

261 Victoria Street
Abbotsford
Victoria 3067
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Work of Religious Against Trafficking is Recognised by Federal Government

ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) has been granted \$350,000 funding for the next three years to continue the fight against human trafficking. The Federal Government has announced that ACRATH is one of four non-government organisations funded, along with Project Respect (Melbourne), Anti-Slavery Project (Sydney) and Scarlett Alliance (Sydney). ACRATH national chair Sr Louise Cleary said the organisation was delighted with the grant as the money would help keep ACRATH viable over the coming three years.

“We are conscious, though, that the grant will cover only part of our costs as the work of ACRATH has grown and ACRATH is now working in four states,” Sr Louise said.

The announcement was made at the Government’s recent National Roundtable on Trafficking in Canberra attended by Sr Louise and Victorian ACRATH chair Sr Carol Hogan. The National Roundtable coincided with a 15 strong delegation of ACRATH members in Canberra. The group had 68 meetings with MPs, Embassy and Union officials and policy makers to discuss trafficking in Australia and globally. Sr Louise said the visit to Canberra had been very encouraging as MPs expressed interest in ACRATH’s work against human trafficking, which is recognised as a transnational problem that needs to be fought on many levels.

Minister for Home Affairs and Justice Brendan O’Connor said \$1.6 million would be invested in tackling human trafficking including sex and labour exploitation.

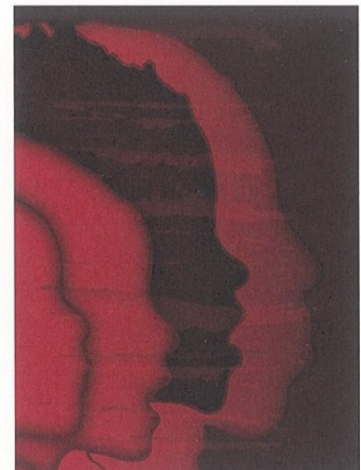
Minister O’Connor said \$1.4 million would be granted to the four non-government organisations ‘that each have a track record of delivering results for the victims of this heinous crime’. He said the funding would support important anti-people trafficking activities, including community education and awareness programs and direct support for victims of trafficking.

A further \$200,000 will be dedicated to a special collaborative project researching labour trafficking and identifying the most effective methods to prevent it.

During the National Roundtable, which involved anti-trafficking groups, unions, industry bodies and Ministers, founding chairperson of ACRATH, Sr Pauline Coll sgs, was praised and thanked by Minister O’Connor for her exemplary work as ‘a tireless champion’ in this anti-trafficking work.

Sr Louise said it was unfortunate that the need for groups such as ACRATH increased daily as more and more people and children were trafficked around the world.

“People are still being trafficked into Australia and the complexities of the problems increase. Whilst sex trafficking continues, there is also an unknown, and under-reported, number of cases of labour and other forms of trafficking,” Sr Louise said.



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She said ACRATH would continue to be an advocate for people whose vulnerabilities are exploited by traffickers.

“Our organisation, which is operating throughout the country, will contribute to on-going discussions initiated this last week by the government on *Forced and Servile Marriage* and on *The Criminal Justice Response to Slavery and People Trafficking; Reparation; and Vulnerable Witness Protections*,” Sr Louise said.

ACRATH is currently advocating for changes to create a more just environment for those freed from trafficking, especially changes relating to trafficked people’s access to financial compensation as well as safe and secure housing.

MEDIA CONTACT

If you would like more information or to interview one of the ACRATH delegates please contact:

Louise Cleary

clouise@brigidine.org.au

0408-225088

Christine Carolan

c.carolan@goodshep.com.au

0427 302 755