

The Hon Amanda Rishworth MP

Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

8 June 2025

Dear Minister Rishworth,

Congratulations on your re-election and new portfolio responsibilities

On behalf of Zonta Australia, I extend our sincere congratulations on your re-election to the House of Representatives and your appointment as Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. Your strong track record in social policy, women's leadership and equity makes you well placed to lead national progress in ensuring workplaces are fair, inclusive and future-ready.

Zonta Australia is part of **Zonta International**, a global non-partisan organisation working to build a better world for women and girls through service and advocacy. With over 100 clubs across regional, remote and urban Australia, our members actively support initiatives that promote gender equity in leadership, economic participation, education and the workplace.

A cornerstone of our efforts is empowering young women to enter and thrive in public life, business, science and technology. We are proud to deliver and promote in Australia, several Zonta International programs that contribute directly to employment and leadership equity:

- The **Zonta Young Women in Leadership Award**, recognising young women aged 16–19 who demonstrate a commitment to civic and community leadership.
- The **Zonta Women in Business Leadership Award**, supporting women aged 18–35 with demonstrated leadership, entrepreneurial vision and a commitment to solving local and global issues.
- The **Zonta Women in STEM Scholarship**, encouraging young women to pursue and remain in STEM careers—fields where women are still significantly underrepresented.
- The **Amelia Earhart Fellowship**, supporting doctoral candidates in aerospace engineering and space sciences, where women's participation remains critically low.

These programs not only celebrate the potential of young women, but also help address systemic barriers to workforce participation, career progression and leadership. They are closely aligned with national efforts to close the gender pay gap, ensure safer workplaces and build pipelines for women's leadership across sectors.

We believe strongly that true economic security for women cannot be achieved without gender equity and the elimination of violence against women. Economic participation and safety are inextricably linked: violence limits access to employment, undermines long-term financial stability and perpetuates cycles of disadvantage.

Embedding prevention and response measures into workplace policy, care systems and community supports is vital to achieving full economic inclusion for all women. Zonta Australia's Zonta Says NOW initiative further highlights how climate-related disasters and extreme events deepen existing inequalities and economic insecurity for women - especially in regional and vulnerable communities. Addressing resilience and recovery through a gender lens is essential for inclusive economic recovery.

As Australia continues to invest in gender-responsive employment and leadership reform, including in preparation for major global events such as COP31, we see a significant opportunity to integrate equity into the climate, skills and workforce transition agenda.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or your office to share insights from our awards programs, advocacy and community partnerships and to explore how Zonta Australia can support your policy reform agenda for a more inclusive workforce.

Once again, congratulations - and thank you for your continued leadership in promoting economic opportunity, dignity and equality for Australian women.

Bridget Mather PSM
Chair Zonta Australia Committee
E: admin@zontaaustralia.org.au
M: +61 418 710 643
www.zontaaustralia.org.au