



Annual Conference and AGM (27 February - 1 March)

In what new ways can ACRATH tackle human trafficking across our region of Asia and the Pacific?

This was one of a number of challenging questions faced by 46 ACRATH members and friends at the ACRATH National Conference and AGM, held over three days in Templestowe, Victoria.

Two keynote speakers informed and challenged ACRATH members as they spoke of trafficking into prostitution across Asia and the Pacific. The speakers shared their sense of urgency as they described the thousands of young women and girls being trafficked across our region.

The outgoing ACRATH president, Maree Marsh csb, stated "ACRATH activities taking place across Australia are as many as they are varied. Education, awareness-raising, advocacy, personal support of women and men trafficked into Australia, visits to parliamentarians as well as the development of networks amongst like-minded groups have been high on the agenda... In valuing the work that has been done within Australia we also celebrate events that have taken place at an international level in relation to fighting against the insidious crime of human trafficking." Maree's theme and challenge was to work in order that "all may have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10).

Conference Participants were able to see the new online education resource that has been developed. This can be accessed at <http://acrath.org.au/education-resource/>



Conference participants

Congratulations

Anne Tormey rsm was elected to the position of President of ACRATH at the AGM. Anne has been the Regional Coordinator of ACRATH in South Australia for the last three years. She has had wide experience in administrative roles and has a passion for working against human trafficking. ACRATH members are grateful to Anne for accepting nomination and election to this role.

Anne is replacing Maree Marsh csb who has held the position of President of ACRATH for the last two years. ACRATH members are grateful for Maree's wise leadership over these years. Her leadership has affirmed, inspired and challenged all members to be strong advocates for the human rights of those who have been trafficked and exploited.

(Photo: L-R Anne Tormey & Maree Marsh)



FAIRTRADE

Above:

Logos for 3 forms of certification of ethical sourcing of raw materials (chocolate, coffee, tea etc)



Easter Eggs: Slavery Free Easter Chocolate

<http://www.acrath.org.au/take-action/>

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Reflection by new ACRATH President

The National Conference is a high point in the year for ACRATH members.

As we meet together we extend our awareness of ACRATH activity, regionally and nationally, and of anti trafficking activity internationally through our networking overseas.

This year we were fortunate to have two keynote speakers who helped us to understand the urgent needs of women trafficked from Asia and the Pacific.

We also engage in strategic planning for the year ahead.

Time together enables us to experience something of the dynamism of ACRATH.

This stems, I believe from our rootedness in the gospel, great clarity of purpose and the energy and commitment of our members.

Our being together enables us to enhance our capacity to work collaboratively and respectfully with one another, and with other people and other organisations committed to addressing the needs of trafficked people and eliminating human trafficking.

Thank you Carol Hogan sss



Incoming national secretary Carmel Heagerty rsm lights a Hope Candle at the ACRATH National Conference. As this candle was lit each day, participants brought to mind our outgoing national secretary Carol Hogan sss.

We prayed each day that Sophia Spirit would enfold Carol as she faces her sudden ill health and the next phase of her journey.



Anne Walsh presenting



Stancea Vichie mss lighting a candle



Ann Kelly ibvm, Carmel Harty, Louise Cleary csb and David O'Brien sdb



Noelene Simmons sm presenting about the Asia Policy Conference

The new Strategic Plan

It was agreed at the conference that until 2017 ACRATH will work on four objectives:

1. Raising awareness of human trafficking, its causes and the scope for action
2. Working to ensure that the rights and complex needs of people trafficked into Australia are met. These needs may include: retraining, employment assistance, access to financial compensation, accompaniment, repatriation assistance, if desired, and meeting medical, dental, psychological & other health needs. This list is not exhaustive as ACRATH support is flexible and responsive to need.
3. Collaborating with like-minded organisations in Australia, in the Asia Pacific region, and globally to advocate for measures to address human trafficking.
4. Building a sustainable future for ACRATH

The conference participants focussed on the two most pressing threads of work under objective 4: funding and membership. These were also the subject of two workshops. In particular the group faced the end of the current core funding in June 2014.

New Zealand Report

Aotearoa New Zealand Religious Against the Trafficking of Humans (ANZRATH) was initiated in early 2012. New Zealand is not a major destination country for trafficking, however the issue is still very real within society. Trafficking issues in New Zealand include: forced marriages; underage street prostitution; trafficking into (legal) brothels – a recent survey showed 5% do not have access to their passports; and exploitation of migrant workers (particularly on foreign charter fishing vessels).

ANZRATH activity in 2013 included: members corresponding with MPs re: street prostitution in south Auckland, much of which is understood to be underage; attending an ECPAT/Salvation Army/US Embassy/NZ Immigration joint conference in May; donating funds to support ECPAT/University of Auckland research on underage prostitution; and promotion of education materials with teachers through our Catholic school networks.

ANZRATH has also lobbied for trafficking to be a focus issue for all NZ Religious in 2014, gaining the support of the Congregational leaders.

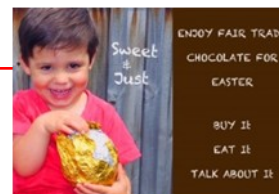
Anna Field

Ethical Easter Eggs

The Slavery-Free Chocolate Campaign was launched with enthusiasm by students from Penleigh and Essendon Grammar Schools and St. Bernard's College. At the same time many ACRATH members have also been busy spreading the word throughout their networks. To maximise the impact further, you may like to consider asking that a small explanation be inserted into newsletters produced by your school, parish, club or other organisation this Lent.

Sample notice for newsletters:

Did you know that much of the chocolate available in Australia comes from cocoa beans picked by children, many of whom have been trafficked or forced to work in exploitative conditions? 70% of the world's cocoa comes from West Africa. To ensure that the chocolate you buy has been produced in an ethical manner, look for the following labels: Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or UTZ. So spread the word, talk to the manager at your local supermarkets about slavery-free chocolate and learn more about this issue from www.acrath.org.au www.facebook.com/sfchoccampaign



ACRATH National Committee (as elected at the 2014 AGM)

President: Anne Tormey rsm

Secretary: Carmel Heagerty rsm

Treasurer: Shane Woods cfc

Co-ordinator - Victoria: Carole McDonald rsm

Co-ordinator - New South Wales: Noelene Simmons sm

Co-ordinator - Western Australia: Lucy van Kessel pbvm

Co-ordinator - South Australia: Mary Mercer rsj

Co-ordinator - Queensland: Janine Bliss fmm

Give us the wisdom and courage to stand in solidarity with all who suffer lack of human dignity. Help all who work against human trafficking to find ways to ensure for all the freedom that is your gift to all of us.

From the Prayer for Anti-trafficking advocates

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We acknowledge the funds received under a grant from the Australian Government. ACRATH's funding from the Attorney General's Department will run out in June 2014. ACRATH therefore needs core business funding and additional funding for special projects.

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

Contact Christine at the National Office.

www.acrath.org.au

People are NOT for sale

Pauline Coll sgs, a founding member of ACRATH, has been honoured with an Australia Day award. She has been awarded an AM (Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia) for her significant service to the Catholic Church in Australia, and as an advocate for the protection of women and children, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. ACRATH congratulates Pauline on receiving this award. May she continue to be an inspiration for those advocating for human rights especially for women and children.



'Although the honour has my name on it, it includes all those who worked with me and also those who supported me – and there were many...' Pauline Coll sgs.



News from the National Projects Co-ordinator

Christine Carolan has been invited to be part of the 2014 Mercy Leadership and Dublin Pilgrimage Program. Outside of her work with ACRATH, Christine is a volunteer on the board for Mercy Works, a development-focussed body providing support for programs in PNG, Timor Leste, and with programs with and for indigenous Australians and refugees in Australia. Christine will be taking annual leave and will be away from the national office from 5 April until 6 May.

Christine will also use this opportunity to catch up with sisters who attended the Vatican workshop on human trafficking last November, and sisters who work in anti trafficking work in London and Dublin.

Regional Group meetings at the annual conference

South Australia



Victoria



Western Australia



NSW & ACT



Queensland

