

## LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN

We are asking ACRATH members and supporters to follow the ACRATH National Office's letter to the PM with a personal letter to Australia's Prime Minister about the stolen wages of the 22 Vanuatu men who were employed on the Seasonal Workers Program in 2014. There is a real possibility of movement on this issue, so an avalanche of letters to the Prime Minister is really important right now. Can you spare 15 to 20 minutes asking the PM to intervene in the disgraceful stolen wages situation of the 22 Vanuatu men? The following points may help you in composing your letter:

- I request an ex-gratia payment totalling \$77,649 be made by the Australian government to the 22 seasonal workers from Vanuatu who were so egregiously exploited in Queensland in 2014.
- I have heard that these men were egregiously exploited under the Seasonal Workers Programme (SWP), part of Australia's aid program to the Pacific administered by the then Department of Employment
- I have heard that the workers have been waiting almost six years since their wages were stolen, and three years since the judgement by an Australian court.
- The government's commitment, as laid out in item number 45 of the National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19, states that the government aims to "Provide trafficked people with the opportunity to access civil and administrative remedies irrespective of their nationality and whether an offender has been convicted.

### Post your letter to

The Hon Scott Morrison MP  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Please email Joseph Dunn at [office@acrath.org.au](mailto:office@acrath.org.au) with any replies

## The Sweet and often Bitter truth about Easter Chocolate

One indisputable truth. Chocolate is delicious. We know this because at Easter Australians spend millions of dollars buying hundreds of kilograms of chocolate to eat and give away.

Another indisputable truth is that the cost of some chocolate is a child's education, and sometimes his or her freedom. That's because much of our chocolate is made using cocoa beans harvested by children, often in the West African region.

### So, as we move into Lent here's a snapshot of chocolate

- Chocolate tastes great. Slavery-free chocolate tastes even better.
- Eat slavery-free chocolate and be assured it has not been produced using the forced labour of children.
- Slavery-free chocolate is chocolate that is certified. Look for chocolate with one of these three logos on it – Fairtrade, UTZ or Rainforest Alliance.



These children are eating Fairtrade chocolate at the launch of the Slavery Free Staffrooms project, details pg. 2



- Australians will purchase over \$200 million in chocolate this Easter. This figure comes from a 2018 report by IBISWorld which said Australia's chocolate spend had risen by \$26 million over the past five years (up to 2018).
- Much of this chocolate is produced using cocoa beans that are NOT certified slavery-free.
- Almost half of all 152 million children victims of child labour are aged 5-11 years, according to a 2017 report by the International Labour Organisation\*. And a great many of these children are in the cocoa industry, picking the cocoa beans used to produce chocolate.
- It's a fair bet that these children will not get to eat any chocolate at Easter.
- The Australian Modern Slavery Act (2018) requires that large companies report about their work to address the risk of slavery in their supply chains. This is a great start, but let's not leave it to the big companies; we can all now ask for slavery-free goods.

## How to change things

- Buy chocolate that is certified slavery-free.
- Tell at least five other people about slavery-free chocolate and encourage them to buy it too. They will discover how delicious it tastes.
- Enjoy making a difference.
- If you are putting together a fundraising chocolate raffle for your school or workplace, make sure it only contains chocolate that is certified slavery-free. Consider giving the profits of your raffle to CARITAS, which works to ensure people are not forced into slavery and forced labour.

## Where to buy your chocolates

There are some slavery-free chocolates available in most large supermarkets. Fairtrade Australia and New Zealand has a comprehensive list of slavery-free certified chocolates. Find it at:

<http://fairtrade.com.au/Fairtrade-Products/Chocolate-cocoa>

Here are just a few other suggestions:

Haighs – might cost a bit more but it's yum

Alter Eco – in some stores and worth the looking

Green and Black's – yes please

ALDI has lots – check out their stores

## Resources

ACRATH has developed notices for your parish, school or workplace bulletin.

These are available on our website.

For more information on Easter chocolate go to: <https://acrath.org.au/take-action/slavery-free-easter/>

Catholic Education Melbourne, ACRATH and the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne have produced a kit to help begin to make your school, hospital or workplace slavery-free. It has lots of valuable information about chocolate and also tea and coffee. Find it at: <https://resourcecem.com/slavery-free-resources/>

\*[https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS\\_574717/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_574717/lang--en/index.htm)

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## Catholic schools lead push to eliminate slavery from their schools

A **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit, launched in Melbourne in February, will help students, teachers and staff eliminate slavery from Catholic schools.

ACRATH's Sister Louise Cleary (Pictured below with two students at the launch) and Melbourne's Archbishop Peter Comensoli, launched the **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit at Academy of Mary Immaculate in Fitzroy. Leading Catholic agencies and dioceses across Victoria and in Tasmania also launched the kit in a bid to slavery-proof their organisations.

Archbishop Comensoli urged teachers and students to eliminate slavery from their schools. He said one of the first steps was to make the school staffroom slavery-free and use only slavery-free certified coffee, tea and chocolate.

Sr Louise said: "By starting with tangible products like tea, coffee and chocolate we will become aware of how to address slavery and exploitation in other areas like school uniforms, sports equipment and computer manufacturing, and how to advocate for a living wage for those whom we still need to produce these goods."

The kit, an initiative of the Victoria-Tasmania Catholic Modern Slavery Taskforce, contains a comprehensive guide to making your school slavery-free, starting with the staffroom, and includes, 'how to go slavery-free' step-by-step, a sourcing guide, testimonials from other schools, information on Catholic Social Teaching that underpins the kit, and resources.

An estimated 45.8 million people are living in slave-like conditions throughout the world and 10 million of these are children. "Children are sold at markets in the Ivory Coast to work in the cocoa plantations that produce about 70% of the chocolate consumed across the world," Sr Louise said.

"When ACRATH began almost fifteen years ago it was very difficult to buy slavery-free coffee and chocolate in Australia. The sourcing guide in the kit, is testimony to how things have changed. But it is just the beginning."

A simultaneous launch was held at the four-day 2nd International Conference on Catholic Religious Education in Schools at the Catholic Leadership Centre in East Melbourne, which went slavery-free early last year. At that launch, ACRATH's Christine Carolan and Sr Claire Griffin, encouraged education leaders to make their place, wherever they were in the world, slavery-free.

While children are often enslaved to pick cocoa and coffee beans in developing countries, Archbishop Comensoli reminded people that there were also serious human trafficking issues close to home. "There are slaves in our city. People who are in bonded employment."

Sr Louise said that while the kit had been developed for schools, she encouraged parishes, community organisations, workplaces and families to use it.

Find the, **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit here: <https://resourcecem.com/slavery-free-resources/>





## OUR ACTIVE NETWORK:

In recent weeks the National Office has had a number of phone calls requesting information about labelling products to assist people in work places, homes, parishes and schools to work towards purchasing slavery free goods – in this case tea, coffee and chocolate.

These conversations highlight how people are supporting ACRATH in their parish and communities; we love hearing these so please keep sharing. One parish indicated they had baskets of products displayed in their church foyer to showcase the products found in the local area – what a great example of assisting people; there will be no excuse in that community 'I can't find those products!'

## COMPANIONSHIP WORKSHOP in February

Through ACRATH's Companionship program, ACRATH continues to provide support to about 40 adults who were trafficked into Australia and their 38 children. In February the companions participated in a peer support session with Radhika Santhanam-Martin a clinical psychologist who works in the field of trauma. Her facilitation skills provided an opportunity for the ongoing peer support culture necessary in such work. 'With Radhika's eloquence and her overflowing *bowl of light*, and through her listening with her heart, she provided a safe and sacred space as we confronted our challenges and complexities; tools were shared and strategies of support and self-care were explored.' Maureen Ham, one of the companions continues, 'We thank her for her experience, education and gentle wisdom in developing a safe space for expressing our vulnerability.' This peer support opportunity has been funded by the UN Voluntary Fund for Slavery; ACRATH is extremely grateful for this.

Rosa, Lynne, Heather, Christine and Kathy in conversation with Radhika (3rd from the right)



## THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE: 2020 – 2022

During the 2020 ACRATH Annual General Meeting Sr Louise Cleary csb was elected as the President of ACRATH. Louise is a co-founder of ACRATH. She has had extensive experience in advocating against human trafficking and slavery in Australia and internationally. ACRATH members are very grateful to Louise for her willingness to take on this role for a third time. The outgoing President Noelene Simmons sm was acknowledged for her 3 years of leadership, for her clarity, thoughtfulness and ability to focus on the vision of a world free of human trafficking.



### Photo:

**Front row:** Carmel Heagerty rsm (Secretary), Meredith Evans rsm (SA Regional Coordinator), Claire Griffin csb (Vic Regional Coordinator), Lorraine Phelan rsm (ACT/NSW Regional Coordinator) and Louise Cleary csb (President)  
**Back row:** Clare Condon sgs (General Committee member), Shane Wood cfc (Treasurer), Janine Bliss fmm (QLD Regional Coordinator), Peter O'Neill ssc (General Committee member), Kathy Fagan (WA Regional Coordinator)

## ACRATH CONFERENCE 2020: ELIMINATING HUMAN TRAFFICKING HERE AND BEYOND

ACRATH members gathered at St Joseph's Centre Baulkham Hills for their annual conference and AGM, 18 – 20 February 2020. Time for reflections to 'nurture our spirit', was interspersed with presentations highlighting the work being done by ACRATH and our partners; there was plenty of opportunity to meet and deepen our working relationships.

Two key collaborations were highlighted: Law Associate Professor from Flinders University, Marinella Marmo, presented a summary of *Slavery and Slavery-like practices in South Australia: A Report*, Aka Marilyn Ross APM, Senior Sergeant, with Melissa Mitchell from the AFP, presented current statistics – in the year 2018 the AFP received 216 referrals 91 of these were cases of forced marriage.

ACRATH members have been active; examples of collaboration in forced marriage and forced labour were shared. Global examples were evident with the New Zealand group ANZRATH presenting examples of their work in Parishes. Another membership initiative has been refining and developing educational resources. There is a suite of presentations for various audiences; the resources are accessible by contacting the National Office at [office@acrath.org.au](mailto:office@acrath.org.au).

Sustainability and increasing the membership of ACRATH were themes for a facilitated discussion. During the story telling session we were reminded that stories are a way of raising awareness and putting the issue of modern slavery at the heart and centre of so many aspects of our lives. Please remember if you are keen to share stories, send them to the National Office or let us know and we may be able to assist you prepare them. Please send to [cd@acrath.org.au](mailto:cd@acrath.org.au).



Attendees of ACRATH's 2020 National Conference in Sydney

## BAKHITA DAY The World Day of Prayer, Reflection and Action to Stop Human Trafficking

To commemorate BAKHITA DAY the Victorian ACRATH team partnered with a Filipino Theatre group to host the performance of their play 'Talk to me Weena'. The intense performance, depicted the story of a Filipino woman enslaved in Australia to look after a dog. The play showed a harrowing experience of a mother in Australia whilst her family struggled to survive in the Philippines. As the play unfolds, the story dramatically highlights inequality and power dynamics. A quote from Weena, 'First world nation treats their dog in a human way' clearly depicts this inequality and the reality of slavery in Australia today. After the performance a conversation of reflection and wonderings was led by Lau, a member of the theatre group, drawing out examples of Overseas Workers across the world, and the defining message was loud: communities of solidarity help survivors of slavery - leading to hope for a world free of slavery and inequality.

Following the performance, Sr Pat Fox nds led a prayer, and then a meal was shared. We thank Pat for her introduction and coordination of this performance and look forward to more opportunities to work in collaboration with this group.



Solo performer – 'Talk to me Weena'.

### FUNDING UPDATE:

Currently ACRATH receives no Government funding and values the many grants and donations from our supporters and members who share our vision for 'a world free of human trafficking'. Ongoing evaluation and oversight of the spending of grants is undertaken by our Evaluation Committee. We really appreciate the financial support we receive and know that our work is what it is because of the grants and donations.

**Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead.**

Contact Christine at the National Office [eo@acrath.org.au](mailto:eo@acrath.org.au)

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