



www.acrath.org.au

People are NOT for sale

**Australian Catholic Religious
Against Trafficking in Humans**

ACRATH MEDIA RELEASE 4 May, 2026

Anti-trafficking faith-led networks strengthen at Women Deliver 2026



Photo L – R: Manira Alva, Sr Margaret Ng, Sr Abby Avelino, Sr Sarah Puls, Lemau Pala'amo, Sr Jane Wakahiu, Erin Kenny.

The work of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) to prevent and address Human Trafficking in Australia and the Pacific Region was highlighted in a global forum this week as ACRATH's National Executive Officer, Sr Sarah Puls, joined a powerful panel of advocates at the [Women Deliver 2026 Conference](#) in Melbourne, sharing ACRATH's 20 years of experience working to end human trafficking.

The session, "Strengthening Collective Action: Faith, Justice and Working to End Human Trafficking in the Oceanic Pacific," was held at the Melbourne Convention Centre on 28 April 2026. It brought together faith leaders, practitioners, funders and advocates working to end violence against women and girls. Speakers included our network partner Sr Abby Avelino (Talitha Kum), Sr Margaret Ng (Josephite Counter Trafficking Project and ACRATH Co-Founder), Erin Kenny, Spotlight Initiative Global Coordinator, Lemau Pala'amo (Soul Talk Samoa, Congregational Christian Church Samoa) and Sr Jane Wakahiu (Conrad N. Hilton Foundation). The panel was organised by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, an ACRATH grant funding partner and moderated by Ms Manira Alva of Vital Voices.

The discussion highlighted the urgent need to strengthen collaboration between faith-based initiatives, civil society organisations and government bodies to better prevent and respond to human trafficking. ACRATH Executive Officer Sr Sarah Puls said the session reinforced the importance of collective action within communities.

"We all have gifts that we can bring to the work of ending human trafficking and the harm it causes, and faith communities have a particular role to play because they have existing



relationships of trust that can be empowered and utilised to end human trafficking” Sr Sarah said. “Our work must be grounded in trust and utilise culturally appropriate and victim/survivor-centred responses. No single organisation can end trafficking alone. It requires strong networks and shared learning. An example of this is the [ACRATH Pacific Connection Project](#), focused on raising awareness and strengthening capacity through culturally relevant approaches. This initiative centres collaborative, local leadership as essential to shape effective and sustainable responses.

As the Australian network of Talitha Kum, ACRATH welcomed the opportunity to connect with Talitha Kum International Coordinator Sr Abby Avelino.. Sr Abby stated, “We cannot do it alone. We need to work together to address human trafficking. We need to accompany women survivors to rise up”



Photo supplied ACRATH L – R: Sabrina Wong Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Sr Sarah Puls ACRATH, Sr Annette Arnold ACRATH, Sr Jane Wakahiu Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Joseph Dunn ACRATH, Melissa Halliday ACRATH and Sr Abby Avelino Talitha Kum International at ACRATHs National Office.

ACRATH President Sr Annette Arnold welcomed Sr Jane and Sabrina Wong from the Foundation to ACRATH’s National Office at Australian Catholic University in Melbourne. The gathering provided an opportunity for lunch, conversation and deeper connection, as well as a chance to share more about the work supported by the Foundation.

"As an organisation with a particular faith identity, it's important to work alongside others who share foundational values about human dignity and human rights. It was such a privilege to be part of the conversation, and I'm so grateful to the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation for inviting our participation and supporting ACRATH's work so generously." Sr Sarah confirmed.

Media contact: Ange Duthie ACRATH Communications Lead networks@acrath.org.au