

MEDIA RELEASE

29 November 2022

CRA and ACRATH appeal to Government to strengthen Modern Slavery legislation

Catholic Religious Australia (CRA) together with Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking Humans (ACRATH) have appealed to the government to strengthen laws preventing human trafficking in a joint submission to the federal government review into the operation of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)*.

The current Australian law works as a reporting and transparency-based framework rather than a mechanism to prevent human trafficking.

“The current legislation has no authority to investigate and ensure compliance, and no penalties for non-submission of reports,” said Peter Jones OSA, President of CRA.

At present there are 50 million people who live in slavery globally, 71% of whom are women and girls. However, only 1 in 5 victims are detected in Australia.

National Executive Director of CRA, Anne Walker said, “Human trafficking is an insidious and pervasive cancer in our society and one which must be tackled at both an individual and systemic level.”

“The mobile phones we use, the coffee we drink, the clothes we wear all may have been tainted by modern slavery, and yet consumer action to stop the slavery is reliant on an incomplete Modern Slavery Reporting Register,” said Christine Carolan, Executive Officer, ACRATH.

“The onus is on government to ensure transparency in supply chains and a more effective and well-resourced Register,” she added.

CRA and ACRATH have requested a speedy implementation of the government’s commitment to establish an Independent Modern Slavery Commissioner, urging the government to provide it with substantial powers to investigate and require compliance.

CRA and ACRATH have also called on the government to improve access to compensation for victim/survivors of modern slavery, pressing the government to establish a national compensation scheme.

Read [the joint submission with ACRATH](#). In addition CRA and ACRATH have co-sponsored a submission to the federal government review into the operation of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)* provided by *Be Slavery Free*, the submission can be [viewed here](#).

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