

Thursday, 26 September 2019

Modern Slavery Act compliance guide welcomed by Law Council

The Law Council of Australia has welcomed the release of detailed reporting entity guidance measures for the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*, which will assist organisations with compliance.

The guidance, released by the Department of Home Affairs today, further establishes Australia as a world-leader in combatting modern slavery practices. It follows a period of close consultation with key stakeholders, including the Law Council.

Law Council President, Arthur Moses SC, said given the widespread global nature of modern slavery, the guidance should be a “living document”, reviewed and regularly updated to remain relevant, accessible and informative.

“Too often we are tempted to think of slavery as a relic of the past, but the truth is it’s a problem alive and well,” Mr Moses SC said.

“The United Nations has estimated there are more than 40 million victims of modern slavery worldwide. Around 25 million are estimated to be exploited through global supply chains.

“More than half of all modern slavery victims are estimated to live in the Asia-Pacific region, where the supply chains of many large Australian businesses are concentrated. This means the risk of exposure to modern slavery is a very real and current problem for businesses.

“Modern slavery in supply chains also distorts global markets, undercuts responsible businesses, and poses significant legal and reputational risks for companies.

“The Law Council commends the Federal Government for the steps it is taking to stamp out this insidious practice, which represents a false economy based on human misery.”

The Law Council believes the guidance is useful and comprehensive.

As the legislation moves into its second year the guidance could usefully be expanded and the Law Council looks forward to ongoing consultation with the department.

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