

Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health Inc



ACHRRH

Empowering Communities
through Knowledge & Research

United We Stand

July 2018
Newsletter

Make your written submission to the Federal Parliament's Inquiry into Dowry Abuse. DEADLINE - 17 AUGUST 2018

This inquiry provides a great opportunity for ACHRH supporters to have their say on how to address the growing problem of dowry abuse & domestic violence in Australia

Please click on this link to read the terms of reference and to submit your views. Try to answer the questions the committee has outlined.

https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Legal_and_Constitutional_Affairs/DowryAbuse

Anti-dowry bill readings in State Parliament

Those of you who follow the State Parliament will know that the second reading of the anti-dowry bill passed unanimously a week ago. This is wonderful progress and has been backed up by a new federal inquiry into dowry abuse being announced - Julian HILL MP and Louise Pratt MP have announced Senate will hold a full inquiry. This is wonderful news, and you can read more of how the ACHRH has been involved in the coming pages.

Natak Vihar videotapes launched in style! (a quick word from the editor – Kristin Aitken)

I was recently lucky enough to attend the launch of the Natak Vihar videotapes, at the Lyceum Club in Melbourne. I don't often get to see Dr O'Connor and the rest of the

ACHRH people, so it was wonderful to catch up and also to hear how



Manjula O'Connor

things have been going. I can only describe the feeling in the room as lovely – everyone wanted to be there and share in the excitement of the work being done by the ACHRH. You can read more about the evening, and see some photos, in the coming pages. Thank you to Sanjay Bhandari for many of the photos!



Dr Manjula O'Connor takes ACHRH's Anti-Dowry Petition to the United Nations

Changing Stories: Exploring Solutions

Dr Manjula O'Connor

Family is the basic unit of harmony and strength in every society. Why does violence within families exist, in every culture, in every country? What can we do to stop this problem?

Domestic Family Violence is a complex issue. It is shown to be the result of interactions at multiple levels- the individual, the family, the community and the structures of society. The exploration of cause and solutions of FV is advanced by the art and science of Theatre under the umbrella paradigm of "Performative Social Science" (Jones (2012)).

Natak Vihar is community participatory theatre, it extends story telling around the family system and what makes happiness and what makes emotional and physical pain by revealing, producing and representing information about what can go wrong in the family, in ways that traditional research and literary methods do not.

4 stories are presented on this videotape that explore culturally responsive solutions

Scene 1 - An ideal, happy family showcasing alternative expression of masculinity

Scene 2- Arranged marriage between two unwilling partners- an Australian-Indian man and a woman in India; arranged by parents. The 'deal' is sweetened with huge dowry offerings by the bride's family,

Scene 3 –
Daughter-in-law and



Extended family, two generations, living together, including a newly married couple, and his mother and sister. the new daughter-in-law is subjected to social exclusion, servitude, verbal and emotional abuse and violence.

Scene 4 – Jealousy and control. A young husband manages to show pleasure at wife's superior job offer. As she progresses at work he becomes progressively more jealous and controlling with serious consequences

Natak Vihar is gratefully for support by the South Asian community of Australia and funded by the Office of Multiculturalism and Citizenship, Government of Victoria.

In turn Natak Vihar supports the goals of the UN Women, the Australian Federal Government and Victorian State to stop domestic violence.

Please watch the Natak Vihar Videotapes.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eunu-tUmFdw>



These images come from the anti-dowry walk organised by the ACHRH in December, 2014.

ACHRH's Anti-Dowry Ambassadors

Rohini Kappadath - Indian-Australian Business Leader

Rohini Kappadath has over 25 years' experience as a pioneer, corporate entrepreneur and advisor in sectors such as Information Technology, Management Consulting and Professional Services. She is the Victorian Winner of the 2015 Telstra Business Women's Award in the Corporate and Private category. Rohini is the current Manager of the Immigration Museum and a former Chair of the Multicultural Ministerial Business Advisory Council. These roles have enabled her to lead a transformative agenda to showcase Victoria's ethnic diaspora advantage and its special role in lifting Victoria's trade and investment links with the region.

Why Rohini Kappadath chose to become an ACHRH Anti-Dowry Ambassador

'As a mother of two daughters and a son, and as an engaged global citizen, I share in our collective

responsibility to chart an equal future for our girls and boys.

Traditional dowry practices advocate gender inequality and do not fit with contemporary Australian values.

Challenging the status quo on such practices that have diminishing relevance in our society is an act of humanity and leadership'



Sadhana Smiles - CEO Harcourts Victoria

Sadhana Smiles is Chief Executive Officer of Harcourts Group Victoria, the state division of one of Australia's leading, well respected and fastest growing real estate brands. She has created a brand that has placed her amongst her peers as a thought leader and industry commentator. In 2013 Sadhana was named the Victorian Telstra Business Women of the Year. In 2012 she brought Walk a Mile in their shoes to Victoria, getting 250+ men and women to walk a mile in high heels. This is now a national event raising funds for White Ribbon's Breaking the Silence Schools Program and making a clear statement that violence against women is not OK!



Why Sadhana Smiles chose to become an ACHRH Anti-Dowry Ambassador

The tradition of dowry and the abuse of many women that stems from this is a foreign concept in Australia. The exorbitant gift giving and taking is essentially about buying and selling a bride.

We need to work together and create a new tradition where the dowry becomes a symbolic gesture, where women are no longer abused because the dowry payment is seen as too little and there is anti-dowry law that protects these women.

#SAYNO TODOWRY



www.achrh.org

Support Us

ACHRH is an NGO and as such relies heavily and extensively on the mission partners and the wider community for support. If you would like to support us and get involved in any way then please do contact us, either via the website:

<http://www.achrh.org/>

Or Facebook (click the image to follow the link):



find us on
Facebook

Natak Vihar dinner

Rachna Prasad - ACHRH volunteer

The beautifully renovated Lyceum Club was the perfect backdrop for the launch of the Natak Vihar videotapes on 27 April 2018. The breadth and number of guests was a visual representation of the amount of dedicated people it takes to ensure the ongoing success of such a terrific initiative.

It goes without saying that domestic violence is a complex and confronting subject matter and coming from South East Asian backgrounds, I understand that the topic can be taboo in many households. The rationale, statistics and research about the need to address domestic violence is widely available and it is important to continue to drive knowledge and education in this regard. Natak Vihar ingeniously stirs conversations and forces audiences to unpack the various levels that the issue stems from in a way that people can resonate with the stories. The videos themselves do a great job in capturing the subtle behaviours leading to violence in the household. The issue of domestic violence is intergenerational and Natak Vihar videos provides a platform for people of ages to engage with and discuss the issues presented. The launch was a fantastic opportunity to get insights from actors and film production crew



and hear from notable speakers such as council members, the Chairperson of Australasian Centre for Human Rights and Health, GM from Immigration Museum and of course the passionate, campaigner, activist and leader Dr Manjula O'Connor.



Image of the videotape screening



Dr O'Connor and Marion Lau, ACHRH Board member



ACHRH Board Members Kate Grimmer & Viv Prasad, with Viv's wife Sneha Flora Prasad



Dr Ashima Soni & Dr O'Connor





Ms Rohini Kappadath & Dr O'Connor



Dr Raj Khillan



Prof. Ian Howie, Dr O'Connor, Cr Mary Lalios & Ms Janine Barnes

Anti-dowry Legislation in Victoria (finally)!

Gauri Kapoor

ACHRH's Anti Dowry Campaign has gained great momentum in 2018.

A bill to include dowry abuse in the Family Violence Protection Act has finally been introduced to the Parliament of Victoria based on the recommendation made by the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence in 2016.

The second reading of the bill was passed on June 21 2018. There will be a third reading in the Upper House this August. Legislation will happen after Royal Ascent in December 2018

Other key developments:

- ✚ Julian Hill MP and Louise Pratt MP have announced a Federal Senate inquiry into dowry abuse
 - ❖ Dr Manjula O'Connor recently visited UN offices in Geneva to lobby for greater international action on dowry abuse
- ✚ Filmmaker Anupam Sharma will make a Bollywood thriller film on dowry in Australia

JOURNEY SO FAR

These achievements would not have been possible had ACHRH not led a passionate and energetic fight against dowry abuse and harassment in Australia over the past few years. It has been a constant effort. In 2014, ACHRH organised a walk against dowry to deliver a powerful anti dowry message on the steps of Parliament. This was followed by ACHRH's convening of Australia's first ever national summit on dowry abuse in 2016. The organisation's extensive public awareness campaign organised by esteemed psychiatrist and activist Dr Manjula O'Connor has succeeded in exposing a pernicious practice which has led to much suffering in migrant communities here in Australia. The fight for justice and equality will continue as ACHRH's anti dowry campaign goes international.

Thank you to all the volunteers for their dedication to the cause.

#SAYNO TODOWRY



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Maansi Sharma – ‘Indian-Australian Super Mom 2018

“Honoured to be a “Community Ambassador of ACHRH- Australasian Centre for Human Rights & Health” 🙏



WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

- **POLICE IN EMERGENCY -- 000**
- **YOUR GP -- they are helpful, easy to reach, they will refer you to the right place.**
- **NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT, DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE -- 1800 RESPECT**
- **INTOUCH MULTICULTURAL CENTER AGAINST FAMILY VIOLENCE -- 1800 755 988**
- **WOMENS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CRISIS SERVICE (WDVCS) 24 Hour state wide line 1800 015 188**
- **MEN'S 24 HOUR REFERRAL SERVICE 1800 065 973 (FREE CALL VICTORIA ONLY)**
- **VICTORIA IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE WOMEN'S COALITION 03 9654 1243**
virwc@virwc.org.au, www.virwc.org.au
- **WOMEN'S INFORMATION & REFERRAL AGENCY (WIRE) 03 9348 9416**
inforequests@wire.org.au
- **DR MANJULA O'CONNOR, FOUNDING DIRECTOR ACHRH 03 9654 5271**
manjula@achrh.org

WHY GET HELP?

- ❖ Domestic Violence damages our culture
- ❖ Domestic violence breaks our homes
- ❖ Domestic Violence causes:
 - Anxiety,
 - Depression,
 - Suicide,
 - Homicide in women, men and children

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- ❖ Support those who may be victims
- ❖ Encourage victims to seek help and become survivors
- ❖ Encourage perpetrators to seek help
- ❖ DO NOT BE SILENT ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Say No to Domestic Violence

Media Engagement

The ACHRH has been making waves in the media – the following is a list of mentions of the ACHRH:

- ABC radio
- ABC digital news.
- ABC television news
- SBS television news
- SBS digital news

The ACHRH has also received the following mentions:

Victorian Parliament (and recorded in Hansard) -- Role of ACHRH and Dr Manjula in attaining the difficult goal of inclusion of words dowry abuse in Family Violence Protection Act by MP Heidi Victoria, MP Gabrielle Williams, and MP Danielle Green.

Federal Parliament -- MP Julian Hill.

**# SAY NO
TO DOWRY**

