

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 Nov – 10 Dec)



Forced marriage happens in Australia. This is *Tamin and *Shamira's story...

Tamin was 20 when she discovered her parents intended sending her out of Australia to marry in another country. She had been promised to a relative. Tamin did not want to leave Australia to marry a stranger. She made contact with an agency and disclosed the imminent marriage. The person she spoke to had participated in an extended training session, presented by ACRATH in the past year. The person knew how to access support for Tamin and the importance of keeping her safe. Tamin was supported as the worker followed the referral pathway. The marriage was stopped. Tamin, who has experienced many difficulties as a result of rejecting a forced marriage, knows she did the right thing. She continues to receive support.

Shamira was 15 and in Year 10 at a secondary school in Australia. She was doing well and hoping to study to be a nurse when she finished Year 12. But she feared that the 'holiday' planned to her parents' homeland in term three break was to marry a much older cousin. Shamira became depressed and began self-harming. Her friend convinced her to speak to a teacher. The teacher contacted the AFP who intervened to stop the marriage. But the cost was high. Shamira has been hospitalised twice after serious self-harming and she is still under pressure from her family to go through with the forced marriage. But she now has support. Though her life has been changed forever, Shamira hopes to become a nurse one day. And she hopes to fall in love with someone she chooses.

The United Nations 16 days of activism against gender-based violence begins on 25th November – International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and ends on 10th December – Human Rights Day. Human trafficking, a \$150 billion global industry, is one of the greatest examples of violence against women and girls. Millions of women and girls are forced to marry, or to work in slave like conditions for little, or no, pay and no chance of an education.

Today, the marriage of an Australian girl, or woman, is being planned. She might be a schoolgirl, or a woman over 18, but either way she won't know about the marriage until it is imminent. She will not have a say in the marriage. Forced marriage is complex and ACRATH has developed a suite of resources to support those working in health, child protection and education. A recently launched ACRATH training video explores the complexities of forced marriage, the impact on a victim of forced marriage, the extent of the problem in Australia and globally, and referral pathways for victim/survivors

Tamin and Samira's Stories From the ACRATH website
(**A**ustralian **C**atholic **R**eligious **A**gainst **T**rafficking in **H**umans)