ZONTA SAYS NOW
TO GENDER-EQUAL CLIMATE ACTION

Guide to Environmentally Responsible Air Travel

This document is designed to be read onscreen as it contains hyperlinks

Zonta International runs on a two year cycle called a biennium. Each biennium starts and ends at an International Convention where Zontians meet to celebrate the achievements of the previous biennium and prepare for the next one.

Conventions are held in different parts of the world, and in 2024, the Convention will be in Brisbane, Australia.

The Convention in Brisbane marks the end of the 2022-2024 biennium and the start of the 2024-2026 biennium and runs from 27 to 30 June 2024.

For many Zontians, attending the International Convention is one of the highlights of their membership.

At the Convention, members experience the 'Zonta Spirit'. We get to meet and enjoy each others' company, learn more about Zonta's programs and projects, confirm our program for the next biennium, listen to inspiring speakers, celebrate achievements, and discuss challenges and solutions facing women and girls in groups at workshops or individually over a coffee.

Some things are impossible to do online. For example, we need to be in attendance to feel the audience's reaction during a debate, observe the body language of speakers and attendees, and share a look with the person sitting next to us.

Imagine feeling our combined strength as we march shoulder to shoulder through the streets of Brisbane, dressed in orange, all saying NO to violence against women.

If possible, we want to be there—but how can we fly there in an environmentally responsible way?

How to reduce our air travel emissions

Most Zontians will need to fly to Brisbane—so here are some practical tips to reduce our emissions when flying.

- Choose an airline with newer, more fuel-efficient aircraft. Check the atmosfair Index, which shows the airlines that produce the least carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions for specific routes.
- Fly economy class.
- Pack lightly and avoid excess baggage.
- Choose direct flights or flights with fewer stopovers.

Is air travel sustainable?

Not yet. Some airlines are making progress to reduce their carbon emissions through a combination of activities such as:

- Mixing more sustainable aviation fuels, such as biofuels made from refined used cooking oils with jet fuel.
- Upgrading to more fuel-efficient aircraft.
- Improving the efficiency of their operations so that aircraft are not in the air for longer than they need to be.
- Exploring new technologies such as electric and hydrogen-propelled aircraft for use on short routes.

Until a technological breakthrough, we must save emissions in different areas of our lives and put them towards air travel.

For example, we can make savings in our personal 'carbon budget' by living more sustainably. We can:

- Walk, cycle, and use public transport more.
- Reduce our energy use and use renewable energy whenever possible.
- Think twice before we purchase anything so that we consume less and waste less.
- Reduce the number of flights we take by staying longer at the destination and combining business with pleasure.

These actions may not be enough to cover the emissions associated with air travel, so we may also need to consider 'offsetting' our emissions.

How to calculate flight emissions

The International Air Transport Association has developed an emissions calculator called CO2 Connect that logistics companies use to track, reduce, report and offset their carbon footprint.

The general public can use a simplified calculator version to determine how many kilograms of carbon are associated with their flight.

The calculator uses airline data to determine aircraft type, fuel burn, and belly cargo weight on particular routes. Calculations use the time engines are operating rather than the distance travelled. For example, prevailing winds may 'push' an aircraft quickly to a destination, but the return journey takes longer as the aircraft has to fly through headwinds.

The calculator can help us select routes and flights with the fewest emissions and determine approximately how many kilograms of carbon we will need to 'offset'.

How to 'offset' emissions

When we offset our carbon emissions, we finance projects that remove or reduce an equal amount of carbon elsewhere.

We purchase carbon credits from reputable environmental projects that remove the same amount of emissions from the atmosphere that we will use on the flight.

We may choose to select the airline's carbon offset option when we purchase our ticket—but wouldn't it be better if we could offset our emissions and advance gender equality at the same time? Well, we can.

Gold Standard for the Global Goals

The *Gold Standard for the Global Goals* provides certified carbon credits to fund climate protection projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to at least three Sustainable Development Goals.

The World Wildlife Fund developed *Gold Standard* with other international NGOs and received support from many international agencies, including the UNDP and the UNFCCC.

Gold Standard projects empower communities by providing renewable energy, clean water, and improved cookstoves, restoring habitats, and preserving biodiversity.

The first gender-responsive project was recently accredited in Uganda. The *Lango Safe Water Project* provides clean water from boreholes and proactively supports gender equality. Women and girls no longer have to walk to collect water from rivers or collect firewood to boil the water. Thanks to this project, violence associated with water collection is now zero, the local Water Resource Committee membership is almost gender equal, and women have more time to spend on income-generating and leisure activities. The project saves 50,000 tonnes of CO2 annually, provides clean water to 40,000 people, reduces disease, and reduces school absenteeism.

All *Gold Standard* projects include safeguards for human rights, labour rights, child labour, indigenous peoples, water sensitivity and gender sensitivity. Projects are assessed and independently verified before being included in the Gold Standard Marketplace.

Project credits vary in price from USD$12 to USD$52 per tonne. To offset the kilograms of CO2 used on a flight, simply purchase credits to that amount from the *Gold Standard* marketplace.

Summary—How to fly responsibly

1. Combine the Brisbane Convention with a holiday and use the practical tips to select flights with the least carbon emissions.
2. Make savings in your personal 'carbon budget' by living more sustainably.
3. Calculate the kilograms of CO2 required for the air journey using CO2 Connect.
4. Offset the emissions by purchasing credits from a Gold Standard project that contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals.