

Zonta: empowering women worldwide

BY ROWAN COWLEY

EIGHT years with Zonta's North Sydney branch has opened president Diana Burrell's eyes to the various struggles of women across the globe.

Diana, who was looking for new interests when she joined the organisation, said being part of the group had been a rewarding but eye-opening experience.

Zonta International is a global organisation of professionals who aim to empower women worldwide through service and advocacy.

As the international movement celebrates its 100th anniversary, Diana encourages other women in the north shore area and around Australia to get involved.

"I've formed a lot of friendships and also gained lots of knowledge about a number of women's issues I hadn't really thought about," Diana said.

"For example, domestic abuse is a much more widespread problem than people realise and it cuts across all socio-economic groups."

The North Sydney branch has 12-15 members working on a number of projects to help empower women through both service and advocacy.

The group's key projects include making breast cushions for breast cancer patients



GIRL POWER: Members of Zonta's North Sydney branch making breast care cushions.

in local and rural hospitals, and assembling birthing kits to be dispatched to countries including Africa, Afghanistan and Papua New Guinea.

It is also involved with the Share the Dignity organisation, providing sanitary products for homeless women in Australia, and with Days for Girls, which provides reusable sanitary napkins to help girls in developing nations remain in school.

"The various educational projects Zonta is involved with are very dear to my heart,"

Diana said.

"We're very lucky in this country that everyone gets a good education."

The group will host a movie night fundraiser at the Hayden Orpheum cinema in Cremorne on October 16.

It will feature a screening of Australian filmmaker Rebecca Barry's *I am a Girl*, which explores what it is like to be a girl in the 21st century by following six girls from different parts of the world.

■ zontanorthsydney.org or call 0410-465-303.