

**INQUIRY INTO MODERN SLAVERY ACT 2018 AND
ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

Organisation: Corrs Chambers Westgarth

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4 October 2019

Members of the Standing Committee on Social Issues
NSW Parliament, Legislative Council
6 Macquarie Street
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Contact
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Dear Sir/Madam

Submissions to the Inquiry into the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW) and Associated Matters

Corrs Chambers Westgarth welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues' inquiry into the *Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW)* (**NSW Act**) and associated matters (**Inquiry**).

Corrs is an independent Australian law firm which believes that by demonstrating respect for human rights, and actively working to identify, prevent and mitigate adverse human rights impacts, businesses can enhance their sustainability, attract and promote investment and build a strong brand and reputation.

Corrs is supportive of efforts to combat modern slavery including through the enactment of the NSW Act and the *Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)* (**Commonwealth Act**). In particular, Corrs supports the establishment of the role of Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and the use of supply chain transparency and reporting to identify, prevent and mitigate risks of modern slavery.

Anti-slavery Commissioner

The office of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner should be maintained as integral to the success of New South Wales's proposed Anti-Slavery scheme. The Anti-Slavery Commissioner's role ensuring public awareness and providing advice to the general public, as well as to other agencies that provide or deal with services or issues affecting victims of modern slavery will be an important resource for entities endeavouring to rid their supply chain of modern slavery. The development of codes of practise to assist companies to remediate or monitor identified risks of modern slavery will be an important contribution to an effective supply chain transparency regime across New South Wales.

In addition, the victim support offered by the role of the Anti-Slavery Commissioner, and the focus on the wellbeing and safeguarding of victims of modern slavery significantly strengthens the integrity of the Act and the ability to have a meaningful contribution to the eradication of slavery in New South Wales.

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Supplementary reporting

The \$50 million annual turnover threshold for businesses to report under the NSW Act¹ can also be seen to strengthen Australia's efforts to eradicate modern slavery and is consistent with threshold levels and practise overseas. Under the Commonwealth Act, only entities with a consolidated revenue of over A\$100 million are required to report on steps they have taken to undertake supply chain due diligence to identify risks of modern slavery. The suppliers of many Commonwealth reporting entities fall below the threshold of the Commonwealth Act but will be required to report under the NSW Act. This cascading of responsibilities provides a framework better suited to combatting modern slavery in supply chains, and it assists larger entities with their reporting capabilities when smaller suppliers are also specifically required by law to report.

Thank you very much for providing us with the opportunity to support the NSW Act, and the role of the Anti-slavery Commissioner.

Yours sincerely

Corrs Chambers Westgarth

Heidi Roberts
Partner

Phoebe Wynn-Pope
Head of Business and Human Rights

¹ See Draft Regulations, cl 6.