

Brisbane Water

Second Quarter - 2026 Newsletter



A Message from Our President

I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the wonderful achievements of our club over the past 3 months. Our Endometriosis High Tea was a tremendous success and showed what can be achieved when we work together. From planning and promotion to catering, set-up and clean-up, our members helped make the day both enjoyable and informative. The positive feedback received is a credit to the teamwork and dedication of our club. With the generous grant from Bendigo Bank and the financial success of the event, we have achieved our goals of supporting the CCCWHC and the women suffering from Endometriosis on the Central Coast.

I would also like to thank those members who volunteered as marshals at the Bay to Bay Fun Run. It was especially pleasing to see three of our newer members joining the team and enthusiastically supporting this community event. SI Brisbane Water continues to punch above its weight at SISEAP. We are fortunate to have Pauline, Rhonda and Jill serving in important Federation leadership roles, representing not only our club but also contributing their skills and experience to the wider Soroptimist movement. Thank you all for your commitment and enthusiasm. I am proud to be part of such a supportive and hardworking club. Therese Breen

President, Soroptimist International Brisbane Water



June Report

SIBW congratulates Theresa Lyford who was appointed in April as the President-Elect of Soroptimist International and who will serve as President for the 2028–2029 biennium. Theresa is a familiar and trusted face in our organisation, having served as Federation President of Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific (2016–2018) and currently serving as SISEAP Company Secretary.



SIBW'S LATEST ADVOCACY FOCUS

SIBW is supporting Abigail Boyd, NSW Member of Parliament, in her advocacy by writing to the NSW Health Minister regarding the petition addressing the lack of access to tampons and underwear for women patients in NSW public hospitals. Abigail is calling on the NSW Health Minister to fund the installation of accessible vending machines that dispense free underwear, sanitary pads and tampons in every NSW public hospital. These vending machines would provide immediate, dignified and trauma-informed access to clean, new underwear for women whose clothing has been removed during medical treatment or forensic examinations. This is particularly important for victim-survivors of sexual violence. They would also ensure reliable access to essential menstrual products for patients whenever they are needed. The machines could be installed in accessible locations such as hospital bathrooms or wards, allowing women to obtain these essential items discreetly and independently. This initiative would also reduce the burden on frontline healthcare workers, who are already doing their best within an overstretched public health system.

By supporting this petition, SIBW is advocating for a practical, compassionate solution that will improve the dignity, comfort and wellbeing of women receiving care in NSW public hospitals.

SISEAP 2026 Conference Kota Kinabalu Sabah Borneo 1 - 3 May



SISEAP's 13 member countries

Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Mongolia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Samoa, Singapore, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar



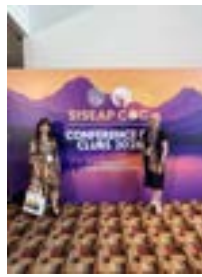
SIBW's 6 member delegation who attended the conference: Dixie, Carole, Pauline, Jill, Cheryl and Rhonda.



Rhonda is continuing in her role as SISEAP Assistant Convenor 1 on Programme Team. She had the pleasure of announcing Best Practice Awards for Environmental Sustainability.



SIBW's Pauline - elected SISEAP Programme Convenor 2026-2028 announces winners of Economic Empowerment Best Practice Awards.



Congratulations to Jill who was appointed as a SISEAP Membership Trainer at the conference.



Minister for Women Malaysia leaves the podium after addressing guests and striking the gong 3 times to declare the Conference open.



Australian Conference Attendees

Left - SI Australia Contingent

Middle - The SINSW contingent

Right - Our SIBW members waiting to attend the Gala Dinner

SISEAP Plant a Mangrove Sapling Campaign



SIBW sponsored the SISEAP's Mangrove Planting Project by donating a mangrove sapling that was planted by our members on day 3 at the SISEAP Conference. Mangroves were chosen as a Climate Action focus as they capture carbon, buffer storms, rebuild habitats, and secure livelihoods. For SISEAP communities battling erosion and rising seas, each sapling planted means stronger villages, engaged women and youth, and healthier ecosystems for the future. Empowered communities are resilient communities. On the final day of the Conference of Clubs in Kota Kinabalu, certificates were presented to clubs that donated towards the mangrove planting project.



Central Coast International Women's Day Committee (CCIWDC)

Our club is playing an integral part in the planning for the 2027 WOW Festival being held on the Central Coast. At the Central Coast Think-Ins and stakeholder meetings (both in person and online), community members identified a broad range of interconnected issues they would like explored through future WOW events and festivals. A strong focus was placed on women's safety, gender-based violence and the systemic inequalities affecting women, including domestic, sexual, financial and psychological abuse, coercive control, the gender pay gap, housing insecurity and homelessness among older women. Participants highlighted the financial vulnerability and social invisibility of many older women, particularly those who are widowed, divorced, affected by domestic violence, have limited superannuation or caring responsibilities. There was also strong support for practical sessions on financial literacy, business development, alternative loan schemes and other initiatives that strengthen women's economic independence. The community also called for programs that reflect the diversity of women's experiences across all stages of life. Priority topics included body image, social media, consent, postpartum care, perimenopause and menopause, invisible disabilities, neurodivergence, and the experiences of women with disability. Participants expressed interest in intergenerational discussions, local stories and presentations by people with lived experience, alongside topics such as women in STEM, sport, AI and technology, environmental science, disaster preparedness, Aboriginal culture and Country, and the role of arts and creativity in building community. A recurring theme was the importance of fostering more collaborative, supportive and inclusive communities by reducing competition and workplace conflict, while encouraging men and boys to become active allies in advancing gender equality. Additionally, our club has offered to organise and coordinate the Schools' Day for next year's WOW Festival. Our member Jill Godwin will be working with a SIBW committee to plan the school day.

SIBW Endometriosis Project



Above: Staff, community members and local politicians at the opening of the CCCWHC Endometriosis Clinic

Our club is proud to support and help raise the profile of the Central Coast Endometriosis and Pelvic Pain Clinic, which officially opened on April 13. Based at the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre, the clinic brings together a multidisciplinary team to provide dedicated care for women and girls living with endometriosis and pelvic pain. This SIBW project correlates to the Soroptimist International Australia's National ENDO Project and directly supports UN Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing and focuses on;

- Community education & awareness: We're hosting a High Tea event to share information about endometriosis and connect locals with available services.
- Better understanding, earlier action: Educational materials will help people recognise symptoms sooner and feel confident seeking help.
- Removing financial barriers: Thanks to a Bendigo Bank Grant, SIBW can fund specialist diagnostic ultrasounds for women who otherwise couldn't afford them – helping with earlier diagnosis and better outcomes.

Listen to Women's Pain - Endometriosis Matters
is a Soroptimist International NSW Region Campaign (2020-2028)
calling for greater understanding of women's pain
through awareness, education and advocacy.

Led by President Jacqui McLaughlin and the NSW Region Council Team,
the campaign brings together Soroptimist clubs across NSW & Vic ACT
to amplify women's voices and work toward
earlier recognition, better and better outcomes.

When women's pain is heard, understanding grows.



The SIBW Endometriosis High Tea, held on Saturday 30 May at the Uniting Church, Gosford, was a wonderful success, bringing together 100 guests for a day of awareness, education and fundraising.

Guests heard an informative presentation from Glen Pearce on the latest endometriosis research, as well as inspiring personal stories from Imogen and Kylie, who shared their lived experiences of the disease. Attendees also learned about the hope the newly established Endometriosis Centre at the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre will bring to local women living with this debilitating condition. We acknowledge and appreciate the generous community grant we received from the local Central Coast Bendigo Bank Group to help fund this project. All funds raised from the event will support women on the Central Coast affected by endometriosis.



April, May and June Business Meetings



At our April Business Meeting, we welcomed local lawyer Jacqui Bilson from Bilson Law, who shared valuable insights on estate planning. Key topics included identifying your beneficiaries, appointing decision-makers, and understanding the impact of taxes and debts on your estate.

We are delighted to welcome Ingrid Hendriks to our Soroptimist family! Ingrid joins us from a fellow S.I. club in Melbourne, bringing a wealth of experience and expertise that we're excited to tap into. We're looking forward to seeing the valuable contributions she'll make and sharing in her passion for our mission..



Dates for 2026 Region Meetings

23 May	Go To Meeting
15 Aug	Canberra
14 Nov	Northern Beaches



Dates for Diary

19 September Trivia Night at the Lions Club Hall in East Gosford.

Theatre Outings Planned

Several of our members and their friends will be attending the the Theatre Party play 'Waitress' at Lyric Theatre on 21 Oct 26. Additionally members are invited to attend the musical 'Neil Diamond - Beautiful Noise' on Wednesday 2 December 26 at the Lyric Theatre Cost \$110. Please let Lorraine know if you are interested in attending.



NSW Region Meeting

The NSW Region GoTo meeting on 23 May was attended by our delegate Joy Croake. Several other members attended as silent observers. Our new President Jacqui McLachlan presided over the meeting. Cheryl Amey presented the Treasurer's report with Terry Maunsell noting that a key agenda item for the incoming meeting will be the proposed removal of the overseas travel insurance component from the national policy, adding that most members attending the Soroptimist's International Convention in Prague next year plan to extend their trips for personal holidays, which falls outside the scope of the SI Australia insurance coverage. All members are invited to attend the International Convention in Prague.

SI Australia AGM, General Meeting and Special General Meetings were also held on 13 June via GoTo. They were livestreamed via Facebook.

Our Projects

The Aspire Program

Educate, Empower, Enable

Four more schools have received Aspire funding in Term 2, with the potential to reach a further 150 students. While Gosford High School, Wadalba Community School and Kincumber High School have been with the Aspire family since its beginning in 2022, we are very happy to welcome Erina High School this term. Abby Douglass, Student Support Officer at Kincumber High School (and a member of our club) writes: "The Aspire Program was introduced to me at an SSO network meeting in 2022 and since that day, I've been running the program at my school with a variety of different students. It's been a massive success, partly due to the ongoing support of Brisbane Water Soroptimists as they provide funding to allow me to buy appropriate resources to make the program run effectively and that my school budget doesn't stretch to."



As the Aspire Program continues to evolve our members Jill Godwin and Abby Douglass are keen to add an extra session to the Aspire Program on Financial Literacy to ensure the female students who participate continue to develop valuable life skills. Congratulations also to Abby and husband Kurt on the arrival of their first baby Jack. Both mum and baby are doing well.

ANZAC Day 2026 at Terrigal Beach

Three of our members – Carol, Bronwyn and Pauline – attended the ANZAC Day service at Terrigal, where they laid a wreath in remembrance. We honour those who returned forever changed by war, and those who never came home. May our act of remembrance inspire a commitment to building a world where future generations are never asked to make such a sacrifice.



Winter Warmers



When the weather cools down, we begin our Winter Warmers Project, with some members knitting beanies and scarves and others clearing their cupboards of warm items no longer needed. These are collected each meeting and delivered to Wyoming Community Centre for distribution to those in need.

BAY TO BAY RUN VOLUNTEERING

On Sunday 14 June seven members from our club were back again this year volunteering as marshalls at the Bay to Bay Fun Run in Gosford.



The Glen for Women

The Glen
For Women



Lynne, Noanie, Kerry and Cheryl visited the Glen on Friday 22 May. The residents were all new to the Glen since our last visit, so Auntie Ang introduced and welcomed us. We were lucky enough to have an Elder, and her daughter facilitate an activity which proved to be very educational. They told us all about the different types of oil that can be collected from a deceased emu or goanna. The oil is used in Aboriginal cultural for making skin cream and has healing properties for many skin conditions. The liquid oil is infused with native flowers and leaves and heated to extract the aroma and healing properties. The women at the Glen combined many of these ingredients and at the end of the session we all received a pot of skin cream to take home. We then moved inside to have the morning tea. All the women really appreciated the range of food provided by our members and warmly thanked us for coming and sharing the food with them.

Personal Care Packs

Our Soroptimists were busy again in June packing another 60 Personal Care Packs to be delivered to the Mental Health Unit at Gosford Hospital. Often patients arrived unprepared and these packs provide the essentials to help restore dignity.



Other Initiatives

Domestic and Family Violence

Orange Our World Initiative

Thank you to all the members who continue to meet each month to mark SIBW's Orange the World initiative. A great time and a delicious brunch was enjoyed by our members at Aroma's on the beach at Terrigal in June . Our next Orange The World Morning Tea will be held on 25 July.

Right: A group of graffiti artists (all young women) painted orange murals in Zone 18 in Guatemala City in support of UN Women and the UNiTE campaign to End Violence against Women. Photo: UN Women/Carlos Rivera



Social Events

On the 19 May Dixie, Rhonda and Jill travelled down to Castle Hill at the invitation of SI The Hills to meet with Anitha, a visiting Soroptimist from SI Madurai in India. It's always great to catch up when Anitha is in Australia.



VISITING OTHER CLUBS WORLDWIDE

During our president Therese's recent holiday in the United Kingdom, she met up with some of our Soroptimist sisters in Cheltenham and Edinburgh - a great opportunity to share ideas and create valuable friendship links.

