

Women's Climate Congress

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Women's Climate Congress applauds cross-party solidarity shown by Victorian women MPs

The Women's Climate Congress (WCC) was pleased to read that Liberal MP for Flinders, Zoe McKenzie, reached out to Jodie Belyea, the new ALP member for Dunkley, to congratulate her on her election, remark on her strong record of supporting women in the area, and foreshadow a working relationship together. This is exactly the sort of cross-party collaboration that can bring better governance for the common good in these very challenging times, especially among women.

It was therefore very distressing to later read that Ms McKenzie was attacked by members of her party for her action. We call out in the strongest terms the militaristic and bullying vocabulary used by Ms McKenzie's critics suggesting that her action was naïve and unforgivable because the next election will necessarily bring a 'war' between candidates.

"Representing the people of Dunkley is not about going to war," declared Dr Janet Salisbury, Founder of WCC. "We are facing huge challenges in our modern world, including ongoing violence against women, inequalities in all aspects of their lives, and the disproportionately greater impact on women of climate and other disasters. We need politicians who promote collaboration for the good of each and every community."

"Voters are calling for their elected representatives to work together," said Dr Salisbury. "We are tired of the mindset that politics is about getting and keeping power for individuals who think that 'the greater good' can be served by gender, class and race wars that pit the needs and hopes of the citizens in every electorate against those of others of a different political hue.

"Here are two women on opposite sides of the political table who, without in any way giving up their own political affiliations, can share knowledge and hope, build a consensus about what their area most needs, and work together to achieve it."

One of the inspirations at the heart of WCC is the Women's International Congress of 1915, in which a group of 1300 women from belligerent and neutral countries, weary of "a reckless sacrifice of human life and the destruction of so much that humanity has laboured through centuries to build up", gathered at The Hague to call for peace. In an echo of the present outcry against the Member for Flinders, the male leaders at the time called them 'those dangerous women'. It seems that little has changed.

Given the complex and long-standing inequities suffered by women across the country and the world, the WCC has consistently called on women in parliaments at all levels to recognise their capacity to build on areas of shared interest to create change. When a woman makes a stand she deserves support for her courage and ability to see the big picture and not vilification for her action.

We at WCC congratulate Ms McKenzie and Ms Belyea, and look forward to the development of policies that benefit all voters in the Mornington Peninsula, and the spread of collaboration across party lines in electorates across the country.

About the Women's Climate Congress

The Women's Climate Congress (WCC) is an Australian not-for-profit organisation established to promote strong action on climate change, mindful of future generations and the natural world. We focus on women's leadership and priorities, deep listening and collaboration across different political, business and community perspectives.

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