



Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans

President's Report to the Annual General Meeting

16 February 2016

Preface: The Changing Context in which ACRATH operates

Initially, in this report I would like to recall with you some of the global developments in the past year which have had a bearing on the practices of human trafficking and modern slavery.

In 2015 globally, nearly 60 million people were displaced by conflict internally, or externally, more than at any time since World War II. In addition there were the displacements due to the effects of climate change and natural disasters, such as the earthquake in Nepal. Human traffickers have preyed on vulnerable people caught up in these large scale migrations. Tens of thousands of unaccompanied minors at risk of abuse and trafficking have been part of the wave of migrants from the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia to Europe, mirroring a similar trend across the United States-Mexican border.

While since the passing of the Palermo Protocol in 2000 there has been an increase in awareness of the magnitude of the scale of human trafficking globally and an increase in legislation to prohibit it, the numbers of people trafficked continue to increase and the practices of modern slavery are now embedded in most societies. Human trafficking is a \$150 billion illicit industry. The Trafficking in Persons Report in 2015 (United States Department of State) emphasised the need to demand accountability and transparency in global supply chains and indicated the ways in governments and businesses could take action to protect workers.

A significant development in 2015 was the inclusion of ending human trafficking and modern day slavery as part of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which will shape the priorities of the United Nations and its 193 member states. Goal 8.7 states: Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour and modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition of the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms. Goal 5.3, put ending forced marriage on the global agenda.

In the United Kingdom the government intended the supply chain clause of its Modern Slavery Act of 2015 to be a "world leading" provision. Large businesses are required to report annually on the steps they have taken to eradicate slavery and human trafficking from their supply chains. The legislation was designed to have extra territorial reach.

While requirement for transparency and accountability in the supply chains was part of the Crimes Act Amendment within Australia in 2013, the legislation specifically directed at supply chains has yet to be implemented. In Australia this year there was conclusive evidence of labour exploitation and slave like conditions in farms and factories supplying Coles, Woolworths, Aldi, IGA and Cosco supermarkets and KFC, Red Rooster and Subway fast food chains. The unscrupulous practices of some labour hire companies were revealed in the ABC media coverage, highlighting Australia Post contractors, and the 7- Eleven franchise chain.

Pope Francis continues to maintain a proactive stance in relation to human trafficking which he sees as a crime against humanity. The third meeting of the Santa Marta group, a Church/ Police Global Trafficking Initiative was held this year in Madrid and attended by representatives from the Church, police forces and NGO's from 34 countries. The issue of law enforcement is critical in the fight against human trafficking for the paucity of prosecutions and convictions globally continues to make human trafficking an attractive, low risk crime.

Since Pope Francis' counter human trafficking messages ACRATH has developed a strong new relationship with the Catholic Bishops of Australia. To mark the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, the Australian Freedom Network was launched on 2 December at Parliament House in Canberra. Leaders of different Faiths signed the same "Joint Declaration of Religious Leaders against Modern Slavery" signed at the Vatican in 2014. ACRATH was acknowledged officially twice during the signing.

ACRATH Strategic Objectives 2014-2017

In reporting on our progress in relation to ACRATH's Strategic Plan for the period 2014 – 2017 the following were significant achievements in 2015.

Objective 1: Raise awareness of human trafficking, its causes and the scope for action

- ACRATH collaborated with the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC) in 2015 and will again this year in preparing materials for the World Day of prayer, reflection and action against human trafficking on 8 February, the Feast of St Josephine Bakhita. ACRATH will work with the ACBC to distribute Slavery Free Easter Chocolate campaign materials prior to, and at, Easter 2016. ACRATH has also begun working with the ACBC on political advocacy strategies.
- In 2015, ACRATH members engaged with communities, NGOs, government organisations, parishes, churches, schools and conferences in 6 capital cities and two territories and in the following regional, rural and remote areas of Australia: Geraldton, Karratha, Port Pirie, Port Augusta, Mildura, Wangaratta, Ballarat, Bendigo, Apollo Bay, Geelong, Swan Hill, Melton, Gippsland, Harrierville, Wagga Wagga, Orange, Wellington, Bundaberg, Gladstone, MacKay and Rockhampton. A total of 164 presentations were given in NSW, VIC, SA, WA, QLD, ACT and Tasmania to schools, parishes, and specific community groups.
- The forced marriage curriculum development project, piloted by ACRATH in 9 Government and Catholic schools in SA, Vic and NSW, funded by the Attorney General's Department, was successfully completed and has contributed to raising awareness of the issue of forced marriage in Australia. ACRATH promoted presentations by UK anti forced marriage activist, Jasvinder Sanghera, in Adelaide, Sydney and Melbourne. ACRATH has connected with many NGOs concerned with forced marriage in Australia through state-based force marriage networks.

- In Queensland ACRATH cluster groups have been formed in Bundaberg and Gladstone and the concept has been explored in Mackay and Rockhampton. The Bundaberg cluster organised a community meeting for local church groups and is exploring ways to address labour trafficking/forced labour in the region in connection with the office of Keith Pitt MHR. In Brisbane an information Stall was organised at the Assembly for Catholic Religious Australia. The Calendar produced by ACRATH Queensland has been an effective awareness raising strategy nationally.
- Two University students, associates of ACRATH SA, were selected to join Carolyn Kitto and the team from Stop the Traffik to visit textile factories in northern India in February 2015 and have subsequently been active campaigners. In South Australia since the Slavery Free Easter Chocolate Campaign members and students have visited 23 dessert bars and chocolate shops/ cafes in Adelaide to promote awareness of ethically certified chocolate. They organised a workshop and stall at the Australian Catholic Youth Festival (3,000 attendees) in December to promote awareness of human trafficking.
- In the ACT ACRATH has had involvement with a number of schools assisting teachers and students in a focus on Fair Trade and ethical supply chains, and with community and parish groups.
- Members from NSW and the ACT gave a presentation on human trafficking, including forced marriage to the annual clergy conference for the Wagga Wagga Diocese.
- In Victoria there was a focus on assisting school communities to utilise the ACRATH Education resource available on the ACRATH website. A Training Day for 34 senior secondary school teachers from 21 schools with appropriate accreditation for participation was held in September and will be replicated in 2016.
- Presentations were given by ACRATH Victoria to community groups in Hobart and Launceston
- ACRATH members in Western Australia attended and distributed information at the Vietnamese Lunar Festival in Perth, the May Day gathering in Fremantle and the Veritas Perth Youth Festival. A fundraising Concert attended by more than 200 people raised \$4,000.
- The ACRATH Radio Awareness Project (RAP) has taken a new approach to raising awareness of human trafficking within CALD communities, developing materials to raise awareness of forced labour in rural and remote communities. There has been involvement with the Catholic ethnic Chaplains group in Brisbane.
- ACRATH members were invited to be interviewed by the following media outlets: Fresh FM (QLD), ABC Radio (Karratha), Radio ECU(Perth), 774 ABC (Melbourne); Canberra Women's radio , SBS World News Report; ABC radio Sydney. ACRATH has been consulted by producers of 4 Corners, Q&A, ABC local radio in Victoria and several Catholic media outlets.
- In 2015, 105 items were uploaded to the ACRATH website; there were 4 newsletters and 79 e-newsletters. (53 website blogs uploaded, 55 e –bulletins) The website, as well as the Facebook and Twitter pages, have been well utilised within the wider community.

Objective 2: Work to ensure that the complex needs of people trafficked into Australia are met

- ACRATH members provided companionship to at least 24 women who had been trafficked and referred to ACRATH in Qld, NSW, Vic, and WA ACRATH members were able to access funds through the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters monies to meet the immediate needs of the trafficked women and children. An application for a further grant from the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters has been approved.
- In Victoria, at the request of the Victorian Police and the Australian Federal Police and in Western Australia at the request of the AFP, support has been provided for individual trafficked people. Some people have been assisted to re-settle in their home countries. ACRATH continues to build an Asia-wide list of people offering to help with repatriations and with links to trafficked people's families.
- ACRATH has continued to work in collaboration with Anti Slavery, Australia, the Freedom Partnership, Project Respect and others to improve visa outcomes for people trafficked into Australia. On 27th May the government announced visa changes which related to the naming of visas to prevent victim identification and the provision of services, including English classes and social security rights for people trafficked into Australia. Ministers at the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery acknowledged ACRATH's long term work on the visa framework. ACRATH and its partner organisations continue to advocate for unaddressed visa issues.

ACRATH member Sr Maree Marsh csb was awarded a 2015 Anti-Slavery Australia Freedom Award which acknowledges the work that she does supporting men, women and children who have been trafficked into Australia through her work as a psychologist at Anti-Slavery Australia.

- ACRATH members in WA have worked with the Salvation Army to begin a Freedom Partnership network, and have begun a training program for all members who want to support people who have been trafficked.
- ACRATH has continued to work with the Law Faculty of ACU and other NGOS to strengthen the case for financial compensation for people trafficked into Australia.

Objective 3: Collaborate with like-minded organisations in Australia, in the Asia Pacific region, and globally to advocate for measures to address human trafficking

ACRATH places a high priority on the development of partnerships and on strengthening relationships with governments and organisations and agencies as part of its overall counter trafficking strategy. All state ACRATH groups have continued to establish new and maintain current relationships with Australian Catholic organisations and national/ international organisations and groups.

Nationally

ACRATH continues to play a strong role at the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery convened by the Attorney General's Department and attended by representatives from government, unions, NGO's and departmental officers. ACRATH is also represented on the National Roundtable working party on Supply Chains and on the National Roundtable working party on Communication and Awareness Raising.

In September, 11 ACRATH advocates were in Canberra for advocacy with MPs. ACRATH representatives met with a total of 52 Members of Parliament, from all states and territories, including a Minister, Ministerial staff and some Shadow Ministers. ACRATH's advocacy points focused on forced marriage, and forced labour and exploitation of workers in Australia.

Within Australia given our emphasis this year on forced marriage, forced labour and slavery free supply chains we collaborated with the following entities.

- With # Speak Out, ACRATH co-sponsored presentations by Jasvinder Sanghera CBE to Australia, in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney, promoted her role in the Victorian Forced Marriage Network Forum and her facilitated media links.
- In New South Wales and Victoria, members have represented ACRATH at forced marriage network meetings. In New South Wales, 60 organisations attended these meetings. The networks are made up of organisations from the community, government and domestic violence sectors.
- ACRATH also worked with the Federal Branch of the Australian Education Union (AEU) in the provision of an awareness-raising presentation on forced marriage at the AEU National Women's Conference, and via an article about forced marriage in their professional journal.
- In Victoria, the office of Maria Vamvakinou MHR co-sponsored a theatre workshop in a Government high school in her electorate exploring forced marriage with the ACRATH Forced Marriage Pilot Project. The theatre workshop was featured on the SBS world news.
- ACRATH members have joined with a taskforce including Justice & International Mission Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia, Walk Free, the Salvation Army and Harris Wake Legal Migration, seeking regulation of labour hire companies in Australia, due to concerns of forced and exploited labour occurring in farming, construction, hospitality and food processing industries in Australia. ACRATH has also made contact with the National Farmers' Federation (NFF). In relation to agricultural labour contracting.
- ACRATH have continued to work and meet with the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Uniting Church Justice and International Mission and the Sandhurst Diocese on slavery-free supply chains and on developing new resources for the Slavery-free Easter Chocolate Campaign for 2016. In New South Wales ACRATH is represented at STOP THE TRAFFIK working group meetings and has collaborated in the preparation of resources for Easter 2016 and in promoting ethical fashion campaigns.

Internationally

- ACRATH has made connections with the following overseas agencies in its counter trafficking initiatives. Franciscans International, Mercy International Association, UNANIMA International, Good Shepherd Philippines, Good Shepherd Shelter Malaysia, Tenaganita (Women's Force) Malaysia, Good Shepherd Women's Center Pattaya, Thailand, Catholic Women's League, Caritas (Asia and Australia), Edmund Rice International, Baptist World Aid, Talitha Kum, HAART, Global Freedom Network, Religious in Europe Networking Against Trafficking and Exploitation (RENATE), Mary Ward International, Karma Nirvana, and Aotearoa-New Zealand Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ANZRATH).
- ACRATH Victorian member, Angela Reed, completed her PHD in *Exploiting Vulnerability: A Study of the lives of Filipino Women who have been trafficked into sex work*. With Marietta Latonio, her

Filipino co-worker, she subsequently published an illustrated book of her work focussing on the life stories of 40 trafficked women in the Philippines who were supported by the Good Shepherd Sisters. Marietta Latonio gave two presentations on this research at the Australian Embassy in Bangkok and Angela Reed gave a presentation at the UN in New York. ACRATH is keen to assist Angela and Marietta working to explore opportunities to share this material globally in 2016.

- An ACRATH member from Queensland attended the Franciscans Justice and Peace workshop in the Philippines. This was an opportunity to develop networks in the region and promote the work of ACRATH.
- Susan Newland, SA ACRATH member, was an intern with UNANIMA in New York during 2015.
- In late 2015 ACRATH hosted a meeting with the Director of ALOLA Timor Leste to explore common concerns about human trafficking in Timor Leste and in Australia. ACRATH members are following up on this meeting.
- ACRATH members met with Denise Boyle fmdm and Aine O'Connor rsm of Mercy International Association to discuss further collaboration.
- Umes Acharya, who has experience in rescue, rehabilitation and involvement in research and intelligence in relation to the trafficking of children as a member of a coalition of NGOs countering human trafficking in Nepal, has joined ACRATH SA.

Objective 4: Build a Sustainable Future for ACRATH

- ACRATH incorporated as an Association in 2013, in 2014 gained Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status. ACRATH is in receipt of Government Funding for the period 2014- 2017. This funding was supplemented by a grant of \$61, 000 for the now completed Forced Marriage Project.
- ACRATH has been supported financially through a generous response to our fundraising requests from many religious institutes and from the funding initiatives of regional groups, such as the ACRATH QLD 2015 calendar project. Grant monies from the Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters were well utilised in addressing immediate needs of trafficked people in 2015; another grant from this fund has been received for 2016. ACRATH is grateful for the generosity of the Fund.
- Work on documentation, including a policy handbook, to accompany the Rules of the Association is in progress.
- ACRATH's archives which contain information about human trafficking and ACRATH's past national and regional meetings, projects and advocacy work, funding/grant documents, campaign materials and financial reports are held in the National Office.
- Sustainability does remain a significant issue for ACRATH. While there are many demands for our work to expand the current wage and salary component of our budget is not sustainable without increased financial resources. While ACRATH is ostensibly a volunteer organisation of senior members of religious institutes, members will increasingly withdraw as they age, or take on new assignments. The regional groups need new members. The formation of cluster groups in regional Queensland has been a significant development in 2015.
- In Victoria, the Anti Trafficking Research and Advocacy Unit, a group of young people keen to further the work of ACRATH has discussed recruiting new members. In Adelaide a group of university and school students assists in awareness raising activities.

ACRATH Staff

Christine Carolan holds the position of National Executive Officer of ACRATH and was ably supported in the National Office this year by community worker, Madelaine Curnow, Rosie Hoban as Coordinator of the RAP project and Anne McPhee ibvm as volunteer archivist. Elizabeth Payne was employed to lead the Forced Marriage Project and, Anne Walsh was employed to assist ACRATH Victoria with the implementation of its education resource. Denise Mulcahy fcj who had worked so diligently as a volunteer in the Office (2011-2014) and was so highly esteemed, retired early in the year. Noelene Simmons sm is the Project Officer for NSW as well as the web manager.

All employment contracts continue to be with Catholic Religious Australia (CRA).

ACRATH National Committee

In 2015 the other members of the National Committee were Carmel Heagerty rsm (Secretary), Shane Wood cfc (Treasurer), Janine Bliss fmm, Noelene Simmons sm, Carole McDonald rsm, Mary Mercer rsj, Lucy van Kessel pbvm (Regional Co-ordinators), Louise Cleary csb and Genny Ryan osu.

Our Appreciation

I thank on behalf of us all, the staff of ACRATH, so ably led by Christine Carolan, for your passion, vision, commitment, professionalism, approachability and sheer hard work. With gratitude I acknowledge the commitment and generosity of members of the National Committee, all of whom have many other areas of involvement. I particularly wish to acknowledge Lucy van Kessel who has contributed so much to ACRATH as regional coordinator for West Australia during the past six years and Mary Mercer for her fine contribution as regional coordinator in South Australia for the past two years. Lucy and Mary we will miss you very much.

We are particularly grateful to the Brigidine Sisters for their immense generosity in making available space for the National ACRATH Office at Albert Park (Vic), and for myriad forms of support. We also thank the Christian Brothers who provided office space and accommodation at Parkville for meetings of the National Committee, the Finance committee and, also, for Victorian Education meetings.

We acknowledge, and are grateful for, the continuing endorsement and support of Catholic Religious Australia including the support of the staff of the CRA Office.

We also acknowledge the generosity of Erin Cassell and Will Dunn who provide a voluntary service as evaluators of ACRATH's Strategic Plan enabling us to meet the requirements for the grant from the Attorney General's Department.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge all members and supporters of ACRATH for your dynamic contribution within the regions in combating human trafficking and in attending to the needs of trafficked people.

Towards the Future

While we keep in mind developments in relation to combating human trafficking in the global arena we will continue to build on our current achievements in relation to ACRATH's strategic objectives for the period 2014-2017. This National Conference with its focus on the need for transparency and accountability in the supply chains will both inspire and inform our efforts to combat modern slavery and human trafficking.

Anne Tormey rsm

ACRATH President