



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC ANTI-SLAVERY NETWORK RELEASE
ACAN ADVOCACY WINS BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR SLAVERY SURVIVORS

“My strongest advice is for an explicit commitment in the bill to put survivors and our concerns at the centre of the commissioner’s work.”

Moe Turaga, ACAN Survivor Consultant

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee
Brisbane public hearing, 19 February 2024

Committee Majority Report tabled 28 February 2024

Recommendation 2

The committee recommends that the bill be amended to include a requirement that the Anti-Slavery Commissioner develops specific guidelines in their strategic plan to support victim-survivors of modern slavery.

Recommendation 3

The committee recommends that the bill be amended to include a requirement that the Anti-Slavery Commissioner engages with victim-survivors of modern slavery in carrying out the functions of their role.

Advocates for the Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network (ACAN) have won key amendments to Commonwealth legislation to give victim-survivors a voice in the national response to modern slavery.

A Senate Committee report into the bill to establish an Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner has taken up three key ACAN recommendations, including specific requirements for the new commissioner to engage with and support survivors.

The Committee report thanked ACAN Survivor Consultant Moe Turaga, the only victim-survivor to give evidence at the Inquiry public hearing in Brisbane on 19 February, and quoted Moe Turaga’s evidence extensively.

In his comments, Queensland Liberal Senator Paul Scarr paid tribute to Mr Turaga.



“It is inspiring that he is now an advocate for vulnerable people who are the victims of modern slavery,” Senator Scarr said, going on to describe Mr Turaga’s evidence as “very moving” and “particularly compelling.”

Mr Turaga appeared at the public inquiry for ACAN alongside Domus8.7 Advisory Committee member Luke Geary, who put the ACAN case for the commissioner to have greater investigative powers to inquire into individual cases of modern slavery.

That specific ACAN recommendation, is reflected in the Committee’s concession that the Anti-Slavery Commissioner should have the remit to make arrangements, such as memoranda of understanding, with law enforcement agencies to refer cases for investigation.

ACAN was the only faith-based organisation invited to give evidence at the public hearing, which also heard from business groups, academics, government agencies, the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, union representatives and non-government organisations.

The Senate Committee Amendments will be considered by Attorney-General Mark Dreyfus KC MP before further consideration by the Parliament.

ACAN program manager Alison Rahill said the Senate Committee Report recommendations provide encouragement and build on ACAN’s growing record of working collaboratively with Catholic organisations to support and protect the most vulnerable.

“We are indebted to Mr Turaga and Mr Geary for sharing their expertise and advocacy on behalf of ACAN,” Ms Rahill said.

“All members of ACAN look forward to working with an independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, who we expect to be appointed later this year.”

“We are keen to ensure the Commissioner takes a robust approach to driving improvements in the Commonwealth public sector in supply chain transparency and remediation – an element of our submission that was included in the Senate Committee Report.

“The largest purchasers of goods and services in the Australian economy – the Federal Government - needs to match the good work Catholic organisations are doing across health and education in compliance with the Modern Slavery Act.”

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[ACAN submission](#)

Modern Slavery Amendment (Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner) Bill 2023 [Provisions]

[REPORT - February 2024](#)



Photo caption (Left to Right)

29 February 2024

Contact: Alison Rahill, ACAN Program Manager 02 9307 8464

Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network: www.acan.org.au