



## **41,000 People in Modern Slavery in Australia**

25 May 2023 – The Global Slavery Index 2023 (GSI) published yesterday indicates that the number of people estimated to be experiencing modern slavery has risen by 10 million since the last report in 2018. The GSI is the most comprehensive measurement of modern slavery in the world. The 2023 edition has identified that conflict, climate change and the impact of the covid-19 pandemic have compounded this crisis and an intersectional response is needed. This includes actions in Australia, where an estimated 41,000 people are estimated to be in modern slavery – nearly triple the estimates since 2018. Slavery survivor advocate Moe Turaga who is supported by ACAN says, “The GSI confirms that a Commonwealth Anti-slavery Commissioner is urgently needed to hold all stakeholders accountable and to give the growing numbers of people living in modern slavery hope.”

For Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network (ACAN) entities complying with the Modern Slavery Act (MSA) 2018, the updated GSI is an important resource for identifying at-risk products and services in their supply chains and operations. “The GSI helps ACAN entities determine where to focus risk assessment efforts and target specific categories of supply for risk management actions,” said ACAN Program Manager and Sustainability Specialist Carsten Primdal. For example, the GSI identifies solar panels in the top five products at-risk of forced labour. “This is a concern for ACAN entities planning or that have already invested in renewables. There are serious implications for procurement in terms of supplier risk, due diligence and demonstrating that Catholic funds are not contributing to people being enslaved, abused or exploited.”

Aggregated ACAN data from 2021 shows that \$4.7 billion AUD worth of procurement is spent across 11 type of high-risk categories. Similar data from 2022 will be released in the coming months. “Catholic entities can fulfill their responsibility to address modern slavery individually and collectively via the ACAN Modern Slavery Risk Management Program. The ACAN program provides participating entities with access to a team of specialist experts and over 70 tools and resources developed to date,” said ACAN Program Manager Alison Rahill. “I like to think that the ACAN program management team supports Catholic entities to navigate a complex regulatory compliance journey whilst also putting Catholic Social Teaching into action.”

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### **Australian catholic Anti-slavery Network**

[www.acan.org.au](http://www.acan.org.au)

### **Global Slavery Index 2023**

[www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index)

### **Global Slavery Index 2023 Australia country study**

[www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/country-studies/australia](http://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/country-studies/australia)