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**Australian Catholic Religious
Against Trafficking in Humans**

News Release ... Monday November 23 2020

Join ACRATH for 16 Days of Activism, Learning, Prayer and Stories

ACRATH is encouraging all Australians to join the United Nation's 16 Days of activism against gender-based violence starting on Wednesday.

Wednesday, 25th November the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, marks the beginning of the United Nations 16 Days of Activism against gender-based violence which ends on 10th December - Human Rights Day.

Human trafficking, a \$150 billion global industry, is one of the greatest examples of violence against women and girls. Millions of women and girls are forced to marry, or to work in slave like conditions for little, or no, pay and no chance of an education.

"Sadly, the COVID 19 pandemic and its lockdown measures have exacerbated these vulnerabilities and have put many women at further risk of violence," said ACRATH co-founder and President Sr Louise Cleary csb.

Sr Louise said the 16 Days of Activism was an opportunity to expose the extent and impact of human trafficking in Australia and globally.

"Importantly, this campaign is also a chance to meet people who are working in their way, in their field, to combat an aspect of human trafficking. ACRATH is using the campaign to introduce these people who, we hope, will inspire others," Sr Louise said. Some of those featured include forced marriage worker Megan Bourke (**pictured**), Catholic Education Melbourne project worker Jess Brady and former diplomat Liz Morris from Canberra.

As well as focusing on the people working in the areas of forced labour, forced marriage and supply chains, the 16 Days of Activism is also a time for learning, prayer and reflection. ACRATH has resources and two special events during the 16 Days of Activism campaign that you are invited to be 'attend'.

On 2nd December we invite you to join ACRATH's lunchtime webinar, **Looking into Australia's Slavery Past**. The webinar will look at Australia's past practices, particularly the 'blackbirding' of people from the eighty islands of Vanuatu and the Solomons. **Looking into Australia's Slavery Past** will be held from 1-2pm (Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney time). To participate in the zoom webinar please register in advance at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/8446121270>





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On 10th December ACRATH will host an international prayer and reflection zoom gathering to end the 16 Days of Activism against gender based violence. The prayer and reflection gathering, to bring light and hope into the darkness of human trafficking, will be held at 1pm to 1.30pm (Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra time). To participate in the gathering please register in advance at:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0rdeCrrz8iGtz5dB4Lgu68idqhS0AtQG_q

ACRATH's Executive Officer Christine Carolan urged people to also download the one-page reflection resource.

"In past years I have found it great to use each day as a 60 second focus for each of the 16 days. Sometimes I read it aloud with work colleagues and sometimes at home before our evening meal. You'll find it here: <https://acrath.org.au/wp-content/uploads/16-Days-Reflection.pdf>," said Christine Carolan, ACRATH's Executive Officer.

For all 16 Days of Activism stories, poster, information and resources go to:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/16-days/>

Information: Contact Rosie Hoban at media@acrath.org.au or on 0431 471046.