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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Modern Slavery Bill becomes law**

Catholic Religious Australia applauds the Commonwealth Government on the passing of the Modern Slavery Bill 2018 (the Bill) through the House of Representatives on Thursday, 29 November. The Bill has now become law.

The Bill has established a Modern Slavery Reporting Requirement which will require more than 3,000 large businesses, with an income in excess of \$100 million, and other entities, to report annually on risks of slavery in their supply chain and the actions they are taking to reduce the risks. Other entities include the Government itself and other NGOs.

According to the United Nations, over half the victims of modern slavery worldwide are exploited in the Asia-Pacific region (approximately 20 million people). This is where a significant number of large Australian businesses have their supply chains. This Bill will help the Australian business community to take proactive and effective action to address modern slavery and help mitigate the risk of modern slavery practices occurring in the supply chains of goods and services in the Australian market.

Modern slavery practices include trafficking in persons, slavery, slavery-like practices (including forced labour and forced marriage) and the worst forms of child labour (including child prostitution and hazardous work). The passing of this Bill means Australia is now the first nation to recognise orphanage trafficking as a form of modern slavery.

Catholic Religious Australia President, Monica Cavanagh rsj, congratulates the Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans (ACRATH), "ACRATH's tireless effort in advocating for the elimination of human trafficking in Australia, the Asia Pacific region, and globally, is to be commended, as is their contribution towards this Bill."

Sr Monica added, "What is key about the Modern Slavery Bill is the mandatory reporting requirements, a significant step in the right direction. However, there is still much work to be done for the 15,000 victims of modern slavery currently in Australia. An independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner would be another step in the right direction."

Entities covered by the reporting requirement will begin reporting from 2019, with the first statements due in 2020.

## **MEDIA ENQUIRIES**

Sylvia MacRitchie-Hook | E: [comms@catholicreligious.org.au](mailto:comms@catholicreligious.org.au) | P: 02 9557 2695 | M: 0410 644 356