

MEDIA RELEASE



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ANTI SLAVERY REPORT CALLS ON CATHOLIC AGENCIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce has released a new report calling on church agencies to share resources and work more closely together to eradicate modern slavery.

The report, *Catholic Action in Australia to eradicate modern slavery from supply chains* comes after a major national conference in July, which brought together 40 Catholic dioceses and Catholic organisations across the health, aged care, education and welfare sectors from across Australia.

The report recommends the setting up of an online hub or portal, which would enable Catholic entities across Australia, to share key resources including supply chain risk assessment tools, contract clauses and employee education and awareness materials.

The report also calls for the establishment of a Modern Slavery Implementation Group. Working through this group, representatives from Catholic organisations would liaise closely with Australia's Department of Home Affairs to prepare modern slavery statements, tailored to meet the needs of Catholic dioceses and agencies.

The Chair of the Anti-Slavery Taskforce and Australia's former Ambassador to the Holy See, John McCarthy QC said the strong recommendations in the report reflect the leadership Catholic organisations are showing in working together to eradicate human trafficking from their supply chains.

"We have seen great leadership from our Archbishop in Sydney, Anthony Fisher on this through a commitment to reviewing and revising all our relevant contractual and business practices as part of our efforts to eradicate human trafficking," Mr McCarthy said. "We would now like to encourage other dioceses and agencies to follow this example and provide them with the support to do so."

A leading sustainability expert who facilitated a series of workshops on the second day of the conference, Ms Sonja Duncan said that while most Catholic entities are at the 'starting line' in terms of managing modern slavery risks, the commitment across the Catholic Church is high.

“Translating this commitment into action on the ground requires a collaborative approach to training, supplier engagement and prioritising risk. With appropriate resourcing of modern slavery initiatives, the Catholic Church will be well placed to lead the way to end modern slavery in our generation”, Ms Duncan said.

The full report can be found online at <https://www.sydneycatholic.org/solidarity-and-justice/anti-slavery/anti-slavery-resources/>

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