

# THE TRADING CIRCLE

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO TRADE OUT OF POVERTY



## **The Trading Circle celebrates 20 years!**

On Thursday 10 September 2015, 70 friends of Good Shepherd gathered together to mark a significant milestone, celebrating 20 years of service to our global community through the Good Shepherd Trading Circle.

What a wonderful achievement for all involved. From the Sisters, who came up with an idea that would enable us all the opportunity to contribute to their vision of empowering women in remote communities and developing nations around the world; to people like Di Brennan (National Manager) and Bindi Lea (Sydney Manager), who have worked to streamline the retailing side and bring the Trading Circle into the digital world; to the many volunteers who have made it possible to operate the shops and to deliver the products to the many supporters who buy them.

### **The founding story, music and a video**

The evening featured two musical acts from talented volunteers, a key note speech on the history of Good Shepherd and the Trading Circle by Sr Jan Ryan and a video created by the women working to make goods in Nong Khai, Thailand.

### **The Trading Circle journey began with a good idea**

A photographic exhibition detailed the Trading Circle journey. It began with an idea from Sr Anne Manning to fill her suitcase with goods from the remote Indigenous community of Dareton to be sold in parish communities in the cities. It grew into a global network of services providing dignified work for marginalised women and their families in developing countries. Absent friends were missed, but were with us in spirit.

### **An opportunity to raise funds....**

In true Good Shepherd style, the evening was also an opportunity to further support. The Trading Circle chose to raise funds for the Fatima Centre in Bangkok which offers girls and women, mainly from the nearby slums and government housing, the possibility of learning basic skills which enable them to earn a decent living in a respectful and friendly environment. The women produce handicrafts, toys, educational books, children's clothes, quilts and embroidered linens. They receive a just wage for dignified work.

### ...for the Fatima Centre in Bangkok

Such is the respect for the work of the Sisters at the Fatima Centre, that they were recently approached by the United Nations to extend their services by assisting with the influx of child refugees who had arrived in Thailand after fleeing Syria and Pakistan. The Sisters agreed and have extended their already stretched services to commit to taking on an extra 250 children. Resources are tight and help is desperately needed.

### Empowering women and families

Throughout the evening, guests were reminded of the necessary and valued work Good Shepherd is achieving for the most marginalised communities in our world. The Trading Circle is an important mechanism for many Good Shepherd communities to provide hope and dignity through empowerment. The Trading Circle means Good Shepherd doesn't just give charity, it enables women to earn a living in places where this would otherwise be impossible. It creates opportunities for women and their families to be a part of a community, in places where they would otherwise be shunned. It encourages women to realise their self-worth and gives them the opportunity to love and to be loved in a world that had otherwise forgotten them.

