



Slavery Survivor Wins Award

24 March 2023 SYDNEY - Modern slavery survivor Moe Turaga was presented with a 2023 Freedom Award in recognition of his work as a modern slavery survivor advocate last weekend. Mr Turaga has a long relationship with Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network (ACAN) Program Managers who nominated him for the award. His story of modern slavery in Australia was recently documented in a video by Australian Catholic University. He also gave a keynote address to Freedom Awards attendees hosted by Anti-slavery Australia at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS).

Mr Turaga's keynote briefly outlined his experience of modern slavery in Australian horticulture at the age of 17 after being deceptively recruited by a relative. He worked two years without pay before escaping with the help of farmers he met at a local church. Many years later, Mr Turaga learned first-hand of the death of British backpacker Mia Ayliffe-Chung through her mother Rosie Ayliffe's campaign to improve conditions for working holiday makers on Australian farms. It was this encounter that inspired Mr Turaga to speak about his own experiences. "It was God's timing for me to stand up and tell my story in hope that it will provide some assistance to the modern slavery conversation." From that time, Mr Turaga became an active participant in advocacy for the Modern Slavery Act 2018. Mr Turaga dedicated his award to Rosie Ayliffe, Mia Ayliffe-Chung, other survivors, his Fijian community and other supporters including his "Catholic anti-slavery family."

In his remarks, Mr Turaga called for a Commonwealth Anti-slavery Commissioner and asked the audience to get behind forthcoming amendments to the Modern Slavery Act review. "The reality is that people in slavery in Australia and around the world need us to go much further much faster. We know the Australian government wants to strengthen the Act. Getting our voices behind amendments that will strengthen Australia's Modern Slavery Act is going to be an important early step," he said.

"From the beginning ACAN has been committed to ensuring that survivors of modern slavery have opportunities to contribute to policies and programs designed to assist them and to raise awareness," said ACAN Program Manager, Alison Rahill. "Mr Turaga has shown great courage and commitment to ending modern slavery in his local community, on the national stage and in empowering other survivors. He is very deserving of recognition." Mr Turaga spoke at an ethical sourcing seminar hosted by Archbishop Fisher in 2019 attended by government ministers and the Business Council of Australia. He has been supported by the ACAN team to raise awareness and conduct advocacy since that time. ACAN also sponsored Mr Vannak Anun Prum's book tour to Australia in 2019. Mr Prum survived three years of slavery in the Thai fishing and Malaysian palm oil industry.

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- Read [Moe Turaga's 2023 Freedom Awards Keynote Speech](#)
- Watch [Moe Turaga's story](#) documented by Australian Catholic University
- Read Moe Turaga's story in [Human Rights Defender](#)
- Learn more about slavery survivor [Vannak Anun Prum](#)
- Purchase [The Dead Eye and the Deep Blue Sea](#) by Vannak Anun Prum
- Watch Rosie Ayliffe and Mia Ayliffe-Chung's story on the ABC's Australian Story:
- [Long Way from Home Part 1](#) and [Long Way From Home Part 2](#)
- Purchase Rosie Ayliffe's book: [Far From Home](#)