



Community Partner Modern Slavery Toolkit

Australian Red Cross Society – 2022

Introduction

Every day, millions of men, women and children around the world are subject to modern slavery.

Their labour – extracted through deception, force, coercion, violence or threats – forms part of the supply chains that make many of the products we consume every day, including our food, clothes, cosmetics, cars and electronics. There is a clear and urgent need for a global response to modern slavery.

Australia itself is not immune and Australian Red Cross Society (Red Cross) has seen an increase in the number of people formally identified as being affected by modern slavery within Australia since we started supporting survivors in 2009.¹

Red Cross works directly with people at risk of, or who have experienced, human trafficking and slavery through our Support for Trafficked People Program, funded by the Department of Social Services. Since 2009, we have provided individualised casework support to more than 515 people referred to us by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) having experienced sexual exploitation, labour exploitation, forced marriage, exit trafficking and other types of exploitation.²

Red Cross's [Modern Slavery Statement](#) describes our actions to assess and address risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain in more detail.

Red Cross is committed to ending modern slavery and supporting survivors. We work to build community strengths, empower people to help themselves and each other, and to address the systemic causes that make people vulnerable to exploitation. As part of this, we have created this toolkit to assist our smaller community partners to understand and address modern slavery.





What is 'modern slavery'?

'Modern slavery' is an umbrella term for a range of practices that involve coercion, threats or deception being used to exploit people and deprive them of their freedom. These are serious crimes globally (and in Australia) and include:

- **Trafficking in persons** – the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a person by means including coercion, threat, fraud and abduction for the purpose of exploitation.
- **Slavery** – when a person tries to exercise 'ownership' over another or when a person is treated like an object which can be bought, sold or traded.
- **Servitude** – when a person does not consider themselves free to stop working or to leave their place of work because of coercion, threats or deception.
- **Forced marriage** – where a person is married without their free and full consent because of coercion, threat, deception or because they are incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony.
- **Forced labour** – when a person is forced to work against their will or under threat of punishment.
- **Debt bondage** – when a person is forced to work to pay off a debt or loan which is used as a form of coercion or control. The person is often tricked into working for little or no pay and may have no control over the level of debt.
- **Exploitative child labour** – where children are exploited through slavery or slavery-like practices or where the work is harmful to children by, for example, depriving them of their potential and dignity or is harmful to their development.

Who is at risk of modern slavery?

Modern slavery can occur in any country or industry. Business models, operating contexts, the nature of work and location of work are all risk factors that have been identified as contributing to modern slavery. Globally, forced labour is most likely to occur in domestic work, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, forestry and fishing.³ In each industry, recruitment mechanisms often involve deception or coercion.

In Australia there has been greater incidence of forced labour, and other forms of modern slavery, in industries like agriculture, construction, domestic work, cleaning, hospitality and food services. Migrants and homeless people may be more vulnerable to modern slavery.

Modern slavery is highly prevalent in global supply chains. In 2018, it was estimated that Australia imported US\$12b worth of products that were at risk of modern slavery.⁴

The top five products at risk of modern slavery imported into Australia were:

- laptops, computers and mobile phones;
- garments;
- fish;
- rice; and
- cocoa.⁴

These products were imported from countries including China, Malaysia, Thailand and India.⁴



How do I know if modern slavery is occurring?

Modern slavery can be difficult to identify as it has many different forms. Common signs that an individual may be at risk of modern slavery include:

- controlled or restricted movement, including restrictions on ability to communicate or being isolated from friends and family;
- living at a workplace or another place owned or controlled by the employer;
- limited or no discretion over life decisions;
- signs of physical or psychological abuse or malnourishment;
- inability, or perceived inability, to end employment;
- retention, underpayment or no payment of wages, or wages being held to pay back a debt;
- an appearance that they have few personal belongings; they may wear the same clothes each day or wear unsuitable clothes;
- a requirement to work excessive hours or poor working conditions; or
- employer has custody of personal documents like their passport, travel or bank documents.

These factors are indicators of modern slavery. The presence of these factors does not mean modern slavery is occurring, just that it may be. In some cases, the signs may indicate other protection issues are present so it's important not to dismiss any of them.

Why you should act to address modern slavery

Modern slavery is illegal and has grievous impacts on individuals and the community. Acting to prevent modern slavery can bring valuable benefits to community groups, including:

- keeping vulnerable people safe;
- avoiding complicity in harming people;
- improved employee engagement, recruitment, retention, motivation and working conditions;
- improved risk assessment and management, healthier working environments;
- improved consumer and investor relations and minimisation of legal risks;
- more sustainable business relationships; and
- enhanced reputation and image.



What steps can organisations take to address modern slavery?

1. Understand the risks of modern slavery

Understand the modern slavery risks of your organisation and the actions that can contribute to modern slavery. Do you operate in a high-risk industry? Do you work with people that may be vulnerable to modern slavery? Do you manage suppliers to mitigate the risks of modern slavery?

2. Educate your staff about modern slavery

- Educate staff about modern slavery, including the causes and indicators. Clearly communicate the risks of modern slavery, policies and actions across the organisation and embed a zero-tolerance policy.
- Ensure staff understand the obligations to address modern slavery and the indicators of modern slavery. Outline clear processes so staff know what to do if they are concerned about or suspect an incident of modern slavery.
- Boards and executive teams set the tone for the organisation, so ensure they understand modern slavery and lead a zero-tolerance approach.

- People working in procurement or making procurement decisions need to understand how to minimise the risks of modern slavery when making purchases.

3. Develop policies that will influence decision-making

- Review existing policies relevant to modern slavery including, but not limited to, procurement and recruitment policies, whistle-blowing procedures, child protection policies, supplier and employee codes of conduct and staff training policies, to identify areas where additional protection can be implemented.
- Consider the need to develop new policies that specifically address the issue of modern slavery, including preventative action policies.
- Develop roles for people at your organisation targeted at the prevention of modern slavery.

4. Perform due diligence and take action to address risks

Using a human rights due diligence approach, an organisation can map its direct operations, supply chains and business relationships, then cross reference these with modern slavery risk factors. Knowing the organisation's vulnerabilities to modern slavery will help identify the most relevant issues and to develop informed prevention strategies. These strategies should focus on mitigating, rather than just avoiding, modern slavery risks.

As part of the human rights due diligence process, you should aim to identify where you may cause, contribute, or be linked to modern slavery.

- You may '**cause**' modern slavery when your actions (or omissions) would in themselves result in a significant risk of modern slavery. For instance, if you were to threaten retaliation against workers who join a union you would adversely impact their right to freedom of association and collective bargaining.

- You may '**contribute to**' modern slavery when your actions (or omissions) increase the risk of modern slavery occurring even if you did not actually cause it. For instance, if your organisation was to put significant cost and time pressure on suppliers such that they could not deliver the service at the time or price requested without exploiting their workers.
- You may be '**directly linked to**' modern slavery when you have a business relationship (through your operations or supply chain) and that entity causes or contributes to modern slavery or materially increases the risk of modern slavery. For instance, you could be linked to modern slavery if you purchase from a supplier who is using subcontractors who are producing goods using forced or child labour.⁵

5. Build engagement and collaborate

Preventing modern slavery is not achievable for any organisation acting alone – collaborate with suppliers, partners, stakeholders and other organisations to identify and respond to modern slavery.

Reach out to Red Cross to collaborate on areas of shared interest or concern.

6. Update and review

Addressing modern slavery should be an ongoing process. Reviews are an opportunity for organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of their policies and previous initiatives, and to ensure that adequate resources are made available to continue to address modern slavery risks.

Read the Red Cross [Modern Slavery Statement](#) and, if you are not required to report under the legislation, consider voluntarily preparing your own modern slavery statement.⁶

Resources

Red Cross has developed a range of resources to support organisations to better understand the humanitarian issue of modern slavery:

- [Modern Slavery Resources](#)
- [Support for Trafficked People Program: Data Snapshot: 2009 to 2019](#)
- [Addressing Modern Slavery: A Guide for Australian Businesses](#)

Further advice and assistance

For further information on the humanitarian issue of modern slavery, to enquire about workplace training or if you encounter someone you believe may be at risk of, or is experiencing, modern slavery, contact the Red Cross national anti-trafficking team by calling 03 9345 1800 or emailing national_stpp@redcross.org.au

Red Cross supports individuals affected by modern slavery in Australia through the Support for Trafficked People Program, funded by the Department of Social Services. More information about this program is available on our website redcross.org.au/stpp

The AFP is responsible for investigating suspected cases of modern slavery in Australia. If you suspect that someone is affected by modern slavery practices, you can also contact the AFP on 131 237 to discuss or report it. Contact can be made anonymously.

In an emergency and if someone is in immediate danger, always call 000 for police assistance.

References

1. Australian Red Cross, 2019, Support for Trafficked People Program Data Snapshot 2009–2019.
2. Modern Slavery Statement, Australian Red Cross Society – 2020/21, Figure as of June 30, 2021 (final day of the 2020/21 reporting period).
3. International Labour Organization, Walk Free Foundation and International Organization for Migration. Global Estimates of Modern Slavery [Internet]. Geneva: International Labour Organization, Walk Free Foundation and International Organization for Migration; 2017. Available from: https://cdn.walkfree.org/content/uploads/2020/10/06153731/global-estimates-of-modern-slavery_executive-summary.pdf, p9.
4. Walk Free Foundation, The Global Slavery Index 2018, p121 available from: <https://www.globallslaveryindex.org/>
5. For a comprehensive discussion of how organisations can cause, contribute to, or be linked to modern slavery and other human rights abuses, see Debevoise Business Integrity Group and Enodo Rights, Practical Definitions of Cause, Contribute, and Directly Linked to Inform Business Respect for Human Rights, Discussion Draft, 9 February 2017.
6. See Chapter 3 of Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018 – *Guidance for reporting entities* for guidance on voluntarily reporting <https://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/criminal-justice/files/modern-slavery-reporting-entities.pdf>.

