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People are NOT for sale

ACRATH joins Pope Francis in tops for 2023

ACRATH joined illustrious company when it was declared a person/organisation of the year (2023) by Jesuit Publications' *Eureka Street* magazine. Laura Kings, Assistant editor of Australian Catholics, chose ACRATH and Linda Burney, Minister for Indigenous Australians and Member for Barton.

Other senior Jesuit Publication staff and writers, including Fr Andy Hamilton sj and *Eureka Street* editor David Halliday, chose people including Pope Francis and Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus. The panel said the final selection of people and organisations in 2023 "spans the gamut from political and legal heavyweights to quiet innovators and social justice revolutionaries; people who somehow left a mark on our collective consciousness, pointing us towards a more hopeful future ... As we turn the page on 2023, we doff our caps to these groups/individuals".

Eureka Street is a publication of the Australian Jesuits. A print magazine for 16 years, starting in March 1991, *Eureka Street* is now an online journal of analysis, commentary and reflection on current issues in the worlds of politics, religion and culture. As a publication of the Australian Jesuits, *Eureka Street* is informed by the values of Jesuit spirituality, and particularly the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

In choosing ACRATH Laura said: "Slavery is not someone else's problem, it's our reality. Modern slavery includes human trafficking, forced labour, forced marriage, and more. Every time we eat or purchase, it's likely modern slavery exists in that supply chain. Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) have been working for close to two decades to eliminate human trafficking, address modern slavery and the resultant harm. Those in office are listening. This year there was a review of the Modern Slavery Act (2019) that seeks to strengthen it, and as much as that might scare any whose business model relies on exploitation and enslavement, it is a very good thing for an Australian society that embraces human rights. Many ACRATH members live a Catholic religious life but are upending stereotypes as they work for the betterment of others with dignity and acumen. Whether they are walking Canberra's halls, creating school resources, or accompanying and advocating for victims, ACRATH does worthy and important work. "

Editor David Halliday, who has championed ACRATH's work for many years, also shone a spotlight on human trafficking in his selection of Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus.

In selecting Mark Dreyfus, David said: "Combating modern slavery has also been a central focus for Dreyfus this year. Modern slavery encompasses a range of serious exploitative practices, such as trafficking in persons, deceptive recruiting, debt bondage, forced labour and forced marriage. He recognized the urgency of the issue and intensified efforts at establishing modern slavery safeguarding. The Modern Slavery Act, his brainchild, stands as a testament to his belief that profit shouldn't be built on the backs of the voiceless. Dreyfus has been instrumental in steering significant legal reforms like establishing Australia's first federal Anti-Slavery Commissioner in 2023 with the aim of supporting victims and survivors and supporting business to address modern slavery practices hidden in supply chains."

To see who else lined up alongside ACRATH and Pope Francis click [here](#).

See page 8 of this newsletter for the *Eureka Street* excerpt.

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Shirley's passion in each page

Thanks to Shirley Eldridge for donating proceeds of her recently published book to ACRATH. Shirley's moving account of a young woman who was trafficked, was highlighted at the Australian Catholic Press Association Conference in Perth late last year. ACRATH Community Development Worker Melissa Halliday, who attended the conference, described the book as '*a story of great heart*'.

Melissa said the book, *Woman for Sale*, describes the insidious fraud, force and coercion that traps people in trafficking and sexual exploitation. The central character, Rose, is a woman whose situation of poverty creates a desperation to secure work as well as a vulnerability to traffickers.

"But we also encounter Rose's incredible strength, dedication and hopes for her family. Through the numerous challenges described in her story, we can see how compounding vulnerabilities impact Rose and her family during and after her experience of trafficking. Her story unfolds within a global interconnectedness, highlighting the intersections of various industries and services that enable trafficking. In addition, we see the seemingly innocuous places where trafficking is hidden in plain sight - a job recruitment office, the airport, the hotel bar. We witness the impact of international bonds, from church networks across the globe, to a family in Australia," Melissa said.

Melissa applauded Shirley's passion to work to combat human trafficking through writing the book. Shirley's book is based on true events.

Shirley is closely associated with Mister Bob, the Australian businessman who alerted her to the urgency to bring about the rescue. It was fortunate she had a close friend involved with ACRATH, members of whom were able to link immediately with Asian associates who worked into the night.

"Mister Bob has mentored Rose since her repatriation and maintains regular contact. Rose's two older children are now at university, one of whom Mister Bob supports. The other receives some financial support from ACRATH with fees.

Rose is fully supportive of Shirley's sharing of this amazing series of events to bring awareness and to educate. Shirley has changed names of people, organisations and places to protect all involved. Human traffickers really are dangerous people," Shirley said.

ACRATH's Ange Duthie read the book over summer and wrote the following review: '*Woman for Sale* is a haunting account that illustrates the reality of modern slavery orchestrated seamlessly by criminal cartels.

This true story is not only inspiring but also incredibly eye-opening. The author's ability to convey the unimaginable horrors endured by the main character is both distressing and thought-provoking. Although the narrative is skillfully woven to be easily digested, the underlying realities it exposes are hard to sit with.

Having completed the read within a day, I felt a sense of great pride for being a part of a global network that works to contribute in part to the protagonist's ultimate freedom. It is a testament to the power of unity and determination of ACRATH's mission to eliminate human trafficking and the harm it causes.

'Woman for Sale' is an exceptional book. Its ability to captivate and educate simultaneously makes it a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the true horrors of modern slavery.



Shirley's book sold out at the WA Conference, but you can purchase a copy of *Woman for Sale* direct from Shirley at eldridges@inet.net.au. The book costs \$33 with postage included to anywhere in Australia.

All profits go to ACRATH. Already almost \$2000 has been donated through book sales.

Photo: WA ACRATH's Rosa Ranieri, Melissa Halliday and Shirley Eldridge at the Conference. Thanks to Fiona Basile for use of the image.

Global leaders joined 16 Days Campaign

ACRATH's 16 Days of Activism focusing on women migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation ended on December 10 2023, but the messages conveyed, the information shared, resources developed and the impact of the campaign are still being felt. We encourage you to find out more and become part of the ongoing story. Teaching resources from ACRATH's 16 Days campaign are now available.



Chiara Porro, Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, joined ACRATH's NEO Christine Carolan, in asking people across the globe to focus on the plight of women migrating across the world for work. They were joined in the campaign by Pope Francis, global leaders, NGOs and Ambassadors, who each shone a light on a different aspect of exploitation that they were working to combat.

"These are women who live among us, whose work our society and economy depend on, but whose dignity and rights can be grossly violated and denied," Ambassador Porro said.

The injustices highlighted by the many ACRATH campaign collaborators did not end when the campaign concluded. ACRATH encourages people, organisations, community groups and schools to consider using the resources produced during the campaign. Already, an Australian tertiary institute, with an overseas campus, has expressed interest in using the material in its curriculum.

"To advocate for women migrating across the world for work, we need to be informed about the many issues they face, and the complexities involved in combating these issues. Using the material produced during the campaign is a first step in understanding what so many women confront when they are migrating from their home country in search of work and security," Christine said.

Fiona Kendall who works with Mediterranean Hope, a project created by the Federation of Evangelical Churches in Italy to support refugees, suggested people needed to know about the situation around the globe to effectively advocate for change. She talked about the vulnerabilities many migrating women face when leaving northern Africa for Italy, and the dangers of being sent back to the source country. The Mediterranean Hope project began in the Italian island of Lampedusa, which is a first destination point for many fleeing Africa by boat. In just two days in September 2023, 120 small boats arrived on Lampedusa carrying 7000 people.

Fiona said the 16 Days campaign was an opportunity to create awareness with people and mobilise support that could be used in advocacy and other responses to the crisis.

The ACRATH 16 Days of Activism campaign caught the attention of women Ambassadors to the Holy See and led to Ambassador Porro joining forces with the Dutch and French Ambassadors to present ACRATH's 16 Days of Activism Campaign material at an event in the French Embassy to the Holy See. A highlight for ACRATH was Christine joining 17 Ambassadors to the Holy See in a campaign event with Pope Francis.

Christine and Ambassador Porro agreed that the social justice challenge is global; vulnerable workers are on the move right across the planet. So global solutions must be sought, and global justice-focused alliances must be built and strengthened.

The Global Estimates of the Modern Slavery report published in 2021 said that an estimated 50 million people were living in situations of modern slavery on any given day in 2021. The most vulnerable — women, children, and migrants — remain disproportionately affected. More than 12 million of all people in modern slavery are children, and women and girls account for over half of them (54 per cent).

The report found that, "while labour migration has a largely positive effect on individuals, households, communities and societies, this finding demonstrates how migrants are particularly vulnerable to forced labour and trafficking, whether because of irregular or poorly governed migration, or unfair and unethical recruitment practices".

Many important resources were produced during the 16 Days campaign including contributions from global speakers, interviews with individuals who have experienced these challenges, material linking global warming to migrant workers being on the move, informative articles, and more. Visit <https://acrath.org.au/take-action/16-days/>. Watch our highlight reel here: <https://vimeo.com/889377955>

Research applauds Companionship Program

Judy Lamb started researching the work of ACRATH Companions almost two years ago. The resulting 10-page publication, *ACRATH Companionship Project Research Paper*, has been published and is now available [here](#) on the ACRATH website.

Walk Free's Global Slavery Index estimates that up to 41,000 people now live in modern slavery in Australia. ACRATH's Companionship Program supports a small number of these people, but this program also has an impact on ACRATH's broader advocacy and awareness-raising work. The Companionship Program arose in 2008 when the Australian Federal Police asked ACRATH if someone could offer personal support for a woman residing in Melbourne who had been trafficked; the AFP were concerned for her wellbeing. In the past 15 years, the Companionship Program has proven to be a vital aspect of ACRATH's broader work.

Today, ACRATH's 13 trained and supervised volunteer Companions offer support and friendship to 35 trafficked women and their 45 children as they face the long journey of healing. ACRATH also reaches out to seasonal workers from Timor Leste and the Pacific.

Judy, a member of ACRATH, interviewed many of the Companions and those closely involved with the program. She focussed on the following questions/talking points:

- What has been your experience of companioning? What were the surprises? Challenges? Rewards for you personally?
- How has your experience impacted on the advocacy work of ACRATH?
- How has your experience been used in ACRATH's efforts to prevent human trafficking, modern slavery and forced marriage?

What impact has your experience had on ACRATH's awareness-raising activities?

Judy's research paper found that the Companionship program does impact on ACRATH – it informs policy, gives evidence to the advocacy work, and deepens our awareness raising and training. The lived experience of Companions' lives led ACRATH to advocate for and help achieve policy and legislative change including:

- The achievement of an Act of Grace payment for exploited seasonal workers.
- The change to the Criminal Justice Stay Visa.
- Expansion of the Support for Trafficked People Program.

These three issues are explored in detail in Judy's report [here](#).

"It was a great privilege for me to be asked to do this research and a very rewarding project to be involved in. It brought together many aspects of the work of ACRATH but the key focus was on the work of the Companions. This was seen by all the participants as a foundational and essential underpinning of ACRATH's advocacy and awareness-raising," Judy said.

Judy paid tribute to the Companions and others involved in the program who shared their time, experiences and reflections.

"I thank them most sincerely for their generosity and I trust that this project shines a light on the companions' amazing commitment to their partners and to ACRATH," she said.

Call to action February 2024

ACRATH supports the work of many like-minded organisations both in Australia and globally. Many produce resources that can be used in a variety of settings and some have campaigns underway. Our newsletter regularly includes this page, encouraging people to find out more and consider becoming involved in actions and advocacy.

Eureka Street person of the year 2023

Laura Kings, Assistant editor of Australian Catholics: Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) and Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians and Member for Barton.

<https://www.eurekastreet.com.au/article/eureka-street-person-of-the-year-2023>

Human trafficking reports continue to increase in Australia

https://www.afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/human-trafficking-reports-continue-increase-australia?mc_cid=6c10dc95b6&mc_eid=aacc237c9b

Schools urged to be on lookout for signs of forced marriage as numbers rise across Australia

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2024-01-20/apf-warns-school-forced-marriage-after-spike-australia/103369500>

Pacific Island workers save wages to change lives at home but feel isolation

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-12-22/pacific-workers-in-australia-saving-for-better-future/103225624>

Advocates welcome government support for forced marriage prevention – 5/12/23

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/podcast-episode/advocates-welcome-government-support-for-forced-marriage-prevention/35ptydjiro?fbclid=IwAR0Nv7ITi9xQIGgogDjXRNwSZ5EjcrUQc2llirEvyEX5igw3qY4rEjS7Y54>

Anti-Slavery Australia

<https://antislavery.org.au/>

20 years of providing legal services to survivors of human trafficking and modern slavery

https://antislavery.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/FINAL_ASA-20-Years-Impact-Report.pdf

Talitha Kum

<https://www.talithakum.info/en/news?lang=en>

Q&A with Sr. Seli Thomas, a winner of inaugural Sisters Anti-Trafficking Awards

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/qa-sr-seli-thomas-winner-inaugural-sisters-anti-trafficking-awards>

Archbishop Kaigama impressed by the Nigerian Government's shelters for survivors of human trafficking

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/africa/news/2023-12/archbishop-kaigama-impressed-by-the-nigerian-government-s-shelte.html>

National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) Nigeria

<https://naptip.gov.ng/>

Alliance to End Human Trafficking

<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org>

Stop Trafficking Newsletter

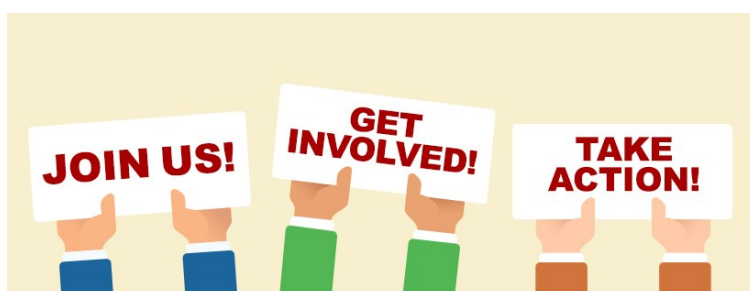
<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org/stop-trafficking-newsletter/>

Malaika Oringo speaks before the UN General Assembly, Office on Drugs and Crime (video clip)

<https://www.footprinttofreedom.org/en/founder/>

Footprint to Freedom

<https://www.footprinttofreedom.org/en/>



It's chocolate so *Indulge Responsibly*

Join with the one billion responsible 'indulgers' this Easter and watch what chocolate you eat. Join ACRATH's *Indulge Responsibly* Easter chocolate campaign starting on Ash Wednesday, 14th February 2024.

Much of the world's chocolate, including that sold in Australian shops and supermarkets, is produced using cocoa beans harvested by child labourers, many of whom endure enslavement and poor, sometimes dangerous, working conditions. Most are deprived of an education.

This Easter and beyond, we ask you to indulge responsibly and select ethically sourced chocolate, and support companies that are working to eliminate slavery from their supply chains.

Our campaign poster is packed with actions, resources and hope. Find the poster and other resources [here](#) and share with a friend.

To join ACRATH's *Indulge Responsibly* campaign we ask you to do two things. Firstly, read the [Be Slavery Free Chocolate Scorecard](#) and make your purchasing and eating decisions based on the behaviour of the producers.

The scorecard has been used as a resource by an estimated one billion people around the globe. So, join this massive and well-meaning global community and find out which companies are trying to do the right thing when it comes to chocolate production. Find the scorecard [here](#)

Be Slavery Free, on its website, states the Chocolate Scorecard survey and resulting report has grown in popularity each year. "It first received ethics approval in 2022 from the Humanities and Social Science (HASS) Human Research Ethics committee from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia (The Open University, UK and University of Wollongong, Australia also participated and were part of the ethics approval process). This process ensures the research is honest, rigorous, transparent, respectful, protects participants, and demonstrates that the research team has adhered to the highest contemporary ethical standards of a genuine research study involving human participants."

The most recent scorecard highlights some of ACRATH's favourite chocolate, including delicious Tony Chocolonely and Alter Eco, which are readily available in Australia. While the makers not only produce chocolate that is perfect for those wanting to *Indulge Responsibly*, they also create awareness of the injustices in the industry.

According to the Tony Chocolonely website: "Things aren't shared fairly in the chocolate supply chain. The chain starts with the millions of farmers that produce cocoa and ends with the billions of consumers that enjoy chocolate. But what about the bit in between? This section is dominated by a group of chocolate giants that profit from keeping the cocoa purchasing price as low as possible. For the farmers, this creates a poverty trap that leads to illegal child labour and modern slavery."

The second part of the campaign is about eating chocolate that features the Fairtrade or Rainforest Alliance logos. The presence of either of these logos says that this chocolate company has committed resources to ensuring the cocoa they source is slavery-free.

There's lots of information about these programs. You can read more here.

<https://fairtradeanz.org/what-is-fairtrade/how-fairtrade-works>

<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org>

Read more about ACRATH's ethical chocolate program [here](#)

Indulge Responsibly



Treat yourself with responsibly sourced chocolate this Easter, supporting brands committed to eliminating slavery from their supply chain.

Learn the truth

A significant portion of chocolate available in Australia is produced using cocoa beans harvested by child labourers, who endure enslavement and exploitative working conditions. Indulge responsibly and select ethically sourced and support companies working towards eliminating slavery from their supply chain chocolate this Easter.

Here is how:

1. Join the one billion people who read the Be Slavery Free Chocolate Scorecard (<https://www.chocolatescorecard.com/>) last year to discover their chocolate's true origins and evaluate their favourite brands' ethical practices.
2. Seek out the Fairtrade and Rainforest Alliance certifications on chocolate packaging.

Note these certification seals mean the certified ingredient was produced using methods that support social, economic, and environmental sustainability.



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Laura Kings, Assistant editor of *Australian Catholics*. Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) and Hon Linda Burney MP, Minister for Indigenous Australians and Member for Barton.

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Register now

The Annual ACRATH Members Gathering and Annual General Meeting will be held this March 2024 in Sydney. It will be the first face-to-face gathering since COVID, so members are looking forward to meeting each other and considering the important theme:

Modern Slavery is closer than you think....

On the evening of Wednesday, 20 March, 2024 at 7.15-8.15pm (AEDT) the Keynote Speaker session will be open to interested partners via a Zoom Webinar. The Keynote Speaker will be: Ms Cary Duffy, A/G Assistant Secretary, Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Transition Branch

Registration is required by Monday 11 March. Please email your name and organisation (if relevant) to secretary@acrath.org.au

The link details will be forwarded to registered people close to the event.



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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