



**BUILD A BETTER WORLD  
FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Senator The Honourable Penny Wong  
Minister for Foreign Affairs  
Level 4  
19 Gouger Street  
Adelaide, SA  
[senator.wong@aph.gov.au](mailto:senator.wong@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator Wong

### **Rights for women and girls in Afghanistan**

I am writing to you to provide the full support of Zonta Australia to the recently announced *Action against Afghanistan over violations of human rights of women and girls* that you announced on 26 September 2024 to take unprecedented action to hold Afghanistan to account under international law for the Taliban's treatment of women and girls.

Zonta Australia stands united with the governments of Australia, Germany, Canada and the Netherlands in this action which aligns with the objectives of [Zonta International](#), a leading global organisation of individuals working together to build a better world for women and girls. Zonta International envisions a world in which women's rights are recognised as human rights and every woman is able to achieve her full potential.

Zonta Australia provides a unified voice for Zonta International and Zonta clubs in Australia on issues of national importance as they impact women and girls. We are a new group, established in June 2024, to represent three Zonta Districts in Australia with more than 2000 members in more than 100 clubs.

Zonta International has fought for gender equality for more than a century, and much of our efforts have focused on ensuring women's full and equal participation in society and securing equal opportunities for girls to pursue an education and realize their full potential.

It is now three years since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan and since then the rights of women and girls have been severely eroded and all indications are that this trend will continue. Zonta International was quick to speak out to support women and girls in Afghanistan publishing its [position](#) on the situation in Afghanistan and our support over many years. A complete list of Zonta's position statements can be found on the [Zonta International](#) web site.

Zonta International has a history of working with partners to support Afghan women and girls for over 20 years. From these partnerships in Afghanistan and from the work with partners in many other parts of the world, Zonta understands and values the importance of girls' education to achieving gender



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equality. It is a fundamental human right that can help eliminate child marriage and we do this through our support of the UNPFA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage.

This is why we fully support the *Action against Afghanistan over violations of human rights of women and girls* and share concerns that Afghan women have had imposed limitations that prohibit them from being actors in their own decision-making, which is a fundamental human right. We continue to work through Zonta International's General Consultative Status at the United Nations to continue to advocate ensuring that women and girls in Afghanistan and elsewhere are able to participate fully in their societies and that girls have access to a quality education and can pursue that education without fear for their safety.

Zonta Australia is very cognisant that amplified voices are only one part, and that action is also needed. We are forging partnerships with like-minded organisations such as UN Women as we step our efforts to be a strong national voice for women's rights, access to education and the end to child marriage. Once again, I want to reiterate our strong support for this action against Afghanistan and to extend to you our full commitment to protecting the rights of women and girls.

Warm regards

Bridget

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Chair: Zonta Australia Committee

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