee for a funded Aotearoa New Zealand NGO delegate to attend CSW69 in March 2025. This was administered through the Ministry for Women. We were grateful for Sylvia being able to give the time to the process and have the Soroptimist name sitting alongside other Aotearoa New Zealand NGO's.

We are continuing to grow and learn as we develop as a national association and this can only make us stronger as Soroptimists as we continue to advocate for what is best for women and girls.

- References:**
- ① [www.women.govt.nz](http://www.women.govt.nz)
  - ② [data.unwomen.org](http://data.unwomen.org)
  - ③ [www.globalwomen.org.nz](http://www.globalwomen.org.nz)
  - ④ [awc.org.nz](http://awc.org.nz)
  - ⑤ [www.rnz.co.nz](http://www.rnz.co.nz)



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT FIJI  
REPORT TO THE FEDERATION MEETING  
2024-2028 BIENNIUM**

Name of country:	<b>Fiji</b>
Name of National President / author:	<b>Senata Tinaiseru Ratumaitavuki</b>
Reporting period:	<b>JAN 2024 – DEC 2024</b>
Date of Report:	<b>14/03/25</b>
No of clubs in country/ region:	<b>10</b>
No of members in country/ region:	<b>119</b>

*NOTE : Please state references and links to webpages / sites where relevant*

**SECTION I – NATIONAL UPDATES**

1. (100 – 300 words)

**a) Important Laws and Conventions affecting rights of women and girls:**

1. *The Government of Fiji is committed to promoting Gender Equality and the empowerment of all women and girls through various national and International frameworks.*
2. *Key Commitments : 1. **International Frameworks** a) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 2030 agenda b) Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) c) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) d) International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) e) 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.*
3. *2. **National Policies and Legal frameworks:** a) Fiji's National Gender Policy b) Fiji Constitution c) 5-year and 20 year National Development Plan (NDP)*

**b) Status of and recent development to the National Gender Policy:**

*Fiji's National gender Policy established in 2014 aims to promote Gender equality across all sectors. Recent developments include The Ministry of Economy's gender Equity and Social Inclusion Policy 2021-2024, which formalises commitments to gender equity and aligns with national and International obligations. Additionally, the Fiji Women's Economic Empowerment National Action Plan (2024-2029) has been introduced to further women's economic participation. These initiatives underscore Fiji's on-going efforts to enhance gender equality and social inclusion.*

**c) Is it mandatory to implement gender-based policies at work?**



*Yes, in Fiji, implementing gender based policies in the workplace is mandated by law. The Employment Relations Act of 2007 explicitly prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including gender, ensuring fair treatment in employment. Additionally, Section 20 of the Constitution of the Republic of Fiji guarantees individuals the right to fair treatment, further reinforcing the commitment to workplace equality.*

**d) Is Gender Budgeting mandatory in your country's national budget planning process and what is the latest position on this issue?**

1. *In Fiji, Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting ( GRPB) has been actively integrated into the national budget planning process, reflecting the government's commitment to gender equality.*
2. *GRPB manual: The Ministry of Finance published the Gender responsive Planning and Budgeting manual in 2024, providing guidelines to ensure that gender perspectives are systemically incorporated into the budgetary process.*

**2. Socio-cultural situation affecting women & girls [100-300 words per item]**

**a) Educational opportunities:**

1. *In Fiji, while significant strides have been made to promote gender equality in education, several socio-cultural factors continue to influence the educational opportunities available to women and girls.*
2. *Traditional gender roles – Fijian society is predominantly patriarchal. With traditional norms often assigning women and girls to domestic roles .this cultural expectation can limit their educational aspirations and opportunities.*
3. *Early marriage and teenage pregnancy; This can disengage them from education*
4. *Economic barriers, where resources are limited, families might prioritise the education of sons over daughters*

**b) Health, hygiene, and wellbeing:**

1. *In Fiji, women's health , hygiene and overall well-being are influenced by various socio-cultural factors;*
2. *Patriachal Society and traditional roles, as stated above in (a).*
3. *These can limit women's autonomy in making health related decisions and accessing health care services.*
4. *Gender based Violence. With the alarmingly high rates of violence against women. Such violence not only causes immediate physical harm but also leads to long term psychological trauma affecting women's mental health and well being.*

**c) Social and Economic Development:**

1. *Traditional gender roles often assign women to domestic responsibilities limiting their participation in formal employment and decision making processes.*
2. *Underrepresentation in leadership: Despite progress, women remain underrepresented in political and corporate leadership positions, hindering their influence on policies affecting their socio economic status.*



3. *Access to resources: Women often face challenges in accessing financial resources, land ownership, and business opportunities, limiting their economic empowerment.*

**d) Impact of environment and climate change:**

1. *Gendered impact. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by climate related disasters such as cyclones, flooding and droughts. They are often placed in caregiving and household responsibilities which increases their vulnerability during natural disasters. In many cases they are expected to care for children, and the sick during times of crisis.*
2. *Access to Resources. Women in rural areas especially those involved in subsistence farming or fishing, rely heavily on natural resources for their livelihood. Climate change exacerbates challenges like soil degradation, sea-level rise, and the depletion of fish stocks, affecting women's ability to sustain their families.*
3. *Education and awareness: Limited access to education can hinder their ability to understand and adapt to environmental challenges, reducing their resilience in the face of climate impacts.*
4. *Health vulnerabilities. Environmental changes contribute to the spread of diseases.*
5. *Migration and Displacement: these have their fair amounts of risks a) exploitation including gender based violence in temporary shelters or new locations, b) fewer resources or support systems during migration.*

### **3. Impact of current economic situation on women [100-300 words]**

*The current economic situation in Fiji presents both challenges and opportunities for women, influenced by socio-cultural norms and recent policy initiatives.*

*Economic participation and Challenges: Women in Fiji predominantly engage in low paying jobs, often within the informal sector, earning approximately one-third less than men. This disparity is partly due to cultural norms and traditional beliefs that limit women's participation in certain economic activities. Additionally, women owned businesses are frequently concentrated in crowded, low productivity sectors, facing challenges in scaling and formalizing their enterprises.*

*Barriers to Economic Empowerment: Several factors hinder women's economic empowerment in Fiji, including: 1) Social norms and systemic Structures- traditional gender roles and systemic biases restrict women's access to opportunities and resources. 2) Health challenges: Issues such as Cancer and reproductive health concerns disproportionately affect women's ability to participate fully in the economy. 3) Gender based Violence: The prevalence of violence against women and girls creates unsafe environments, limiting their economic activities.*

*Policy Initiatives and Progress: 1) Legal Frameworks 2) national Action Plans 3) Government Endorsements.*

***To conclude, while socio-cultural norms and systemic barriers continue to impede women's full economic participation in Fiji, on going policy initiatives and legal frameworks aim to address these challenges.***

### **4. Topical/current national issues**



**a) International Women's Day (IWD), 16 Days of Activism or similar celebration:**

- In 2024 ,Fiji celebrated International Women's Day ( IWD) with a series of events and initiatives that underscored the nation's commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. The Global theme for IWD 2024 was " Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress" reflecting a worldwide emphasis on enhancing women's roles in various sectors.

Government and Institutional Celebrations included: Ministry of Foreign Affairs – The Ministry ,led by Asst Minister- Hon Lenora Qereqeretabua, honoured IWD by acknowledging the unwavering commitment and contributions of women in developing their families, communities and the nation. The Ministry of Education: Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Hon Viliame Gavoka, alongside the Permanent Sec, Ms Selina, launched the Ministry's IWD celebrations and a Gender Sensitization Awareness Programme at the Pearl Resort, Pacific Harbour, aimed to promote gender equality within the Education sector and raise awareness about gender –related issues.

b) In 2024, Fiji actively participated in the global 16 days of Activism Against Gender based Violence held from Nov 2024 to Dec 10. – National Leadership and commitment; The Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka emphasized the significance of this period, urging all Fijians to strive for a violence free nation beyond the 16-day campaign.

Government Initiatives: The Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection collaborated with various organizations to empower at- risk boys, addressing root causes on gender-based violence (MWCSP.GOV.FJ) (FIJITIMEs.COM.FJ)

**b) Observance by Soroptimist clubs:**

Most Soroptimist clubs , in Fiji celebrated both of these events in 2024.

1. The Lautoka Club organized an Oratory Contest for Primary and Secondary schools in Lautoka. That was the 11<sup>th</sup> year they've hosted such an event on International Women's Day, and they're organizing this year's IWD Oratory contest for 2025 as I write this.
2. Ba club organised a march through town on IWD 2024 involving most of the women clubs in Ba, and enabled these women to showcase their crafts at the Ba Open Flea market Day., Chief Guest was the Special Administrator of Ba Town, Mr Moshin who assessed the displays and gave an encouraging speech on how the Ba town stands behind these ladies ready to support and empower them.
3. The Suva club celebrated Saturday of service together with IWD 2024 by visiting the Hart Home in Valelevu, Suva (Hart Home houses single mothers with their children) by assisting them with cleaning and preparation of gardens by planting vegetables. They also served them meals for that day.
4. Sigatoka Club launched the 16 days of activism in November 2024 with the market vendors in Sigatoka town, and handed out pamphlets and posters throughout Sigatoka market and town.

**c) Any other issue:**

**5. Women Leaders**

**a) Women in key leadership positions:**

- As of 2023 women's representations in key leadership positions in Fiji reflects both progress and on-going challenges.



Parliamentary Representation: Women's participation in Fiji's parliament has increased over the years, rising from 4.3% in 1995 to 21.6% in 2020.

Board membership: Women hold approximately 21% of board memberships in Fiji, indicating a significant under representation in decision making roles.

Board Chair positions: Only 2 out of 38 board chair position ( 5%) are occupied by women, a decline from 18 % in 2020

Private Sector Leadership: Fiji falls below the Pacific Regional average for women's representation in business leadership, with many private sector boards comprising fewer than 30% women Directors.

## **b) Notable developments to promote women leadership:**

### Government Initiatives :

*Policy Development – The Fijian Government has emphasized the importance of integrating women into leadership roles.*

*International Advocacy – Fiji has actively participated in Regional and International Forums to Advocate for women's empowerment and leadership . For instance , during the 53<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the committee representatives of Governments and Administration ( CRGA) and the 13<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Pacific Community (SPC), Fiji called for stronger Regional cooperation to promote women's leadership at all development levels.*

*Fiji Women's Forum – Formed in 2012, this coalition of women's organizations aims to increase women's participation in Leadership.*

## **6. Violence Against Women and Girls [100 – 300 words]**

### **a) Current statistics / status:**

### **b) Key forms of violence :**

### **c) Existing & recent government action measures:**

*Violence against women and girls in Fiji remains a critical issue, with statistics indicating some of the highest prevalence rates globally ; key findings ;*

*Intimate partner Violence: Approximately 64% of Fiji women who have ever been in an intimate relationship have experienced physical and /or sexual violence by a husband or partner in their lifetime.*

*Childhood Exposure- reports indicate that 4 out of 5 children in Fiji face some form of violence.*

*Daily Impact; a study revealed that daily, 43 women are injured , one is permanently disabled , and 71 lose consciousness due to domestic violence in Fiji. (FIJIWOMEN.COM).*

*In response to these alarming statistics, Fiji launched the National Action Plan to prevent violence against all women and girls ( 2023- 2028) in June 2023. This comprehensive plan aims to address and reduce violence through coordinated efforts across various sectors . ( ASIAPACIFIC.UNWOMEN.ORG )*

## **7. Soroptimist Engagement [100 – 500 words]**

### **a) Engagement at government, NGO and community level:**

*Soroptimist collaborative efforts include:*



*Government Collaboration – memorandum of Understanding ( MOU) with the Ministry of Women, Children, and poverty Alleviation : In August 2018, SI Fiji signed a MOU with the Fiji Government to establish Soroptimist Shelters for women and children. This initiative aims to provide a safe haven for victims of violence and homelessness, reflecting a strong partnership between SI and Governmental bodies.*

*NGO Partnerships – Women’s Fund Fiji Grant; The SI Sigatoka club received a grant of Fijian Dollars \$50,000 from Women’s Fund Fiji for a 12 month project starting in July 2020. This funding supports training programs , awareness campaigns, networking opportunities, and Income generating activities tailored for women in the Sigatoka region.*

*Community Engagement- Saturdays of service, are widely practised by most SI clubs , from cleaning campaigns, to planting of vegetables or trees, visitations to Homes and Hospitals, providing meals to special groups, paintings of classrooms etc.*

## SECTION II – NP BIENNIUM PLANS

### National President’s plan to:

- a) Strengthen Soroptimist clubs:
- b) Promote key events on equality and women’s rights:
- c) Improve and increase membership:

<u>NP’s planned activities</u>	<u>Extent achieved</u>	<u>State reason, if not achieved</u>	<u>Budget / Actual expense</u>
1. Club Visitation- especially to clubs that are threatening to close down. 2 Clubs are yet to be visited. ( Labasa and Rakiraki)	2 clubs visited – Gold Town Tavua, and SI Sugar City Dialogues were made and weaknesses highlighted. Loss of interest from members, and high membership fees seems to be the common factor.	Geography – SI Labasa is on another island , so we have to think hard about getting across to them or them to us	\$150
Conduct trainings and workshops for clubs	1 training conducted thus far.	Time constraints	150
Collaborate more with the Government Ministries especially the Ministry for Women and Children	Already had conversations with the Ministry for Women and Children regarding this write up and we are meeting in the near future to discuss about the Shelter Home project.		

## SECTION III - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF NP WORK

### A. What are the key challenges?



(Your answer may include any / a combination of the following factors)

- i) Time Management:
- ii) Financial constraints:
- iii) Knowledge and skills in NP work:
- iv) Support from Federation or country:
- v) Stagnant or falling membership:
- vi) Others, if any

*As the National Rep for Fiji Soroptimist I face the following key challenges:*

1. *Ensuring that Soroptimist projects align with national development goals and funding priorities.*
2. *Funding and Resource mobilization – it is difficult to secure sustainable funding for projects and Initiatives. Managing Financial constraints while expanding programs to reach more women and girls.*
3. *Organization growth – we are trying to expand but to do that we have to keep the current clubs open first. So making sure that clubs don't close is a challenge as we have to look for genuine members who are in it for the course and make sure they are financially secured .*
4. *I have lost my Secretary for Region this year,( she just left SI). So finding a right person for the job is challenging.*

## **B. Solutions undertaken / planned**

*Strategic planning, strong leadership and continuous advocacy to advance women's empowerment - we can market women empowerment in such a way to grab the interests of current members and potential members.*

## **C. Recommendations and Activism**

*As above*

- i) Key recommendations that a NP can make:
- ii) Who can the NP consult before sharing recommendations:
- iii) Participation in key national consultations:

*Before sharing recommendations, its crucial to consult various stakeholders to ensure that your proposals are well informed, inclusive and aligned with the goals of the organization.*

1. *Soroptimist International members and other clubs in the region- Feedback from members across the clubs to ensure that it reflects their collective experiences and challenges*
2. *Government Officials and Agencies – Ministry for Women, Children and poverty alleviation- collaborate with Govt representatives to align your recommendation*
3. *NGOs , work with NGOs like Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM ) of the Fiji Women's Crisis Center ( FWCC)*
4. *UN Women – Seek guidance from the UN Women Fiji Multi Country Office for advice on global best practices and alignment with International frameworks such as the SDGs.*



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT MALAYSIA  
REPORT TO THE FEDERATION MEETING  
2024 - 2026 BIENNIUM**

Name of country:	Malaysia
Name of National President / author:	Michele Kaur
Reporting period:	19 March 2024 – 13 March 2025
Date of Report:	13.3.2025
No of clubs in country/ region:	18
No of members in country/ region:	232

*NOTE : Please state references and links to webpages / sites where relevant*

**SECTION I – NATIONAL UPDATES**

**1. Important Laws and Conventions affecting rights of women and girls:**

- i. **Constitutional Amendment on Citizenship Rights:** In October 2024, the House of Representative (Dewan Rakyat) passed an amendment allowing both mothers and fathers equal rights to pass on Malaysian citizenship to their children. This is a major step towards gender equality, as previously only Malaysian fathers could pass on citizenship. However, the amendments also strip citizenship rights from children born in Malaysia to permanent residents.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/12/malaysia-un-experts-welcome-proposed-changes-citizenship-law-urge-more>

- ii. **National Women’s Policy 2025 - 2030 :** In conjunction with International Women’s Day 2025, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Women, Family & Community Development launched the National Women’s Policy. Domestic violence against women will be one of the key issues under the newly launched policy, with a focus on strengthening protection for women and addressing loopholes.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/2025/03/08/national-womens-policy-2025-2030-to-assist-victims-of-domestic-violence-says-nancy-shukri>



- iii. Malaysia is also a party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

**b) Status of and recent development to the National Gender Policy:**

It was conceived in 1989, and the latest updates can be found in the **Malaysia Progress Report 2020 – 2024** issued by the Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development to the Beijing Declaration and Platform For Action in late 2024.

The newly-minted National Women's Policy (8.3.2025) complements the National Gender Policy, ie. both policies promote gender equality and protect women's rights in Malaysia.

<https://www.asiapacificgender.org/sites/default/files/2024-11/MALAYSIA%20National%20Review%20for%20Implementation%20of%20the%20Beijing%20Platform%20for%20Action%20%282024%29.pdf>

**c) Is it mandatory to implement gender-based policies at work?**

Yes, it is according to Art 8(2) of the Malaysian Federal Constitution.

**d) Is Gender Budgeting mandatory in your country's national budget planning process and what is the latest position on this issue?**

Yes, it is. A guideline has been introduced to all ministries that emphasizes gender analysis in the preparation of both management and development budgets.

**2. Socio-cultural situation affecting women & girls [100-300 words per item]**

- a) Educational opportunities: Girls' education in Malaysia has been on an upward trend in recent years. The enrolment levels for girls are equal to or higher than those for boys across the nation and more girls complete advanced education compared to boys. However, there is also a consistent rate of secondary (high) school dropout. In that connection, the Malaysian government is working on making secondary education mandatory and encouraging more girls to participate in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/education/2025/03/09/keeping-girls-in-school>

- b) Health, hygiene, and wellbeing:

The government is also focusing on improving work-life balance for women, especially those who are primary breadwinners or part of the sandwich generation. Initiatives to improve childcare services and provide flexible working arrangements are expected to enhance the quality of life for women.

- c) Social and Economic Development:



Female representation on boards of the Top 100 publicly listed companies (PLCs) in Malaysia has nearly doubled since 2016, rising from 16.6% to 31.4% in 2024, according to recent data from the Securities Commission (SC). This places Malaysia ahead of other Asian nations in terms of female board representation. Bloomberg News reports that, on average, women hold only 16% of board seats at Asia's largest listed companies, highlighting Malaysia's leading position in the region.

<https://www.businesstoday.com.my/2024/08/09/women-now-hold-31-4-of-board-seats-in-malaysias-top-100-c/?ompaniesform=MG0AV3>

d) Impact of environment and climate change:

Climate change can exacerbate the workload of women and girls. During periods of drought or flooding, women may have to travel longer distances to fetch water or find alternative sources of food and fuel. This additional burden can limit their opportunities for education and employment.

### 3. Impact of current economic situation on women [100-300 words]

- a) The 2025 budget includes significant allocations to support women and youth in entrepreneurship. Financial support through institutions like the *SME Bank* and *Bank Simpanan Nasional* empowers women entrepreneurs to expand their businesses and innovate. The economic recovery and growth have also created more job opportunities. Government initiatives, such as the *Women's Leadership Apprenticeship Programme* and the *Returnship* programme, aim to encourage women to return to the workforce and take on leadership roles.
- b) The government is also focused on improving work-life balance for women, especially those who are primary breadwinners or part of the sandwich generation. Initiatives to improve childcare services and provide flexible working arrangements should enhance the quality of life for women.

<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2024/10/20/budget-2025-empowers-women-bridges-gender-gap>

<https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/CR/Issues/2025/03/03/Malaysia-2025-Article-IV-Consultation-Press-Release-and-Staff-Report-562916>

## 4 Topical/current national issues

a) International Women's Day (IWD), 16 Days of Activism or similar celebration:

The Ministry of Women, Family & Community Development does celebrate the International Women's Day on 8.3.2025 with the launch of the National Women's Policy.

On 23.11.2024, an impressive Orange Run was organised by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM), the Department of Women's Affairs (JPW), and Jom Run, to commemorate the 16 Days of Activism. There were about 3,800 participants, including women, men and children, that attended the colourful affair in Putrajaya.



b) Observance by Soroptimist clubs:

For **International Women's Day 2024**, SI Malaysia ran a webinar showcasing 3 speakers, SISEAP Past President Christine Johnstone, Yap Li Ling (Forest Solutions, Merica Group) and SI Shah Alam member, Fatin Amin (Author & Junior Golf Instructor).

SI clubs in Malaysia ran various events, advocacy campaigns and dialogues to commemorate these 16 days. In addition, SI Malaysia celebrated the **16 Days of Activism** on 30.11.2024 with a UNITE Walk together with the YWCA and the Malaysian Girl Guides Association, which was a walk in solidarity to advocate against gender-based violence. The walk was followed up with a forum discussing the current state of gender-based violence in Malaysia from the perspective of the Royal Malaysian Police Force and a cybersecurity professional.

## 5 Women Leaders

a) Women in key leadership positions:

**Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri**, the current Minister of Women, Family and Community Development and a former Soroptimist (SI Kuching) has been a strong advocate for increasing women's representation in leadership roles within both the public and private sectors.

**Hon Justice Tan Sri Datuk Nallini Pathmanathan** is the first female of Indian ethnicity to become a judge of the Federal Court in Malaysia, the apex court. She was elevated to a High Court Judge in 2009, the Court of Appeal Judge in 2014 and appointed as Federal Court Judge in 2018

b) Notable developments to promote women leadership:

- i) In line with global trends toward gender parity, Malaysia's government has appointed more women to cabinet and high-ranking positions in 2024. The Prime Minister's Office has expanded to include more female ministers and deputy ministers, as its ongoing commitment to achieving gender equality in leadership.
- ii) Malaysia's corporate sector has seen gradual improvements in women's representation in senior leadership roles. In 2024, there was an increase in the number of women being appointed to board positions and executive roles in major companies.

## 6 Violence Against Women and Girls [100 – 300 words]

a) Current statistics / status:

In **2024**, Malaysia continued to face challenges regarding gender-based violence, with increasing numbers of reported incidents of domestic violence, sexual violence, and harassment. However, improvements in legislation and victim support systems marked a positive shift from 2023, with increased willingness to report.

b) Key forms of violence :

Domestic violence, intimate partner violence, sexual violence, human trafficking and online harassment.



## c) Existing &amp; recent government action measures:

- i. The introduction of the **Tribunal for Sexual Harassment** in March 2024 showed a governmental response, while still catching up to the growing scale of the issue, toward improving support for survivors.
- ii. In 2024, the **Royal Malaysia Police** continued to develop and strengthen **specialized units** for handling gender-based violence cases, including domestic violence and sexual harassment. These units are trained to handle sensitive cases and support victims through the investigative process.
- iii. The **National Women's Policy 2025-2030** aims to improve existing measures and enhance enforcement against domestic violence offenders. It focuses on closing policy loopholes and providing better protection for women.

## 7 Soroptimist Engagement [100 – 500 words]

Engagement at government, NGO and community level:

In 2024, Malaysia has continued to take meaningful steps to address gender-based violence, including strengthening legal frameworks, expanding victim support services, and improving law enforcement. To that end, SI Malaysia frequently engaged with various female ministers, other NGOs and corporations like the Starbucks Foundation, the CIMB Foundation and AETOS Holdings.

### SECTION II – NP BIENNIUM PLANS

#### National President's plan to:

- a) Strengthen Soroptimist clubs:
- b) Promote key events on equality and women's rights:
- c) Improve and increase membership:

<u>NP's planned activities</u>	<u>Extent achieved</u>	<u>State reason, if not achieved</u>	<u>Budget / Actual expense</u>
Extension	Charter of SI Pearl of the Orient in Penang on 23.3.2024	-	-
Increasing membership	Thriving Futures Training on 16.3.2024	-	-
Advocacy	UNITE Walk in Chinatown, Kuala Lumpur on 30.11.2024	-	-

### SECTION III - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF NP WORK

#### A. What are the key challenges?

*(Your answer may include any / a combination of the following factors)*

- i) Time Management:



It is a factor where the National President also holds other regional or federation positions or is working.

ii) Financial constraints:

The rising capitation fees impact many members, more so Asian countries with a less dynamic foreign exchange rate. Most members are retirees or pensioners and the normal capitation fee is also a hard-sell to new members.

iii) Knowledge and skills in NP work :

An orientation day to introduce new NPs to the job will be great to set the bar on what is required of a National President and on the reporting timelines.

iv) Support from Federation or country :

I have been fortunate to receive ample support from members during my tenure as National President.

v) Stagnant or falling membership:

This is a Federation-wide concern but Thriving Futures Training has had some positive impact. SI Malaysia has found progress in promoting the various categories of memberships, eg. awardees. SI Iskandar Puteri is also the only club in the Federation that has scored 2 corporate members.

vi) Others, if any

## **B. Solutions undertaken / planned**

SI Malaysia conducted a Thriving Futures Training on 16.3.2024, conducted by SISEAP President Joanne Yeoh and SIROM Membership Development Convenor Hanaa Abdullah, in conjunction with our 2024 Annual General Meeting. It was a good opportunity for the original TFT trainees to share their knowledge and the tips they picked up from the original training session in September 2023.

## **C. Recommendations and Activism**

i) Key recommendations that a NP can make:

Partnering with other NGOs, government agencies and private sector organizations to create a united front in advocating for women's empowerment. Collaboration can amplify the impact of advocacy efforts and raise awareness about SI work at the same time.

ii) Who can the NP consult before sharing recommendations:

Personally, I found it helpful reaching out to club presidents and my National Association Exco members, especially senior members.

iii) Participation in key national consultations: NIL



**NATIONAL PRESIDENT MONGOLIA**  
**REPORT TO THE FEDERATION MEETING**  
**BIENNIUM**

Name of country:	MONGOLIA
Name of National President / author:	KHONGORZUL Togtokhbayar
Reporting period:	2024
Date of Report:	2024-03-17
No of clubs in country/ region:	4
No of members in country/ region:	89

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**SECTION I – NATIONAL UPDATES**

1. (100 – 300 words)

**a) Important Laws and Conventions affecting rights of women and girls:**

Laws of Mongolia:

- Constitution of Mongolia
- Law on Combating Domestic Violence (2016)
- Law on the Protection of Children's Rights (amended in 2023)
- Law on Ensuring Gender Equality (2011)

United Nations Conventions and International Agreements:

- Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1965)
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1981)
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1993)
- Paris Agreement (2016)
- Convention on Biological Diversity (1993)
- Ramsar Convention (1998)
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Mongolia adopted the SDGs in 2015.

**b) Status of and recent development to the National Gender Policy:**

In 2011, the "Law on Ensuring Gender Equality" was adopted.

In 2011, the "National Program on Gender Equality" was adopted.

In 2017, the Law on Combating Domestic Violence was revised.

Since 2016, Mongolia has been implementing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recent Updates:

- "Financial Education Training" program



- Program to support women entrepreneurs
- Preferential loan and savings products, and financial advisory services offered by financial institutions
- UNDP's "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs" project
- Asian Development Bank's (ADB) credit program for women
- Women's Political Leadership Program (2022-2024) is being implemented.
- Annual "Best Female Entrepreneur" awards are given, along with prizes and incentives.
- Since 1995, the National Center Against Violence has been operational.
- Hospitals, government agencies, and NGOs provide free services to victims, regardless of their location.
- Since 2007, the National Program on Combating Domestic Violence has been implemented.
- Labor laws include provisions to protect women's rights.
- In 2019, Mongolia joined the World Trustline Network.

**c) Is it mandatory to implement gender-based policies at work?**

Ensuring gender equality in the workplace is highly important, but it is not currently mandatory. The Labor Law includes provisions to eliminate gender discrimination and protect employees from exclusion.

According to the Law on Ensuring Gender Equality, both public and private organizations are obligated to take measures in this direction.

The National Program on Gender Equality includes increasing women's participation in leadership and ensuring equal opportunities in the workplace.

The government develops policies and programs in this area and provides recommendations and guidance to businesses.

Although not mandatory, large enterprises often provide maternity and childcare leave and ensure safe working conditions for female employees.

NGOs work to raise public awareness and provide recommendations on ensuring equality in the workplace.

**d) Is Gender Budgeting mandatory in your country's national budget planning process and what is the latest position on this issue?**

In 2015, "Guidelines for Introducing Gender Budgeting" were developed, but they are not officially mandatory.

**Recent Stance:**

- Within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals, attention is being paid to this issue, which influences budget planning.
- According to the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, policy changes at the national level are necessary to ensure gender equality.
- With the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), efforts are being made to improve gender budgeting.

**2. Socio-cultural situation affecting women & girls [100-300 words per item]**

**a) Educational opportunities:**

- Some families consider education unnecessary for female children and prefer to involve them in household chores.
- In rural areas, access to schools and educational centers is limited, and remoteness, along with a lack of information, negatively impacts women's education.
- The number of women aspiring to pursue higher education is increasing each year, but access to higher education remains limited in rural areas.

**b) Health, hygiene, and wellbeing:**

- Access to sanitary products is limited in rural areas.
- Access to maternal health care during childbirth is risky, and in some regions, medical assistance is insufficient.
- Access to medical assistance during childbirth is limited in rural areas, and postpartum health care and breastfeeding services are not widely available.
- Traditional beliefs and a lack of information hinder early detection of diseases, cancer screening, and the use of preventive measures.
- Access to mental health services for women is limited.
- Family pressure, childcare responsibilities, and household chores negatively affect mental health and quality of life.
- Rural women are being provided with the opportunity to receive medical consultations via mobile phones.
- The government and NGOs are working to raise public awareness about menstrual health, reproductive health, and mental health issues.

**c) Social and Economic Development:**

Economic instability increases poverty and reduces access to education and health care.

Girls from poor families are increasingly dropping out of school to participate in household work.

Economic difficulties tend to increase domestic violence, leading to a rise in cases of women becoming victims of violence.

Women's employment rate is lower than men's.

In rural areas, women face challenges in starting businesses due to a lack of financial support, business information, and social support systems.

Economic difficulties place a greater burden on women, who must balance household chores, childcare, and work, limiting their employment opportunities.

Rising living costs and economic downturns increase financial pressure on women.

During economic crises, funding for health services decreases. Economic pressure negatively impacts women's mental health.

Women with paid jobs face challenges in balancing work with household chores and childcare responsibilities.

**d) Impact of environment and climate change:**



**Spring and autumn droughts:** Extreme droughts or excessive rainfall during spring and autumn reduce crop yields, posing significant challenges to rural women involved in livestock farming. Women in rural areas are the most affected by these natural disasters. For example, droughts, extreme cold, and strong winds reduce livestock numbers, increasing women's workload as they take on responsibilities for animal care, food, and water supply.

Air pollution in Ulaanbaatar is causing serious health problems. Pregnant women and children are at higher risk of respiratory diseases, lung issues, and cardiovascular diseases.

Mongolia's water resources are relatively limited, and water scarcity is increasing due to climate change.

**Agricultural issues:** Climate change negatively affects Mongolia's agricultural sector. Hot and dry weather reduces crop yields, limiting food and income opportunities for women involved in farming. Mining activities are depleting springs and reducing water resources.

### **Recent Measures and Support**

**Green Policy:** The government is implementing green development policies to protect the environment, develop renewable energy sources, and promote the use of electric vehicles.

**Disaster relief support:** The Mongolian government, in collaboration with international organizations, is providing rapid assistance to rural women affected by natural disasters and supporting the recovery of livestock numbers.

## **3 Topical/current national issues [100-300 words]**

### **International Women's Rights Day (March 8)**

Events are organized to promote women's rights and gender equality.

Initiatives are launched to support women's employment and social participation.

Female athletes, entrepreneurs, and government officials are recognized and awarded.

### **16 Days of Activism**

**November 25:** International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marked by the "White Ribbon Campaign."

**November 29:** International Day of Women Human Rights Defenders.

**December 1:** World AIDS Day.

**December 3:** International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

**December 5:** International Volunteer Day.

**December 10:** International Human Rights Day.

During this period, the government and NGOs organize activities, training, and awareness programs aimed at assisting victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence.

### **Similar Commemorative Days:**

#### **International Day of the Girl Child (October 11)**

Aims to promote girls' education, health, and safety.

Events are organized to protect girls' rights and promote gender equality.

#### **Mother and Child Day (June 1)**



Celebrated since 1995.

Mothers who have raised many children are honored with awards.

#### **International Day of Families (May 15)**

Celebrates family values and recognizes the role of mothers.

Government and non-governmental organizations organize events to improve family relationships.

#### **International Day of the Midwife (May 5)**

Focuses on protecting maternal health and improving maternal and neonatal health services.

Midwives are honored and celebrated.

#### **a) Observance by Soroptimist clubs:**

Soroptimist clubs in Mongolia are actively engaged in various activities aimed at protecting women's rights, supporting their education, health, economic success, and development, and combating violence against women.

### **4. Activities to Protect Women's and Girls' Rights and Amplify Their Voices:**

Participate in the activities of organizations working on women's issues and advocate for their rights. Implement the "Khurekhui" project, which aims to empower girls to protect themselves from sexual violence by providing knowledge and skills. The project targets children in grades 1-2, with plans to expand it to preschool-aged children.

Operate the "Shüüder" Girls' Center, which provides psychological and reproductive health services to adolescent girls, offers counseling, and connects them with necessary resources.

#### **a) Supporting Women's Employment:**

**Expanding Employment Opportunities:** The clubs work to support women's employment and improve their quality of life.

Collaborate with local and international organizations to expand initiatives aimed at protecting women's rights.

#### **b) Collaboration with Government and International Organizations**

Soroptimist clubs collaborate with local government agencies and international organizations to expand their efforts in protecting women's rights.

**Collaboration with Government Agencies:** They work with local governments to secure funding and spaces for their activities.

**International Cooperation:** They maintain partnerships with international Soroptimist organizations, receive funding and support, and participate in international conferences to share and learn from experiences.

**Raising Public Awareness and Respect:** Soroptimist clubs organize public awareness campaigns to promote women's rights and increase their participation in society.

**c) Public Awareness Campaigns:**

Regularly organize the 16 Days of Activism campaign in local communities to raise awareness and promote knowledge about combating violence against women.

Organize girls' conferences, art, and sports events.

Conduct leadership training for club members and other women.

**d) Any other issue:**

Violence against women and girls remains a critical issue, limiting women's rights and affecting their health, education, and quality of life. Efforts to address this issue through legal and policy reforms are ongoing.

**4. Women Leaders****a) Women in key leadership positions:**

As of 2024, 25.4% of the members of the State Great Khural (Parliament) are women. While this represents progress compared to previous years, it remains below international standards.

Women make up **10-15%** of the government. Although some ministers and deputy ministers are women, their numbers are limited.

The participation of women as governors of provinces and districts is increasing, but overall, it does not exceed **10-15%**.

Women's representation in the boards of major companies is increasing but remains below **15-20%**. In the small and medium-sized business sector, the number of female entrepreneurs is growing, but women's participation in the leadership of large businesses remains relatively low.

Women's participation in the leadership of NGOs is relatively high.

In the **education and health sectors**, women's participation is relatively high, with an increasing number of female university presidents, scholars, and doctors.

**5. Moving Forward:**

Provide training and professional support for women.

More effectively implement legislation to increase women's participation.

Build confidence in women's leadership abilities and reduce gender-based discrimination.

**b) Key Events Supporting Women's Leadership****Highlighted Events Supporting Women's Leadership:**

Annual forums for women leaders are organized to enhance women's leadership skills and create networking opportunities.

Meetings and seminars are held to strengthen collaboration and connections among female entrepreneurs.

Training programs to enhance women's leadership skills are implemented with the support of international organizations.

Programs offering funding, training, and advisory services for female entrepreneurs are carried out.

Outstanding female leaders are recognized and awarded annually.

Mongolian women leaders are included in international forums supporting women's leadership.



## 6. Violence Against Women and Girls [100 – 300 words]

### a) Current statistics / status:

As of the first nine months of 2024, cases of violence against women and girls in Mongolia have increased compared to the same period in the previous year. Specifically:

[Crimes related to domestic violence:](#)

**Fatal cases:** Increased by 4.5%.

**Serious crimes:** Increased by 20.2%.

**Domestic violence-related disputes:** Increased by 24.3%.

[Services provided by temporary shelters:](#)

A total of 3,041 people have used the services of 37 temporary shelters operating nationwide.

[Prevalence of violence against women:](#)

57.9% of women aged 15-49 who have had a partner have experienced some form of violence in their lifetime.

31.2% have experienced physical or sexual violence by an intimate partner at least once.

### b) Key forms of violence :

In Mongolia, the main forms of violence are multifaceted, similar to other countries, but there are unique characteristics influenced by Mongolia's social context and conditions. These include:

**Domestic violence:** Women are often subjected to physical violence by family members (spouses, children, relatives). In Mongolia, 70-80% of domestic violence cases involve women as victims.

**Psychological violence:** Includes insults, threats, intimidation, and harassment or bullying through social media.

**Sexual violence:** Includes rape, sexual assault, attempted sexual violence, and sexual exploitation of girls.

**Economic violence:** Involves making women economically dependent, restricting their ability to work or earn money, and controlling their personal finances.

**Relational violence:** Involves restricting women's relationships, isolating them from family and friends, and controlling or threatening them through phones, the internet, or violating their privacy.

**Violence against girls:** Includes physical violence such as beating or hitting girls, as well as sexual violence.

**Social violence:** Involves excluding women from certain social sectors or limiting them to specific social roles.

### c) Existing & recent government action measures:

The **Law on Combating Domestic Violence**, enacted in 2016, defines domestic violence and aims to prevent it, protect victims, and hold perpetrators accountable. Under this law, measures are taken to protect victims, provide support services, and punish offenders.

The **Law on Offenses**, adopted on May 11, 2017, and effective from July 1, 2017, includes provisions related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, and other forms of violence against women.



**The National Program on Reducing Violence** is being implemented. This program aims to prevent violence, protect victims, provide assistance, and raise public awareness and knowledge about violence.

**The Program to Support Women's Employment** aims to reduce women's economic dependency and ensure income equality.

Support centers for victims of violence, particularly women and girls, have been established and expanded. These centers provide legal assistance, psychological support, health services, and work to raise public awareness about violence. They collaborate with international organizations and NGOs to conduct training, seminars, and campaigns.

Public awareness campaigns are being carried out through media to promote the protection of women's and girls' rights.

Mongolia is collaborating with UN agencies and international development organizations to protect the rights of women and girls and reduce violence, receiving support and investments from these entities.

Mobile applications and online support systems have been introduced to help victims of violence seek assistance and access information.

Efforts are being made to support social movements and activism, ensuring their voices are reflected in laws and policies.

Anti-violence training is being introduced in schools and universities to develop young students' understanding and knowledge about combating violence from an early age.

## 6. Soroptimist Engagement [100 – 500 words]

Engagement at government, NGO and community level:

Soroptimist International actively participates in global efforts to support women's rights, working to promote women's education, social protection, and gender equality.

### Activities to Protect Women's Rights:

Participates in public campaigns against violence and advocates for women's rights.

Engages in the **16 Days of Activism** campaign.

Implements the "**Khurekhui**" **Project**, which aims to empower girls to protect themselves from sexual violence by providing knowledge and skills. The project targets children in grades 1-2, with plans to expand it to preschool-aged children.

Operates the "**Shüüder**" **Girls' Center**, which provides psychological and reproductive health services to adolescent girls, offers counseling, and connects them with necessary resources.

### Supporting Women's Employment:

**Expanding Employment Opportunities:** Clubs work to support women's employment and improve their quality of life.

Organizes training programs for handicrafts and product development to increase household income.

#### a) Collaboration with Government and International Organizations

Mongolia's Soroptimist clubs collaborate with local government agencies and international organizations to expand their efforts in protecting women's rights.



Collaboration with Government Agencies: Works with local governments to secure funding and resolve issues related to the spaces for their activities.

**International Cooperation:** Soroptimist clubs maintain partnerships with Soroptimist International, receive funding and support, and participate in international conferences to share and learn from experiences.

## SECTION II – NP BIENNIUM PLANS


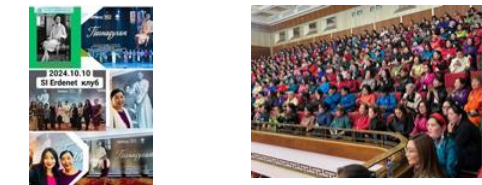
### National President's plan to:

- a) Strengthen Soroptimist clubs:
- b) Promote key events on equality and women's rights:
- c) Improve and increase membership:


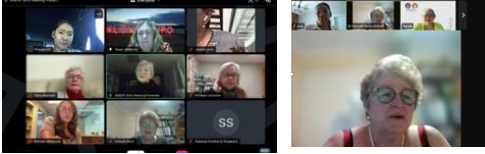


Activity Area	Planned Activity	Timeline
Develop and strengthen Programme and advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize joint training and events with professional organizations and individuals.</li> <li>• Implement collaborative projects with clubs.</li> </ul>	2024-2026
Empower membership through strengthening diversity, capacity and effectiveness to deliver the Soroptimist Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate and support club members' participation.</li> <li>• Promote club activities to the public and increase membership.</li> <li>• Organize events for the 25th anniversary of the Ulaanbaatar club and the 20th anniversary of the Darkhan club.</li> </ul>	2024-2026  August 2025
Raise awareness and understanding of programme work in the broader community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize the 16 Days of Activism campaign.</li> <li>• Organize events for International Women's Day (March 8).</li> <li>• Organize events for International Day of the Girl Child</li> <li>• Conduct training on gender equality and women's rights.</li> </ul>	November-December 2024,2025 March 8, 2025 October 11, 2024,2025 2024-2026
Enhance Structure, Strategic Leadership and Financial resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize capacity-building training and events for members.</li> <li>• Participate in international conferences and events.</li> </ul>	2024-2026



Activity Area	Planned Activity	Timeline
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Receive training from professional organizations and individuals on fundraising and financial management.</li> </ul>	

NP's planned activities	Extent achieved	State reason, if not achieved	Budget / Actual expense
<p><b>Strengthening Clubs</b></p>	<p>Regularized club meetings, organized visits, and mutual support meetings.</p> 	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>2391 /AUD/</p>
	<p>Began preparations for the 25th anniversary of the Ulaanbaatar club and the 20th anniversary of the Darkhan club, involving 4 clubs.</p> 	<p>Implementing</p>	<p>-</p>
	<p>SI Darkhan club held an online meeting with partner clubs.</p> 	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>
	<p>Participated in the 100th anniversary of Mongolian Women's Organizations.</p> 	<p>Implemented</p>	<p>444 /AUD/</p>
<p>Ulaanbaatar club president R. Enkhtuul and member G. Chimgee</p>	<p>-</p>	<p>-</p>	




	<p>participated in a "Safe Choices" training.</p> 		
	<p>Participated in the online meeting of national presidents.</p> 		
<p><b>Promoting Women's Rights</b></p>	<p>SI Ulaanbaatar club and SI Erdenet club participated in a human rights rally during the 16 Days of Activism campaign.</p> 		<p>-</p>
	<p>Conducted public awareness campaigns during the 16 Days of Activism.</p> 		<p>208 /AUD/</p>



	<p>The "Shuuder" Girls' Center, supported by SI Erdenet club, launched the "Aga Egee" project in collaboration with the U.S. Peace Corps.</p>		<p>1120 /AUD/</p>
	<p>SISEAP 2024 "Your voice our future" conference 3May – 5 May , 2024</p>		<p>At personal expense</p>
	<p>SI Ulaanbaatar club provided material assistance to the National Center Against Violence.</p>		<p>2391 /AUD/</p>
<p><b>Increasing Membership</b></p>	<p>SI Amgalan club provided free training and information to students and youth.</p>		<p>-</p>



	<p>Conducted awareness campaigns through public media and social networks.</p> 		-
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**SECTION III - CHALLENGES AND ISSUES OF NP WORK**

**A. What are the key challenges?**

(Your answer may include any / a combination of the following factors)

i) Time Management:

All members are employed, making it difficult to branch out and work in multiple locations.

In Ulaanbaatar, traffic congestion causes time-related issues.

Depending on members' work and location (urban or rural), 50-80% of members are able to meet.

ii) Financial constraints:

Projects and programs are implemented using their own funding, leading to financial shortages.

While some funding is secured by introducing the club in local areas, there is a lack of funding specifically for members, resulting in members leaving the club and limited opportunities for member capacity building.

Training and support are needed on how to generate external funding.

iii) Knowledge and skills in NP work:

In the current information age, this issue is not a major challenge.

Members struggle to collaborate with professional organizations to access accurate knowledge and information.

iv) Support from Federation or country:

Although there are laws to protect women and girls, the economic capacity is weak, leading to poor implementation and support from government agencies, as well as weak collaboration between NGOs.

Limited opportunities to exchange experiences with international members.

v) Stagnant or falling membership:

The national economic situation and unfair governance have an impact.

The scope of the club's activities is limited.

Before recruiting new members, it is crucial to clearly communicate the club's values and goals, and after joining, actively support their involvement to maintain consistent and active participation.

vi) Others, if any

- Cultural and Social Issues:



- Negative societal attitudes, criticism, and distrust create difficulties.
  - The poor living standards of most citizens, along with high levels of stress and frustration, have a negative impact.
  - National Policies and Political Environment:
    - Political policies are flawed, unfair, and prone to corruption.
    - Although there are numerous laws and conventions, their actual implementation and monitoring are weak.
    - The government centralizes too much power and finances, and the system for outsourcing tasks to NGOs and funding them is insufficient.
  - Technological Limitations: There are no technological limitations.
- B. Solutions undertaken / planned
- Offer flexible work schedules for women.
  - Provide technological support to remote areas.
  - Develop special financial programs for women, including small loans and grants.
  - Organize online training sessions and webinars, and establish an information database.
  - Strengthen the implementation and enforcement of laws protecting the rights of women and girls.
  - Improve collaboration between government and non-governmental organizations to implement joint projects.
  - Learn from successful international experiences and cooperate with global organizations.
  - Expand the scope of club activities and attract new members.
  - Clearly explain the club's values and goals to new members and encourage participation.
  - Provide incentives and rewards for active members.
  - Establish a system to fund and support the activities of non-governmental organizations.
  - Utilize online platforms to deliver information and training.
- C. Recommendations and Activism
- i) Key recommendations that a NP can make:
- a) Suggestions:
- Provide financial support from the association for large-scale projects and programs.  
 Allocate some funding from the association to activate and develop club members.  
 Effectively promote and market the association's activities on an international level.
- ii) Who can the NP consult before sharing recommendations:
- Club leaders and members.
  - Other collaborating organizations.
- iii) Participation in key national consultations:



- Key decision-making forums related to women's rights, gender equality, and social development.
- Local and international network events on gender equality and women's rights.
- National campaigns on violence, wages, and reproductive rights.
- UN and other international forums.