

MEDIA RELEASE



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INITIATIVE SUPPORTS VICTIMS OF MODERN SLAVERY

The Catholic Archbishop of Sydney, Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP has announced a new initiative to help victims of modern slavery.

Named Domus 8.7, the Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce will work with other Catholic entities to assist those in need to access confidential legal advice and assistance to housing.

The service will also connect them with interpreters, healthcare services, financial advisors and welfare support.

Domus 8.7 will act as a conduit for 45 Catholic entities, including dioceses, schools, universities, health, aged care, social services and finance and investment sectors who are seeking help on behalf of victims of modern slavery in Australia, trapped in forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage or human trafficking.

It continues on from the work the Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce has undertaken since it was established in 2018 in ensuring the supply chain across the Archdiocese and its agencies is slavery-free, including guidelines for all purchasing of goods and services for parishes and Church agencies. The Taskforce has also introduced anti-slavery education initiatives in Catholic schools and universities.

The 45 entities signed up include members of the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN), which was launched in December to promote closer collaboration between Catholic organisations in the fight against modern slavery.

Archbishop Fisher said the service will provide comprehensive support to people affected by modern slavery and forced labour.

"This service enables entities or workers to have a safe, confidential conversation about situations of modern slavery and forced labour," Archbishop Fisher said.

“Domus 8.7 fills a gap in providing readily available support from a formal perspective, emergency assistance and addressing other needs for people trapped in modern slavery or facing exploitation in the workforce”, he added.

The name Domus 8.7 comes from the Latin word “Domus” meaning “home” and 8.7 refers to “Target 8.7”- a United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) inspired by Pope Francis and which calls for effective measures to end all forms of forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour by 2030.

The Global Slavery Index estimates there are 15,000 victims of modern slavery in Australia in forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage or human trafficking.

The launch of Domus 8.7 comes as companies with a consolidated annual revenue of more than \$100 million face stringent reporting requirements under the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (MSA) such as providing an annual statement on risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

It also coincides with the feast day on 8 February of St Josephine Bakhita, the patron saint of victims of slavery and of Sudan.

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