

## **Strengthening Australia's Global efforts for freedom**

Destiny Rescue's CEO, Paul Mergard commends the Federal Government's commitment to strengthening Australia's global efforts to address modern slavery and human trafficking following the National Modern Slavery Conference 2023, *Taking Action Together*. The Conference was hosted this week by the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, in partnership with the Australian Institute of Criminology.

Mr Mergard says Destiny Rescue welcomed the conference's cross-sector collaborative platform and anticipates it will help create positive change to combat this growing issue. The Federal Government recently provided a funding boost of \$24.3 million<sup>1</sup> to prevent and disrupt modern slavery, Mr Mergard added;

*"Following a robust conference program, I'd like to take this opportunity to commend the Albanese Government for the appointment of an Anti-Slavery Commissioner, as well as its ongoing commitment to strengthening the Modern Slavery Act.*

*In particular, Destiny Rescue supports the view that child sexual exploitation (CSE) should be recognised separately within the Act as a type of modern slavery which falls within a wider continuum of exploitation, violence and abuse."*

The Federal Government's consultation process with stakeholders while preparing its response to the *Report of the statutory review of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)* is also welcomed.

Destiny Rescue, together with our Ambassador, singer songwriter Dami Im, will continue to advocate to the Australian Government for funding of an ethical traveller campaign aimed at departing Australian travellers to the Asia Pacific Region. Mr Mergard said:

*"Destiny Rescue has witnessed the increase in travellers returning to exploit children overseas following the resurgence in global travel. 31% of all foreigners arrested in Thailand for sex offences yearly over a 10-year period were Australians. <sup>2</sup>*

*With this in mind, there is a need to actively address the demand side of child exploitation. We believe a **Safe Children, Safe Traveller campaign** is vital to address this modern slavery crime-type".*

Paul Mergard, CEO, Destiny Rescue can be contacted for interviews and further information.

**--ENDS--**

**Contact us for interviews and case studies.**

Destiny Rescue  
**1300 738 761**  
admin@destinyresuce.org  
[2022 Annual Report](#)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ministers.dss.gov.au/media-releases/11236>

<sup>2</sup> December 2012 Report of the UN Special Rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, Ms Najat Maalla M'jid, to the Human Rights Council of the UN General Assembly; A/HRC/22/534 Pg 5 (UN Special Rapporteur M'jid Report, December 2012) (Refers to prosecutions between 1995 and 2006).