


## Trafficked women not left alone – help ACRATH to help them

Each June we grapple with how to thank you for your overwhelming support in the past year and how to ask you for money. The past year was challenging for many of us, but for vulnerable people, trafficked people, the year was a nightmare. Thanks to you we were able to continue supporting many of these people and advocating for their rights.

ACRATH's Companionship Program is one way of providing very necessary support. Our Companions listen while trafficked women relive their trauma, they support women through court hearings and finding housing and they accompany parents to parent/teacher interviews to try and achieve better educational outcomes for the children of trafficked women.

These are just a few of the 'tasks' ACRATH's volunteer Companions take on as they journey with a survivor of human trafficking, including sexual exploitation, forced labour and forced marriage. The Companionship Program began more than 13 years ago when ACRATH was approached by organisations, including Australian Federal Police, Red Cross, Anti-Slavery Australia and Project Respect. These organisations work with people who have experienced deep trauma and who need a Companion with whom they can talk about their day-to-day struggles.

ACRATH has 13 trained and supervised Companions who offer support and friendship to 34 trafficked women and their 45 children. Two Companions also support groups of seasonal workers in Victoria and Queensland. During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 many other survivors of trafficking, living in Australia on restricted visas, were not eligible for certain benefits. ACRATH provided assistance to help these people buy food or pay bills.

 **We invite you to hear more about the work of ACRATH Companions** at the first of our new Conversation Series. Companions Liz Payne and Kathy Fagan will talk about their roles on Wednesday 30 June at 11:15am. See story on page 4 for details.

*Christine Carolan (EO) and Louise Cleary csb (President)*



**ACRATH receives no Government funding.**

**Please donate today to help us continue programs like the Companionship Program.**

## Spread the word about child labour

This newsletter contains a full-page poster (page 6) highlighting the International Day Against Child Labour on 12 June 2021. We urge you to send this poster to your friends, family and networks to raise awareness of the issue.

Children around the world are forced to work in unsafe conditions to provide some of the food we eat, clothes we wear and in mining for minerals used in batteries in our phones. Find out more and make one change. Thanks to Heather McNaught from ACRATH WA for her poster design.

## New formation program with St John of God Healthcare

ACRATH, in partnership with St John of God Healthcare (SJGHC), is embarking on a major formation-training program, which will be offered to 563 leaders from SJGHC facilities in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste.

The formation sessions, from July to December, will raise awareness of human trafficking and modern day slavery and what can be done within SJGHC to identify and support trafficked people and to identify slavery in supply chains.

Led by ACRATH's healthcare liaison and forced marriage worker Megan Bourke (pictured), the program will be delivered via zoom by ACRATH staff assisted by external experts.

"We hope people will see any possible change, know how to share that with their teams and contribute to SJGHC's best practice to honour the dignity of all people in their care settings," Megan said.



ACRATH's Megan Bourke

The first presentation will explore the meaning of human trafficking and modern slavery globally. This presentation will feature Kirsty Sword Gusmao AO, founder of the ALOLA Foundation, which addresses the needs of Timor Leste women survivors of rape and other forms of gender-based violence. Ms Sword Gusmao will explore human trafficking issues as they relate to Timor Leste and the Asia Pacific region.

The second presentation will look at supply chains, focusing on products such as rubber gloves, tea, coffee and chocolate. Ben Smith Chair, Modern Slavery Act Compliance Committee, Hobart Archdiocese, will talk about their extensive work to eradicate slavery from supply chains and ensure compliance with the Modern Slavery Act (MSA) across the archdiocese. Jess Brady (Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools) and Heather McNaught (ACRATH WA Co-ordinator) will also describe contributions to the MSA in Melbourne Schools and WA school and parish settings.

The third presentation will look at the vulnerability of women being trafficked; it will focus on how healthcare workers can observe patients/clients for a range of behaviours indicating that a person might be a victim-survivor of human trafficking or forced marriage. Guest speakers include ACRATH Companion Robin Harbidge, law enforcement personnel and representatives from St Vincent's Health Australia's Advocates for Change program who will contribute their frontline experiences.

### India COVID-19 Emergency Response Appeal



**Caritas**  
AUSTRALIA

COVID-19 is having a devastating impact around the world, particularly in India. ACRATH knows that experiencing natural disasters makes people extra vulnerable to human trafficking. CARITAS is asking for our urgent support today to provide immediate aid and relief to communities in India impacted by emergencies. Click [here](#) to donate.



## Kathy Fagan – take a bow

Congratulations to ACRATH's Kathy Fagan who was a finalist in the Volunteer for Multicultural Communities Award in Western Australia during Volunteer Week in May. Kathy joined ACRATH in WA in 2009 and was WA coordinator 2016-2021.

Kathy is one of ACRATH's 110 wonderful volunteers working around Australia to combat human trafficking. Our volunteers work in many areas including awareness raising through presentations, developing education resources, political advocacy, companionship to trafficked people and fundraising. In 2019 our volunteers contributed 8588 volunteer hours (COVID-19 limited presentations in schools in 2020).

Kathy was nominated for her work to combat human trafficking, which began when she worked with trafficked women and children in Asia, particularly in Thailand and Cambodia. She developed strong international networks over the years, that are called on by the Australian Federal Police and other NGOs, when a trafficked woman is being repatriated and needs support to rebuild her life when she cannot return to her community.

Kathy also supports victims of human trafficking in her role as an ACRATH Companion. She is currently offering companionship to four women and their six children. Hear more about Kathy's work as a Companion at ACRATH's new Conversation Series starting on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 11:15am. See page 4 for details.

Thanks to Heather McNaught and the ACRATH WA group for Kathy's nomination.



## ACRATH WA new leadership group reaching out to schools

Well done to ACRATHers in Western Australia who have forged wonderful partnerships with Catholic education.

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) has advised all Catholic secondary schools in WA of ACRATH's ability to present to students and teachers on modern slavery and human trafficking. Schools have been asked to contact ACRATH directly if they would like ACRATH to present. ACRATH members, led by Heather McNaught, Rosa Ranieri and Sr Mary Ryan op, have had interest from a number of schools and are arranging presentations.

They recently led an engaging and interactive session with the energetic Year 10 students at Our Lady of Mercy College in Australind (south-west of Perth) raising awareness of human trafficking and ethical purchasing. The students enjoyed fair-trade chocolate and joined in the activities with enthusiasm and genuine interest.

"This is a great partnership in awareness raising within schools," Heather said.

Rosa said demand for speakers was increasing and ACRATH members would be 'trained up' to meet this need.

"We are lucky that we have members who would like to present and so we are currently looking at training options to upskill and enable more members to run these presentations," Rosa said.



Photo: ACRATH WA members Heather McNaught, Rosa Ranieri, Sr Frances Hayes pbvm & Sr Mary Ryan op with students from Our Lady of Mercy, Australind.



## Meet ACRATH Companions in new Conversation Series

ACRATH has launched a new Conversation Series to be held on the last Wednesday of each month at 11:15am. The first Conversation on Wednesday 30 June will shine a spotlight on the Companionship Program.



Join ACRATH Companions Kathy Fagan (WA) and Liz Payne (Victoria) at the Companions in Conversation online event on Wednesday 30 June 2021 at 11.15am (Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney). During the 30 minute conversation Liz (pictured) and Kathy will give an insight into their work as Companions.

The Conversation Series will feature an aspect of ACRATH's work in human trafficking. You can join the conversation at 11.15am for a cuppa and 15 minutes of informal chat. The conversations will start at 11.30am sharp and will involve an interview with one or more people. Come for all or part of this event. Join the zoom meeting at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89866995755?pwd=d3ZkQWQrUHFtOG5xNmJ1c0hDb1VoUT09>

Save the date for the July conversation on Wednesday 28 July. Topic is **ADVOCACY**: What issues are we working on now? What successes have we had?

### Vale Ann Laidlaw dc

Ann Laidlaw, a member of the Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul for 63 years and long time member of ACRATH, died on 22 April 2021. ACRATH's Executive Officer Christine Carolan remembers Anne ...

"I remember traveling to a Daughters of Charity counter trafficking meeting in the USA with Ann in 2013. In the 10 days of meetings, Ann was such a feisty woman when she thought we could all do better. And on that same trip, when we met someone who was struggling with life, Ann was totally present to them and showed she was aware of their complex life. Ann, may we learn from your feistiness and kindness."



Ann (centre) at a meeting with US Trafficking in Persons Ambassador Lou de Baca (left) in Washington DC.

### COVID update: Timor Leste

Until recently, Timor Leste's isolation allowed for minimal damage from the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately heavy rains at Easter caused flooding ravaging the nation, hitting Dili, isolating communities, causing landslides, destroying roads and limiting access to supplies. The effects of this were devastating on the country, with cases of COVID-19 growing daily, access to vaccines and health supplies severely restricted and resources stretched.

Dr Rui Maria de Araújo, head of the country's Covid-19 response noted in media reports Australia's existing support – nearly 100 medical oxygen cannisters and 40,000 AZ vaccines. But when asked what else Australia could provide, it was pretty simple, 'Vaccines, vaccines and vaccines.'

**ACTION:** Please contact Australia's Health Minister Hon Greg Hunt MP acknowledging Australia's support and requesting further assistance.

## Reconciliation Week Reflection ....

*Heather Weedon fmm attended this year's ACRATH National Conference and heard speaker Sherry Balcombe talk about the intergenerational impact of dispossession and how indigenous families today are still challenged by the trauma that was brought upon their ancestors. She shares her reflections ...*

Indigenous woman Sherry Balcombe (pictured) shared her pain and suffering, reflecting on the history of her family and their appalling treatment, particularly under the White Australia Policy.

In sharing with us, Sherry, Manager Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria, told us of the attempt made to wipe out the Indigenous peoples of this land (the attempted genocide as it has been called). Her ancestors were deeply affected by the white invasion into her homeland, and Sherry shared how this decimated her ancestors. It was very moving presentation indeed.



Although many say that 'we did not do these massacres', we are now living in this land and cannot ignore the suffering and injustices perpetrated by our ancestors. As Sherry said, the forced labour, stolen wages, punishment if one refused to work... this is slavery, and it is still present today here in Australia because there has been little or no redress. This has led to the continued impoverishment of so many of our Indigenous sisters and brothers. We cannot advance as a nation until we admit the horrors perpetrated against the first peoples here, and then strive together for a just and peaceful future.

I thank Sherry very much for her courage and commitment to striving for justice and recognition of the history and the contribution our Indigenous peoples have and still do make to our Australian society

## Free the Uyghurs

ACRATH is concerned that more than 1 million Uyghurs are being used as forced labour in China to produce our clothes. ACRATH notes that one fifth of the world's cotton supplies come from the Uyghur region. ACRATH co-badged a submission supporting the Customs Amendment (Banning Goods Produced By Uyghur Forced Labour) Bill 2020 in the Australian Parliament.

Read more about this issue and sign the Freedom United petition at:

<https://www.freedomunited.org/advocate/free-uyghurs/>

ACRATH needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

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

<https://www.trybooking.com/au/donate/acrath>  
or <https://acrath.org.au/donate>

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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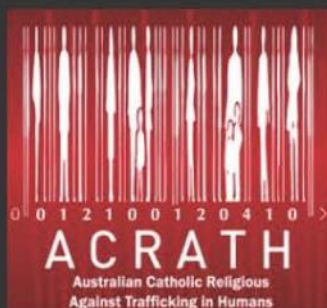


ALMOST ONE IN TEN OF ALL CHILDREN  
WORLDWIDE ARE IN CHILD LABOUR!  
KEEP THEM OUT OF THE SUPPLY CHAINS.

## INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST CHILD LABOUR - 12TH JUNE 2021

WE CAN CONSUME RESPONSIBLY BY BUYING SLAVERY-  
FREE CHOCOLATE, TEA, COFFEE, SPORTS EQUIPMENT  
AND CLOTHING - MADE WITHOUT CHILD LABOUR.

2021 IS THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR FOR THE  
ELIMINATION OF  
CHILD LABOUR



[www.acrath.org.au](http://www.acrath.org.au)

People are NOT for sale

