



MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

**Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the
Diocese of Cairns**

2023

STATEMENT 4

Purpose of Statement

As a religious organisation, the Catholic Diocese of Cairns (“Diocese”) recognises the important role it plays in making a significant contribution to the global effort to eradicate modern slavery. Modern slavery breaches the most fundamental freedoms and human rights of individuals. The Diocese rejects all forms of modern slavery and recognises that modern slavery is never acceptable in any of its forms.

The Diocese is committed to respecting human rights and taking meaningful action to identify and address risks within its direct control which have the potential to cause, contribute to, or directly link the Diocese to modern slavery. When modern slavery risks arise outside our direct control, the Diocese will use its influence and leverage to engage with suppliers, partners and stakeholders to affect change in their relevant practices.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of Australia, the traditional custodians of the land, seas, skies and waterways on which we reside, work, travel and meet. We pay our respect to First Nations elders past, present and emerging, and support the Uluru Statement From The Heart.

Joint Statement

This is the fourth joint statement produced by the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns ("Corporation") in accordance with the Modern Slavery Act 2018. The Corporation is committed to upholding the highest ethical standards by assessing and reducing the risks of modern slavery within our organisation and supply chains. This joint statement has been produced on behalf of the following businesses and entities:

- Catholic Diocese of Cairns
- Centacare FNQ
- Catholic Education Services
- Catholic Early Learning and Care
- St Therese's School
- St Augustine's College
- St Monica's College
- Our Lady Help of Christians School
- Holy Spirit College
- St Michael's School
- St Francis Xavier's School
- MacKillop Catholic College
- Mother of Good Counsel School
- St Joseph's School (*Atherton*)
- St Andrew's Catholic College
- Newman Catholic College
- Holy Cross School
- St Gerard Majella School
- St Mary's Catholic College
- St Augustine's School
- Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School
- St Joseph's Parish School
- St Teresa's School
- St Thomas' School
- St Stephen's Catholic College
- Mount St Bernard College
- St Anthony's School
- St Joseph's School (*Parramatta Park*)
- St Rita's School (*Babinda*)
- Good Counsel College
- Good Counsel Primary School
- St John's School
- St Rita's School (*South Johnstone*)
- St Clare's School



Structure

The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns (“Corporation”) is a Body Corporate incorporated pursuant to letters patent issued under the Religious, Educational and Charitable Institutions Act 1861.

With over 2250 employees, The Corporation carries out the mission and objects of the Catholic Diocese of Cairns (“Diocese”) through its various agencies and pastoral operations conducted under four separate ABN’s. The Diocese serves people of 23 parishes and parish clusters as well as 30 schools and colleges within 3 deaneries across Far North Queensland, including the Torres Strait.

Our Operations

Safeguarding

An active commitment to fostering communities of safeguarding that recognise and uphold the dignity and rights of all children and vulnerable adults.

Catholic Development Fund (CDF)

The Corporation operates the CDF to further the mission of the Church to promote and support the religious and charitable work of the parishes, schools and institutions of the Corporation through harnessing the financial resources of the Diocesan Catholic Community.

Catholic Education

The Cairns Diocese’s 30 Catholic schools and colleges provide a quality education to over 12, 000 students. Our schools extend from Tully in the South, west to Dimbulah on the Atherton Tablelands, and north to Waiben in the Torres Strait. The operation of the schools is coordinated by Catholic Education Services, Cairns. Schools range in size from less than 50 to more than 1500 and serve urban, rural and remote communities. More than 2000 staff are employed across the system and schools.

Social Services

Centacare FNQ is the social services agency of the Cairns Diocese. Centacare FNQ proudly works with the community to deliver social services that support the needs of residents in the region.

Catholic Early Learning and Care (CELC)

CELC cater for children aged from 6 weeks to 13 years and include Early Learning, Kindergarten and Outside Schools Hours Care, and provide authentic, developmentally sensitive and community centered educational and care service provision.

Pastoral Care

Pastoral care consists of:

- The Diocesan Marriage Tribunal which assists with the pastoral care of divorced and remarried persons.
- Pastoral Support Services which support home, hospital and aged care visits.
- Cairns Catholic Youth Ministry encourages and supports young people in the life of the Church.

Supply Chains

The Diocese procures goods and services from a broad range of suppliers across various sectors, with the vast majority of suppliers and contractors procured from Australia. Some supply chains extend overseas.



Our supply Chains:

- Textiles: school and office uniforms
- Building and property development
- Office, classroom and playground equipment
- Management of facilities: maintenance, waste removal, landscaping, cleaning
- Food service / Catering companies
- ICT equipment and software
- Marketing and advertising
- Motor vehicles
- Professional Services – legal and consultancy
- Insurance
- Furniture and fittings
- Travel services
- Appliances: dishwashers, fridges/freezers, stoves etc.
- Couriers and freight
- Conference and training venues
- Tangible gifts and awards



Suppliers for the entities of the Corporation are required to be procured as per the requirements of our Purchasing Guideline which highlight the key objectives as:

- Value for money: Value for money is not restricted to price alone. The value for money assessment should include consideration of product quality, service and support and other related costs with its acquisition, use, maintenance and disposal.
- Encourage competitive and non-discriminatory processes.
- Use resources in efficient, effective, economical and ethical manners that are consistent with policies and procedures.
- Conduct a purchasing process commensurate with the scale and scope of the procurement.
- Probity & Accountability: Conduct purchasing activities with the utmost probity. It should be conducted ethically, honestly and with fairness to all. Accordingly, appropriate records must be maintained to provide transparency and accountability.
- Environmental, workplace health and safety issues and regulations should be considered, including compliance with the Environmental Protection Act and Work Health and Safety Act.

Potential Risks

OPERATIONAL RISKS



The risks of modern slavery practices within the Corporation's operations remain low. This is primarily due to direct employment of our workforce as well as mitigation of risks through industrial agreements and awards and compliance with Australian employment laws.

We acknowledge that through engaging with recruitment agencies for employment and contracting, we may be contributing or linked to modern slavery risks due to less visibility over these employees and contractors employment terms and processes for recruitment. In our setting, this risk is very low.

SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS



Our identified supply chain risks remain the same as identified in 2020, with the greatest risks arising from procuring goods that are manufactured and sourced from countries outside of Australia, some of which have been identified as countries that practice modern slavery.

Our 2020 risk assessment identified our primary supply risks as:

- Uniform, clothing, and other textiles
- ICT equipment and resources
- Building materials and school and office fit out.

Actions Taken

In 2023, our primary focus was on our third identified supply chain risk, which included suppliers and contractors involved in sourcing building materials. During this period, we initiated a review of the building contractors and trade contractors engaged by entities under the Corporation.

This process led to the establishment of a compliance register. Given the diverse nature of the industries encompassed within the scope of this review, we encountered notable challenges in verifying compliance with the Act. Many suppliers proved challenging to contact, attributable to limited communication channels or unavailability due to their on-site responsibilities. Currently, only 50% of suppliers have provided written confirmation of their compliance measures, both domestically and internationally. We will continue our work with suppliers in this space in 2024 to emphasise the importance of compliance with the Act and the consequences of non-compliance.

As highlighted in previous statements, as part of our ongoing commitment to reducing Modern Slavery practices, we continue to integrate our modern slavery statement and compliance requirements into our directives, policies and procedures during routine documentation reviews.

Through collaborative work across entities within the Corporation, we are developing a formalised procurement process that will have the capacity to also capture and confirm a contractor's compliance with the Modern Slavery Act prior to commencing work.

2024 Action Plan

Given the difficulties in obtaining the compliance status for our 2023 supply risks, we will continue our efforts in 2024 to ensure 100% compliance among all building and trade contractors. As in previous years, rigorous investigations will continue, with remedial actions swiftly implemented for suppliers found in possible breach of regulations or lacking commitment to disclosing supplier chain details. We will once again extend the opportunity for suppliers to understand their obligations fully and confirm their compliance before remedial actions are taken.

As we have now formally reviewed our three primary supply risks that were initially identified in 2020, 2024 will also include a review of the 2020 risk assessment to evaluate if our risks remain the same or require any revisions.



Assessment of Effectiveness

The Corporation is committed to continuous improvement and open to opportunities to enhance our practices and increase awareness and understanding of Modern Slavery within our own organisation. Our efforts to identify and address Modern Slavery risks in our supply chains is a continuous and evolving process.

In 2021, we collated data from our textile (uniform) suppliers and developed a register of written confirmation of compliance. Our efforts in 2021 formed the key component for our review process and action plan.

In 2022, we endeavoured to make improvements based on the 2021 data and to further investigate our textile suppliers who had not confirmed their compliance. This exercise assisted in differentiating whether a company was not compliant or if they were unsure of the requirements of the Act. By the end of 2022, we had achieved 100% compliance.

Our learnings from our review of textile suppliers assisted in obtaining 100% compliance within in the first year for ICT suppliers in 2022. Similar approaches were taken in 2023 for the review of building and trade contractors. Despite our efforts and our low compliance confirmation rates in comparison to previous years, we acknowledge that continuously reviewing and evaluating our actions to mitigate modern slavery risks within our operations and throughout our supply chain is a commitment that requires ongoing refinement.


2024 will be a year of growth and refinement of our annual goals and approach to managing modern slavery risks and compliance from our suppliers.



Consultation

The Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns (Corporation) is the single legal entity operating within the Cairns Diocese. The Corporation was originally incorporated by letters patent and is now a recognised corporation under the Roman Catholic Church (Incorporation of Church Entities) Act 1994 (“RCC Act”). In preparation of this joint statement, reporting entities covered by this statement were engaged during the preparation and drafting of this statement.

This statement was approved by Rev Fr Kerry Crowley as the Sole Trustee of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns on 18 June 2024.



Rev Fr Kerry Crowley
Diocesan Administrator
Sole Trustee of the Roman Catholic Trust Corporation for the Diocese of Cairns
18 June 2024