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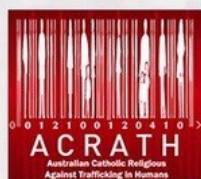
Support victims and survivors of human trafficking

On July 30, the World Day Against Trafficking in Humans, we focus on the plight of an estimated 50 million children, women and men who are living in slavery. ACRATH is working tirelessly to bring an end to modern slavery and now, with your help, we will double our efforts.

Stand with ACRATH and the victim/survivors of human trafficking and help us reach our \$350,000 target by 30 July.

Donate today at <https://acrath.org.au/support-acrath/donate/>

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TO CREATE A WORLD
WHERE EVERYONE IS **FREE!**



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Help to identify risk of forced marriage

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) asked schools at the start of the year to learn the signs of forced marriage, in a bid to disrupt human trafficking in Australia. ACRATH and the AFP in collaboration with Catholic Education South Australia have responded and are offering schools the chance to learn more about the issue, and what action to take.

Secondary teachers across Australia are invited to participate in a one-hour webinar on Thursday 1 August 2024 (see times below). To register for the webinar via MS Teams [click here](#)

According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare forced marriage has been the most reported form of modern slavery to the AFP in every year since 2015–16, with 90 reports in 2022–23.

Forced marriage, which has been illegal in Australia since 2013, is often a complex and underreported crime. AFP Commander Human Exploitation Helen Schneider said in January that parents, teachers and students are often the ones to first see a change in behaviour in victims of forced marriage.

“By educating the community of the prevalence of forced marriage and building awareness – particularly for those involved in school communities – we hope more people are empowered to seek help and report their experiences or suspicions to the AFP,” Commander Schneider said.

ACRATH’s Melissa Halliday, who will present the webinar, said the online event was open to all secondary teachers, because classroom, well-being and homeroom teachers each had different opportunities to observe behaviours of students.

“We know that an hour-long workshop cannot cover everything, but it is an important opportunity for school staff to learn key pieces of information, particularly how to identify students at risk,” Melissa said.

“Teachers already have huge workloads so this webinar isn’t about directing teachers on how to manage the issue, but rather helping them know the services and agencies they can go to for support.”

Melissa said that in Victoria forced marriage is now recognised as family violence, making it a well-being issue for schools that have mandatory reporting obligations.

Commander Schneider said the AFP does everything in its power to protect victims and survivors of human trafficking and put those responsible before the courts.

“Forced marriage is not limited to any cultural group, religion or ethnicity. Anyone can be a victim of forced marriage, regardless of their age, gender or sexual orientation.”

“The number one priority of the AFP is to ensure victims are safe and have access to all the support they need, with our teams professionally trained to manage sensitive cases.

The AFP said common signs of forced marriage include a person who may:

- Have a family history of elder siblings leaving education early, marrying early or indicating concerns of an early marriage;
- Be highly controlled by family or community members in and outside of the home, including surveillance; always accompanied; limited or no control of finances; limited or no control over life decisions, education and career choices;
- Have communications monitored or restricted;
- Express concern regarding an upcoming family holiday or overseas travel;
- Demonstrate feelings of conflict or concern for the ramifications if they do not go ahead with an agreed marriage or engagement; and,
- Express concern of physical or psychological violence for not fulfilling family or community expectations.

A forced marriage is when a person enters a marriage without freely and fully consenting, because they have been coerced, threatened, or deceived, or because they are incapable of understanding the nature and effect of a marriage ceremony, for reasons including age or mental capacity.

Melissa said ACRATH’s extensive range of online resources were regularly used by schools and she expected the webinar to be well attended.

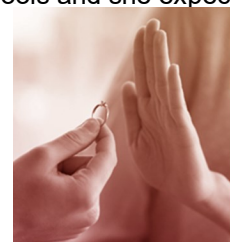
The times for the webinar on 1 August 2024 are:

South Australia and Northern Territory 3.30pm to 4.30pm

Queensland, New South Wales, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania 4pm to 5pm

Western Australia 2pm to 3pm

To register for the webinar via MS Teams [click here](#).



Young people must not 'abandon' injustices

Young justice advocates are looking at ways to influence their peers and join the global efforts to end modern slavery. The women, all part of ACRATH and Young Mercy Links South Australia, are running a webinar to mark the UN World Day Against Trafficking in Person on Tuesday 30 July 2024.

The 45-minute webinar starts at 5pm in Western Australia, 6.30pm in South Australia and the Northern Territory and 7pm in Victoria, Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales and the ACT. Click [here](#) to register for the webinar.

The webinar, ***Journeying together to end trafficking***, will feature two young women who attended the recent Talitha Kum General Assembly in Italy. Isabel Salter and Catherine Edwards were Oceania youth delegates at the assembly and were inspired by many anti-trafficking initiatives around the world that have garnered widespread support from young people.

Isabel and Catherine will discuss a range of issues including the challenges for young people wanting to respond to forced labour in garment factories and other industries and the growing displacement of migrating workers.

After the General Assembly Isabel, who is currently in New York undertaking a 10-month internship with Mercy Global Action (MGA), the justice arm and United Nations office of Mercy International Association (MIA), said the importance of youth in the work against human trafficking cannot be overstated.

"Throughout the Assembly I heard from youth advocates from around the world who are doing incredible work to raise awareness of modern slavery and protect vulnerable people in their communities. This was a great reminder to me that young people are powerful and creative advocates, and as we grow into leadership positions, we will have real opportunities to disrupt the patterns of inequality that enable modern slavery to prevail," Isabel said.

"To young people getting involved, I would say: in this time of overlapping crises, you can't do it all. Ending modern slavery is going to require structural transformation, so we need advocates who are going to be in it for the long haul. That means finding a way of using your unique gifts to contribute to the cause, while looking after yourself. There's a quote in the Talmud that encapsulates this nicely. It reads, 'Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. Do justly now, love mercy now, walk humbly now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.'"

Catherine, a previous intern at Mercy Global Action, has been a part of Young Mercy Links since its creation and has been involved with ACRATH for the past few years. She is currently completing a legal graduate program in Canberra. Catherine encouraged people to attend the webinar because it offers a crucial opportunity to engage with global efforts against modern slavery.

"The webinar provides a platform for us to reflect on the inspiring initiatives discussed at the Talitha Kum General Assembly and to explore how young people can actively contribute to ending trafficking," she said.

"It's a chance for us to learn, share best practices, and discuss actionable strategies that can make a real difference in our communities."

Click [here](#) to register for the webinar.



Catherine and Isabel after attending a mass for assembly participants at St Peter's Basilica.

Thanks, Peter, for a job well done

Fr Peter O'Neill SSC led ACRATH's work on forced labour/labour exploitation since January 2019 when he became ACRATH's representative on the Australian Government's Seasonal Workers Programme Advisory Committee. He became a member of ACRATH in 2017 when he returned to Australia after ministering in Taiwan for 26 years.

Peter was recently elected as the new Columban Society Vicar for six years. As the Society Vicar Peter is a member of the Columban General Council based in Hong Kong. He has taken up his new role but, in this Q&A he reflects on the issues facing seasonal workers in Australia.



1. Is there likely to be any intersection between your new role and modern slavery?

At our Columban General Assembly in Lima, we decided that one of our two priority ministries for the next six years is to continue our ministry with migrants and refugees including trafficked persons. Ministering to people on the move has been one of our Columban priority ministries since the year 2000. Together with the other General Council members I will oversee our Columban global ministry with migrants and refugees including trafficked persons.

2. Forced and exploited labour is still to gain traction as a big issue in the Australian community, but how does it compare with a decade ago?

Forced and exploited labour is still a huge problem in the Australian community. This has been documented in research papers published by Anti-Slavery Australia and some university research centres. Victims of forced and exploited labour with the assistance of unions and faith-based organisations have had the courage to speak out against this exploitation. Therefore, more cases of abuse have been reported by the media.

3. You have been part of systemic change in this space - what do you consider are a couple of the really important changes that have made seasonal workers coming to Australia better off?

The new Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme Approved Employers Deed and Guidelines published in June 2023 better protect the rights of seasonal workers. I prepared ACRATH's three submissions into the process of reviewing the Deed and Guidelines. Since 1 July 2024, seasonal workers are to receive a minimum of 30 hours of work per week averaged over four weeks. Previously it was an average of 30 hours of work per week over the seasonal worker's contract period which is a maximum of nine months. This was easily abused by unscrupulous Approved Employers. I have met many seasonal workers who received very little work in their first three weeks in Australia. Seasonal workers must now receive at least 30 hours of work per week the moment they arrive in Australia. This will enable the seasonal workers to be better off because they will be able to earn more money to send home to their families.

Seasonal workers can now come to Australia on a four-year contract which gives them more stability and the opportunity to earn more money to support their families at home.

Fr Peter O'Neill ssc

4. What's an area you would like to see a greater focus on and why?

The government needs to ensure that the new approved PALM Scheme Approved Employers Deed and Guidelines are implemented, monitored and evaluated so as to better protect the human rights of seasonal workers and prevent labour exploitation. Approved Employers who steal workers' salaries through non-payment of salaries must be investigated, prosecuted and sentenced according to the law. The government and courts need to be more diligent in ensuring this is done. Many seasonal workers have not claimed their superannuation because they do not know how to file a claim. Also, they cannot file a claim until their visa has expired. Seasonal workers are returning to Australia on a second, third and fourth secondment while their visa is still valid. The government needs to change this practice so that seasonal workers can apply for their superannuation either before or soon after their return to their home country.

Within the context of the Catholic church, local bishops, parish priests and laity need to implement a well organised structure to make an outreach to the seasonal workers and welcome them into the local faith communities.

5. What have you learned in the years of working with seasonal workers and others in this space?

I have learned the importance of educating seasonal workers about their rights and empowering them to stand up collectively against any form of abuse. Advocating for policy change to better protect the rights of seasonal workers requires hard work, patience and perseverance. You need to commit yourself in collaboration with others to be in it for the long haul.

6. What is one thing Australians could do to ensure seasonal workers are welcomed to this country and treated justly?

Australians need to reach out to the seasonal workers and educate themselves on who picks their fruit and vegetables and to speak out strongly against any abuse they see towards seasonal workers. They need to show appreciation and gratitude for everything the seasonal workers offer to the building up of our local economy and the richness of their own cultures and faith which they share with our communities.

ACRATH ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2024 WITH YOUR DONATIONS



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.

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or <https://acrath.org.au/donate>

Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

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Carla seeks 'village' support for seasonal workers

Carla Chung believes it takes a village to welcome seasonal workers and she's keen to hear from 'village leaders', particularly people active in Catholic parishes in key agriculture areas of Australia.

"Isolation can lead to exploitation and that's what we want to try and stop happening," Carla said. Developing networks to support seasonal workers is one of Carla's roles as ACRATH's new Seasonal Worker Support person, a position created after ACRATH received a three-year grant from a Congregation of Catholic Sisters. She's hit the ground running and has already had great success in Werribee on the outskirts of Melbourne, working with a parish-based group keen to create a support network for more than 80 seasonal workers in the area.

Carla said the hospitality and support shown by parishioners from St Andrew's Catholic parish in Werribee is a great model for other parishes. The seasonal workers from Timor-Leste attend mass at St Andrew's and some parishioners are about to set up an English language class to help the men improve their English skills.

"We also used the parish hall to run a Pacific Engagement Visa session to answer questions that workers had about applying for a new visa in the June to August timeframe. Forty-three men came to the session and we were able to answer questions and help them navigate the process," Carla said.

Carla is in a newly established role at ACRATH, which recognises the increasing issue of labour exploitation, often involving seasonal workers. Carla is promoting seasonal workers' wellbeing in many ways, including:

- encouraging ACRATH and other volunteer initiatives
- ensuring practical support is provided by relevant agencies
- promoting community links
- assisting with policy development

Carla, from Timor-Leste, came to ACRATH after many years working with seasonal workers with the United Workers Union. She's convinced that too many seasonal workers coming to Australia, as part of government employment programs, do not have a full understanding of their rights.

"Workers attend briefings in their home country and when they arrive and are told about their job and conditions and are given a lot of other written information, but it is very difficult for people from another country to understand a different culture quickly. And Pacific Islanders and Timorese are from very oral traditions so giving the workers contracts and then later giving them contract variations to sign, is very difficult for them," Carla said.

Technology makes it easier to reach seasonal workers who have issues. The St Andrews Parish volunteers and the local seasonal workers have set up a WhatsApp group to ensure workers have an ongoing support team.

ACRATH's years of advocacy, alongside other community organisations, has led to some recent changes to many of the regulations and conditions offered to seasonal workers. Many workers who were on short term contracts of six to 12 months are now offered longer contracts. Workers must also be paid for a minimum of 120 hours over four weeks, ensuring workers access a bare minimum wage.

The importance of community support for seasonal workers was a focus of the recent Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office (ACMRO) national conference. Speakers, including ACRATH's own Peter O'Neill ssc and Christine Carolan, encouraged people across the country to actively support seasonal and migrant workers, particularly those from the Pacific islands and Timor-Leste.



Carla said great support was being offered to seasonal workers from Timor-Leste, Samoa, Kiribati, Tuvalu and Papua New Guinea in communities and parishes all over Australia including Warrnambool, Port Augusta, parts of Queensland, Lilydale and Werribee. But there is more to be done.

"There have been great changes because of advocacy and working together. But there is much more to be done. And we need to ensure that seasonal workers are not isolated because that's when exploitation can happen," Carla said.

ACRATH supporters shine bright at Run Melbourne Charity Event

ACRATH runners and supporters raised more than \$10,000 on 22 July at the annual Run Melbourne charity event. Spirits soared as members of the Friends of ACRATH gathered in full force, determined to raise money for ACRATH's critical initiatives, including education, awareness campaigns, advocacy, and victim-survivor support programs - all dedicated to the mission of eradicating human trafficking.

The event saw outstanding participation from various communities and organisations, including representatives from Padua College Mornington, students of Sacred Heart Girls' College (SHGC) Oakleigh, Thornbury High, Fairfield Primary, Our champion fundraiser was Father Andrew Jekot from St Mary of the Cross in Mordialloc and Aspendale who was pleased he finished his run in good shape as were our supporters from Allans law firm. Together, they proudly waved the ACRATH flag throughout the event.

The project manager, Erin, reflected on the day's success: " Personal bests were achieved, others were just happy -----to get to the finishing line and our hearts were warmed by the father-young daughter team. All promised to be back next year," Erin said.

The donation link remains active for those who wish to contribute: [Run Melbourne ACRATH](#) and please consider supporting our ongoing fundraising efforts at the Sacred Heart Girls College/Roos Friends of ACRATH team bake sale at Oakleigh Bunnings on Saturday 27th July, 2024."

ACRATH bake sale at Oakleigh Bunnings on Saturday 27th July, 2024.

The community's generosity was overwhelming, with Reverend Jekot and his congregation at St Mary of the Cross Mordialloc and Aspendale, raising a notable \$4,510. Their contributions are deeply appreciated.

Looking ahead to 2025, enthusiasm remains high as teams are already beginning to plan. Sacred Heart Girls' College Oakleigh, Thornbury High, and Fairfield Primary School have all pledged their commitment to next year's event, promising another round of spirited fundraising and community engagement.

A heartfelt thank you to all participants, supporters, and volunteers who made this year's event a resounding success. Your dedication and compassion are instrumental in driving ACRATH's mission forward.

For more information, contact Ange Duthie 0430 488 001 or email: networks@acrath.org.au



Pictured:

*Top Left: Father Andrew Jekot and friends,
Top Right: Project Manager Erin with ACRATH member Janet and Executive Officer Christine,
Bottom Left: students from Padua Friends of ACRATH Roos team,
Bottom Right: Students from Thornbury High and Fairfield Primary with ACRATH staff member Ange.*