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**Australian Catholic Religious
Against Trafficking in Humans**

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Anti-trafficking office opens in Western Australia

ACRATH (Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans) will open an office in Perth on October 29 to further its work nationally. The office has been provided by the Archdiocese of Perth and will be staffed by ACRATH volunteers. ACRATH is continuing its anti-trafficking programs and advocacy, despite losing \$125,000 Federal Government funding in June. Following the funding blow, ACRATH launched a national fundraising campaign and has been overwhelmed with the response.

The ACRATH office, at the Newman Siena Centre, 33 Williamstown Rd, Doubleview, Western Australia, will be 'launched' at 4pm on Monday October 29 2018.

ACRATH National Executive Officer, Christine Carolan, said "ACRATH's anti-trafficking work, particularly our work to eliminate forced marriage, has been driven in Western Australia by our volunteers. Some schools in the state with vulnerable population groups have participated in forced marriage teacher training and awareness raising sessions for students, particularly young women. More sessions are planned for next year."

Christine said the Perth volunteers were some of the early pioneers of the anti-trafficking movement in Western Australia, helping set up the WA Freedom Network, which looks at human trafficking issues.

Kathy Fagan, ACRATH Regional Coordinator for Western Australia, has developed strong international networks over the years that are called on when a trafficked woman is being repatriated. Network members help the woman to reintegrate back into her community or support her to rebuild her life when she cannot return to her community or family.

Kathy worked with trafficked women and children in Asia, particularly in Thailand and Cambodia, and began volunteering with ACRATH when she returned to Australia.

"Before I left, I asked the women in Thailand and Cambodia what they needed. They said, 'never forget us and tell people what is happening to us'," Kathy said. The opening of the Perth office is another way of ensuring the voices of trafficked women will be heard.

ACRATH's anti-trafficking work has also benefited from the keen support of people in Western Australia. Earlier this year a fundraising Thai banquet was held at Seton Catholic College and attracted 130 guests. It was also a chance to raise awareness of modern-day slavery in Australia.

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