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People are NOT for sale

## **ACRATH - Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans Countering human trafficking since 2005**

### **Snapshot of ACRATH's work over the past year**

**206** Presentations across Australia

**24** Trafficked people assisted

**9 schools in 3 states** trialling ACRATH forced marriage education kit

**325** students engaged in ACRATH forced marriage pilot project

**229** Network meetings attended

**48** Members of the House of Representatives & **17** Senators visited

**117** items uploaded to the ACRATH Website

**7,069** hours of volunteer time donated

Volunteer time costed at **\$199,065**

**ACRATH appreciates the bipartisan support for policy work on human trafficking.** We believe positive change has grown out of the genuine collaboration between government and civil society.

**ACRATH acknowledges the recent positive changes to the Human Trafficking Visa Framework.** Renaming the visas, and the improved access to Social Services attached to those visas, will greatly assist people trafficked into Australia in rebuilding their lives.

**ACRATH also applauds the establishment of the Supply Chains Working Group** of the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery. This working group is now examining the existence of forced labour and trafficking in the supply chain of goods produced in, and also imported into, Australia.

**1. ACRATH is asking MPs to address the needs of those in Australia facing forced marriage.**

**ACRATH is advocating for:**

- a. A Pilot Project for flexible entry to the Support for Trafficked People Program, delivered by the Red Cross.

ACRATH believes that young people, predominantly girls and young women, who are facing forced marriage in Australia, need access to quality Support Services without agreeing to testify against those arranging their forced marriage, very often their family members. Currently referral to the Support Program is by the AFP. ACRATH proposes a flexible entry pilot project with referrals by certified agencies, including DIBP, the Red Cross, and a few registered NGOs.

- b. A two year extension of the successful forced marriage education project being run by ACRATH.

ACRATH has been funded by the AGD to develop curriculum for school communities so they can recognise and address forced marriage. So far the kit has proven successful in trials in 9 schools in 3 states. We now need a wider roll-out of the newly-developed curriculum so that vulnerable communities are engaged in the issue, and so that those facing forced marriage know their rights. This second phase of the project will have a strong prevention focus, working with parents and community leaders, as well as teachers and students.

**2. ACRATH is asking MPs to address the needs of overseas workers facing forced and exploited labour in Australia. ACRATH is advocating for:**

- a. The licensing of labour hire companies responsible for placing thousands of overseas workers in Australia. ACRATH believes that these companies need more oversight to ensure overseas workers are not exploited while they work in Australia.

**ACRATH is asking Minister Dutton to begin licensing these labour hire companies.**

- b. Prosecutions of exploitative employers of overseas workers under the Migration Amendment (Reform of Employer Sanctions) Act 2013. ACRATH asks how many prosecutions and convictions have occurred using this or other legislation, especially given the recent media coverage of employers and labour hire companies involved in severe exploitation of overseas workers?

- c. Payment of back wages to overseas workers, even when they are repatriated, for the work they have done in Australia. ACRATH is concerned that, for example, the approximately 160 overseas workers at Carabooda WA have not yet received their back wages. ACRATH sees this as an issue of justice for the workers and a means of making the exploitative employers financially liable for huge back wages bills. This would also be a deterrent for would-be exploitative employers. ACRATH would like to see all investigations, like the one in Carabooda, begin by considering the possibility that the overseas workers may have been trafficked or have experienced forced labour.

- d. Mechanisms to link overseas workers in to Australian society to ensure they have an independent means for exploring their rights as workers. ACRATH knows that workers who have been linked in to community groups, church groups, Migrant Resource Centres, Unions have been much less vulnerable to forced labour.

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1 September 2015