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People are NOT for sale

## Hope for a better world

Carla Chung, ACRATH's migrant support worker, is one of the Ambassadors of Hope for the global online Marathon of Prayer held on Friday, February 7, as part of the [International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking](#)

The 2025 theme is Ambassadors of Hope: Together Against Human Trafficking. Pope Francis in 2015 designated 8th February, the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, as the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking. Talitha Kum, the network of Catholic Religious women and men and their collaborators against Human Trafficking, is tasked with coordinating a group of partner organisations to prepare and facilitate this day.

St Josephine Bakhita, who was born in 1869 in Sudan, knew the pain and sorrow of losing her freedom. She was taken by slave traders when she was seven and was bought and sold many times in the following decade. Taken to Italy by a family, who 'owned' her, she met the Canossian Daughters of Charity, became a Catholic and joined the Canossian congregation. She died in 1947 and was canonized in 2000.

People around the world are invited to join in this prayer marathon, in their own region. Annette Arnold is Talitha Kum's Oceania Regional Coordinator and has led the Oceania team's contribution to the opening section of the online prayer, which highlights the relationship of climate change to exploitation in the Pacific Island Nations.

Carla Chung works closely with migrant workers from Timor Leste and the Pacific. She said 'hope' for a better life for their communities motivates many of the migrant workers she supports each day. "Most migrant workers who come to Australia, they have a big hope to make a change in their lives, not just for themselves, but hope to change for a better life for their families. This will be to help finances for a brother or sister, or children or wife or parents while they work here," Carla said.

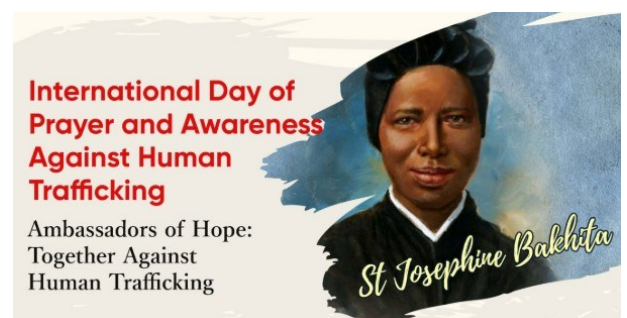
Carla said she works closely with workers to advocate for them and to make sure they know their rights, especially regarding wages and other employment conditions. One of Carla's hopes is that communities, particularly parishes around Australia, will offer support and friendship to workers who come to pray, to ensure they are not alone.

There are many ways to celebrate the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking and many resources are available [here](#) on the ACRATH website, including:

- Time and dates of the prayer marathon in your region
- Links to join the prayer marathon
- Poster to promote the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking
- Prayers for the event
- Actions to take to prevent human trafficking

Annette said she hoped many people would come together to mark this important event.

"I read these words of Aussie journalist Stan Grant: '*Hope is the oxygen in our blood; resentment is its poison*'. I pray that, as we endeavour to be **Ambassadors of Hope** this year, that we help nourish each other's hopeful blood supply! Together we continue, step by step, to free this world of exploitation and human trafficking," Annette said.



## Rising to the Challenge Together



ACRATH's ambitious 2024 fundraising target of \$350,000 has been reached after generous donations in December, many in lieu of Christmas gifts. Thank you for your incredible generosity and commitment to help eradicate modern slavery,

Fundraising is critical, allowing us to sustain crucial initiatives such as Educating for Change and the Companionship Program and awareness campaigns dedicated to helping victim/survivors of human trafficking in 2025.

ACRATH also received grants from The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation and the Attorney-General's Department that conclude on June 30 this year.

"2024 has been a year that has brought challenges to everyone as the cost-of-living pressures hit across the board. Nevertheless, the generous donations to ACRATH either through direct donations, regular salary deductions through workplace giving, TryBooking account, attending fundraisers, or being a volunteer to support the education programs or other activities, have enabled us to have a good year financially," said ACRATH Treasurer Shane Wood cfc.

One of our valued donors shared her journey of becoming a contributor after learning more about human trafficking and ACRATH's important work: "I discovered the breadth of ACRATH's efforts....and the various ways one can contribute, even through mindful purchasing. I chose to donate to ACRATH because everyone deserves freedom, dignity, and respect. ACRATH is instrumental in upholding these values, both through direct action and by advocating for policy changes with the government."

Leaving a gift to ACRATH in your will is a powerful way to create a lasting impact and support victims and survivors of modern slavery. For more information about this option, or to arrange a confidential discussion contact our office at [networks@acrath.org.au](mailto:networks@acrath.org.au)

Thank you once again for your incredible support of ACRATH. We couldn't continue this important work without you.

## Educating for Change – Register today

Register your interest now for ACRATH's new university **Educating for Change** modules. ACRATH, Flinders University and the University of South Australia have created **Educating for Change**, 6 micro-credentialed courses that will equip the next generation of professionals to better understand, recognise and respond to modern slavery. The courses are free and have been developed for students studying social work, law, criminology, education, and health care as well as for staff working with international students. [Register](#) your interest today and prepare to use the modules in semester 2.

**Educating for Change**, which was trialled in some tertiary settings in 2024, has been endorsed by Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus as well as key advocates and educators. **Educating for Change** was developed with funding from the Attorney-General's Department and ACRATH donors.

The Attorney-General encouraged students to engage in the relevant **Educating for Change** module and said: "Because modern slavery can occur in any sector, industry or domestic setting, I encourage you to learn and understand the indicators of modern slavery so that you can help us identify those who are experiencing modern slavery and support them."

ACRATH's Melissa Halliday said "This is a really exciting time for the Educating for Change team because there has been so much hard work from so many people across the sector and we know this program is keenly anticipated by many educators who are passionate about responding to modern slavery in various settings. We are also pleased that former ACRATH Executive Officer Christine Carolan is able to stay on with the project in a position with Flinders University. Christine's vast experience and knowledge will strengthen the content, reach and rollout of the Educating for Change program."

"We know that some tertiary institutions are keen to roll out **Educating for Change** because they have followed the development of the modules and been involved in testing and giving feedback, as part of our advisory group. Any university staff member can register and seek more information or a discussion with us. Registering your interest means that you will be updated with more information on the progress and release of the modules when they are ready," Melissa said.

"I would also encourage people to join us and share the **Educating for Change** information, website and videos with their university contacts, networks, friends, and follow our progress online and share the social media posts."

The modules have already undergone extensive testing and review and input from an Advisory Committee that includes Australian Red Cross, Anti-Slavery Australia, and the Attorney-General's Department. The Department's funding for the program runs out in June 2025.

[Listen](#) to Attorney-General Hon. Mark Dreyfus discussing the importance of **Educating for Change**.

Join ACRATH in helping future frontline professionals prevent and address modern slavery in Australia, from universities to the workforce. Together, we can educate for change.

[Register](#) your interest in **Educating for Change** today or contact us at [edforchange@acrath.org.au](mailto:edforchange@acrath.org.au)

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## Chocolate under the supply chains spotlight

Chocolate comes under the spotlight every Lent when ACRATH encourages people to reconsider their chocolate choices and buy products certified slavery-free. This year momentum is building early as Pope Francis and civic leaders are focussing on supply chains more broadly.



Ash Wednesday on March 5 will mark the beginning of ACRATH's Easter chocolate awareness campaign. In the weeks leading up to Easter Sunday on April 20, Australians will spend billions of dollars on chocolate.

Much of the chocolate consumed will be produced using cocoa beans picked by children and adults in conditions that are often unsafe and restrict a child's access to education.

There are many free resources [here](#) if you are planning to promote slavery-free chocolate in your home, workplace and amongst family and friends. An important resource is the fifth edition of Be Slavery Free's Chocolate Scorecard, which can help you use your buying power for good.

Key insights of the [Chocolate Scorecard](#) include the following:

- 100% of companies have a policy for monitoring, reducing, or eliminating child labour, but only an average of around 55% of the supply chains are being covered by a program
- 68% of respondents have evidence that the programs or schemes are reducing the prevalence of child labour situations – but verification is often lacking
- 18% of respondent companies found and successfully remediated cases of forced labour and human trafficking in the past 12 months – great increase in transparency and action
- 70% of respondent companies have a policy to monitor, reduce or eliminate the exposure of children to pesticides in their supply chains
- Traceability has increased but still about 50% of supply chain is indirect (not traced).
- Almost all of the participating chocolate companies believe that a living income is a human right, but only six companies are paying a living income to all their farmers.

Pope Francis also weighed in on the issue of supply chains on January 15 during his audience for the second consecutive week, saying people and institutions can protect children by changing what they buy and what they invest in.

"Fighting exploitation, particularly child exploitation, is the high road to building a better future for all of society," said the Pope - [according to a report from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops](#).

"Child abuse, in whatever form it may be, is a despicable and heinous act. It is a most serious violation of God's commandments."

Pope Francis urged all people to consider what they can do as individuals to respond to the societal problem of child exploitation.

"First of all, we must recognise that, if we want to eradicate child labour, we cannot be complicit in it," he said, explaining that people support child labour "when we buy products that employ child labour".

"How can I eat and dress myself knowing that behind that food or those clothes, there are exploited children who work instead of going to school?" he said. "The knowledge about what we buy is the first act in not being complicit. Look at where those products come from."

Many organisations, including Be Slavery Free, have called on the Federal Government to introduce legislation to ban the import of products made with forced and child labour into Australia. The USA, Canada, Mexico and Europe have enacted such bans.

So this Lent we ask you to look for the Rainforest Alliance or Fairtrade International certifications when buying chocolate.



## New ears and eyes for ACRATH

Lys Crowe, ACRATH's Interim NEO, is keen to bring 'new eyes and ears' to the organisation as ACRATH continues working towards a vision of a world free of human trafficking. Lys was no stranger to ACRATH when she took over as the Acting NEO late last year. For the past four years she has been a member of ACRATH in Victoria, juggling monthly meetings, presentations to parishes and schools, fundraising and a full-time job.



"Victorian members Claire Griffin csb, Mary Cameron and Bernard Dobson are the reason I first got involved with ACRATH, as I had heard from them about their involvement and listened to them speak of the impact of modern slavery globally and in Australia. They encouraged, and inspired, me to become an ACRATH member," Lys said.

Before commencing as the Acting NEO Lys was working for the St Vincent de Paul Society, Victoria as part of the Mission and Spirituality Team and, before that as a Project Officer for Young Christian Students (YCS), Melbourne. She started off in primary schools in Sale and Melbourne Dioceses with all sorts of roles, before spending most of her working life as a Pastoral Associate (including a few years as the Co-ordinator, Ministry to Pastoral Associates for the Melbourne Archdiocese) in various parishes in Melbourne and in Mildura.

Lys said she's inspired and motivated by the capacity of Victorian ACRATH members to continually find new ways to be involved, to advocate, to raise awareness, and to serve as companions to survivors of human trafficking. "And now, in my Interim NEO role I get to meet the members nationally, and to hear of their amazing commitments and involvements too around the country," Lys said.

"There is lots to be done as we continue to work with the big organisations that are so familiar to us like the Australian Federal Police (AFP), Anti-Slavery Australia, Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme, St Vincent's Health Australia, the Federal and the State Members of Parliament, Flinders University, and the University of South Australia. At the same time, I don't think we should underestimate the smaller ways we can also make an impact."

Lys said she's encouraged to hear of so many things happening in the community in response to human trafficking, including:

- the student who, after hearing a presentation at her school, now goes shopping with her mum each week "to make sure she only buys products with the green frog (Rainforest Alliance) on it".
- the woman, who after receiving an ACRATH calendar as a gift from a member, said "I had no idea this happened in Australia – thank you for letting me know".
- the family member of one of our members who changed their brands of coffee and chocolate, and even the shop they bought them from, because they will now only buy Fair Trade/Rainforest Alliance.
- the parish that responded to a call out and collected so many warm and waterproof coats for the migrant workers as they pick the fruit and vegetables in our colder, wetter months.
- the many conversations I've been part of about fast fashion, with many of my family and friends now thinking twice about their purchases.
- one of our members has made earrings – one featuring the Fairtrade symbol and one with the Rainforest Alliance symbol. She says they have led to many conversations and chances to raise awareness among her friends and colleagues.
- our "Is your tearoom slavery free?" sticker is another way to spread our message.

"And so, I've discovered that awareness raising, education, and action goes on in many ways and many are very simple," Lys said. "Sometimes it only takes a moment for a change to be made or at least to plant a seed of change."

"It's all these moments, big or small, intentional, and coincidental, that help us to ensure that all people can 'have life and have it to the full' - always remembering that 'people are not for sale'."

Lys is looking forward to learning lots, and contributing more, to the work of ACRATH during her time as Interim NEO.

## Call to action February 2025

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.

### Divest from companies that exploit children, Pope says

<https://www.usccb.org/news/2025/divest-companies-exploit-children-pope-says>

### Talitha Kum Annual Report 2023

[https://distribution-point.webstorage-4sigma.it/talithakum-510/media/documentdownload/2025/annual\\_report\\_2023\\_eng\\_hi\\_double.pdf](https://distribution-point.webstorage-4sigma.it/talithakum-510/media/documentdownload/2025/annual_report_2023_eng_hi_double.pdf)

### Chinese model rescued from scam centre in Myanmar

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-17/chinese-model-rescued-from-scam-centre-in-myanmar/104831514>

### Anti-slavery commissioner calls for urgent action on forced labour laws

<https://cathnews.com/2025/01/22/anti-slavery-commissioner-calls-for-urgent-action-on-forced-labour-laws/>

### Say Our Name exhibition marks 30 years since recognition of South Sea Islanders

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-03/30-year-anniversary-of-pacific-blackbirding-recognition-slavery/104739826>

### Moe Turaga was a modern slavery victim on an Australian farm for 2 years before escaping

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-09/what-is-modern-slavery-nsw-migrant-workers-commissioner/104589016>

### Embassies on notice for treating servants like slaves

<https://www.smh.com.au/politics/federal/embassies-on-notice-for-treating-servants-like-slaves-20250103-p5l1ua.html>

### Union recovers more than \$30 million in stolen seafarer wages as poor conditions laid bare

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-01-07/union-recovers-30-million-dollars-in-seafarer-wages/104789568>

### Shein's silence on China cotton use leaves British lawmakers in the dark on supply chain

<https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/shein-representative-declines-say-if-company-uses-cotton-china-uk-hearing-2025-01-07/>

### The exploitation of domestic workers in Australia

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/religionandethicsreport/the-exploitation-of-domestic-workers-in-australia/104576618>

### EU Adopts New Regulation to Curtail Forced Labor

[https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/19/eu-adopts-new-regulation-curtail-forced-labor?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=the-week-in-rights&utm\\_campaign=2024-11-22](https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/11/19/eu-adopts-new-regulation-curtail-forced-labor?utm_medium=email&utm_source=the-week-in-rights&utm_campaign=2024-11-22)

### Global Sisters Report: Trafficking

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/topics/trafficking>

### Be Slavery Free

<https://www.beslaveryfree.com/>

### Stop Trafficking Newsletter

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

### Anti-Slavery Australia

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

### Freedom United

<https://www.freedomunited.org/>



**“How can I eat and dress myself knowing that behind that food or those clothes, there are exploited children who work instead of going to school?”**

**The knowledge about what we buy is the first act in not being complicit. Look at where those products come from.”**

Pope Francis - 15 January, 2025

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.

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or <https://acrath.org.au/donate>

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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