

# Rotarian Action Group against Child Slavery

(This RAG is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International)

Website [www.racsrag.org](http://www.racsrag.org)

25 June 2014

Issue No 49



Editor: Mark Little – Rotary Club of Norwich St Edmund, England

“We are the doers of our communities, the leaders, the ones who are most involved, who see the problems and have the means to find the solutions. We are the worldwide network of inspired individuals who translate their passions into relevant social causes to change lives in communities”

Kalyan Banerjee(RI President 2011/12)



Robbie Boyes (RC of Bargarra – District 9570, Queensland)



Tony Stokes (RC of Box Hill Central – District 9810, Victoria)



Gillian Yudelman (RC of Bay View Claremont – D9455, Western Australia)

## RAG Coordinators appointed for Australia

Following RACSRAg’s visit to the Sydney Convention, six RAG Coordinators have been appointed to cover each State in Australia.

These Coordinators are Tony Stokes (Victoria), Chris Love (Tasmania), Gillian Yudelman (Western Australia), John Roberson (NSW), Teresa Evans (South Australia) and Robbie Boyes (Queensland).

Brief background details of our new Coordinators are included below.

As Coordinators their responsibilities will include raising awareness of human trafficking and slavery and taking action against these obnoxious crimes, not only in Australia, but also in other parts of the world.

Human Trafficking is a major issue in Australia where the number trafficked into the

country is estimated to be between 300 and 1,000 a year. The same problem prevails in most of the industrialized and developed countries of the world because people are usually transported from the poorer to the richer countries. According to the US State Department’s latest Trafficking in Person’s Report, there are over 800,000 men, women and children trafficked each year across inter-national borders into slavery.

The latter figure increases to 2.5 million when trafficking, which takes place from poorer to richer districts within a country and from poorer to richer countries within a region, is included.

The figure of 2.5 million trafficked victims is just part

of Slavery’s global picture and is just over 8% of the Global Slavery Index’s estimated total of 29.8 million people enslaved around the world. The remaining 92% of the world’s slaves are sedentary. That is they have not been moved from one place to another. In most cases they have been enslaved by their own people as in Mauritania, India, Haiti and in many other countries.

With the above situation in mind, RACSRAg members need to focus not only on human trafficking issues in their own country, but also on ensuring that children are protected from slavery and its consequences in other areas of the world where slavery is endemic. This is best achieved by working in partnership with anti-slavery organizations.

### Dr Gillian Booth-Yudelman

Gillian is the Charter President of the Rotary of Bay View Claremont (in District 9455, West Australia). She has been involved for a number of years with “Maiti Nepal”, an anti-slavery organization dedicated to help victims of sex trafficking in Nepal. The organization currently operates a rehabilitation home in Kathmandu, as well as transit homes at the Indo-Nepal border towns, preventative homes in the countryside and an academy in Kathmandu. Gillian is Maiti Nepal’s representative in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific and is a public speaker who raises awareness in the community about slavery and human trafficking. She has supported a Rotary Australia World Community Services (RAWCS) project in Nepal to assist with the interception of trafficked women and children at the border and has been instrumental in achieving two Matching Grants for “Maiti Nepal”.



## Australian RAG Coordinators (Cont'd)

### Robbie Boyes

Robbie is a member of the Rotary Club of Bargara (District 9570, Queensland). He is a Lifeline Telephone Crisis Supporter, a member of ARACY (Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth), Child Helpline International, PACT (Protect all Children Today) and the Child Protection Week Committee. He has been invited as the Key Note speaker for the RI Queensland Conference next year and will be speaking on child witness and slavery issues.

### John Roberson



John Roberson (RC of Wagga Wagga, New South Wales)

John has been a member of the Rotary Club of Wagga Wagga (District 9700, New South Wales, Australia) since 1994. He served as Club President in 2000/01 and led a GSE team to England in 2008. During the last 18 years, John has served in various capacities with Rotary Australia World Community Services (RAWCS) and is currently its National Projects Coordinator. He is Chairman Elect of RAWCS Eastern Region with a seat on the National Board.

Moved by the child slavery presentations he heard at the RACSRAG's Breakout Session at the Sydney Convention, John has decided to become involved in the campaign to eliminate child slavery.

*"If we cannot stop slavery, how can we really say we are free"*

*(Kevin Bales)*

### Tony Stokes



Chris Love (RC of Salamanca, Tasmania)

Tony joined the Rotary Club of Box Hill Central (District 9810, Victoria) in 2003. He was President in 2007/08 and Assistant Governor in 2010/11. He became aware of the child slavery issue through "Unshackled", an Action Group established in 2011. His Club partnered with "Unshackled" in a Community Forum on this issue last November and this heightened his interest and desire to become involved in actions to address human trafficking and slavery. Both Tony and his wife, Robyn attended the RACSRAG Breakout Session at the Sydney RI Convention and were dismayed to learn about the extent of the practice, but encouraged to discover the numbers of Rotarians wanting to do something about the problem. As a result of attending the Breakout Session, his wife Robyn has now decided to become a Rotarian and also be involved in the crusade against child slavery.

### Chris Love

Chris is a member of the Rotary Club of Salamanca (District 9830, Tasmania). He was President of the Rotary Club of Sullivan's Cove in 2008/09, was Club Vision Facilitator (2010-2012) and occupied the post of District Public Relations and Marketing Director for Tasmania between 2009-2012

### Teresa Evans



Teresa Evans (RC of Adelaide EDGE, South Australia)

Teresa is a member of the Rotary Club of Adelaide EDGE (District 9500, South Australia). She was previously a member of the Rotaract Club of Munno Para and the Rotary Club of Playford. In 2012, after the RI Convention in Bangkok, she travelled with other RACSRAG members to a Trafficking Shelter in Northern Thailand called "Rescue Mission for Children"

*She comments " I was so deeply touched from witnessing the poverty and vulnerability of children in poorer countries that I have since concentrated fundraising efforts to support projects to combat child slavery. I have also discussed this subject with many friends, colleagues and Rotarians to raise awareness of this crisis. I have arranged fundraiser events such as rock and roll nights, selling chocolates at my workplace and garage sales. I am passionate about closing the gap between the "have's" and the "have not's" in the world to make it a better place for everyone. I believe it starts with giving children a start in life, not being used and abused and discarded like disposable products".*



## **Slavery in the Thai Seafood Industry – Walk Free calls for Action**

As a result of a 6 month Guardian Newspaper investigation into slavery in the Thai Seafood industry, the Australian arm of a seafood company has recently circulated a statement addressing its concern about its own supply chain. The firm's concerns are justified because the newspaper's investigation has shown that the world's largest prawn farmer, Thailand-based Charoen Pokhand (CP) Foods, which opened a Melbourne office in 2012, buys fishmeal, which it feeds to its farmed prawns, from some suppliers that (it is alleged) own, operate or buy from fishing boats manned with slaves.

The revelation that slavery is endemic in the Thai fishing industry is no surprise to anti-slavery organizations like Walk Free and Anti-Slavery International. Large numbers of men bought and sold like animals and held against their will on fishing boats off Thailand, are integral to the production of prawns (commonly called shrimps in the US) sold in leading supermarkets around the world, including the top four global retailers: Walmart, Carrefour, Costco and Tesco.

Tesco has agreed to take appropriate steps to help end forced labour in Thailand's seafood industry, but the other three large retailers have yet to commit to this objective. So Walk Free is asking the public to take action by clicking on the link below.

**[TAKE ACTION: Tell the big four retailers to use their buying power to help eliminate modern slavery in the Thai fishing industry.](#)**

### **A Message to all RAG Supporters**

Please pass on Walk Free's link and request to all your Rotary colleagues to likewise take action after you have done so yourself.