

Transcript of 'Human Trafficking'

Season 3, Episode 2, Transforming Tomorrow

[Theme music]

Paul: Hello, and welcome to Transforming Tomorrow from the Pentland Centre for Sustainability in Business. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.

Paul: The iPhone you're listening on, that coffee you're holding, the clothes you 'e wearing. These are all things at high risk of modern slavery, but so few of us are aware of it. Let's talk about it.

[Theme music]

Paul: Jan, it's time to return to, I don't wanna say one of our favourite topics, because the topic itself isn't particularly cheerful. But a topic that we really get a lot out of on this podcast, and that's modern slavery.

Jan: Yes indeed. Because it's an enduring problem. And so it's an enduring podcast to revisit different aspects of modern, modern slavery, but also to look for experience from elsewhere in the world where people are trying to tackle the same problems.

Paul: Yeah, because we've looked at modern slavery reporting, how that works. We've looked at the situation in the UK specifically around, uh, the fashion industry and fast fashion around Leicester.

We've looked at various different aspects of it, and every time we return to the topic, we find out something new and we discuss some elements of it that just haven't come up in the past, and that really brings new light to the topic.

Jan: And now I need to actually, like, cue our listeners in, and I need to cue you in as well, Paul, because we are going to have an Australian guest and I'm obviously a New Zealand co-host...

Paul: ...we've managed it before. There's not been any declarations of war.
[Jan laughs] It's fine.

Jan: No, no. But it gives people a chance to hear the difference between the two accents and really nail it, because people find us slightly confusing.

So, um...

Paul: ...so I find you confusing, but it's nothing to do with your accent.

Jan: Okay, okay. Well, let's, let's see how tuned in you are to the differences between New Zealand and Australia. So I have a little quiz for you...

Paul: ...okay, go on then, right, go on, yeah, yeah.

Jan: So I'll, I'll give, give you the practice one. So the, the practice one, you'll get given two things and you need to say which ones are from New Zealand and which ones are from Australia.

But they might both be from Australia or both be from New Zealand. So number one, this is a practice, so, so get yourself ready.

Paul: So when you say they might both be, do you mean they might be both from. I'm gonna pick up on your grammar here...

Jan: ...yes, indeed...

Paul: ...because otherwise it's a very confusing thing. I'm very confused...

Jan: ...oh, you're confused already. I'll give you a practice go, you'll be fine.

So kiwis, koalas. Australia or New Zealand?

Paul: Kiwis, koalas...

Jan: ...yeah, So kiwis and koalas....

Paul: ...oh, so there's two things. I thought there was a diff, I thought there was a, a branch of the koala family that were made of kiwis...

Jan: ...focus, focus...

Paul: ...right. Kiwis. Um. Koalas are from Australia. I don't believe they're in New Zealand as well. And kiwis, I'm gonna say both.

Jan: Ah, well, you see, one fail. Kiwis are indigenous only to New Zealand, yeah.

Paul: Well that's just you being selfish, frankly. [Jan laughs] You should, you should have just got on a boat earlier, taken them across and let the people in Australia have them as well...

Jan: ...fair enough.

Paul: No one's to blame for the lack of Kiwis in Australia, apart from you New Zealanders.

Jan: Okay. But, but now you know the, the structure. Okay, so I'm gonna start with a, a sporting question 'cause I know you're a sporting fan.

So the Black Ferns...

Paul: ...yeah....

Jan: ...and the Wallaroos.

Paul: Yeah?

Jan: New Zealand or Australians?

Paul: Well, one of each. The Black Ferns are from New Zealand and the Wallaroos are from Australia.

Jan: And what's, what's the sport for the bonus question?

Paul: Um, I think that's Rugby. Rugby Union?

Jan: Yep. Women's Rugby Union...

Pauk: ...okay....

Jan: Yeah, there we are. He's doing all right, isn't he? [laughs]

Paul: Now this is where I, I've never seen the point in differentiating between women's and men's sports in that regard.

It's just sports. So it's just rugby union.

Jan: It, it is...

Paul: ...yes...

Jan: ...yeah, but they're different names. So...

Paul: ...yeah, because the equivalent are the Wallabies and the All Blacks.

Jan: Yes, indeed. Well done, well done. So...

Paul: ...you asked me a sport question, Jan. I was at home there. It's fine. [Jan laughs] Now are you gonna go on to politics and name the 1950 Prime Minister from New Zealand...?

Jan: No, no. I'm gonna go into music next. , Midnight Oil and Crowded House.

Paul: Uh, Midnight Oil are from Australia and Crowded House are from New Zealand. I thought you might have said Split Enz to be honest, but you went for Crowded House and that's fine...

Jan: ...Aah, you are showing your colours, even better. Okay, so Kylie Minogue and Nicole Kidman.

Paul: I think they're both from Australia.

Jan: Ah, well, we'll come back and we'll score you later on. Okay...

Paul: [mock indignantly] ...hang on! [inaudible noises] which obviously tells me I've got one wrong.

Jan: No, no, you're right on both. [laughs]

Paul: [laughing] Oh, that's okay.

Jan: So the final one and the critical one, pavlova and flat whites.

Paul: Pavlova and flat whites? Are you telling me one of these was created, or both of these were created in Australia and or New Zealand?

Jan: Yeah. See, this is a political question. There's a bear trap opening up, step into it. See what you're gonna do there.

Paul: I'm gonna say one of them's from Fiji and one of them's from Tonga...

[Jan laughs]

Paul: ...and, uh, leave it at that, 'cause I don't want to get involved in any, you know, cross-Tasman disputes at all.

Jan: Well, you're very good 'cause I, 'cause I don't think that we ever, we've figured out pavlova and flat whites, but, um, on the rest of them, you know what you're talking about. So we can safely have an Australian guest.

Paul: Right. Okay. Right. I, I didn't realise that there was some, this is like a visa. This is worse than coming into this country if you don't have a British passport.

[Jan laughs]

Paul: It's, yeah, why are you here? What's going on? Are you allowed to even talk to Australians in New Zealand?

Thank you, Jan.

Jan: That's alright. Are you ready for it now? Ready? Are you ready? [laughs]

Paul: I know. I feel like the chair I'm sitting in needed to have some more, a spotlight on it and uh, that's it...

Jan: ...we could have arranged that, right.

Paul: You know Magnus Magnusson?

Jan: Yes, I do indeed.

Paul: No, I said you're *no* Magnus Magnusson. I don't say you know Magnus Magnus...

Jan: ...you're nooo [mimicking Paul's accent]

Paul: ...you're no, you are not Magnus Magnusson.

Jan: That's true. That's true.

Paul: [disgruntled noises] This is only just started and already you're insulting my accent. Never mind Australia and New Zealand.

We need to move on! So I, do I take it from this, we're gonna be talking possibly about modern slavery in Australia?

Jan: Uh, yes...

Paul: ...yes.

Jan: That was a long way in, but I thought it was a, I thought it was more...

Paul: ...it was a really long way in. [Jan giggles], I, I was hoping that you'd bring up something like Shortland Street or, or various other like soap operas from Australia and New Zealand.

There's one of those that was from New Zealand. I can't remember what it was that was...

Jan: ...well, now Shortland Street's New Zealand.

Paul: It is New Zealand. I thought, I said that and I thought, I don't know if that is New Zealand, but I think it is.

Jan: It is...

Paul: ...yeah, it had Shortland Street, and then the Sullivans and, uh, Neighbours, Home And Away, and like...

Jan: ...well, I can see that you're not been, you've been, what you've been doing with your, time that you've been watching...

Paul: ...I know nothing at all of any use to this podcast, but if it comes to popular culture around the world, even in New Zealand, which is, you know, approximately 30 years behind the rest of the world, I'm just about there. Um...

Jan: I'd like to contest that point, but I can't, [Paul laughs] carry on.

Paul: Yeah, when I mentioned Split Enz, what I didn't say is they're currently number one in both the singles and album charts in New Zealand.

Jan: [whilst Paul laughs] Aaaah... I knew this was gonna backfire on me.

Dear listeners, I thought this would be a prank on, on himself, but no, I've caught, I've been caught in the same thing.

Paul: Yes. You, you've been caught in your own bear trap.

Um, so we're gonna be talking about modern slavery in relation to Australia. But not just Australia, other countries as well, because we've touched on it on a global scale without focusing on certain countries, and on a UK scale. So yeah, let's look at some other countries too.

Jan: So who's gonna talk to us about this?

Paul: Well, we are joined today by Kyla Raby, who is an anti-slavery specialist, and she's completing her PhD at the University of South Australia. Soon to be, I want to say the University of Adelaide, or is it Adelaide University.

Kyla: Adelaide University.

Paul: I dunno, that's a big thing that you don't wanna get that wrong. That's, that's gonna be lots of trouble if you say that wrong.

And Kyla though has a lot of experience when it comes to practical, practicalities of modern slavery. She's managed and designed support services for survivors of trafficking in the UK, Greece, Bangladesh, Australia.

She's held positions with the Australian Red Cross and the British Red Cross. She was an inaugural member of the New South Wales Anti-Slavery Commissioner's advisory panel. That's a long title, but nowhere near the longest that we've had on this show.

And I'm sure there's about 5 million other things that Kyla's done that tie in with modern slavery.

So, I think we've got ourselves an expert. Welcome, Kyla.

Kyla: Thank you so much. It's great to be here.

Jan: So can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your background? Which from the, the show notes we, we already know is extensive, but it's, it's interesting 'cause you're putting a PhD after a world of, of experience and practice. So I think that's a really interesting thing to hear about as well.

Kyla: Yeah. Thanks so much. So I'm not sure if you use this term here, I only heard it for myself a few months ago, but I'm what they call a 'pracademic'.
[laughs]

So I have, yeah, more recently stepped into the academia field, but really, yeah, come from, as you've mentioned, you know, really a strong history of practice.

So I've worked to support survivors of human trafficking and slavery, um, primarily with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. So my background started in Australia. Um, I was working with, with refugees and asylum seekers before I moved to the UK, actually, in about 2014. And I was working for the British Red Cross in Nottinghamshire and, um, across Derbyshire and Cheshire.

And I was managing refugee and asylum seeker support programmes. And at that time, uh, if you can cast your mind back, it was, um, peak European migration crisis with, you know, the conflict in Syria, you know, forcing many, you know, hundreds and thousands and millions of people actually to kind of, uh, seek asylum and to move across Europe.

And we were seeing so many people actually being trafficked into the UK and into Derbyshire in particular, and unfortunately at that time there really was very little services to support those people. So we were seeing people who'd experienced human trafficking come to the refugee and asylum seeker support services that we were providing. And as a response, we really started working with the local councils, and really started kind of working with them to develop, uh, support services to help these survivors.

So, um, that's where my work with human trafficking first started, you know, here in the UK. And it was actually around the time where the UK introduced their Modern Slavery Act in 2015.

And then I, I worked, I was deployed with the British Red Cross to Greece to support the migration crisis there. Um, and as a result was also seeing human trafficking in that context and, and working to support that there. And when I returned to Australia in 2018, I got back in the November of that year and I started working with the Australian Red Cross leading their response to human trafficking and forced labour.

And a couple of weeks later, um, Australia passed its own Modern Slavery Act. And so it was a really exciting time, it was really great to see the first example of a Commonwealth regulation in the Australian context that looked at addressing, you know, modern slavery, particularly in the context of global supply chains.

I went from having, you know, a long history of being in that very practical operational space where I was managing casework services and support services around human trafficking, to all of a sudden having conversations about supply chains.

And I'd never really had conversations about supply chains before, but, um, being that Australian Red Cross was actually a reporting entity under the Modern Slavery Act, um, our organisation very quickly had to turn its attention to thinking about, well, how do we address this issue internally? How is our own operations and supply chains potentially contributing to the exploitation of people?

And I was a core part of the beginnings of Australian Red Cross's response to, to modern slavery and reporting under the Modern Slavery Act. So that's been, um, my kind of history to date, uh, working on these various issues. And now I guess I can bring a bit of a perspective from both sides from, you know, understanding the human trafficking and the trafficking and slavery, um, space, which is, you know, very frontline response. And also now thinking about this issue from more of the modern slavery terminology and from the global supply chains context.

Jan: And just one thing, a, a phrase I would like to pick up there, because it's in our news at the moment, um, in terms of, you know, migrants, um, trafficking,

modern slavery, and victims of modern slavery. So could you define for our listeners what trafficking is?

Kyla: Yeah, for sure. So, trafficking in persons is a crime that originated from a, a piece of legislation commonly known as the trafficking protocol that was, um, developed about 25 years ago and passed at an international level. Um, almost every single state in, sorry, state in the world has, um, ratified this international legislation.

And essentially it describes a situation where there's an act, a means and a purpose. So the act could be that somebody has been recruited or they've been transported, um, or they've been harboured, for example.

And then there's a means. So the means is that it's often being done using coercion or deception. And then there's a purpose and there's an exploitative purpose. So that could be that for labour exploitation, for sexual exploitation.

So it's a quite a legally specific term, um, but it has been applied quite broadly to refer to people who've been exploited, um, for commercial purposes or for, for sexual purposes, um, using coercion or deception. It's kind of like the umbrella term.

So prior to, I would say around about 2015, when you passed, um, the, the, the United Kingdom passed the UK Modern Slavery Act, trafficking in persons and human trafficking was really the primarily termin, primary terminology that was used to, to refer to the exploitation of people, whether that was, you know, in, um, for example, a domestic setting or in a commercial setting, like in a, in a business, in a corporate entity.

Um, it was really this trafficking dialogue, which we used, and it's only been, you know, kind of since that point in time that modern slavery as an umbrella term has kind of been used.

And there's lots of different debates about, you know, whether or not trafficking in persons actually comes under the banner of modern slavery or not. But you know, that, they're, they're very legal and technical. I think, you know, for the purpose of, of your listeners, I would just say, um, you know, modern slavery is that broader umbrella term that, you know, encapsulates various forms of, of exploitation, which human trafficking is one of them.

Paul: So. You're here in Lancaster visiting the, the Pentland Centre. It's part of a, a wider tour that comes as part of your PhD. Can you tell us a little bit about

that, and what you are looking to find out about modern slavery from us over here?

Kyla: Yeah, fantastic. Um, so I, like I was very fortunate to receive a scholarship from University of South Australia and you mentioned, um, in the beginning that my university is actually merging with another one in South Australia, um, which is the University of Adelaide.

And together we're collectively becoming Adelaide University as of, um, a few months away, I think in 6th of January officially. And that university has a number of different relationships with universities across the UK. Um, and the scholarship that I applied for and was successful in, um, being granted is the Maurice De Rohan International Travel Scholarship.

Um, it's a real, yeah, privilege and pleasure to be able to, to come over here and to do this work through, um, through the support of the, of his family. Um, and through my time here in the UK I'll be visiting a number of institutions that are partners with Adelaide University.

And so last week I was in Cardiff, with Cardiff University at the Business of Modern Slavery Conference there, which was a really great opportunity to meet so many, um, different researchers and also, um, government representatives and practitioners in this space from the UK context.

And then next week I'll be down in Liverpool, um, visiting some of the team from the Centre for the Study of International Slavery, and then heading over to Nottingham to the, the Rights Lab team there who I've, I've really watched, um, and admired the work from afar for many years of that team. They're, they're really world, world class in the human trafficking and, and modern slavery research space. So really excited to connect with them.

And then also meeting with some, um, of the team of the, uh, Modern Slavery Policy and Evidence Centre, um, when I'm in Oxford and London later on, in the five weeks that I'm here.

[Laughs]

Paul: Fitting a lot in.

Kyla: Yeah... [laughs]

Jan: ...yeah. But also it's, um, like these are really, you know, hotspots of, of absolutely excellent research and practitioner engagement across the UK. So it's a really nice study tour and nice to enmesh yourself in that.

And with that in mind, that it's sort of like looking at what's happening in the UK to reflect on the Australian experience, what is similar and different between modern slavery in the UK and, and Australia in, in your experience and also that experience with the, the Red Cross organisation in the two places? Does it look radically different or is it a variations on the same thing?

Kyla: Yeah, great question. Um, I think one of the most significant differences in the context is that, in the Australian context, I think about 10 years ago now, Australia decided to criminalise forced marriage as a practice, as a human trafficking and slavery practice.

So forced marriage now kind of comes under our Commonwealth criminal framework, which is included in what we call modern slavery offences. So it's now also part of our primary response to modern slavery, which is, is very different to the UK here.

So when I was working in the UK, I, I didn't, we didn't deal with the issue of forced marriage at all because it's, um, really seen as an issue of domestic and family violence here in the UK, and the, the frameworks that have been developed in response have emerge from that space.

However, in the Australian context, given that it's under the, you know, the human trafficking and modern slavery framework, we, uh, responding to forced marriage was a big part of our work when I was at the Australian Red Cross, and still is a big part of the Australian Red Cross's work.

So, forced marriage though, as a form of modern slavery, is very different to other forms of modern slavery. Um, you know, obviously it's something that primarily happens in a domestic context.

So, interesting fact: the Australian Modern Slavery Act actually provides a definition of modern slavery. Which I don't think the UK Act did, did it? No. Um, and in doing that, we kind of listed a range of existing offences that we put under this banner of modern slavery, and that, that, that includes our Commonwealth criminal code offences, so modern slavery.

So technically under the Australian Modern Slavery Act, businesses need to report on how they, you know, are, do or do not identify forced marriage as a

risk in their supply chains, which, you know, feels quite abstract for a lot of businesses. But, um, when we were talking yesterday, Jan, um, doing a piece of research on how universities, for example, as institutions respond to the issue of modern slavery, and we know in the Australian context, um, forced marriage is something that does affect international, uh, sorry, university students, um, whether that be domestic or international students.

So it does have that, you know, application there, but it is quite a different form of, of exploitation. Um, I think there's quite a few similarities though between the context as well. We've seen, you know, the high-risk sectors, um, in Australia and the, the UK context are quite similar. So, for example, construction, you know, hospitality, um, agriculture, they, these are all high-risk areas in Australia.

Um, we know migrants are. You know, much higher risk than Australian citizens and residents in the Australian context. And I think it's the same here in the UK. So, there are some similarities.

I would say the UK response to human trafficking as an issue is, is more developed than the Australian response. But that is also because, I guess thinking about the issue in terms of scale, your population means that the scale is much larger here, um, compared to the Australian context.

Paul: Yeah, it's interesting. I, I guess if you were to ask people to name similar countries to the UK in the world, Australia and New Zealand, where, albeit 30 years ago would be pretty high up on the list. So it's interesting to see the similarities and differences, but what about the other countries you've worked with?

What about somewhere like, say Bangladesh? What about somewhere like Greece where you've got totally different, maybe, attitudes and approaches.

Kyla: Yeah, so I'm so glad you asked about Bangladesh. It's um, it's a really topical issue right now. So I was working there, I got sent there in February 2020. Now, if that date rings a bell [everyone laughs], to anybody listening, you'll know that it was before the end of the world. [laughs]

Um, no, it was before COVID was really a thing. I think, um, I remember on my first day, um, landing in Dhaka, having a briefing about this thing called COVID and going, what is this? Why is everybody really panicked about this? Turned out there was, there was a real reason for, for that panic.

Um, but so I, I was sent to Bangladesh through the, um, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to work in Cox's Bazar, which is the world's largest refugee camp, is based, just outside of the Cox's Bazar, which is a city in Bangladesh. The city's on the coast and Cox's Bazar refugee camp is between the coast and the border of Burma.

So the Rohingya population in Myanmar were forced to, have been forced to flee for, for many, many years. For many decades actually. But in particular around, um, 2016, 17, there was a really significant mass, um, migration or force displacement of Rohingya from Myanmar into Cox's Bazar. And as a result, there is a refugee camp there that's about 1.4 million people living, still today.

This is where I was working and, and my role was a protection gender and inclusion delegate, meaning that I was there to really support, um, a response that looked at protecting people's human rights. And some of the most severe human right violations was human trafficking, including forced marriage and child marriage.

So, I think fast forward to 2025, and the situation in Bangladesh, um, is still the same in terms of there's still 1.4 million people there, living in really horrific conditions. But because of major funding cuts to aid, um, around the world, there is real risk now that Cox's Bazar is gonna become a significant hotspot for human trafficking.

You know, it's always been an issue, you know, people have been trafficked, um, from, uh, Cox's Bazar to Malaysia, for example, you know, um, from the camps into Dhaka, into the capital city to work in the Bangladeshi garment industry.

But this, these risks of human trafficking are only gonna increase given that now there's been these major cuts to services that have been provided in the camps. Essential services such as schools, um, are all being, are being closed. And yeah, it's really increasing that risk of human trafficking.

So it's on a scale that's really hard to imagine. Um, you know, 1.4 million people is like the size of the city that I live in, in Australia, in Adelaide. And to imagine, um, you know 50 to 60% of those people are at risk, at significant risk of human trafficking, it's just, um, yeah, it's, it's really, really hard to, to kind of comprehend, given the context we live and work in.

Paul: It's evidence of something that we talk about quite frequently, in the change in political winds, and you talk about the cuts to international aid, which has been something that's been highlighted in the USA particularly, even over here in the UK. And then you start seeing these effects.

So while the UK say might be doing more with the Modern Slavery Act and other things to address modern slavery within its own boundaries and borders, and within the structures of companies that operate here, cuts to international aid can have an effect elsewhere that makes, exacerbates the problem.

Kyla: Absolutely. And I think root causes of modern slavery are poverty, um, inequality, racism, et cetera. And these are all things that unfortunately exist, you know, in, in spades across the world. And, and actions taken to address those things are by default, anti-slavery actions. Um, they're just often not kind of seen under that banner.

Jan: And I think what, what's arresting as well is that you say refugee camp, at 1.4 million people. I mean, that's a whole scale of, of settlement that, that, again, we, we don't usually think of ref, we think, maybe if we think about them at all, we might think about a few wee tents or something like that. But it's a scale issue.

Paul: Yeah. On that, that point. You've worked in Greece as well. So how big are the refugee camps that you operated in there, by, for comparison's sake?

Kyla: So when I was in Greece, um, it was in that 2016, 2017 period. So it was kind of at the end of the, the tail end of the significant European refugee crisis movement, um, uh, across Europe.

So borders had been closed for about a year by the time I was there, and people had essentially become a bit trapped in Greece because, you know, that was the point in time where a lot of European countries decided to close their borders to stop people from moving through, um, you know, under pressure from countries such as the UK who didn't want people to be able to reach the UK, for example.

So the refugee camps themselves weren't that significant in terms of size. Um, when, when I was working there. I think we were probably talking about more like, um, you know, 50 to 60,000 people. But it was more, the issue that we were grappling with at that time was, well, these people were now going to be living in Greece for the long term.

Um, and they, that wasn't really by choice. That wasn't their, their preferred country. They didn't speak the language. They, um, didn't have family there. They may have had family in other countries in Europe that they had been trying to reach. And so the work I was doing was around trying to develop settlement support services and, and a settlement framework to help these people really adjust to living in Greece and to settle, um, and, and create a life in, in Greece, as well as to support the local Greek community to adapt to that significant migration.

Jan: So keeping on with this focus on trafficking, which you've defined really well, how do you support the survivors of trafficking?

So like how, how do you, how do they become identified? What do they need, and then how are those needs met?

Kyla: Hmm. Great question. So it's a, uh, we could speak for hours about this. [everyone laughs]. That's a very big question.

Um, I guess before I talk about specific services, I will say, what's really important is that the way support is provided, um, I think it's, it's really important that we recognise that. The experience of human trafficking is incredibly traumatic, and as a result, the response needs to be really trauma-informed.

So we, we use that word a lot in the Australian context, thinking about how, um, support services and frameworks really recognise the impact of trauma and think about how that might show up in someone's experience.

So your first point about how they're identified, you know, an a trauma-informed response would not be somebody sitting there with a checklist saying, have you experienced human trafficking?

Jan: Yeah.

Kyla: Because, you know, we know the language of human trafficking is not something that a survivor of human trafficking actually relates to. Um, you know, they, it's often that they may not recognise what they have experienced is, is called human trafficking or even that what they've experienced is a crime, for example.

So, you know, having systems and responses that really recognise that impact of trauma and how that may play out in someone's experience of, of, um, a frontline service response, for example, is really important. And having

pathways for people to be able to seek protection through trusted points of contact.

So one of the major issues in Australian context, um, that we, when I was working with the Australian Red Cross that we worked really hard to change was the fact that in order to access government funded support for survivors of human trafficking, up until last year, you needed to report to the police. There was no way I've been able to do that, um, other than reporting to the police.

So we know there's so many, um, reasons why a survivor of human trafficking may not feel comfortable talking to someone from a law enforcement, um, body. And it's a real barrier to be able to access that support. Here in the UK context, you know, you changed that a long time ago. I think that was part of your initial response to human trafficking, but you know, since then you've had the NRM, the National Referral Mechanism, um, and you've had a range of different first responders that can refer people into that, into that NRM, and those first responders come from a, a range of different organisations such as NGOs, which often are more of a place of safety for survivors to connect with in that first instance.

Um, so we didn't have that until last year in the Australian context, but we've, we managed to get an additional referral pathway, um, through as a pilot, um, which has I think in 12 months been able to refer, um, an additional 104, I think was the statistics I saw a couple of weeks ago, survivors of human trafficking to government funded support that would not have been able to connect with that support, um, previously.

So I think that access point is really important, but also from my work and my research, so putting that kind of academic hat on, some of the major issues around support frameworks and, and structures. I did some research whilst I was at Australian Red Cross as well as with my Uni SA hat on, around the barriers, um, to accommodating survivors of human trafficking.

So housing is an absolutely essential need for all of us. Um, that doesn't change, you know, for survivors, but it, I think the importance of it, of stable and secure and appropriate housing for a survivor of human trafficking cannot be, um, underestimated because it really acts as a base for, um, their recovery process and for them to be able to go on to then start to address other needs that they may have.

And so, without that stable accommodation, it can be really challenging, um, you know, for survivors to, to progress on that recovery journey, so to speak. Um, and it's a real issue in the Australian context, um, in terms of we're, we have a major housing crisis as, as I know you do here as well. Um, so housing in general is, is in a massive shortage.

And so we've done some research about that and, um, made some, um, you know, some recommendations and, published a peer review article on, on that as well, so if anyone's interested in looking into that. And another one of the issues that we have looked at really specifically with that, um, kind of, also the, the practitioner as well as the research, um, you know, angle is around survivors of human trafficking who have children.

Um, so this is a, a big gap in, um, the response recognising that, um, as a survivor, one, you may have your own needs that are, are arising from your experience of exploitation. But if you have children and dependents then there's this whole other layer of, of needs. Um, and from the research we found that survivors, um, no surprising, uh, which won't be a surprise to I think really, uh, prioritise the needs of their children over their own.

And so if the needs of those dependents and those children are not being met, um, it's a real barrier for survivors to be able to go on and meet their own needs. But unfortunately, a lot of our systems and structures don't recognise the needs of those children under the, the frameworks that exist to support survivors.

So, we've been doing some advocacy in the Australian context as well to the government to try and change some of those frameworks. And we've seen some small changes as well. So, um, that's a positive, but I think there's a lot more space there to go to recognise that.

But, I'll leave it there. I could, like I said, we could talk about that, that issue for a really long time, but.

Jan: No, I think what's helpful is it sort of opens up the, the box a little bit for our listeners to realise just how big and complex that space is within there.

Paul: How good are countries at cooperating with each other and sharing expertise and resources when it comes to supporting these survivors of trafficking?

You're gonna have someone who's started out in one country, maybe gone through two or three other countries and ended up somewhere. What's the cooperation like between all the countries on those chains, if you will?

Kyla: Unfortunately, from what I've seen, not very good. [short laugh] Um, I, I think it depends on when somebody is a resident or a citizen of a particular country.

So, for example, in Australia, one of the kind of emerging issues that is getting a lot more traction because we're seeing much more of it, is, um, what is known colloquially as 'exit trafficking'. So when an Australian citizen or a resident is trafficked out of Australia.

So this generally kind of occurs in the context of domestic and family violence. So when a, um, primarily male takes, um, a partner, a wife, um, and children to another country and then leaves them there and takes their passports, um, as a way of removing them from the domestic life in Australia.

So when that occurs, we have seen some really great cooperation with other countries. Uh, and I think it's very much on a case-by-case basis though, depending on diplomatic relations and whatever's present in that particular country.

But I think more generally, um, the responses that I've seen in each country I've worked in are quite, um, fragmented and quite specific to that country's context. I think given our diplomatic ties, the UK and Australia do tend to learn a lot from each other. Um, you know, we, we copied our entire modern slavery legislation based on Section 54 of your UK Act. [Jan and Kyla laugh]

So, um, I think in that way, you know, informally we learn a lot, but, um, I don't know if it's kind of through any real formalised structures, if that makes sense.

Paul: And then how does your PhD fit into all of this, then? You've gone from working across all of this practice, you said how there's a bit of overlap there now between the practice and the PhD.

How does it all fit and what exactly is it you are doing with your PhD around the area?

Kyla: Yeah. Um, so I guess it all fits because when I was, when I was working with the Australian Red Cross, um, one of the things that I was finding is that we were so busy doing the doing, um, you know, it was a really, really intense, heavily operational role.

Um, we were working with the Australian Federal Police and, and responding to cases of human trafficking as they were emerging. You know, we were on call, um, on the weekends, I remember being out with friends, playing pool and getting phone calls from the Australian Federal Police saying, you know, we've got this case, we need to deal with this right now, and having to stop everything and go into a very operational response.

And I, I really enjoyed that work, like I got a lot of meaning and purpose from doing that work. And, um, however, one of the things that was really frustrating for me was that I was finding that we never had any time to do the thinking. And there was a lot of issues that were coming up that needed thought, a lot of deep thinking.

Um, and we didn't even have time to do the reading. You know, academic literature was never something I would've had time to sit down and, and look to, um, if I remained, you know, entirely in that practitioner space because, you know, the NGO environment is, is so intense where that, the workloads are so high.

So, my choice to do a PhD really kind of came from that desire to carve out some time in my week to do the thinking. And I dropped down to four days a week. And I was very fortunate to have, you know, managers who allowed me to do that, to be able to start a PhD part-time. And at the, at the time I thought it was gonna take me about eight or nine years part-time, and luckily it hasn't.

Um, but you know, that's for a mix of right, um, other reasons. I've had a few babies in the last few years as well, so I've been able to go on maternity leave and strangely pick up more of the PhD whilst I've not been, um, you know, in that practitioner role.

Um, but the desire, my, my PhD is looking at Australia's Modern Slavery Act. It's looking at it from quite a critical policy analysis perspective, and it's really looking at the responsibility that Australia's Modern Slavery Act puts on consumers to be the accountability mechanism to regulate business.

So within our Modern Slavery Act, we don't have any penalties, um, similar to yours. We don't have any formal accountability mechanism. And when it was developed, there was this belief that by businesses publishing, you know, these modern slavery statements, consumers would go out and make more informed decisions and they would then be the influence to hold corporates, you know, accountable for, um, you know, having ethical supply chains.

So when, when that first came out, I was actually really excited by that idea and I was like, okay, great, consumers are the answer. This is gonna, this is gonna really work. Um, and as I mentioned at the beginning when I was first kind of in the Australian Red Cross helping the organisation respond to this legislation, I realised all the reasons why that may not occur and is very, uh, likely not to occur.

One for Australian Red Cross being that we didn't have consumers, you know, um, we are not a consumer based organisation. So even thinking about who is consumers to that type of organisation was a big question. So that's where, um, yeah, the, the kind of inspiration for my, my PhD came from. And then it's evolved, I guess, um, as I've, as I've done it since. And now only hopefully about six months away from submitting. [laughing] Fingers crossed.

Jan: So, when you're talking about that, that consumer focus and, and certainly once you become sensitised to issues of modern slavery, I think you do think about what you buy in a different way and you observe, you maybe observe building sites in a different way, or nail bars, or whatever it is.

You, you do end up being a bit more sensitised to what's going on, although it's, you know, it's hard to know what's going on. Just as somebody who's, you know, in, in a, you know, commercial relationship with somebody.

But you've got a social media approach to this, which, um, which sounds really, really interesting. So, could you tell us something about how you've been using your project, called Everyday Slavery, and we'll make sure that's in the, the show notes for our listeners as well. Can you tell us about that project and what you're trying to achieve with it and how it's going.

Kyla: Yeah, thanks for asking. So I guess one of the other things I did in, in my PhD um, research was I undertook a consumer survey in partnership with CHOICE, a consumer, um, advocacy group in Australia to really look at what, what did consumers think of this issue of modern slavery, but also of the fact that the legislation, you know, place this responsibility on them.

And through that research it became really apparent that there was a very limited awareness of, um, of modern slavery as an issue, but also, um, I think more importantly, very limited understanding of how modern slavery actually manifests in global supply chains in a way that kind of then appears in the products and the services that we use every day.

So I took some of those findings and I applied to the Australian government under the National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery, um, a grant programme, and said, hey, um, this is an issue. If you give me a bit of money, I will, um, try to address this through, you know, creating a social media awareness raising project, um, that aims to really target the everyday Australian as consumers, but also as citizens.

Um, knowing that from my work also, having an awareness of human trafficking and modern slavery and how it exists in your local community is so important in helping that identification of, um, survivors. So that was a real motivation for this project as well.

So, um, I was very fortunate that the government decided to fund it. So for the first two years I received pilot funding to, to establish this project, it just expired in June, um, a few months ago. But this project exists across Instagram, across YouTube and um, Facebook. And really, um, I've developed a whole range of different content to help, you know, do that education and awareness raising piece, but also to do that translation of, um, how does this now show up in the goods and services, um, you know, that, that you're using every day.

So, for example, on the YouTube channel, there is a range of videos in a series that I've called Slavery in Every Day. Um, and it's on, you know, common commodities that, um, that we would all use every single day that have, are at high risk of modern slavery. So, your iPhone sitting on the table here, the coffee that I know I definitely drank this morning, um, chocolate, seafood, um, you know, clothing, those, those things.

Um, and they're really short, um, accessible videos. They're only two or three minutes long and they try to really kind of give the context of why is this a high-risk product. This, this product that's a high risk of being made with modern slavery. Where in the world are these kind of issues linked to? Um, and also what can you do about it as a consumer if this is something you care about, you know, how can you perhaps think about making some, some different choices in that area to either, you know, avoid that risk or to, to reduce that risk as much as possible.

So, yeah, thanks for putting the, the, um, you know, the links in the show notes and if anyone, um, wants to know more, feel free to reach out to me through that platform as well. I'd be really happy to chat.

Paul: So, just to wrap up then, Kayla, what's coming next? What's coming next for you in your work in this area, but what also do you see coming next in terms of maybe modern slavery regulation and legislation?

Kyla: Hmm, great question. Wish I had a, um, crystal ball. Wouldn't that be amazing? Right. [laughs]

Look, I think, um, for me personally, I love, I really love that balance of, um, you know, the pracademic terminology of the practice and the research. So I really hope to continue that. I think, um, it's been really exciting to also see a real shift in, you know, universities' thinking around the, the, um, real emphasis on applied knowledge.

And I think, you know, we, we know that, um, research is only valuable if it has that application or if, if it can be used. That new knowledge production needs to be able to be used somewhere. And I think I'm, I'm really committed to, to trying to use research to improve policy and, um, you know, whether that's in the Australian context or the UK context, I think learning from, um, you know, research and to be able to, to be able to create better policies and laws that actually, um, address the, you know, the root causes of modern slavery, so that we're having a, a real meaningful impact on, um, the, you know, the lives of people who are experiencing exploitation is, is kind of what drives me every day. So I hope to continue to do that.

And I think in that question of what comes next in the policy space, it's been exciting to see, you know, a, a real shift from the, the kind of discussion of transparency to a discussion around, you know, uh, human rights due diligence and corporate responsibility in that space. Um, I know the Omnibus and, um, other kind of setbacks I suppose, have caused, um, a, a bit of concern there, rightly so, but I still think we're moving in the right direction where we're thinking we're going beyond that transparency approach. And I think it's absolutely necessary.

So in, in my, um, uh, for my PhD, I, I made a submission to the, um, statutory review of Australia's Modern Slavery Act saying we really need to rethink this transparency approach, um, because it's not working. It's not having, um, a meaningful impact on, on those who have been exploited. And I think in the Australian context that that message is starting to slowly get through.

So I'm really hopeful that we will move in that direction. We are fortunate that in Australia we have, um, a New South Wales Modern Slavery Act, so at a

state-based level, which already has mandatory human rights due diligence for public, um, entities over a certain revenue, uh, sorry, public entities all across New South Wales, um, including, for example, um, new South Wales universities.

So, um, we're gonna see reporting under that in the next few years, and I think that's gonna really be a catalyst and an emphasis for the Commonwealth, um, law and, and policy space to also be taking that similar approach. So I'm optimistic, in short. [laughs]

Paul: Well, thank you very much for joining us, Kyla. It's been really great to get this different international perspective to the whole issue of modern slavery, adding to what we've discussed before.

Jan: And what I also like is that, that to appreciate something of the pointy end. The, the, the place where, where people are in desperate need and, and that we have a, you know, humanitarian and, and you know, compassionate response to that. That was really, yeah. That's quite sobering, but really important to hear as well.

So, thank you.

Kyla: Thanks so much for having me. It's been a real pleasure.

[Theme music]

Paul: We're building up quite a library here, Jan, of people with lots of fascinating insights, both practical, research based and across both of those areas, into modern slavery.

Jan: Well, and also I think that what that really showed me, and, and this was quite a distinctive conversation with that trafficking element, is the extent to which it, its variability, um, how it manifests in different places.

Things like the incidence. So, like 50 people, 50% of people in, you know, a massive refugee camp at risk of, of trafficking. Um, it's been moved across the border to work in perhaps private sector, you know, supply chains was, yeah, that was beyond my comprehension, I have to say. I was, uh, it was truly inspiring, but horrifying at the same time.

Paul: 50% of 1.4 million people. 1.4 million people as a city would, I think be the second or third biggest city in the UK. It's huge. Absolutely huge. And then when Kyla says, oh, the ones that she came across in Greece and stuff, they

weren't very big in comparative, but they're still 50 or 60,000 people, which is about half the size of Lancaster as a district.

And it's about the size of where I come from in Barrow. That's...

Jan: ...mm-hmm...

Paul: ...imagining that everyone there was a refugee and half of them on the Cox's Bazar scale at risk of human trafficking, and not necessarily half in terms of the Greek refugee camps that she mentioned. But yeah, it's just such a, a massive area of concern.

Jan: And, and then it makes you feel quite sort of disappointed in a way with a Modern Slavery Act that somehow says, okay, you as a consumer, it's now your responsibility to unpick all of that.

So it seems like that there's sort of like a whole pipeline of things that goes on between us consuming goods that may have been very, you know, made with, with forced labour, um, through to, you know, the, I mean the, the really complex social, political, you know, sources of some of the movement of people that end up in this situation.

But, but somehow, you know, the consumer at the far end seems like the less likely person to be able to do too much at all. Not to do, not that you can't do anything, but, but that's a, that's a lever that's a long way away from the source.

Paul: There needs to be, and I know this is something that Kyla talks about the problem with this legislation, particularly on the Australian context, but as she's pointed out, there's so much similarity with the UK context.

The problem with how it's imagined to be enforced, and it's through consumer power, and that shouldn't be where it is. That shouldn't be where you're cutting down on and enforcing and regulating and pushing back against modern slavery and trafficking, and everything that's there...

Jan: ...mm-hmm...

Paul: ...it should be so much further back along the line, not at the very end of it where you've got someone going into a shop and saying, which of these things am I gonna buy? Let me just check on their modern slavery reports on my phone to see who's got the better one, oh they're two 30 page reports. I

better just give it a few weeks and read through them before making a purchasing decision.

Jan: Or, or even worse, you know, two five-page reports that don't tell you very much at all. I mean, that's the other thing. [laughs]

Paul: I, I was being optimistic that these two companies had filled out proper reports, but as we've talked, spoken about previously about reporting, there's a lot of reliance on the companies themselves for taking it seriously.

Jan: It's also then, it really does pull out some of the limits of, um, governance by transparency.

Paul: Yes.

Jan: So, so that, and we've, we've talked about that before on the podcast, I'm sure we'll talk about it again, is that there's again, it's, it's helpful, it's not unhelpful, it's quite good when you've got a very complex situation to provide principles for reporting and people can then say what matters in their, their context.

But again, it has limits as well.

Paul: Yes. Particularly when, as we said, the consumers at the end of it, and as Kyla pointed out, so many members of the general public have a limited awareness around issues of modern slavery. In a university, and in the context of something like the Pentland Centre, where we talk about modern slavery so often, it's hard to lose track of the fact that most of the people on the street, the general public aren't engaging with it as much and discussing it as much, aren't coming across it as much on their social media.

So their knowledge of what situations are with regards to trafficking, with regards to other issues of modern slavery is so minimal that you can't rely on them to have that knowledge there to enact actions against companies.

Jan: But what we will do on the show notes, listeners, is um, make a link across to that Everyday Slavery project, 'cause I think that sounds, again, really, you know, another intervention point.

And, you know, it's, it's not the, the silver bullet, it's, you know, and it's all a bit sort of militaristic and, and gun-orientated, but it is a buckshot that we need, not a, not a silver bullet. And now I apologise for the metaphor 'cause it's all gone horribly wrong.

Paul: [drily] It has. [Jan chuckles] What fascinated me as well, and it's something that isn't really possible given the way the legislation and government works in here in the UK, but at state level in Australia, you had New South Wales introducing legislation.

I dare say that in somewhere like the US where states have lots of powers in certain areas and not in others, that would be possible too. Here in the UK it's not something that gets devolved to regional mayors to act around something such as modern slavery.

I'm not even sure how it would fit in with modern slavery legislation in say, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales. I dare say that's probably at a whole UK level.

Jan: Yes.

Paul: But knowing that if your central government isn't necessarily taking action in some countries, you're gonna be able to take action at a more local, regional level. And that, that's almost certainly gonna be better suited to you than have something come down to you. That's, that's got to be a positive, especially if New South Wales are enacting it and other states in Australia, if they follow suit.

Jan: And the, the, the most longstanding and best example of this is Californian's Transparency in Supply Chain Act.

So that's, that's been around for a long time. So, we'll put a link through to that in the, the show notes as well.

Paul: If I'd had to guess on a state in America that was going to do it, California's renowned for having lots of legislation that is at a state level that doesn't necessarily tie in with what's going on at a national level.

Jan: Yeah.

Paul: So, shall we move on?

Jan: [with feeling] Oh yeah. [laughs]

Paul: Yeah. And to move on from a modern slavery to a different area, but something that legislation is almost certainly going to come into it, and where we stand with that and what's gonna come on in the future. Data farms, data banks, data, data, data, and the whole footprint of that.

Jan: Excellent. So, I think that's something that we've touched upon before and we've looked at the sustainability credentials of, of um, um, internet and computing technology, but this is gonna focus in then on a particular aspect of it.

Paul: Yes. It is really gonna focus in on those data farms and on all the issues around that.

And we're gonna have Adrian Friday back with us, who's joined us previously on the podcast, and he'll fill us in on that.

Jan: Brilliant. I look forward to that.

Paul: Until then, thank you very much for listening. I'm Paul Turner.

Jan: And I'm Professor Jan Bebbington.