



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC ANTI-SLAVERY NETWORK RELEASE

ANTI-SLAVERY COMMISSIONER LEGISLATION PASSES FEDERAL PARLIAMENT

Program managers in the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN) have hailed the passage of legislation to appoint an Australian federal Anti-Slavery Commissioner.

“This is a landmark moment for everyone who has been working for many years to strengthen Australia’s response to modern slavery,” ACAN Program Manager Jenny Stanger said. “The independent commissioner role will have a national platform to uphold the interests of victim-survivors, and to drive best practice among entities reporting under the Modern Slavery Act.”

“ACAN Program managers will be working closely and collaboratively with the new commissioner when he or she is appointed,” Ms Stanger said.

The *Modern Slavery Amendment (Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner) Bill 2023* passed the Parliament on Tuesday 28 May. The legislation which passed the Parliament included several amendments advocated for by ACAN.

ACAN Consultant and survivor advocate Moe Turaga welcomed the fact the legislation includes a specific focus on victim-survivors, which he advocated for at a [Senate hearing earlier this year](#).

“Engagement with victim-survivors is now listed as one of the commissioner’s functions,” Mr Turaga said. “Making material publicly available to support victim-survivors also has to be a part of the commissioner’s strategic plan.”

“I’d like to thank Senators who made sure the commissioner role includes this explicit focus. It gives hope to people with lived experience like myself that their perspectives will be listened to as part of the national response.”

Mr Turaga was the only person with lived experience to give evidence before the Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee Hearing inquiry into the legislation held in Brisbane in February 2024. In 2017, he also gave evidence to the Parliamentary Inquiry that produced *Hidden in Plain Sight* report, the landmark report that led to the establishment of the Modern Slavery Act in 2018.

“As someone who has been telling my own story for the last seven years, I’m really looking forward to working with my ACAN colleagues and the federal Anti-slavery Commissioner to improve the lives of people suffering in modern slavery,” Mr Turaga said.

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