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ACRATH News

Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans

November 2025

16 Days of Activism

Join ACRATH's 16 Days of Activism starting on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. For 16 days we will offer you actions, prayers and reflections around this year's theme:

End digital violence against all women and girls.

16 Days of Activism 2025: End digital violence against all women and girls. Click. Act. End It!

ACRATH invite you to **click** the links on our calendar, take meaningful **action**, and help us put an **end** to human trafficking, modern slavery, and emerging challenges and trends such as digital violence. **Join the conversation.**



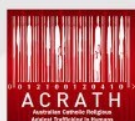
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Together, we can work to eliminate human trafficking and modern slavery, increase awareness of these critical issues, and confront the growing threat of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

16 Days of ACTIVISM Against Gender Based Violence 2025 Campaign. Click. Act. End it.

From 25 November (International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women) to 10 December (Human Rights Day), This year, our Interactive 16 Days of Activism calendar serves as a tool to share knowledge and resources. Each day during the campaign, we invite you to click the links on our calendar, take meaningful action, and help us put an end to human trafficking, modern slavery and emerging challenges and trends such as digital violence. Visit acrath.org.au/take-action/16-days/

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
NOV 24 Download our calendar of events	NOV 25 March Against Gender Based Violence	NOV 26 Order your free ACRATH Prayer Card celebrating 20 years of impact!	NOV 27 Watch webinar on Digital Safety: Understanding Online Exploitation Prevent the New Forms of Human Trafficking.	NOV 28 Join ACRATH staff and members at the 17th annual Melbourne CBD Walk Against Family Violence.	NOV 29 Visit ACRATH's Fashion page for six practical tips and guides to help you be an agent of change!	NOV 30 38% of women have had a personal experience of online violence. See UN Women infographic
DEC 1 Download the Be Slavery Free Chocolate Scorecard	DEC 2 Register your interest to join ACRATH's Run Melbourne team in 2026	DEC 3 Attend Vic: Holding the Light, an ecumenical service remembering victims and survivors of family violence	DEC 4 "We cannot allow digital spaces to be yet another place where women are girls are unsafe." UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres	DEC 5 Listen to Be Slavery Free's podcast Slavery Unravelling	DEC 6 Learn the facts, myths, and scale of modern slavery in Australia and worldwide with ACRATH's Modern Slavery Quiz	DEC 7 Donate to ACRATH in our 20th year of impact and support our mission
DEC 8 Visit these FAQs on digital abuse, trolling, stalking, and other forms of technology-facilitated violence against women	DEC 9 Donate to ACRATH in our 20th year and support our mission for a world free of human trafficking and modern slavery.	DEC 10 Human Rights Day, read UN Women's FAQs on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls	Join the conversation here: help us to end digital violence against all women and girls! #NoExcuse #ACTtoEndViolence #16daysofactivism #ACRATH			



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Technology-facilitated violence against women as any act committed, assisted, aggravated, or amplified by information and communication technologies or other digital tools that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological, social, political, or economic harm, or other infringements of rights and freedoms.
Source UN Women

Download our calendar of events: <https://acrath.org.au/take-action/16-days/> and follow ACRATH on social media for daily reflections and calls to action across Australia during the 16 Days of Activism, ending on December 10, Human Rights Day. Click. Act. End It.

Listening to Survivor Voices

Survivor voices must be at the centre whenever plans and projects are being developed to combat modern slavery. This is one of the four key priorities of the Australian Modern Slavery Strategic Plan 2025-2028 launched recently by Chris Evans, the Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

The plan, **Building Australia's Ambition and Impact - Strengthening the response to modern slavery**, will focus on four priorities:

1. Transforming systems to centre survivors and people with lived experience
2. Strengthening law and policy
3. Driving business and government towards better due diligence
4. Improving access to justice and remedy

"To bring this Strategic Plan to life, we need to act together. Critical to our success will be genuine partnership with the victim-survivors and dedicated individuals, organisations and businesses working to address modern slavery. We need to unite behind common goals and set out clear and feasible policy options for decision-makers," Commissioner Evans said.

Carmel Shaw, ACRATH's Community Development Coordinator and Cynthia Mulholland East Coast regional coordinator participated in some of the many strategic plan consultations. ACRATH also made a submission to the strategic plan's consultation phase.

Carmel is hopeful that the work being done by the commissioner will build greater partnerships with business and civil society and lead to important reforms.

While many of the issues explored in the plan, including visa reforms and labour hire licencing, rely on Government action and reform of the Modern Slavery Act, Carmel believes much can be done by civil society to improve services and opportunities for victim/survivors of modern slavery.

"One of the issues that is strong in the strategic plan and has also been championed by the Anti-slavery Commissioner for New South Wales, Dr James Cockayne, is that civil society groups increase the involvement of survivors in the development of plans and projects. It's important that organisations recognise the value of this expertise and are prepared to pay people with lived experience for their work and factor it? into project budgets," Carmel said. "It is certainly one of the things ACRATH can also seek to do at all levels of the organisation."

"The survivor voice is critical in all our work, and it certainly underpins the new strategic plan. It shifts our thinking from helping survivors to empowering them to be part of the decisions and plans."

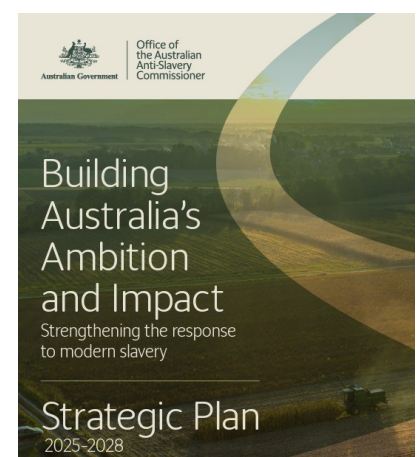
Another strategic priority, **Driving business and government towards better due diligence**, is an area where reforms to the Modern Slavery Act could have great impact, demanding greater supply chain transparency and compliance from businesses.

"The Commissioner is advocating for change in this area and working very closely with unions and business for reforms. Australia has made a great start in responding to modern slavery but now is the time for us to ensure we keep up with robust protections that are being developed in other countries. Unless these changes are made, we will be left behind in the global push to reduce the risk of slavery in our supply chains, especially in imported goods." Carmel said.

Carmel believes positive work is happening, but often in isolation. Greater connections and partnerships will strengthen existing systems and programs.

"I think the Commissioner, as shown through the strategic plan, is very keen to advance things by working closely with the community and business and not just rely on government reform. And there are many businesses doing good work, but there are currently no penalties for businesses that don't comply with the Modern Slavery Act's supply chain reporting requirements."

Read the strategic plan [here](#)

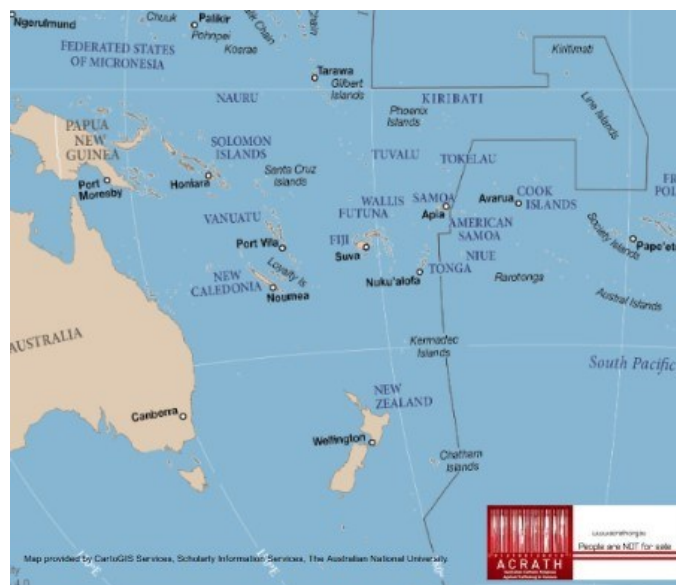


New Pacific Island Project

ACRATH has launched the Pacific Project, which will work to provide culturally appropriate education, training and resources about human trafficking and modern slavery in the Pacific, with a focus on labour exploitation. Participants from Pacific Island nations and Timor-Leste will collaborate in the planning and delivery of the programs to ensure the work recognises local needs and prioritises local knowledge.

ACRATH's National Executive Officer Sarah Puls said the project would work to build local capacity and develop resources that were culturally relevant, using funds provided by the Conrad Hilton Foundation in partnership with Talitha Kum Oceania.

Over a three year period the project will target Samoa, Fiji, Timor-Leste, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Nauru, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.



"We have a long history working to combat human trafficking and we want to share that knowledge and help develop local networks and resources that can respond to modern slavery," Sarah said. "We know that each of these countries has unique challenges that local people want addressed. One example is in Papua New Guinea where we are hearing that labour exploitation amongst mining and logging workers is a concern." The project, led by Melissa Halliday ACRATH's Community development project coordinator, is in its infancy. She said a key first step was finding out what people in the various Pacific countries were concerned about and what responses they consider important and relevant.

"The essence of this project is collaboration - we hope to learn from one another, build capacity, and raise awareness so that communities are better equipped to prevent and respond to human trafficking," Melissa said.

Sarah said some Pacific countries already had services and networks operating and others had limited understanding of modern slavery and how to respond to reports. She said any work would be underpinned by local knowledge.

"If we examine what is going on in other countries through an Australian lens, then the solutions will be Australian solutions. To be effective, any solutions must be locally driven," Sarah said. "One common concern in many Pacific Islands is the domestic trafficking from outer islands to a main island so that is something we need to learn more about."

The project will rely heavily on the knowledge and experience of working group members including Mariana Waqa, a Fijian Australian who works for the Columban Mission Society and Annette Arnold rsj Talitha Kum's Oceania regional coordinator.

Sarah, who has worked in Kiribati, said she hoped the project will be ready to offer some face-to-face training on modern slavery late next year, as well as online modules where appropriate.

Another focus of the Pacific project will be supporting Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers before they arrive in Australia. This might involve pre-departure information about the challenges and costs to families of workers coming to Australia under the scheme.

"Our years of work and involvement in the PALM scheme have given us an insight into the issues facing so many Pacific workers who come to Australia, as well as their families remaining at home," Sarah said.

"Coming to work in Australia and leaving their families behind can cause problems and safety issues for their families, but long absences can also affect family relationships. Some PALM scheme workers also have misconceptions about the program, thinking they are coming to Australia to put down roots. But under current work agreements this is not going to happen."

"This project is an exciting ACRATH initiative and it has the potential to positively impact people at risk in the Pacific."

Road safety training a priority for migrant workers

Hundreds of migrant workers in the Warrnambool area are expected to participate in road safety training this month in a bid to prevent car accidents, particularly over the summer holiday season. ACRATH has partnered with community and labour organisations, including Community Connections, for the event being run at St Pius X Catholic Parish in Warrnambool on 29 November.

ACRATH's National Executive Officer Sarah Puls sgs said ACRATH is involved in the program as part of an ongoing relationship with migrant workers to ensure they better understand their rights and protections while in Australia.

"We know that migrant workers are at risk of exploitation when they are not given opportunities to understand their rights and know how to advocate for themselves. An event like this is an opportunity for ACRATH to build connections with workers and let them know who to contact if they find themselves in situations that seem unsafe or unfair. While there are formal structures under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme that do this, we know that some people are frightened to use those avenues and so ACRATH's support is crucial," Sarah said.

"While the workers are gathered together outside of their workplace, and feeling the support of the community, ACRATH is present to listen to their stories, to hear their concerns, and to let them know how to access support when they need it."

Carla Chung, ACRATH's Seasonal Worker Support officer, said the training would help drivers to better understand Australian road rules and conditions. It would also support passengers to call out unsafe driving.

The event is expected to attract at least 300 workers employed under the PALM scheme, including many of the areas' 387 Timor-Leste workers and families. Most of the workers are employed by the Midfield Group, which is a meat processing business in *Warrnambool*.

Carla said workers, who came from countries with very different driving rules and practices, would hear from council, police, ambulance and State Emergency Service staff.

Last year the ABC reported that PALM workers are six times more likely to die on Australia's roads. The December 2024 news report said: "Figures obtained by the ABC reveal at least 10 road deaths of Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) workers have been reported since November 13th last year. With about 30,000 PALM workers in Australia as of October, that equates to about 30 deaths per 100,000 people — more than six times the national average of 4.8 per 100,000."

The call for greater road safety training has grown louder in recent years after several horrific accidents involving migrant workers. Back in 2021 the Australian Workers' Union demanded urgent action from the Federal Government to address the unacceptable number of fatal road accidents involving seasonal workers employed on farms across Australia.

Daniel Walton, then National Secretary of the AWU spoke out during a spate of bad accidents in January 2021, saying: "We have a duty to treat our neighbours from the Pacific Island far better. They come here expecting to save up money to take home to their families, but instead we have workers going home in a coffin."

"It's clear that we need to focus much more on driver education and skills improvement for seasonal workers."

Carla said the road safety training would hopefully prevent accidents over the summer holiday season when roads were particularly busy. She said many workers came to Australia to work not fully understanding how busy the roads are, even in country areas. Driving while fatigued and under the influence of alcohol was also a problem.

Also, some workers, who are licenced to drive in their own country, did not know that after six months they must transfer to a Victorian licence to drive legally in the state. This lack of awareness often led to workers receiving fines. Carla said PALM workers could access funding to cover costs for the licence transfer and necessary training.

As well as road safety education during the day, Mass will be celebrated followed by a social gathering for all workers.

See the poster of page 8

‘Educating for Change’ an Awareness Raising Initiative to Address Modern Slavery in Australia's Universities.

Educating for Change, the groundbreaking program developed by ACRATH in partnership with Adelaide University and Flinders University, was recognised with Commendation by Dr James Cockayne, the NSW Anti-Trafficking Commissioner, during the recent *Building Freedom Together* Forum.

Thank you for your interest in the Educating for Change program.

We recommend starting with the 'Introduction to Modern Slavery' module and then selecting a second specialised module.

[Introduction to Modern Slavery](#)

[Modern Slavery in Social Work Settings](#)

[Modern Slavery in Law and Legal Settings](#)

[Modern Slavery in School Settings](#)

[Modern Slavery in Healthcare Settings](#)

[Modern Slavery in University Settings](#)

We have a small favour to ask! If you are going to use these modules with fellow staff and students, we would most appreciate you completing this [Implementation Plan Survey](#). It will only take a few minutes and will help us gather data regarding the use and impact of the modules. Thank you!

ACRATH, Flinders University, and the University of South Australia have collaborated to develop six, free online modules. Designed for university staff and students, these modules aim to equip future professionals with the skills to identify and combat modern slavery in their fields while supporting university staff in addressing modern slavery in their current roles.

We are committed to raising awareness in all professional settings. If you'd like to discuss how we can tailor learning materials to your sector's needs, please contact us at edforchange@acrath.org.au



Pictured right: Dr Nerida Chazal, University of South Australia, and Carmel Shaw.



ACRATH Bids Farewell to the Brigidine Ministry Centre, Welcomes a New Chapter at ACU

ACRATH's National Office is moving after 14 wonderful years at the Brigidine Ministry Centre in Albert Park. ACRATH is relocating to the Australian Catholic University in East Melbourne in December. The move marks an exciting new chapter in ACRATH's 20th year of impact.

ACRATH staff, past and present, and National Committee members held a special thank-you and farewell lunch with our Brigidine friends earlier this month. It was a chance for people including President Clare Condon sgs, Executive Officer Sarah Puls sgs, and Communications Lead Ange Duthie, to express their appreciation to the Brigidine Sisters and the Ministry staff and share special memories. Each person talked about the privilege of being part of the Centre's legacy.

ACRATH is grateful to everyone who has worked at the Brigidine Ministry Centre during its 14-year tenure, including the Brigidine Sisters, the Brigidine Asylum Seeker Project, and Kildare Ministries, for their warm welcome and unwavering support throughout the years. Their friendship has been instrumental to ACRATH's growth and experiences.

"As we step into this new phase at ACU, we cherish the relationships and support that have brought us to this point, and we look forward to new opportunities ahead," Sarah said.



Call to action November 2025

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.

Reports of human trafficking nearly double over past five years

<https://afp.gov.au/news-centre/media-release/reports-human-trafficking-nearly-double-over-past-five-years>

How Zimbabwe girls are empowered to fight child marriage

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/africa/girls-once-used-this-room-to-learn-how-to-please-their-husbands-not-any-more-20251015-p5n2sq.html>

Stolen childhoods: These sisters are rescuing Kenya's girls from child sex tourism

<https://www.globalsistersreport.org/trafficking/stolen-childhoods-these-sisters-are-rescuing-kenyas-girls-child-sex-tourism>

Social media and online dating exposes girls to greater risks of child marriage, new report shows

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-02/social-media-digital-connection-child-marriage/105837010>

Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner

<https://www.antislaverycommissioner.gov.au/news/australian-anti-slavery-commissioner-raises-concern-over-removal-minimum-hours-guarantee-palm-workers>

<https://www.antislaverycommissioner.gov.au/news/modern-slavery-perpetrators-stripped-assets>

Timor-Leste workers part of PALM scheme helping to fill NT workforce gaps

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-10-11/palm-scheme-workers-timor-leste-nt-workforce-shortages/105876688>

NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner

<https://dcj.nsw.gov.au/legal-and-justice/our-commissioners/anti-slavery-commissioner/news-and-media.html>

Talitha Kum

<https://www.talithakum.info/en/news?lang=en>

Alliance to End Human Trafficking, including Stop Trafficking Newsletter

<https://alliancetoendhumantrafficking.org>





PALM scheme Driver Safety Awareness Event

Date: Saturday 29 November 2025
Time: 12:00 pm to 3:00 pm
Location: St. Pius X Church
 80 Morriss Road, Warrnambool VIC
 3280



Always wear your seatbelt



Avoid distractions



Never drink and drive



Follow the speed limit



Maintain your car

Proudly supported by:

- Victoria Police
- Ambulance Victoria
- Victoria State Emergency Services
- Uniting Church - Community Connections
- ACRATH
- PALM Partner Country Liaison Officers

Join us for free refreshments after the event!

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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