

Developing a strategic plan to combat modern slavery

Discussion Paper #002, October 2022

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Office of NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner acknowledges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are the first peoples and traditional custodians of Australia, and the oldest continuing culture in human history.

We pay respect to elders past and present and commit to respecting the lands we walk on, and the communities we walk with.

We celebrate the deep and enduring connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to country and acknowledge their continuing custodianship of the land, seas and sky.

We acknowledge the ongoing stewardship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and the important contribution they make to our communities and economies.

We acknowledge the enduring legacies of coerced labour, exploitation and practices today described as modern slavery, on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We reflect on the continuing impact of government policies and practices, and recognise our responsibility to work together with and for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, families and communities, towards improved economic, social and cultural outcomes.

Artwork: 'Regeneration' by Josie Rose 2020

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Why do we need a strategic plan?

Between 1,500 and 15,000 people are estimated to be in modern slavery in Australia. Fifty million people are estimated to be in modern slavery worldwide. Australian businesses may also be connected to people in modern slavery overseas.

New South Wales is the first Australian jurisdiction with an Anti-slavery Commissioner. Section 11 of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (NSW) ('the Act') calls for the Anti-slavery Commissioner to prepare a strategic plan "as soon as reasonably practicable after the Commissioner's appointment". My appointment commenced on 1 August 2022. The Act indicates that the strategic plan must:

- cover a period of between 1 and 3 years;
- set out how the Commissioner proposes to exercise her/his functions;
- outline the Commissioner's key objectives and priorities;
- include a strategy to combat human trafficking in accordance with the Commonwealth National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25; and
- address strategies for raising public awareness about modern slavery and providing education and training about combating modern slavery.

The Commissioner must consult with the Attorney General in preparing the plan.

Developing the strategic plan requires understanding where modern slavery risks exist in New South Wales. It also requires understanding where our responses are working well, and where they could work better.

The need for a strategic plan goes beyond legislative requirement. A strategic plan requires a clear vision for anti-slavery action in New South Wales. It can provide a framework for accountable action, setting out goals, providing a basis for prioritising among actions, and helping to ensure effective resource allocation.

This Discussion Paper explains how I intend to develop my first strategic plan and explains how you can help inform and shape it.

What we need to know

To develop an effective strategic plan to combat modern slavery in NSW between 2023 and 2025, there are several things we need to know.

First, and most importantly, we need to know

***What should anti-slavery action in NSW look like by the end of 2025?
And how do we get there?***

Answering those central questions, however, requires thinking about a number of other questions, such as:

- How should services to prevent and remedy modern slavery be different?
- How should modern slavery risks in supply chains and portfolios be addressed differently?
- How should the criminal justice system address modern slavery differently?
- How will partnerships strengthen anti-slavery efforts?
- How will anti-slavery efforts integrate survivor leadership?

Answering those questions also requires consultation with a wide array of stakeholders, from victims and survivors of modern slavery, to government agencies, business, civil society, unions, and researchers.

How we will answer those questions

To answer those questions, I am running a consultation process for the next several months, with a view to publishing a strategic plan in the first half of 2023, covering the financial years 2023/2024 through to 2025/2026.

This will be supported by a partnership between my office and the [James Martin Institute for Public Policy](#) (JMI). JMI is an independent, non-partisan policy institute, initially established in 2019 through a generous grant from the NSW government, in partnership with the University of Sydney, Western Sydney University and the University of Technology Sydney.

The process is founded on the principles I set out in my August 2022 piece, [‘First principles’ in combatting modern slavery in New South Wales](#). These include:

- putting people at the heart of our work, including through providing survivors an opportunity to shape my work from the planning phase;

- inclusion and collaboration. I will spend the next several months listening to what stakeholders want to see from NSW anti-slavery action, and inviting public engagement and input;
- independence and transparency, including laying out clearly how the plan will be developed, and how you can help (see below); and
- evidence, research and innovation. My plan will seek to create a framework that fosters innovation in policy and practice based on the best available evidence.

How you can help

There are different ways you can help us:

Join the kick-off webinar to help us understand the problem

What: Online public launch webinar
Purpose: Launch the consultation process and gather perspectives on what modern slavery risks exist in New South Wales today
Where: Online. To register, click [here](#)
When: 24 October 2022

Have Your Say

What: Online consultation
Purpose: An opportunity for anyone to share their views on how we should combat modern slavery in New South Wales
Where: Click [here](#) from 24 October 2022
When: From 24 October 2022 until 30 November 2022

Survivor engagement

What: Confidential consultations with survivors of modern slavery
Purpose: An opportunity for survivor leadership, shaping our work from the planning stage
Where: Contact the Anti-slavery Commissioner in confidence on antislavery@justice.nsw.gov.au
When: From now until January 2023

Expert workshops

What: Thematic workshops under the Chatham House Rule to explore specific challenges and opportunities for action
Purpose: Gather evidence, insights and expert views
Where: University campuses and other venues
When: From November 2022

Write a submission

- What:** Public written submission process – respond to the questions in the section above entitled *What we need to know*
- Purpose:** Gather and publish evidence, insights and expert views
- Where:** Further details available through the [Have Your Say page](#) from mid-October 2022. These submissions will be collected and published in early 2023. If you want to submit confidentially (i.e. not for publication), please first contact antislavery@justice.nsw.org.au.
- When:** From 24 October 2022 until 30 November 2022

Thank you for your attention to these issues. I look forward to your input and response.

Dr James Cockayne
Anti-slavery Commissioner
October 2022