



Media Release

6 June 2017

The Salvation Army welcomes Labor's call for Modern Slavery Act

The Salvation Army enthusiastically welcomes the Australian Labor Party's announcement that it will support a Modern Slavery Act in Australia.

This announcement demonstrates Labor's strong commitment to ending the range of exploitative practices captured under 'modern slavery', including forced labour, trafficking in persons, debt bondage and servitude—all of which are stand-alone offences under Australia's Criminal Code.

National Secretary Lieutenant-Colonel Samuel Pho of The Salvation Army Australia said: "We congratulate Labor on this commitment and we look forward to working with all political parties to develop strong legislation that reflects but also sets the bar for international best practice."

Labor's announcement comes in light of a Government inquiry into establishing a Modern Slavery Act similar to that of the United Kingdom's, which passed in 2015 and was aimed at clarifying slavery and related offences, introducing new protections for victims, and formalising a role for business through a new, annual reporting requirement on steps certain companies have taken to identify and mitigate risk of slavery in global supply chains.

Federal Opposition Leader, the Honourable Bill Shorten MP, announced that Labor will push for a similar, but stronger UK Act, including:

- An Anti-Slavery Commissioner to provide independent oversight over the national anti-slavery framework, with comparable staffing and resourcing as the UK Commissioner;
- A requirement for certain companies to report annually on steps they've taken to address trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices in their global supply chains; and
- Financial penalties for failing to develop and publish a statement

Labor's announcement comes days after the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, Kevin Hyland OBE, appeared before a sub-committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. Commissioner Hyland presented evidence to the Sub-Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade detailing how the Modern Slavery Act has fostered a "race-to-the-top" amongst business to join the ranks of stakeholders working to end modern slavery.

Mr. Hyland also explained how the Modern Slavery Act has contributed to a 63% increase in victim identifications and a 71% increase in prosecutions since its enactment. Mr. Hyland attributed these improvements to strengthened training for police and judges; improved data collection and crime reporting of slavery-related crimes; international collaboration; and refined engagement with civil society to improve screening and engagement of potential victims.

During his visit to Australia, Mr. Hyland said: "These changes have come about because we put protection first. Protecting victims' rights first will improve prosecution which gives us more information about how criminals work, which makes it easier to prevent the crime from happening."

Lieutenant-Colonel Pho said: "The Salvation Army's motto is 'Hope-where it's needed most.' Human beings held in slavery and slavery-like situations need hope. They need us to do everything in our power to both liberate them but also to remove the social structures that facilitate slavery in the first place. The inquiry into a Modern Slavery Act presents an unprecedented opportunity to build on what we have, to bring more stakeholders-like business-to the table, to expand and improve



pathways out of slavery, and make sure no one is held in slavery again. We offer our gratitude and our partnership to the Labor party and to the Government in this endeavour.”

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