



News Release ...Friday February 14 2020

Cardinal Knox Centre
383 Albert Street,
East Melbourne VIC 3002
PO Box 146,
East Melbourne VIC 8002
(03) 9926 5710
justice@cam.org.au

Catholic schools lead push to eliminate slavery from their schools

A **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit was launched in Melbourne yesterday (Thursday February 13) to help students, teachers and staff eliminate slavery from Catholic schools.

Taskforce Members

Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
Catholic Diocese of Ballarat
Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst
Catholic Diocese of Sale
Catholic Archdiocese of Hobart
Australian Catholic Religious Against
Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH)
Caritas Australia

Taskforce Aims:

To encourage and assist the Church in Victoria and Tasmania to eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking through:

1. Developing slavery-free supply chain strategies in all Church agencies.
2. Providing anti-slavery education and engagement initiatives.
3. Ensuring welfare services and justice are available for all human trafficking survivors.

"...to let the oppressed go free..."

Lk 4:18

Archbishop Peter Comensoli and Brigidine Sister Louise Cleary, a co-founder of ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) launched the **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit at Academy of Mary Immaculate in North 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 in the Melbourne Archdiocese's 333 schools to try and eliminate slavery from their school. He said one of the first and simple 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, is available online on the Catholic Education Melbourne website. It 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."

The Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst Dioceses and Hobart Archdiocese are also launching the **Make your school slavery-free** resource kit this week.



A simultaneous launch was held yesterday 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.

Archbishop Comensoli urged students and teachers and the wider community to consider how our lives impact on others around the world.

“How can we live in a way that can be good for others, that ensures they are not entrapped,” he asked.

While children are often enslaved to pick cocoa and coffee beans in developing countries, he said there were serious human trafficking issues closer to home. “There are slaves in our city. People who are in bonded employment.”

The launch of the ***Make your school slavery-free*** kit also celebrates the February 8 feast day of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of slavery and of Sudan. Sr Louise said that while the kit had been developed for schools, he encouraged parishes, community organisations, workplaces and families to use it.

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

Slavery-free certified tea, coffee and chocolate

Look out for products that feature one of the following certification labels:



Victoria-Tasmania Catholic Modern Slavery Taskforce

The Taskforce began in 2018 and includes:

ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans), Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Dioceses of Ballarat, Sale and Sandhurst, Archdiocese of Hobart, CARITAS and Catholic Education Melbourne.

Contacts

Jess Brady

Catholic Education Melbourne

P: 03 9267 0228

E: antislavery@cem.edu.au

Rosie Hoban

ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans)

M: 0431 471 046

E: rap@acrath.org.au