

2018 ACRATH ANNUAL REPORT

ACRATH is committed to working together towards the elimination of human trafficking in Australia, the Asia Pacific region, and globally.

This mission statement for ACRATH presents us with a huge task. As a small NGO scattered across five Australian states and the Australian Capital Territory, it would seem this is impossible for us to accomplish. However, inspired by the words of Jesus – “I have come that all may have life and have it to the full”, and with the faith that “nothing is impossible for God”, ACRATH members, with passion and skill, set about doing what they can believing that each action contributes towards the elimination of the evil of human trafficking and slavery in our world today.

Global Context

Inspiration of Pope Francis

ACRATH’s mission statement demands that we are aware of the global context in which we work. It is only in this way that we can think globally while acting locally. We are blessed that we have a key figure on the world scene who continues to inspire us. Of course, I am referring to Pope Francis. During 2017, in response to the consultations regarding the establishment of UN Global Compacts on Refugees and Migrants, the Vatican’s Section on Migrants and Refugees (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development) set out a plan of 20 pastoral action points which were approved by the Holy Father. The action points are grouped under four headings “to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate migrants, refugees and victims of human trafficking.”¹ These actions, grounded in Catholic Social Teaching, all have as their focus the dignity and rights of the human person irrespective of race, culture or visa status. They aim to ensure safe migration for all in this unprecedented era of mass migration brought about by conflict and natural disasters.

UN Global Compacts

Throughout 2017, consultative meetings were held to inform the development of the UN Global Compacts. The aim is for these compacts to be finalised by the end of 2018. Meetings have been organised around themes. The fifth thematic meeting held in Vienna in September 2017, had as its focus “the smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery, including appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims.” The report of this meeting indicates concerns such as the under reporting of human trafficking incidents, the vulnerability of migrants to being trafficked, ratification of the Trafficking Protocol does not always mean implementation, and the low number of prosecutions and even fewer convictions. Participants at the September meeting reiterated the importance of distinguishing between people smuggling and people trafficking while at the same time noting these two activities can overlap as the vulnerability of smuggled migrants exposes them to exploitation such as forced labour and sexual exploitation. The need for international cooperation and partnership in implementing existing frameworks was highlighted, as was the role of non-

¹ Address to participants in the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”, 21 February 2017.

government stakeholders in supporting States to fulfil their obligations to address human trafficking and slavery.²

Sustainable Development Goals

As Sr Anne Tormey noted in the 2017 ACRATH Annual Report, the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda came into effect on 1st January 2016. Goals five, eight and sixteen specifically refer to human trafficking and slavery issues. However, there must be a holistic approach to achieving these goals as without the alleviation of poverty, justice for all and environmental sustainability there will be people vulnerable to being exploited and marginalised. In the 2017 report of the UN Secretary General on the progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals, António Guterres indicated that child marriage is declining but the ratio of girls under the age of 18 being forced to marry was still 1 in 4; more than half of the world's 85 million child labourers participate in hazardous work and globally more women and girls than men and boys are still being identified as victims of trafficking. He also reported that in 2016 only six countries (Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom) met the United Nations Overseas Development Aid (ODA) target of 0.7% of gross national income. It is interesting to note that the May 2017 Federal Budget cuts to ODA meant that Australia was contributing 0.22% of gross national income or 22 cents in every one hundred dollars.

Bali Process and Bali Process Government & Business Forum

Established in 2002, the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Transnational Crime was set up as a forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation to help address these challenges in the Asia-Pacific region. Co-chaired by Australia and Indonesia there are 45 member states and three UN Agencies involved in the forum. For the first time in 2017 parallel to the Bali Process meeting that occurred in Perth a Bali Process Government & Business Forum was held. It is intended that the business forum will become a regular part of Bali Process events. It highlights the growing awareness of the role that business plays in addressing the issue of human trafficking and slavery. Our WA ACRATH members were represented at a seminar that took place for NGOs during the forum.

Australian Context

Modern Slavery Act

The Commonwealth Government's Inquiry into whether Australia should have a Modern Slavery Act similar to that in the UK dominated the Australian scene in 2017. The Inquiry was conducted by the Foreign Affairs and Aid Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. After receiving 225 submissions, holding 10 public hearings and extensive consultation with civil society organisations and businesses the committee tabled its report, ***Hidden in Plain Sight***, in Parliament on Thursday 7th December. Recommendations include:

- the introduction of a Modern Slavery Act in Australia
- the establishment of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner
- mandatory annual supply chain reporting for entities with a total revenue of \$50 million or more

² Report of Fifth Informal Thematic Session of Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and regular migration preparatory process, September 2017.

- the de-linking of access to the Support for Trafficked People Program and the Human Trafficking Visa Framework from compliance with criminal investigations
- extension of the 45 day period of initial support available under the Support for Trafficked People Program to a minimum of 90 days, with multiple options for extension
- the establishment of a national compensation scheme for victims of modern slavery in Australia, modelled on existing victim compensation schemes administered by the Commonwealth
- urgent review of Australia’s visa framework for migrants to replace or eliminate ‘tied’ visa conditions, such as employer sponsorship and sign-off requirements, that often create conditions of vulnerability to exploitation and modern slavery

ACRATH has seen participation in these Inquiries as an important part of our advocacy. ACRATH also sees the need to collaborate with other NGOs. In the past we have learnt that if NGOs can speak to government with a common voice there is a greater chance of bringing about policy change. Especially with regard to the Modern Slavery Act Inquiry, ACRATH worked with two NGO networks on two written submissions, engaged in a number of meetings with NGOs prior to presenting a written submission. ACRATH collaborated with three other NGOs (Salvation Army - Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery; Justice and International Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and FECCA – the Federation of Ethnic Communities’ Councils of Australia) to present a combined submission for this inquiry.

ACRATH is grateful to the members of the Inquiry Committee for their commitment and their willingness to listen to those participating in the Inquiry. This is an example of the collaboration that takes place in the human trafficking and slavery space in Australia. The Committee’s recommendations for a robust Modern Slavery Act will be the basis of ACRATH’s advocacy work for 2018.

Inquiry into Organ Trafficking and Organ Transplant Tourism in Australia

During 2017 the Commonwealth Government also conducted an inquiry into Organ Trafficking and Organ Transplant Tourism in Australia. The Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee of Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade called for papers to be submitted by June 2017. While there has only been one alleged case of a person being trafficked into Australia for the purpose of harvesting her kidney, there is a significant number of Australians travelling to Asian countries to receive organ transplants. It is a concern that the organs are obtained by exploiting people trying to find a way out of poverty or by stealing them from unwilling patients. Also, the medical follow up after surgery in some countries where the transplants take place is not always appropriate and there can be complications for the transplant recipient when he or she returns to Australia. ACRATH is grateful to the students and staff of the St Thomas More Law School of the Australian Catholic University, North Sydney for their assistance in preparing our submission for this inquiry.

NSW Parliament Inquiry into Human Trafficking and Slavery

The NSW Parliament also conducted an Inquiry into Human Trafficking and Slavery in NSW during 2017. ACRATH participated in this Inquiry with a written submission. The inquiry report was tabled in Parliament in October 2017. ACRATH welcomed many of the recommendations of this report. We now await the government response with debate on the report commencing soon.

Ministerial Changes

In the later part of 2017, Prime Minister Turnbull announced changes to his Government's Ministry. While the responsibility for human trafficking and slavery was formerly the responsibility of the Minister for Justice and the Attorney General's Department, the reshuffle means that this issue now sits within the Department of Home Affairs. While the ministerial changes were announced in December 2017 it is only recently that we have learnt human trafficking will be within the portfolio of the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, Alex Hawke. I am pleased to let you know that we have been able to arrange a meeting with Minister Hawke this coming Friday afternoon.

The ministerial changes meant that a number of important events were postponed. No date has yet been set for the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery which was due to be held in November 2017. The Interdepartmental Report on Human Trafficking and Slavery which gives a review of the Australian situation for the previous financial year, normally tabled in Parliament in November or December each year, is yet to be tabled. The Labour Exploitation Working Group of the National Roundtable has not been able to meet since June of 2017. The change to a new government ministry also has implications for ACRATH as we endeavour to advocate for funding beyond the expiration of our current grant on 30th June 2018.

In noting the challenges of the ministerial changes ACRATH would also like to publicly acknowledge the support we have received from Ministers of Justice and the Attorney General's Department in the past. We have valued the frank and honest discussions we have been able to engage in, the grants that we have received and the policy changes that have meant a better life for people who have been trafficked into Australia.

ACRATH Strategic Plan

Within a collaborative process involving all members of ACRATH, the later part of 2016 and the early part of 2017 was spent developing a strategic plan for July 2017-June 2020. The new Strategic Plan consists of 5 goals and some strategies for achieving these goals. A copy of the Strategic Plan has been provided for your interest this afternoon. You will notice that raising awareness about human trafficking and forced marriage, advocacy, slavery free supply chains and the ability of people who have been trafficked to access their rights continue to be key foci for ACRATH.

During 2017 ACRATH members gave 175 presentations on human trafficking to schools, parishes and community groups. When giving presentations ACRATH is keen to empower the audience so they are able to take steps that will contribute to the elimination of human trafficking and slavery. Steps include sharing what they have learnt with others, shopping ethically and participating in campaigns aimed at eliminating slavery and forced labour in supply chains.

Some ACRATH presentations have been specifically on forced marriage. In the forced marriage space, it has been important for ACRATH to engage with ethnic communities. This has been possible through participation in forced marriage networks in NSW and Victoria. An Islamic school also sought the assistance of ACRATH for training for their Deputy Principal and three members of their pastoral care team.

Over 30 trafficked women and their children were supported by ACRATH companions during 2017. A new initiative in 2017 was to bring together ACRATH volunteer companions from across Australia to reflect on the newly formulated ACRATH Companionship policy and to receive mentoring from a qualified social worker and psychologist. This ongoing support is valued by ACRATH companions and seen to be very important by the ACRATH National Committee.

ACRATH Collaboration and Partnerships

2017 saw ACRATH developing some new partnerships. The ACRATH and St Vincent's Health Australia (SVHA) *Human Trafficking Project* is looking at how trafficked people – who may present at any of SVHA's hospitals Australia-wide – can be identified and receive necessary treatment, support, referrals and access to services. This includes women who have been sexually exploited, people facing forced marriage and people who have experienced forced labour. The project will also look at how to make sure the goods and services procured for the 28 sites of St Vincent's Health Australia are slavery-free. It involves investigating supply chains to make sure a diverse range of goods – everything from medical equipment through to cotton sheets and gowns, and chocolates sold for hospital fundraising – have been produced without the use of enslaved or forced labour.

The Archdiocese of Sydney also sought the support of ACRATH last year. Archbishop Anthony Fisher gave evidence at a NSW State Parliament Public Hearing for an Inquiry into human trafficking and slavery. While giving evidence at the hearing Archbishop Fisher committed the Archdiocese to investigating whether there is exposure to slavery in its procurement practices and to taking steps to bring about change should it be identified. ACRATH is a member of the Archdiocesan Anti-Slavery Task Force set up to advise the Archbishop. A key role that is emerging for ACRATH in this regard is awareness raising within the various sectors of the Archdiocese. Earlier this month following a Mass in St Marys' Cathedral to celebrate the feast of St Josephine Bakhita, which is also the World Day of Prayer and Reflection Against Human Trafficking, Archbishop Fisher launched the Archdiocesan Anti-Slavery Taskforce Implementation Strategies. ACRATH is delighted to hear that other Dioceses around Australia are considering a similar commitment to slavery free procurement.

ACRATH continues to value the collaboration we experience with a number of organisations and in a number of networks. It is not possible to list them all in this report. Some key organisations include Anti-Slavery Australia, The Salvation Army - Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery, Red Cross, STOP THE TRAFFIK and The Justice and International Mission of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. ACRATH is also part of some international networks such as Talitha Kum and Caritas Internationalis (COATNET). Three ACRATH members happened to be in Rome during 2017 and were able to meet with Australia's Ambassador to the Holy See, Melissa Hitchman who has an active interest in anti-trafficking activities. Collaborating with NGOS enables us to learn from each other, to complement each other in the actions that we take and to be a united voice in advocating for policy change to ensure people trafficked into Australia can access their rights.

As you can see from what has been shared the activities of ACRATH form a rich tapestry of challenges and achievements, struggles and joys, concerns and hopes, frustrations and perseverance. Our work is not about being successful and acclaimed but about being a voice

with and for the vulnerable and ensuring their human rights are respected and accessible. Knowing that we have been able to make a difference is cause for thanksgiving and renewed commitment for all that is still to be done.

Hopes for the Future

ACRATH Membership

Since being incorporated as an association in 2013 ACRATH has put in place a formal process for accepting new members. ACRATH's Rules of the Association states "any person who supports the purposes of the Association is eligible for membership." Applications for membership are presented at ACRATH National Committee meetings for approval. This would normally happen after the applicant has had some contact with the relevant Regional ACRATH group and is able to see possibilities for engaging in the work of ACRATH. Most National Committee meetings would have applications for membership to consider. The hope is that membership will continue to grow. In particular, we would like to find ways to involve younger people in the work of ACRATH. Initiatives such as the young professionals group in Victoria, the young women working on supply chains in SA and working with ACU Law students in NSW are some examples of how we are working towards involving the younger generation. Perhaps there are other adjustments that will need to be made as we journey forward, such as times meetings are held and the structure of meetings, to name a few.

Financial Sustainability

At the beginning of 2017 ACRATH was in a vulnerable situation with regard to financial sustainability as we were led to believe that we would not receive further Government Funding when the 2014-2017 grant expired at the end of June. At the same time the calls on ACRATH were expanding. Possible sources of funding other than through the Commonwealth Government were investigated. The challenge of spending time to prepare grant applications while continuing to do the core business of ACRATH presented challenges. A consultant was engaged on an as needed basis but with the various applications requiring varied objectives to be satisfied each application was unique and still required considerable time from the National Executive Officer and other ACRATH personnel. It was then disheartening to receive notification that applications had not been successful after the hours of resources that had been expended.

A new initiative for ACRATH in 2017 was to conduct an appeal for funds leading up to the United Nations Day Against Human Trafficking on 30th July. By linking the appeal to this significant day in the anti-human trafficking calendar awareness raising and the needs of trafficked people remains a focus. The appeal was advertised via website, social media and the sending of letters to ACRATH e-lists and supporters. The response to this appeal has put ACRATH in a stronger financial situation as we begin 2018. Consideration will be given to this appeal to becoming an annual event. ACRATH is most grateful to all who responded. Whether your contribution was small or large it still contributes to the overall aim of eliminating human trafficking and slavery. ACRATH would like to make special mention of Religious Congregations and Dioceses that responded very generously to this appeal. We were particularly encouraged by congregations who made a 3 year commitment as that gives us the ability to plan ahead.

Publication of the ACRATH calendar also continues to be an awareness raising activity as well as a mean of raising funds. First published in 2015 the calendar is attractively presented

but more importantly it is a valuable resource creating awareness of human trafficking globally and in Australia. Thanks must go to Qld Regional Coordinator, Sr Janine Bliss fmm, and her team of supporters for the hours of work that go into producing the calendar.

It was with a sense of some relief that ACRATH learnt on 30th July 2017 that we had been successful in obtaining a Commonwealth Government Grant of \$125,000 for the period July 2017 to June 2018. The funding awarded to four NGOs and provided under the National Community Crime Prevention Program, will assist the implementation of three of ACRATH's Strategic Plan goals, at least until June of this year. There is no guarantee of government funding beyond June 2018. In advocating for further funding for NGOs ACRATH is noting that addressing the problem of human trafficking requires complex systemic change. A one-year funding grant limits the complexity of what can be taken on and achieved. Following on from the funding announcement by the then Minister for Justice, Michael Keenan, one of the other NGOs that received funding commented the efficacy of ACRATH's advocacy was a contributing factor to grants being awarded. ACRATH included the request for three-year funding grants during our advocacy visit to Federal Parliament in September 2017 and will take up this issue with the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs when we meet later this week.

ACRATH Appreciation

We have already taken time to give thanks for the blessings that have come about through the work of ACRATH members. It is also important that we acknowledge those who have made it possible for us to do this work. We owe an incredible debt to the many religious congregations that support us in obvious and in hidden ways. We thank Congregation Leaders who have members of their congregation participating in the work of ACRATH most often in a voluntary capacity. This has also involved the member having congregation assets such as motor vehicles, phones, electronic equipment and financial resources available to be able to do the work and perhaps the foregoing of a stipend.

Special mention needs to be made of the Brigidine Sisters, Victoria, who make the ACRATH office space available and to the Christian Brothers, Oceania Province, for making meeting rooms available for ACRATH National Committee and Sub-Committee meetings. Saying thank you seems so inadequate but we do appreciate your generosity and commitment to being involved in initiatives that strive to restore dignity and hope for those impacted by human trafficking and slavery.

The endorsement ACRATH receives from Catholic Religious Australia is a blessing for us. We are grateful for the encouragement we receive, for the assistance of CRA staff and for the hospitality that is extended to NSW ACRATH members who hold their regular meetings at the CRA offices in Annandale.

ACRATH also values the growing relationship with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. It is becoming a regular event for ACRATH to release a joint media statement with the Bishops' Conference for the World Day of Prayer and Reflection against Human Trafficking on the feast of St Josephine Bakhita. Bishop Terry Brady, Chair of the Bishops' Commission for Pastoral Life, has invited ACRATH to present at meetings of the Commission and Allison Burt, Executive Officer of the Commission, is in regular contact with ACRATH not only responding to our communications with her but also suggesting ways that the work of

ACRATH could be supported through Church agencies and events. We are grateful for this support and look forward to continuing this relationship.

Governance of ACRATH for the last two years has been in the capable hands of Carmel Heagerty rsm (Secretary), Shane Wood cfc (Treasurer), Regional Coordinators Kathy Fagan, Meredith Evans rsm, Carole McDonald rsm and Janine Bliss fmm and for 2017 Margaret Ng rsj, and co-opted member Louise Cleary csb. During 2017 Ray Sanchez cp was also co-opted onto the National Committee. Thanks also to Anne Tormey rsm who was President of ACRATH in 2016. To each of you thank you for your time, your wisdom and your commitment.

ACRATH is fortunate to have a dedicated team of staff and volunteers. ACRATH's National Executive Officer, Christine Carolan, continues to lead this team valuing each individual for their special giftedness and drawing from them skills that enable them to engage in the various tasks with confidence. And to Christine, thank you for all you do in the name of ACRATH. Your knowledge, skills, passion and dedication, your capacity for networking, your perseverance in advocacy, your sense of justice and your professionalism are all a gift to ACRATH.

An important part of ACRATH's strategic plan is to evaluate the work so that the best possible outcomes can be achieved with the resources that are available. ACRATH is very grateful to the evaluation committee - Erin Cassell, Will Dunn and Bernard Dobson. Erin, Will and Bernard give of their time and talents voluntarily. Their work is quietly done but the expertise and insights they provide are invaluable to ACRATH.

And of course, thanks must be extended to all the members of ACRATH for your participation in so many activities. Throughout 2017 you donated over 7,500 hours to the work of ACRATH. Without your contribution there would be so much we could not do. You each engage in sharing the message of ACRATH and advocating for change supporting and complementing each other in the process. Your availability and passionate commitment is very much appreciated.

Grateful for all that has been in 2017 and with commitment to our mission to eliminate human trafficking and slavery let us journey forward in hope and in the confidence that our God is with us always. Let us take to heart the words of Paul's exhortation to the Romans:

“Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer” (Rom 12:12)

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Rom 15:13)