

## MEDIA RELEASE

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# First Nations women reflect on hope in new book

*Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this media release may contain names of deceased persons.*

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholic women have opened up about their lived experience of hope in a new book inspired by the recent Jubilee Year.

*Hope: Unfinished Business* invites readers into powerful stories of the grit and resilience of trailblazing women, and their ability to live, love and fight for faith-filled hope amidst turmoil and challenge.

Each touching story, authored by proud Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women, offers a unique and personal glimpse into the ongoing but unfinished work towards justice and reconciliation.

Sponsored by Australian Catholic University's (ACU) Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) in partnership with Catholic Mission and [formation.org.au](http://formation.org.au), the new book is a collection of raw reflections on hope in the face of darkness, uncertainty, survival and intergenerational trauma.

With a foreword by Fr Frank Brennan SJ AO, the book features the authentic experiences of the late Gumbayngirr woman Aunty Hilda Louise Campbell; education researcher Antoinette Cole; Executive Officer of Aboriginal Catholic Ministry in Sydney Dr Lisa Buxton; Kimberley Catholic Erica Bernard; mother of three Karen Andriske; Northern Territory educator Cynthia Page; Melukerdee and Palawa woman Alarna Page; Gumbayngirr woman Aunty Doreen Flanders; and Muruwari woman Sally Fitzgerald.

ACU Pro Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous) Kelly Humphrey said the book was conceived during the 2025 Jubilee Year of Hope, opened by Pope Francis in December 2024.

“Pope Francis invited all people to reflect on the signs of hope in our world and communities, and pray for a renewed hope in Christ,” Ms Humphrey, a proud Gomeri woman, co-author and editor of the book, said.

“For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Catholics, the Jubilee Year was an opportunity to reflect on the healing power of hope, and the role faith has played in our deep desire for change and reconciliation.

“*Hope: Unfinished Business* is a collection of these desires written by strong and faith-filled Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women who storytelling, prayer, art and even motherhood have found hope and healing in their lives.

“There is much work still to be done, together. *Hope* and a shared, hope-filled Australia future needs every person to join the conversation.

“We offer this book as a gift the Church in Australia, to nourish and support the ongoing works of formation and mission leadership.”

National Director of Catholic Mission Peter Gates said the Australian arm of the Pontifical Mission Societies was proud to collaborate on a book that offered a safe space for the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

“There is something profoundly powerful in being entrusted with these reflections, shaped by faith, resilience, healing and lived experience,” Mr Gates said.

“We hope this book will be received as a gift, inviting people to pause, listen and encounter the wisdom and hope these women share so generously.

“Through these stories, we are reminded that mission begins with relationship, with deep listening, and with walking alongside one another with a heart for healing and reconciliation.”

*Hope: Unfinished Business* is published by St Pauls Books and will be launched at ACU North Sydney Campus this week.

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