

MEDIA RELEASE



Polding Centre
133 Liverpool Street
Sydney NSW 2000

8 February 2019

ANTI-SLAVERY EXPO TO HELP BUSINESSES PREPARE FOR NEW LAWS

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney will host a seminar and expo **today, Friday 8 February (9am-1pm)** to help companies and large faith organisations understand their obligations under new federal and state legislation to combat slavery and human trafficking.

Under the new federal legislation, introduced in January 2019, companies with a consolidated annual revenue of more than \$100 million must provide a written statement on what steps they are taking to ensure their supply chains are slavery-free. Companies have until July 2020 to comply with the changes.

Under NSW law for companies with a turnover of more than \$50 million in a financial year, they will also be required to report what actions they have taken to slavery-proof their supply chains.

Speakers from federal politics, the business and not-for-profit sector and unions such as the Federal Special Minister of State, the Hon Alex Hawke MP, Federal Labor's Deputy Leader, Tanya Plibersek, the Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia, Ms Jennifer Westacott and the National Secretary of United Voice, Jo-anne Schofield will join the Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP at the event at St Mary's Cathedral College Sydney.

Slavery survivor, Mr Moe Turaga will also tell his own story.

“As one of the largest employers in the country, the Catholic Church is taking a leading role in working to ensure our supply chains comply with the new laws”, said Chair of the Archdiocese's Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Mr John McCarthy QC.

“Archbishop Anthony Fisher has committed to reviewing and revising all our relevant contractual and business practices as part of our commitment to eradicating human trafficking.”

Fairtraders such as Etiko, Sprout, RREPP and other suppliers will be showcasing their products as part of an ethical sourcing expo at the event. There will also be a Q&A session where guests can directly ask questions of the companies involved.

Ms Westacott says the seminar is long overdue.

“This event will be an opportunity for all businesses to understand more clearly their obligations under Australia’s new anti-modern slavery regime”, she said.

“The Australian business community strongly believes modern slavery is abhorrent, and has long taken a leadership role in combatting forced labour and weeding it out of tainted global supply chains”.

The seminar is being held on the feast day of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of slavery and of Sudan.

“St Bakhita has been an inspiration to all campaigners against slavery and human trafficking. She was sold into slavery herself at the age of nine, but never lost her faith and concern for others”, said Executive Officer of the Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Ms Alison Rahill.

A Mass to honour St Bakhita will be celebrated at 1:10pm at St Mary’s Cathedral. All are welcome to attend.

A full list of speakers and their time allocations is included below:

9:40-9:45am- Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev Anthony Fisher OP

9:45-9:50am- Chief Executive of the Business Council of Australia, Jennifer Westacott

9:50-10:00am- Federal Special Minister of State, The Hon Alex Hawke MP

10:00-10:10am- Federal Labor’s Deputy Leader and Education and Training Spokesperson, The Hon Tanya Plibersek MP

10:10-10:15am- Fijian-born slavery survivor turned anti-slavery advocate, Mr Moe Turaga

10:30-11:00am- Expo for companies with ethically sourced goods (**Media interviews available at this time**)

11:05-12:25pm- Q&A panel with the Head of ESG Research, Ausbil Investment Management, Mr Mans Carlsson-Sweeny; Procurement Manager, Sydney Catholic Schools, Mr Shehan Micheal; Management Consultant, St Vincent’s Health Australia, Mr Jeffrey Westbrook; National Secretary of United Voice, Ms Joanne Schofield.

1:10pm-1:45pm- St Bakhita’s Day Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral to be celebrated by Archbishop Fisher.

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