



**Launch Address of Mr Paul Burton  
NSW State President – Society of St Vincent de Paul  
Modern Slavery Workshop – 26 July 2022**

It is no coincidence that we are launching this Statement in the lead up to the United Nations World Day Against Trafficking in Persons, this coming Saturday.

As we have heard, in Australia around 15,000 people are enslaved, with the additional risk that procurement through international supply chains, exposed to slavery, adds to the global suffering of over 40 million people.

I ask this, concerning men, women and children persevering in substandard and completely unacceptable conditions, having no recourse to any medium which could potentially serve to improve their lot, and having no option, in return for their labour, but to accept the continual dismal handouts which do not even remotely apologise for anything more than the foundations for a subsistence existence and a constant link to a life of poverty and inequity. Can such circumstances be identified as other than slavery?

Under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*, we are required to assess and prevent the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains. So, this Modern Slavery Statement is part of those obligations.

But this endeavour is not just about meeting legislated obligations. It goes much deeper!

The Society of St Vincent de Paul is a values-based organisation. Our underlying concern for the women, children and men trapped in slavery is generated by our commitment to protect the sacredness of life, to defend the God-given dignity of each person and to show a unique concern for the most vulnerable.

This special concern – or ‘preferential option for the poor’ – is foundational to the Society of St Vincent de Paul and all our good works.

As we know, The Rule states that no work of charity is foreign to the Society. We are called to seek out and find those in need. This includes being vigilant for emerging injustices and forms of hardship throughout society.

The extent of Modern Slavery in Australia and around the world is one such area warranting growing awareness and appropriate action.

We are committed not only to alleviating the need of victims and survivors of Modern Slavery but also to identify the unjust structures that are the cause of it.



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NSW  
*good works*

St Vincent de Paul Society NSW

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And so, I am honoured to launch our Vinnies NSW Modern Slavery Statement and I do so, humbly, in the words of our founder Blessed Frédéric Ozanam, when he said,

*Charity is the Samaritan who pours oil on the wounds of the traveler who has been attacked. But, it is justice's role to prevent the attacks.*

In charity and in justice, let us continue to raise awareness of the scourge of modern slavery in Australia and around the world. Let us be mindful of all the circumstances where we may encounter people who are enslaved or at risk and be prepared to report our concerns.

And please, spread the word about this Modern Slavery Statement among your colleagues and teams.

Thank you, and God Bless.