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People are NOT for sale

15 Good Years Around the Table

ACRATH's important role in combating human trafficking was recognised from its early days when it was invited to be part of the Federal Government's National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery. This new entity was established in 2008 as a mechanism for government to consult with civil society about issues relating to human trafficking.

2023 is the 15th Roundtable anniversary and ACRATH member, Noelene Simmons sm will participate, as she has over many years. ACRATH Community Development Worker Cindy Bohan will assist Noelene at the celebration.

ACRATH Executive Officer Christine Carolan has been part of the Roundtable since it began and believes it has achieved a great deal. In light of the 16 Days of Activism focusing on women migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation, she reflected on the importance of work done by the Roundtable's Labour Exploitation Working Group. The group's recommendations relate to women and men migrant workers; these are significant recommendations to establish strong migrant worker-focused policies.

The Roundtable is attended by up to five federal Ministers, Departmental officers from about seven or sometimes eight Federal Government Departments, representatives from various groups including the Law Institute, Industry groups and the Australian Institute of Criminology, the Australian Federal Police, a representative from about ten civil society groups including ACRATH, and, since 2022, people with lived experience of human trafficking. Each year there are two meetings – the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) and the Ministerial Roundtable.

“Since a discussion at the August 2023 Roundtable, ACRATH has been invited to work with the Attorney-General's Department (AGD) on overseas capacity building activities and regional responses including in the Pacific. Five ACRATH representatives met with five AGD officers to discuss issues arising from our ACRATH work in the Pacific and with people from Timor Leste,” Christine said.

“One example is the need for women seasonal workers when they come to Australia to have health insurance that includes pregnancy and maternity cover. In the past this has on occasion not happened and women workers have been asked to go home once they know they are pregnant.”

Christine believes the Roundtable has achieved more than it set out to do 15 years ago. It has established working groups that made concrete proposals for policy change that will definitely change people's lives. Policy change may sound dry, but these examples will make such a difference:

- There is now a publication from a working group, called Guidelines for NGOs Working with Trafficked People.
- The former Criminal Justice Stay Visa has been replaced by an extended Bridging Visa F and the Witness Protection Trafficking Visa has been replaced by a Referred Stay Visa. The new visas enable people who have been trafficked to access services specific to their needs.
- Developing resources on Forced Marriage.
- A working group considered Labour Exploitation and came up with similar recommendations to those of Prof Alan Fels, including the licensing of labour hire companies.
- The Modern Slavery Act slowly emerged from working group proposals.
- Piloting of an additional pathway onto the Support for Trafficked People Program. The final proposal was developed by a strong, focused working group of civil society Roundtable members.
- Two National Action Plans have been developed following on from consultation with Roundtable members.

Noelene believes the exchange of ideas and experience has contributed greatly to the Roundtable's achievements. “The Roundtable provides a forum for policy makers to dialogue with those working at the coal face. Meeting days are opportunities to network during the sessions and informally over morning tea and lunch. The sharing of wisdom that takes place energises participants and promotes collaboration and planning between meetings,” she said.

Migrating workers face separation

The challenges facing seasonal workers, particularly women migrant workers, can be life-changing. Many families are separated because a mother or father in the family has to leave home to secure better pay and greater security for their family. In the case of migrant workers the separation can last for years.

Sr Jean Quinn DW, Executive Director of UNANIMA, says the majority of migrant domestic workers around the world are women and girls, and they are extremely vulnerable to violence and abuse. Many leave their homes because of poverty, conflict, climate-related disasters or violence for the promise of a better life for themselves and their families.



While most season workers coming to Australia from the Pacific and Timor Leste will not suffer abuse, many suffer from years of separation from their families and many other personal hardships.

ACRATH Forced Labour Worker Sr Taabeia Ibouri sgs from Kiribati is very familiar with the challenges of separation people face, particularly those from her homeland. She said households of 10 to 15 people could not survive on the wages they earn locally, and so come to Australia seeking more money and security for their families. One incident shone a light on the difficulties migrating workers face.

During a Diocesan Assembly in Port Pirie, Sr Taabeia met with seasonal workers who worked at a tomato plantation in Port Augusta. There were sixteen workers - 12 women and 4 men and most had children. At a park gathering with people from Kiribati Sr Taabeia was heartbroken to hear many of them talk about the children they had left behind to come to Australia to work. At the party one woman brought two cakes to celebrate her twin's second birthday.

[Listen](#) to Sr Taabeia talk about the factors leading to the migration of workers and some of the issues they encounter.



Meredith Evans rsm honoured

Sister Meredith Evans rsm has been named the 2024 South Australian Senior Australian of the Year. Meredith has been a dedicated ACRATH Member for many years and was the Regional Coordinator in South Australia from 2016 until November 2021.

The award is a wonderful recognition of Meredith's commitment to justice, to responding to people in vulnerable circumstances and to inspiring and working alongside young adults. ACRATH congratulates Meredith on receiving this award.

Better deal for seasonal workers

New guidelines have been established to try and ensure better outcomes for seasonal workers coming to Australia from the Pacific and Timor Leste. Fr Peter O'Neill, Columban Regional Director of Oceania, is ACRATH's representative on the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme Agriculture Committee. In this Q & A Peter explains how one change relating to minimum working hours will impact seasonal workers.

Q. New guidelines have been established to try and ensure better outcomes for seasonal workers coming to Australia from the Pacific and Timor Leste. The Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme Approved Employer Deed and Guidelines set out a range of requirements and regulations that follow years of advocacy by ACRATH and other organisations. What is the change to minimum hours and wages?

A. Presently short-term seasonal workers are to receive a minimum of 30 hours of work per week averaged over the entire work placement (maximum 9 months). Effective from 1 January 2024 to 30 June 2024, they are to receive a minimum of 30 hours of work per week averaged over 4 weeks. Effective from 1 July 2024, they are to receive a minimum of 30 hours of work every week. Previously long term -workers (1-4 years) received a minimum of 30 hours of work per week. Effective from 1 October 2023, they are to receive full time hours.

Effective from 1 October 2023, if workers are offered less than 20 hours of work a week, the employer must pay accommodation and transport costs and the debt cannot be accrued. Employers are to pay PALM workers in line with other workers at the same workplace. There must be a minimum net pay guarantee for all workers after tax and deductions of \$200 a week.

Q. How important is this change to a minimum number of hours?

A. This change will better protect the rights of seasonal workers to a more regular and stable income and hopefully prevent workers from disengaging from the program due to a shortage of work.

Q. What will it mean to a seasonal worker?

A. This change will enable workers to have a stable income with enough money to live off each week. It will also enable them to send money to their families on a regular basis.

Q. Are you aware of incidences where seasonal workers have not been given adequate hours and struggle financially?

A. I have met some newly arrived seasonal workers who for several weeks were not given adequate hours of work and struggled financially.

Q. Are women, involved in the seasonal worker program, more vulnerable to exploitation?

A. Women who are pregnant are vulnerable to being sent home if they are unable to work.

Q. In terms of wages for seasonal workers, is there still a way to go?

A. There have been huge improvements in the PALM Deed and Guidelines to better protect the wages of seasonal workers. There needs to be ongoing monitoring by the government to ensure that all approved employers are abiding by the deeds and guidelines. Otherwise, unscrupulous employers will be left unaccounted for.



Learning for Justice – A Victorian Initiative



On 8 February 2023, the International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking, Pope Francis instigated a global ‘year of action by young people’ – an opportunity for young people to raise their voices to make a real difference for a fairer world. In response, a group of Victorian ACRATH Members devised its *Learning for Justice* Project. Its aim was for secondary school students to deepen their knowledge and understanding of a human trafficking issue and determine an appropriate action that they would commit to taking.

ACRATH is a member network within a global network called Talitha Kum. Talitha Kum is committed to the protection, empowerment and healing of victim survivors of human trafficking. Our *Learning for Justice* Project has given students an opportunity to be part of a global movement of young people – culminating in a series of special events on 8 February 2024.

Students at one of the involved schools, St Mary of the Angels Secondary College in Nathalia, examined the issue of slavery free coffee. They uncovered the reality of trafficking in coffee production and responded creatively, investigating available slavery free coffee brands and offering their teachers and peers a coffee tasting session. Their aim was to introduce the most popular brand of slavery free coffee throughout the school. They produced a video highlighting their learnings and showcasing their coffee tasting session. Colleen Jackson and I were delighted to be able to visit the students and their teacher Ruth Bakogianis to acknowledge and applaud their impressive work on their Coffee Project, culminating in the formal introduction of Jasper Coffee across the school. We were truly impressed by the knowledge and conviction displayed by these young people and their effective actions to address the injustice of human trafficking.

If readers wish to read an article about this in the St Mary of the Angels’ College newsletter, the link is: https://drive.google.com/file/d/15z4xTCR0VXq7CbZHhZ1Yk_0jFkxmmr8Q/view

Marguerite Buckley, VIC Region Co-coordinator

Domestic workers must be protected

The majority of migrant domestic workers around the world are women and girls and they are extremely vulnerable to violence and abuse. Many leave their homes because of poverty, conflict, climate-related disasters or violence, for the promise of a better life for them and their families. But many countries do not recognise domestic workers and so they are not protected by labour laws and are at risk of labour rights abuses. Sr Jean Quinn DW, Executive Director of UNANIMA, shares her insights (2 minute video) and the work being done to redress many of the injustices suffered by migrant women workers.

[Watch Sr Jean’s video here](#)

Who is making your Christmas prezzies

The 16 Days of Activism shines a light on many injustices faced by workers around the world. Using our power as consumers is one important way to push back against the exploitation of workers. Shopping ethically is one action we can take. Here are some Christmas shopping ideas that ensure the workers involved are not exploited.



Chocolate

Chocolate is a popular gift at Christmas so make sure you buy from a company that is striving for a slavery-free supply chain. Australians spent an average of AU\$196.96 per capita on chocolate products last year (Australian Chocolate Consumption Statistics for 2022). But some of this chocolate is tainted by slavery and comes at the cost of a child's health, education and sometimes his or her freedom. Much of our chocolate is made using cocoa beans harvested by children, often in the West African region. Many of these children are forced into labour. We can help change this.

Look for the FAIRTRADE or Rainforest Alliance logos.

Try buying Alter Eco, Tony's Chocolonely, Whittaker's and Haigh's Chocolates. It's fair and delicious.

Coffee and Tea

It's so easy now to find good quality slavery-free tea and coffee in your small local or bigger supermarkets. Again, look for the FAIRTRADE or Rainforest Alliance logos.

For more information on slavery-free tea and coffee and who is joining this movement [click here](#)

Clothes

In 2013 the Rana Plaza in Dhaka, Bangladesh, an eight-story building collapsed, killing 1132 people and injuring 2500. Most of the dead and injured were poorly paid female garment makers, producing many of the clothes that end up in Australia. The tragedy shone a spotlight on the terrible working conditions many workers endure and since then some of the big brand companies have worked to ensure conditions have improved. Others have not.

Go to the [Baptist World Aid Ethical Fashion Report](#) and find out which of your favourite brands is working towards better conditions.

There is a standout Australian company that we should support because it is doing the right thing. [ETIKO](#) sells FAIRTRADE certified underwear, clothes, socks and runners, all made by workers who are paid a living wage. ETIKO FAIRTRADE t-shirts are made using cotton produced by the Chetna Organic Cooperative, which now has 7000 members. Producers are paid a floor price for the cotton, which will not drop if the global price of cotton collapses. However, they are paid more if the price of cotton increases. The cooperative has diversified with many farmers now also growing legumes. The FAIRTRADE premium has been used to improve communities including the building of toilet blocks and educational facilities.

ACRATH Calendar for 2024

Get ready for the new year and order your 2024 ACRATH Calendar today! These vibrant calendars serve as an invaluable resource, offering a wealth of information on various topics, including:

- Education on modern slavery and human trafficking – Discover how it exists, not only globally, but also right here in Australia, much closer than you may think!
- Important links to raise awareness – From shedding light on the impact of fast fashion and promoting slavery-free chocolate to making your kitchen a slavery-free zone and beyond, these calendars provide essential references for making a positive difference.
- Yearly projects and advocacy work – Find out about the projects and initiatives ACRATH is actively contributing to and join in to make a meaningful impact alongside us.

Part of the proceeds of this calendar will provide income for a project in South East Asia supporting victims of human trafficking. By fostering widespread community awareness, we can make a difference and spread the message that people are not for sale. Consider buying one of these calendars as an ethical gift for someone, or forward on the order form to someone else.

Click [here](#) to download an order form.

Migrating women workers are vulnerable

This year, the Australian Embassy to the Holy See will join ACRATH for the launch of its 16 Days of Activism, which will focus on women migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation, starting on November 25 - the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

ACRATH's executive officer Christine Carolan is in Rome with Chiara Porro, Australian Ambassador to the Holy See for this important launch. "The social justice challenge is global; vulnerable workers are on the move right across the planet. So global solutions must be sought, and global justice-focused alliances must be built and strengthened," Chiara and Christine said.

Christine said it was estimated that migrant workers were three times more likely to be in forced labour than non-migrant workers. Chiara said she hoped that through the campaign the faces of these vulnerable workers will become visible.

"Debate on immigration dominates political discourse in many countries around the world, and yet, the working conditions of many migrants – which are often precarious and exploitative - remain relatively unknown. There is an urgent need to raise awareness of this issue and to reaffirm our support for the dignity of all human beings," Chiara said.

The 16 Days of Activism begins on November 25 and concludes on December 10, Human Right's Day. ACRATH has developed a calendar of events ([link to calendar](#)), resources and stories, to mark days through the campaign.

Christine reminded people that ACRATH has organised a campaign to mark the 16 Days every year since 2005 and has published a 16-day calendar to encourage our network to stop and remember women vulnerable to exploitation and women working to make a difference.

The campaign will be presented at an event hosted by women Ambassadors to the Holy See at Villa Bonaparte, the French Embassy to the Holy See, on 1 December 2023.

"Catholic entities are making an important contribution on the prevention of labour exploitation and violence against women in the migrant worker context. Pope Francis has been extremely vocal about the need to protect the most vulnerable, including those who are seeking better lives elsewhere. His calls to protect migrants, describing it "as a duty of civilization", and to combat the "globalization of indifference", have underlined the urgency of addressing this growing global challenge," Chiara said.

"In that first year I remember visiting some Sisters in Belgium and they had the ACRATH 16 day calendar in their chapel to focus their daily prayer, and when I popped in to visit some Sisters in New York, the Sisters had our ACRATH 16 day calendar on their fridge. I hope in 2023, with Ambassador Chiara offering partnership, we will bring to an even larger network our concern for women migrant workers and their families. We will continue to build a world where just working conditions are the norm for women migrant workers and their families," Christine said.

Christine echoed her words saying: "In 2023 there are so many people on the move across our planet seeking work in another country and many are women. Other women stay behind with their children and elderly parents while their partners leave home to work overseas; all are attempting to make a living to support their families in any way they can. This campaign reminds me of the women on the move for work, and of their increased vulnerability to exploitation".

The Global Estimates of Modern Slavery report published in 2021 said that an estimated 50 million people were living in situations of modern slavery on any given day in 2021. The most vulnerable — women, children, and migrants — remain disproportionately affected. More than 12 million of all people in modern slavery are children, and women and girls account for over half of them (54 per cent).

The report found that, "while labour migration has a largely positive effect on individuals, households, communities and societies, this finding demonstrates how migrants are particularly vulnerable to forced labour and trafficking, whether because of irregular or poorly governed migration, or unfair and unethical recruitment practices".

Join ACRATH in 16 Days of Activism

WOMEN MIGRANT WORKERS: INCREASINGLY ON THE MOVE AND VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION

16 Days of Activism - 25th November to 10th December



www.acrath.org.au
People are NOT for sale



Join ACRATH's 16 Days of Activism focusing on women migrant workers vulnerable to exploitation. The 16 Days of Activism begins on November 25 and concludes on December 10, Human Right's Day. ACRATH has developed a calendar of events, resources and stories, to mark days through the campaign. We invite you to hear compelling lived experiences and read about policy developments to improve life for seasonal workers.

Our calendar is full of information.

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM



SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		NOV 21	22	23 Newsletter 16 Days Campaign - Women Migrant Workers PUBLISHED	24	25 LAUNCH Statement
26 ROME Joint Statement ACRATH and Australian Ambassador to the Holy See	27 Insights and the work being done to address many of the injustices suffered by migrant women workers. Recording with Sir Juan Quinn, UNANIMA, International	28 Statement - Fiona Kendall Mediterranean Hope, Italy	29 Q & A with Fr Peter O'Neill, Catholic Regional Director of Oceania, ACRATH's representative on the PALM Scheme Agriculture Committee	30 Justice for exploited migrant workers from Vanuatu - Christine Carolan ACRATH Executive Officer	DEC 1 The challenges facing seasonal workers featuring ACRATH Worker Sr Taabeia Ibou from Kiribati	2 Event hosted by women Ambassadors - Villa Borghese with the French Embassy to the Holy See
3 ACRATH interview with Nancy Isala Climate warning - a factor in Tonga's population on the move as migrant workers	4 ACRATH Interview: Sr Sheila Thomas - Parish reaches out to Migrant Workers in Port Augusta - South Australia	5 15th anniversary of the Federal Government's National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery ACRATH participating today and over the past 15 years	6 Message from Anna Maria Spinelli from the Community of Sant Egidio	7 ACRATH interview - Denise Talbot - Local communities welcoming seasonal workers in Tasmania	8 STATISTIC It is estimated 50 million people were living in relations of modern slavery in any given day in 2021. The most vulnerable - women, children, and migrants remain disproportionately affected. Global Estimate of Modern Slavery Report 2021	9 We depend on you to help us in that work against Human Trafficking and Slavery ACRATH SCALE acrath.org.au/support-acrath/ukale
10 Human Rights Day						



see more on this campaign and valuable resources here:
<https://acrath.org.au/take-action/16-days/>

Join the conversation here:



Call to action November 2023

ACRATH supports the work of many like-minded organisations both in Australia and globally. Many produce resources that can be used in a variety of settings and some have campaigns underway. Our newsletter regularly includes this page, encouraging people to find out more and consider becoming involved in actions and advocacy.

'People are not for sale': ACRATH and the fight to live freely

<https://melbournecatholic.org/news/people-are-not-for-sale-acrath-and-the-fight-to-live-freely>

Seminar puts a face on reality of human trafficking in Latin America

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/node/253071>

My name is Rony and this is my story

<https://www.talithakum.info/en/news/the-story-of-Rony-journey-of-liberation>

Mercy Walks With Trafficked Women

<https://www.mercyworld.org/f/45074/x/d9c6e707f0/mercy-walks-with-trafficked-women.pdf>

US Catholic sisters envision a world without human trafficking

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/news/us-catholic-sisters-envision-world-without-human-trafficking>

Alliance to End Human Trafficking

<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org/about/>

Stop Trafficking Newsletter

<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org/stop-trafficking-newsletter/>

Immigration strike force crackdown on visa abuse

<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/video/immigration-strike-force-crackdown-on-visa-abuse/d4zij4owl>

Sisters Anti-Trafficking Awards 2023: exceptional contribution of Catholic Sisters to the anti-trafficking movement

The event honoured three Sisters who have demonstrated courage, creativity, collaboration and achievement in the protection of their communities from human trafficking.

<https://www.satawards.com/2023>

Arise: <https://www.arisefdn.org/>

Jury finds Melbourne doctor Seyyed Farshchi guilty over sweet shop slavery

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-10-30/melbourne-doctor-seyyed-farshchi-guilty-forced-labour/103040752>

Be Slavery Free

<https://www.beslaveryfree.com/>

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

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