

## ACRATH meetings in Canberra

In March Christine Carolan and Noelene Simmons spent a day and a half advocating in Canberra. This was an opportunity to meet with several people stepping into new, and significant to us, positions while at the same time forwarding the issues that we have been advocating for over a period of time. They were able to meet with ministerial advisors, members of the Opposition, Australian Federal Police and Attorney General's Department staff and the Chief Librarian of the Parliamentary Library. Issues raised included forced and exploited labour in regional agriculture, child protection issues concerning forced marriage across federal and state domestic violence responsibilities, support for girls and young women who find themselves overseas and facing a forced marriage, people vulnerable to being trafficked in areas of conflict and natural disaster and the role of Overseas Development Assistance in helping to prevent this, the establishment of an independent Anti-Trafficking Commissioner, human rights and supply chain issues and support for people trafficked into Australia whose circumstances make them vulnerable to 'falling between the cracks'. Several of the meetings offered us strong insights and clear next steps for our advocacy work to push forward our strategic directions.

## Talitha Kum



Talitha Kum  
**ARISE**



The 2<sup>nd</sup> Co-ordination Meeting of Talitha Kum, the International Network of Consecrated Life Against Trafficking in Persons was held in Rome in January 2016. ACRATH member Sr Noelene Simmons represented Oceania at this meeting. The aim of the meeting was to define the priorities of Talitha Kum and to formulate a strategic plan for the three years 2016-2018. During the meeting the 27 participants shared the experiences of their local networks and looked at the strengths and weaknesses of the global network. They were able to reflect on the input given by international experts who gave up to date information on the complexities of migration routes and the effects of the current economic situation. Partner organization of the Vatican engaged in dialogue with the group regarding their anti-human trafficking efforts. On the final day of meeting participants presented workshops on human trafficking to members of secular institutes who were in Rome for the final days of the Year of Consecrated Life. The Talitha Kum Declaration developed at the meeting may be viewed at [http://www.talithakum.info/files/news/2016/Declaration\\_EN.pdf](http://www.talithakum.info/files/news/2016/Declaration_EN.pdf).

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



## Slavery Free Chocolate Easter Campaign

This year's campaign was a success, though just how successful is difficult to measure and may require some information from you, the ACRATH members and supporters.

Again, the campaign was a collaboration involving the CARITAS Australia - Archdiocese of Melbourne, Catholic Diocese of Ballarat - Social Justice Commission, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne - Office for Justice and Peace, Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst - Social Justice Committee, Uniting Church in Australia - Synod of Victoria & Tasmania, Victorian Council of Churches - Social Questions Commission, Stop the Traffik.

We disseminated resources including a news release, seven weeks of parish/school bulletins and a four-page flier with (almost) everything you needed to know about slavery free chocolate.



It seems the news release was picked up and used by bigger organisations and the parish bulletins hit the mark, being used by parishes everywhere from country Victoria to northern Queensland.

Another positive aspect of the campaign was the directing of readers to the ACRATH website. Hopefully, this will raise awareness of other issues ACRATH is working on.

One of the challenges of the campaign is knowing just who is using what material. We know that many ACRATH members and supporters worked hard to have material published, but we don't always find out about it.

*To assist in the evaluation of this year's campaign and to inform next year's work, could I ask readers to send me an email with the following information:*

- Did you see the slavery free chocolate Easter campaign material published in a parish bulletin on or on a website. If so, where?
- If you were one of those people who received the material and tried to have it published, do you have suggestions how we could improve the information for next year.
- Finally, can you in April, May and June to go to three supermarkets and ask them to increase their slavery-free chocolate selection.

Rosie Hoban [rap@acrath.org.au](mailto:rap@acrath.org.au)

## ACRATH Calendar a Great Success

The 2016 ACRATH calendar, now in its second year, has been another great success, thanks to Janine Bliss fmm in Queensland.

Janine worked collaboratively with a range of people, organisations, schools and NGOs to pull the calendar together. It showcases the work that is happening in Australia to support trafficked people. It also shines a light on the some of the other emerging issues such as forced labour and forced marriage. 2016 calendars are still available. The calendars serve not only to mark the passing days but also to find out who is doing what and contacts for the various organisations.



Production of the calendar is a mammoth task for Janine and work on the 2017 edition has already begun.

## Visa News

Kathy Fagan one of the leadership group in ACRATH WA, has just shared exciting news of a permanent visa being granted for a trafficked woman supported by Kathy and Jennifer Burn's team at Anti-Slavery Australia.

The case was incredibly complicated including multiple submissions and legal arguments. It involved a colossal cross country effort by several determined organisations both within Australia and across Asia.

It has taken 5 years of concentrated effort but we are extremely happy that it has finally come to this very happy conclusion.

## Bishops Commission

Noelene Simmons sm and Christine Carolan presented to the Bishops Commission for Pastoral Life on 14 April. ACRATH was thanked and affirmed by the bishops. Many new possibilities for collaborative work emerged.



## Forced Marriage Project

It is wonderful to once again have the opportunity to be involved in the work of ACRATH and to work alongside Christine and other members of the team. This year my role is more diverse, but still includes work on following up the 2015 forced marriage project.

The forced marriage follow-up work from 2015 is now well underway, with all 2015 pilot schools provided with a soft copy of the Kit. Feedback received in 2015 from the pilot schools indicated that all schools are incorporating forced marriage into their curriculum in 2016 and beyond, and that there is an ongoing need to train teachers and to use the resources provided as a result of the Pilot Project.

In 2015, in additional hours provided to ACRATH, we developed a draft of a Professional Learning Program (PLP) for teachers and school staff to be used in conjunction with the Kit. It seemed a logical next step in the process, and a possible method of overcoming the need for face-to-face training in remote locations. This PLP is currently being considered for use, as school staff training is an essential element of use of the Kit by schools.

*Elizabeth Payne*

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## ACRATH Western Australia team work

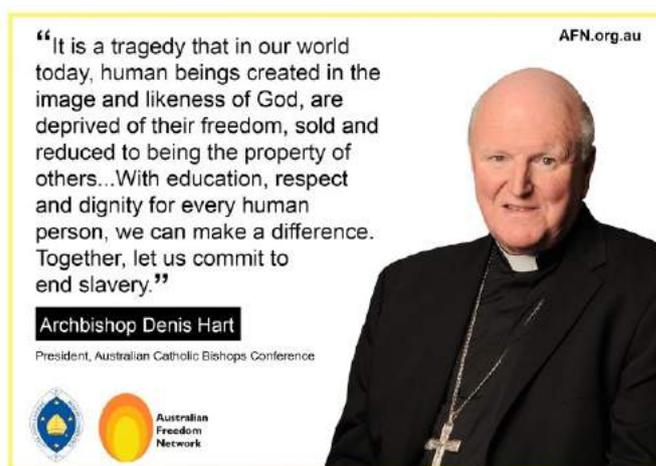
The ACRATH WA delegation to the National Conference in Sydney in February 2016 met with ACRATH Executive Officer Christine Carolan. They asked Christine to come to Perth to work with the group as they began to make plans following the resignation from leadership of Lucy Van Kessel pbvm. The four day trip to Perth began with a seven person ACRATH delegation to see Justice Minister Keenan's advisor. We were given an hour and our delegation, as a powerful team, covered our key advocacy issues.

The ACRATH members meeting was held on the Monday night; it began with a celebration of Lucy's leadership with some sensitive and humorous words of acknowledgement. Christine presented on forced marriage and on advocacy issues.

We also met with the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Perth and the director of the Justice, Environment and Development Office, with Catholic Mission, St. John Of God Leadership Team, the Catholic Education office Religious Education and Faith Formation Team, and the Chaplain for the African Community. An ACRATH group also went to visit the Sisters House/Safe House. Many new opportunities for ACRATH work have emerged from these meetings.

## Australian Freedom Network

In Parliament House Canberra on December 2, 2015, International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, leaders of 15 different faiths from around Australia pledged their support to end slavery. They signed the same declaration that had been signed 12 months earlier by Pope Francis and other world faith leaders. In signing this document the Australian Freedom Network was established and the faith leaders committed their respective faith communities to collaborate on ending slavery in Australia. ACRATH was represented at this event by Srs Genny Ryan & Noelene Simmons. Sr Rosemary Grundy, Executive Director of Catholic Religious Australia was also present. Members of the Australian Federal Parliament who were in attendance endorsed the Joint declaration. The work of ACRATH was affirmed by the Hon Tanya Plibersek MP and by Fr Brian Lucas, General Secretary of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference. Fr Brian signed the declaration on behalf of Archbishop Denis Hart, President of the Australian Catholic



Bishops' Conference. ACRATH is committed to working in collaboration with faith communities in an effort to eliminate human trafficking and modern day slavery.

## Project Respect

On March 16 Cindy Smith Project Respect's Executive Director announced that the organization could no longer continue financially. Cindy said: *Project Respect has a long and proud history of working very hard to support and advocate for women in the sex industry and women trafficked, who are often marginalised, stigmatised and forgotten.... Project Respect has performed on a very tight budget now for many years. Although we have been successful in attracting funding from many philanthropic funding sources, the grants generally have not been large enough to ensure sustainability.*

**STOP THE PRESS:** The closure of Project Respect has been averted. The Victorian State Government has agreed to offer support. This will only last for a few months.



Therese said Project Respect workers have always provided great support to many vulnerable women and was committed to ensuring their care would continue even when the organization closed.

Project Respect has done great work and much of it is documented on its website at: <http://www.projectrespect.org.au>

## National Conference and AGM 2016

ACRATH members from around Australia gathered in Sydney 16-18 February for the ACRATH National Conference. The theme of the conference was *NO to Exploitation, YES to Dignity*.



Further details are in the National Conference newsletter.

## Canberra Advocacy in 2016

Many people have asked about the Canberra advocacy trip this year. No dates have yet been set because of election talk. ACRATH's Executive Officer Christine Carolan said the date for the annual Canberra trip would be set after the election when parliament sitting dates are determined.

## NACRATH Fundraising event

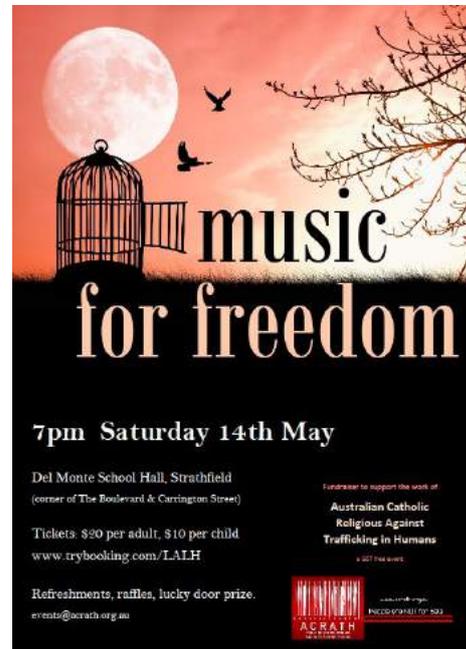
NSW ACRATH has organized a fundraising event on Saturday 14 May (7pm) at Del Monte School Hall, Strathfield.

*Music for Freedom* will showcase music groups from Sydney schools whilst raising awareness of human trafficking in Australia.

Please see the flyer (right of page).

Tickets: \$20 per adult, \$10 per child

Bookings for this event can be made at [www.trybooking.com/LALH](http://www.trybooking.com/LALH)



*We acknowledge the funds received under a grant from the Australian Government. ACRATH also 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.*

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