

Editorial

Your support is taking us into the suburbs and universities

A leading charity fundraiser, who supports ACRATH with some pro-bono advice, said: “You must have incredibly faithful and committed supporters to have held your ground during the pandemic”. She was reflecting on our June-July fundraising campaign results and she was right!

We can't fully express our gratitude to you all for your financial, and in kind, support that saw us reach our campaign target. The generosity of so many is inspirational given the pressures many people face in this COVID pandemic time of uncertainty. Significantly, it means that ACRATH can push ahead in the coming months with some important projects that include:

- Expanding our forced marriage work with universities to engage with the training of teachers, midwives and nurses. In October we will work with Flinders University in South Australia.
- Working with certain community groups vulnerable to forced marriage. This outreach work will focus on the western suburbs of Melbourne and the Queensland area of Toowoomba.
- Embracing technology during COVID-19 by offering many of our resources via webinars. This means working closely with teachers and front-line workers around the country. Two examples are our recently released forced marriage video and our education packages for schools. More webinars are planned for later in the year as we work to spread more widely the information about human trafficking and modern slavery in Australia.

None of this would be possible without you – ACRATH's “incredibly faithful and committed supporters!” We thank you for your generous support of our 2020 fund-raising campaign.

Louise Cleary csb (President) and Christine Carolan (EO)



WA ACRATH held a hugely successful movie night fundraiser in August. An early release of the highly anticipated WA-set movie, RAMS, attracted 140 people. Along with sales of raffles, homemade cupcakes and biscuits, the evening was blessed with generous supporters. It was also a great way to promote the work of ACRATH and raise awareness in the community!

New Forced Marriage Resource Launched

ACRATH's **2020 ACRATH Recorded Forced Marriage Video Presentation** is now available following a zoom launch in August attended by 114 people from around Australia.

ACRATH's recently retired forced marriage worker Liz Payne, in collaboration with her brother Matt James, a professional Corporate Education Specialist and videographer, produced the 35-minute video.

The video is part of a suite of new and revised forced marriage resources available free at acrath.org.au. It is targeted towards educators, healthcare professionals and frontline responders including child protection workers. Supporting resources developed specifically for educators, marriage celebrants and clergy, healthcare professionals, and for front-line professionals, including child protection workers, accompany the video presentation.

The forced marriage video explores the complexities of forced marriage, the impact on a victim of forced marriage, the extent of the problem in Australia and globally, and referral pathways for victim/survivors. It is a compelling tool for those working to combat forced marriage and provides some disturbing information about forced marriage in Australia.

During the launch, Senior Sergeant Marilyn Ross, of the Australian Federal Police, said the AFP received 92 reports of forced marriage during the 2019/20 financial year, with just over half of these relating to victims under the age of 18 years. 70% of the reports alleged that victims were taken offshore or the intent was for them to travel offshore for the purpose of forced marriage. The most vulnerable group seen by the AFP during this period was young females between the ages of 15 and 19 years.

Marilynn said reports of forced marriage were challenging to investigate and that unless a witness or a victim comes forward, they may never know about an imminent forced marriage, or a forced marriage that has occurred.

"Often victims don't want police involvement as the offenders may well be family members. They may also be fearful because they have been threatened, coerced or deceived. For us it is about working with the community, other Government agencies and NGOs like ACRATH

to give people a pathway and provide support for those who do come forward to report to police," Marilyn said.

"It's so important that health workers, midwives, child protection workers and teachers know the right referral pathways for a person who discloses a forced marriage or an imminent forced marriage," Liz said.

"Without knowing the correct way to respond to someone, that person can be left very vulnerable and their safety jeopardised. And we know that even though the AFP was investigating almost 100 cases last year, there are so many more that will never be reported because of fear of retribution, or of the concern that the victim has in relation to the shame that will be brought upon the family within their community."

The **2020 ACRATH-Developed Forced Marriage Presentation** is not recommended for use with school-aged students.

Find the resources at: <https://acrath.org.au/resources/forced-marriage/>



Marilynn Ross



ACRATH QR Code

Use this QR Code to take you direct to the ACRATH website suite of forced marriage resources - for education, healthcare and frontline professionals

Canberra Advocacy 2020

Each year ACRATH members and staff participate in the advocacy week in Canberra. Our advocacy and networking with politicians and policy makers over the years has contributed to key gains including the passing of the Modern Slavery Act in 2018 and visa changes for trafficked people.

This week is one aspect of our advocacy and this year a team of 10 will be participating in the week of Sept 21st to 25th via ZOOM or alternate technologies.

In the lead up we have had a number of workshops with key ACRATH spokespeople who have shared their knowledge and helped us deepen our understanding for each advocacy issue.

These include:

- De-linking the Support For Trafficked People Program (STPP). People referred to STPP currently need to make a report to the Australian Federal Police; we are seeking an alternate pathway for accessing services via an NGO.
- Funding for NGOs whose work targets the elimination of human trafficking.
- A national registration scheme for labour hire companies. *See story.*
- An increase in Australia's Overseas Development Assistance.
- An *Act of Grace* for 'egregiously exploited' Vanuatu workers. *See story.*

Calling all teachers engaged in Curriculum Planning for 2021

Save the date!

ACRATH will hold a Webinar to introduce its updated resource, *Modern Slavery: A Teaching Kit for Senior Secondary Students* on Monday 23rd November 2020 at 4.30pm Australian Eastern Summer Time. The purpose of the Webinar is to introduce teachers to the kit and its applications in the classroom. It will be ideal for teachers engaged in course planning for 2021.

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83912889531>

Update on stolen wages of the 22 from Vanuatu

ACRATH's campaign to reclaim the wages stolen in 2014 from 22 farm workers from Vanuatu has taken another hopeful step forward. Regular readers will remember the men's case was taken to court in Brisbane, and the judge in 2017 described the theft of wages as 'egregious exploitation'. But the exploiter did not pay back the stolen wages, nor most of the fine imposed by the court.

The FairWork Ombudsman obtained financial information in May to establish that Mr Bani does not currently have any substantial means to pay the judgement debt. The court has closed the proceedings.

This month the ACRATH campaign leaders feel a glimmer of hope. The FairWork Ombudsman's office has the possibility of making a very small first instalment payment to each of the men. Also ACRATH campaigners are working with Allens, a large Australian law firm who offer ACRATH pro bono legal advice.

Allens and ACRATH are working together to support the 22 men applying for an Act of Grace payment from the Australian government to cover the rest of the men's stolen wages. We will keep you posted on the next steps of the campaign in our e-news bulletins; we'll also alert you to any further action we may need to take collectively.



Liz makes her mark with ACRATH submission to Senate Inquiry

Liz Morris is fairly new to ACRATH, but already her contribution has been enormous. Most recently, she drafted ACRATH's submission to the Senate's Select Committee on Temporary Migration, which is looking into the impact temporary migration has on the Australian economy, wages and jobs, social cohesion and workplace rights and conditions. Liz was supported by many ACRATH members who provided case studies and information for the submission.



The submission draws upon the many years of experience ACRATH has had with temporary migrant workers around Australia, but particularly in Victoria and Queensland. ACRATH member Fr Peter O'Neill ssc, who worked with Liz on the submission, is a member of a Government Committee advising on the Seasonal Worker Program.

Liz, a former diplomat, has significant international experience including in anti-human trafficking programs, governance and policy reviews. She is also a member of 2020 ACRATH Canberra Advocacy team.

ACRATH's submission presents 10 recommendations to the Australia Government, including that the Government:

- implement a national labour hire licensing scheme that covers all industries
- introduce stringent penalties for wage theft
- provide a mechanism for workers to report unlawful workplace practices
- explore mechanisms and processes to ensure migrant workers' claims, for example wage redress and superannuation recompense, are dealt with expeditiously and workers' visas are amended to allow them to remain in Australia until their case/s are resolved.

"Many people would assume that migrant workers already enjoy rights such as protection from wage theft, but they don't. They are a hidden group of often exploited workers," Liz said.

The submission shines a spotlight on some of the failures to protect migrant workers and calls for practical changes that would see more structured and relevant information given to migrant workers (in their own language) before they arrive and once in Australia. Liz believes ACRATH is well-placed to play a role in the delivery of some of these support services.

Liz said ACRATH has spent years advocating on behalf of migrant workers, particularly in the case of 22 men from Vanuatu who came to Australia under the Seasonal Worker Program in 2014 and are still waiting for payment. ACRATH recently secured the pro bono support of a major law firm to help pursue justice for these workers.

A copy of ACRATH's submission can be obtained on the [Inquiry website](#) as Submission 108.

New ACRATH Resources

The 35-minute **2020 ACRATH Recorded Forced Marriage Video Presentation** for educators, healthcare professionals and frontline responders including child protection workers.
<https://acrath.org.au/resources/forced-marriage/>

In Australia! Slavery!

A video to assist in raising awareness about human trafficking and slavery here in Australia. Schools may find this resource particularly helpful. It explains what human trafficking is and encourages viewers to take some action to assist in the fight against human trafficking and slavery.
<https://acrath.org.au/videopage/in-australia-slavery/>

ACRATH 2021 calendar now available

ACRATH's 2021 calendar is now available. In previous years we sold the ACRATH Calendar for \$10. However this year we acknowledge that many are directly effected by COVID-19, and we would still like for you to receive the 2021 ACRATH Calendar. We value your support, so please feel free to order calendars complimentary or make a donation. To order a calendar please go to <https://acrath.org.au/2021-acrath-calendar/> OR contact office@acrath.org.au.

ACRATH's Queensland coordinator Sr Janine Bliss fmm produced the first ACRATH calendar in 2015. Since then it has become a feature in many offices, homes, staffrooms and classrooms.

"For me the calendar has always been about the trafficked person and showing how everything we do has the trafficked person at the centre. The stories of ACRATH's projects are all in response to the trafficked person and their stories," Janine said.



Take Action on Clothing

Looking for a summer tee-shirt or sporting equipment as a birthday or Christmas gift? Then look for Fairtrade certified products.

ETIKO has a range of women's, men's and kids' clothes that are made by people who are paid a fair wage and who work in safe conditions.

If you have connections with a school, suggest that they consider using ETIKO's sporting equipment, Jinta sports.

ETIKO's founder Nick Savaidis, is offering ACRATH readers a 15% off Jinta sports when you apply the code at checkout - Jinta15. The discount is live now and valid until 31 December.

ACRATH would love supporters to buy Fairtrade to ensure that workers in countries, including India, where a lot of ETIKO clothing is made, keep their jobs during COVID-19.

You can find Jinta sports equipment at <https://jintasport.com.au/>

To buy ETIKO clothing or to find out more go to: etiko.com.au

If you buy something please let us know at media@acrath.org.au



Companionship during COVID

ACRATH's 11 volunteer Companions offer support and friendship to 32 trafficked women, their 38 children and to three trafficked men. Two Companions support groups of seasonal workers in Victoria and Queensland. This support is, at times, a challenge during COVID-19.

The trafficked women in our program are facing financial stress, limited access to work and financial supports, and isolation bringing with it challenges to emotional health.

Without regular face to face catch ups and incidental material aid drop offs, ACRATH's volunteer companions expressed their concern of 'letting their partner down', despite their creative use of texts and email allowing for communication and support to continue.

ACRATH is grateful for a grant provided by the UN Voluntary Fund for Slavery, which has meant our companions offered financial and material aid to people all over Australia, providing gift vouchers if needed. Over 60 adults and children have benefitted.

Both parties expressed their gratitude.

'The Visa cards have arrived safely. I am very grateful and want to pass on my thanks, so too does my son,' said one recipient.

'I just received your letter and the voucher. Thank you so much Sister. I will buy food for the kids. They stay at home and eat a lot.'

Companions shared their gratitude too that they were able to support people who are in a more dire situation because of COVID. One of our companions sums it up, 'Thank you so very much; what a joy it was to be able to help the women.'

One of ACRATH's volunteer Companions, Sr Therese Power rsm, said she was also moved by the generosity of the trafficked women she has supported for many years and their concern for her well-being.

Thank you to all our companions for supporting survivors of human trafficking.



ACRATH needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

Please consider a regular donation to ACRATH so that we can plan ahead. Thanks.

<https://www.trybooking.com/au/donate/acrath>
or <https://acrath.org.au/donate>

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

NATIONAL OFFICE

54 Beaconsfield Pde
Albert Park, VIC 3206

Ph: 03 9645 5986

www.acrath.org.au

info@acrath.org.au