



## Orange the Range: Blackall Range Communities Unite Against Violence Towards Women

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**Blackall Range communities are being called upon to paint the towns orange during the international 16 Days of Activism campaign, running from 25 November to 10 December, as local advocacy groups intensify efforts to end violence against women.**

The Zonta Club of Blackall Range, in partnership with Speak Up Now – Stop Domestic and Family Violence, is leading the “Orange the Range” campaign across Maleny, Mapleton, Montville, Palmwoods and Kenilworth, bringing global attention to a crisis that claims women’s lives at an alarming rate.

The campaign launches on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and concludes on World Human Rights Day, 10 December. Orange, the official United Nations colour for the campaign, symbolises hope for a brighter, violence-free future.



### A Crisis Both Global and Local

The statistics paint a sobering picture. Globally, a woman is killed by an intimate partner or family member every ten minutes. In Australia, the rate stands at one woman every eight days, with 2024 proving particularly devastating, 101 Australian women were killed by violence during the year.

Two in five Australian women have experienced violence since the age of 15, whilst one in five has experienced sexual violence. Men also experience partner violence, with one in six having experienced physical or sexual violence by a current or former partner since the age of 15. The violence transcends all socioeconomic backgrounds, ages and communities.

Recent research has revealed the extent of the problem from another perspective. More than one in three men in Australia reported using violence with an intimate partner, according to a longitudinal study by Australia’s Institute of Family Studies, a figure that has risen from one in four a decade ago.

Whilst progress has been made over recent decades, there has been a significant decrease in the number of women murdered each year over the past three decades, the crisis demands continued vigilance and action.

In 2023, there was a 28% increase in the number of women killed by their partners in Australia, though 2024-25 figures suggest this rise may have been partially reversed. The toll remains unacceptably high, with victims coming from all walks of life.

## What Locals Will See Across the Range

Throughout the 16 days, residents will notice distinctive campaign elements across the Blackall Range. Information stations at the iconic red benches in each township, Maleny, Mapleton, Montville, Palmwoods and Kenilworth, will provide emergency contact numbers and support resources.

Campaign materials, including posters displaying the hashtag #SafeEverywhereAlways, will appear in shop windows, community centres and public spaces. Residents are encouraged to download resources from the Zonta Club of Blackall Range Facebook page for display in business windows, staff kitchens and anywhere visibility can create impact.

The campaign seeks broad community participation. Residents can wear orange, change their digital profile pictures to orange, display awareness posters, and most importantly, have open conversations about safety, respect and equality.



Image:©Zonta Club of Blackall Range



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## Local Partnership: Speak Up Now

Speak Up Now, a collaboration of local service and community groups in the Maleny and Hinterland area founded by local advocate Val France, has been instrumental in raising awareness across the Blackall Range. Speakers at community forums have emphasised that the Sunshine Coast hinterland is not immune to domestic and family violence, which occurs in all levels of society and from all walks of life.

The group has implemented practical initiatives including placing signage with men's support phone numbers in men's toilets across the Range and partnering with local hairdressers, beauticians and massage therapists through the "Hairdressers with Hearts" programme to recognise signs of domestic violence.

Val France, described as a former president of Quota, lawyer and passionate advocate for women's rights, has been one of the founders and driving forces behind Speak Up Now. The organisation has welcomed recent Queensland legislation on coercive control, calling it a vital step in recognising non-physical abuse and empowering victims.

## Zonta's Global and Local Mission

The Zonta Club of Blackall Range has proudly supported gender equality initiatives for nearly 30 years through both local and global projects. Part of Zonta International, a leading global organisation founded in 1919 with over 26,000 members across 64 countries, the local club works to advance women's status through service and advocacy.



All 103 Zonta clubs across Australia are participating in the 2025 campaign, backed by national advocacy efforts on policy, legal change and public commitment. Zonta International partners with UNICEF and UNFPA to accelerate gender equality and support projects including ending child marriage and empowering girls with life skills.

Margy Henderson, returning as club president following the recent changeover dinner at Flaxton Gardens, has reflected on the club's achievements and acknowledged the dedication and teamwork of members in advancing the organisation's mission.

The club raises funds through events such as Valentine's trivia nights, monthly plant stalls and the annual Zonta Hinterland Business Directory. These efforts support local Sunshine Coast services focused on addressing women's safety, access to education and housing, and preventing domestic and family violence.

## The Origins and Symbolism of 16 Days

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence was started by activists at the inauguration of the Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and has since become a global movement. The dates were deliberately chosen to link the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women with World Human Rights Day, emphasising that women's rights are human rights.

Orange was selected as the campaign colour to represent a brighter future free from violence. The colour also links to UN Sustainable Development Goal 5, which aims to achieve gender equality. Each UN Sustainable Development Goal has its own distinct colour to help visually differentiate and unify advocacy efforts worldwide.

During the campaign period, Zonta clubs across Australia display large banners in prominent positions, light infrastructure orange, place "Orange women" (plywood cutouts) with safety information in locations like businesses and libraries, hold functions with guest speakers, seek publicity in local media, and conduct social media campaigns.

## Understanding the Impact

Violence against women manifests in many forms: physical violence, sexual violence, coercive control, emotional abuse, economic abuse, stalking, workplace sexual harassment and online harassment. Women are more likely to experience violence from someone they know than by a stranger.

The impacts extend far beyond immediate physical harm. Women who have experienced violence are more likely to experience multiple incidents, and the effects can last generations. Research shows links between intimate partner violence and men's mental health challenges, with men with moderate or severe depressive symptoms 62 times more likely to use intimate partner violence.

## How to Get Involved

Community members can participate by:

- Wearing orange during the 16 days
- Sharing campaign materials on social media using #SafeEverywhereAlways
- Displaying awareness posters in homes, workplaces and businesses
- Having open discussions about preventing gender-based violence
- Downloading resources from the Zonta Blackall Range Facebook page
- Attending local events and forums

Businesses and organisations are encouraged to embrace the campaign by decorating windows, encouraging staff to wear orange, and creating spaces for conversations about safety and respect.

## Getting Help and Support

Domestic and family violence affects people of all genders. If you or someone you know, whether woman, man or child, is experiencing violence from a partner or family member, support services are available 24/7:

- **1800RESPECT:** 1800 737 732 (also available via text: 0458 737 732, online chat and video call at [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au))
- **MensLine Australia:** 1300 78 99 78 (24/7 telephone and online support and information service for men)
- **13YARN** (for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people): 13 92 76
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800
- **Lifeline Australia:** 13 11 14
- **In emergencies, call 000**

For campaign information and community involvement, contact Eva-Marie Seeto at [pr@zontablackallrange.org.au](mailto:pr@zontablackallrange.org.au) or visit the Zonta Club of Blackall Range Facebook page.

## A Community Responsibility

The campaign's central message is clear: gender-based violence is not inevitable, not acceptable, and can be prevented through collective action and awareness. Every individual has a responsibility to create safe environments and challenge attitudes that enable violence.

As the Zonta vision states: a world where women's rights are recognised as human rights and no woman lives in fear of violence. Through 16 days of activism and sustained community commitment, the Blackall Range is taking tangible steps towards that vision, one orange shirt, one conversation, one life saved at a time.

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