



## AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

### **Bishops commend Senate for passing anti-slavery legislation**

**Media Release**

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The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference has congratulated the Australian Senate for taking an important step towards eliminating the scourge of slavery.

In its submission to the Modern Slavery Bill 2018 earlier this year, the ACBC said Australians “have a moral imperative to eradicate the injustice of modern slavery. If we know that a person’s human dignity is being harmed in this way, we should do what we can to free them from that ill-treatment”.

That legislation passed through the Senate this week. It is expected to be debated in the House of Representatives before the end of the year.

The Bishops Conference, meeting together this week, paid special tribute to the efforts of Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH) and the Archdiocese of Sydney’s Anti-Slavery Taskforce advocating for new legislation.

The ACBC said it is “a travesty” that an estimated 4300 people in Australia are victims of modern slavery, in forms such as people trafficking, forced labour and forced marriage.

It called the passage of legislation “an important first step in national efforts against slavery”, with further work needed to establish an independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner who can drive efforts to eradicate modern slavery and hold large organisations accountable.