



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC ANTI-SLAVERY NETWORK RELEASE

ROCKHAMPTON ROCKS MODERN SLAVERY AWARENESS IN MARCH

“Managing risk of modern slavery is about much more than compliance.
It’s about developing a culture that looks out for people.”

Moe Turaga
ACAN Lived Experience leader

The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton and Catholic Education – Diocese of Rockhampton through primary schools, colleges and kindergartens, made modern slavery a major focus of their pastoral and social justice work this March.

The Diocese held modern slavery awareness raising events in Rockhampton and Bundaberg, while Rockhampton’s Catholic Education Office released an all staff training module on modern slavery.

ACAN Lived Experience consultant Moe Turaga, who lives in Bundaberg, featured in all activities.

On Friday 7 March, the Bishop of Rockhampton Michael McCarthy and the Diocese’s Pastoral Council hosted Moe at the Duhig Centre in Rockhampton.

Moe shared his personal experiences in the horticulture sector with members of the Pastoral Council and discussed the pastoral needs of temporary migrant workers from the Pacific. He thanked Bishop McCarthy for his support and encouragement.

“My ACAN colleagues and I deeply appreciate your leadership on modern slavery,” Moe said.

Moe also congratulated Rockhampton’s Catholic Education Office, who for the last four years has made modern slavery awareness training mandatory for its 3200 staff.

“Training is an important part of identifying people at risk. Many cases of modern slavery are identified because a trained employee responded safely when someone asked for help,” Moe explained.

The Diocese of Rockhampton covers some of Australia’s richest horticultural areas. Local produce is picked mostly by temporary migrant workers – one of the most vulnerable groups to labour exploitation and modern slavery.



On Saturday 15 March Moe addressed more than 45 parishioners at Bundaberg Parish's MenAlive Breakfast.

"It was great to talk to a mostly male audience about forced labour," Moe said. "Women and girls are vulnerable to modern slavery, but lots of men find themselves in these situations too, through deceptive recruitment or coercion. I am a big rugby-playing Pacific Islander, so when I stand up and tell my story, it challenges people's understandings about vulnerability."

Moe and ACAN's message is being heard more widely than ever across the Diocese of Rockhampton, thanks to Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, Michael McCusker, who included a 15 minute video of Moe in their 2025 modern slavery e-learning module.

One of Moe's key points from the video is the need for what Pope Francis' calls "an economy of care".

"Managing risk of modern slavery is about much more than compliance. It's about developing a culture that looks out for people," Moe explained.

"This is safeguarding. It's about giving your people the skills and the confidence to recognise and call out bad situations when they see them."

Moe Turaga will be back in Rockhampton on Saturday 12 April to deliver modern slavery awareness training at the Diocese's Social Justice Gathering socialjustice@rok.catholic.net.au

Moe is available to speak to Catholic groups and organisations, either in person or remotely. If you would like to book him as a speaker, please contact ACAN.

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