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Australian Catholic Religious
Against Trafficking in Humans

ACRATH MEDIA RELEASE: 26th February 2025 ACRATH Emphasizes: SLAVERY is Present in Your ELECTORATE!

Victorian politicians were given a wake-up call at a recent Speaker's Breakfast when told modern slavery is almost certainly happening in every electorate in Victoria.

The Speakers Breakfast' at Parliament House was organised by Legislative Assembly Speaker Maree Edwards MP. The Breakfast event was part of a series highlighting key community issues and the organisations actively addressing them. Ms Edwards has worked closely with ACRATH over the past 18 months planning the event learning about modern slavery and listening to stories by ACRATH members.

ACRATH's anti-slavery work was highlighted in 2023 when Victoria's Health Minister and Member for Macedon Mary-Anne Thomas urged all Members of Parliament to make their electorate offices slavery-free, starting with tea, coffee and chocolate. She promoted the collaboration with ACRATH during a Slavery Free Kitchen initiative and campaign.



Pictured: ACRATH member Marg Leahy, Mary-Anne Thomas MP, Shaun Leane MP and Iwan Walters MP



"I am certain that no one in this place wants to drink beverages where there's slave labour in the supply chains that bring them to us. It's a simple and small action that can make a significant difference," Minister Thomas told the Victorian Parliament during her member's address on 23rd February 2023.



Pictured: ACRATH member Marg Leahy and Chris Crewther MP, who instigated and led Parliament's Modern Slavery Inquiry, contributing to Australia's Modern Slavery Act. The pair look over the selection of Fairtrade coffee, tea and biscuits.

During the Speaker's Breakfast, ACRATH representatives highlighted ACRATH's efforts in the community, focusing on their programs and initiatives aimed at eliminating modern slavery in Australia and highlighting the importance of actions to prevent modern slavery and to support victims/survivors.

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ACRATH's mission to eliminate modern slavery in Australia includes tackling issues such as forced marriage, exploitation of migrant workers, and slavery within the supply chains of local shops, markets and supermarkets. ACRATH member Marg Leahy said, 'No matter what electorate you belong to there is human trafficking and modern slavery in your electorate'.

Megan Bourke, a member of ACRATH's working group on forced marriage, noted that forced marriage is one of the most highly reported forms of modern slavery across Australia and in Victoria.

'ACRATH's response to this is a very human perspective for a start in that we look to train and educate people to notice and respond to behavioural indicators of forced marriage, to look for people who may be in a forced marriage or at threat of being in a forced marriage,' she said.

Following the presentation ACRATH members and staff engaged in meaningful discussions with the MPs who were also invited to find out more about ACRATH initiatives that support and identify victim/survivors of modern slavery after they discussed concerns in their electorates.

To see ACRATH in action at the event: [ACRATH & Vic Parliament](#)

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Further reading:

See Parliament of Victoria published article: [Survivor's story sheds light on modern slavery - Parliament of Victoria](#)