



Catholic Health Australia endorses move to establish anti-slavery commissioner

Catholic Health Australia (CHA) strongly endorses the federal government's move to establish an anti-slavery commissioner under a bill introduced to parliament on Thursday.

"Establishing an anti-slavery commissioner is an important step forward in tackling the scourge of modern slavery," said CHA Strategy & Mission Director Brigid Meney.

"CHA has been calling for this move and is pleased to see the government progressing it.

"CHA stands firmly against modern slavery which violates fundamental human rights and has no place in Australia or the world more broadly."

Ms Meney said a federal anti-slavery commissioner can play a key role in improving reporting standards.

"There are currently no quality control measures in place for entities that report under the Modern Slavery Act," Ms Meney said.

"CHA's 19 entities that report under the scheme submit statements of the highest standard which are rigorously reviewed for quality and compared before publication - but many organisations fail to match this high standard in the absence of clear requirements."

CHA also recommends the government:

1. Enhance the Modern Slavery Statements Register to include mandated areas of reporting, and capture baseline data. This data should be searchable for comparative assessments and analysis
2. Explore additional enforcement measures to reward good practice and improve standards, supported by periodic reviews beyond statutory reviews
3. Clarify definitions of operations and supply chains to resolve consistency around labour hire services
4. Include a requirement for entities to report time and money spent on compliance to capture the true cost of reporting
5. Clarify that calendar year reporting is permissible when reporting through ACAN

Notes to editors: Catholic Health Australia (CHA) is Australia's largest non-government grouping of health and aged care services, accounting for approximately 15 per cent of hospital-based healthcare in Australia. Our members also provide around 25 percent of private hospital care, five per cent of public hospital care, 12 per cent of aged care facilities, and 20 per cent of home care and support for the elderly. Visit us at <https://cha.org.au>