

MEDIA RELEASE



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29 September 2020

Archbishop Fisher welcomes NSW Government's new plans to address modern slavery

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, the Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP has welcomed a commitment by the NSW Government to finally enact legislation passed by parliament over two years ago to provide greater protection for the victims of modern slavery.

The government has accepted all the recommendations of a 2019 Legislative Council report, endorsing the NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 and supported in principle a recommendation to commence the act before the end of the year.

Under the new laws, companies with annual consolidated revenue of over \$50 million would have to produce public statements detailing how they are keeping their supply chains slavery-free. The NSW Government has also promised to begin talks with the Commonwealth government for it to lower the threshold under federal laws from \$100 million to \$50 million.

Archbishop Fisher said the new laws are long overdue.

“It is pleasing to see the NSW Government finally commit to implementing new legislation to protect the victims of modern slavery. I am grateful to the more than ten thousand people who petitioned the government over recent months, calling for an end to the stalling tactics that were delaying the enactment of these laws”, he said.

“It is fitting that NSW will take the lead in seeking to harmonise the supply chain threshold between the NSW and Commonwealth legislation.

“It is also encouraging to see the NSW Government commit to providing greater support and assistance for the victims of modern slavery through the appointment of a NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner. Our community cannot be indifferent to modern slavery and human trafficking, or our responsibility to eradicate it. Like the Good Samaritan, we must reach out with a supportive hand to those in greatest need. I look forward to these laws coming into effect, and urge the government to ensure this happens before the end of this year”, Archbishop Fisher added.

The Executive Officer of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney’s Anti-Slavery Taskforce, Alison Rahill, said it was very pleasing to see the NSW Government attempting to drive change on this issue at a national level.

“We know from the experience overseas in countries such as the United States, that when states take the lead on this issue, it breathes a whole new life into it and encourages a stronger national response”, Ms Rahill said.

“It’s also pleasing to see the NSW Government call for local councils to face the same reporting obligations on supply chains as state government agencies.

“We’re also pleased to see the government commit to amending the legislation to give the victims of modern slavery access to recognition payments, and to establish a Working Group, including the Anti-Slavery Commissioner and representatives from the NSW Police to consider ways of better protecting potential victims of forced marriage”, Ms Rahill added.

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