



The Hon Alex Hawke MP
Assistant Minister for Home Affairs

MEDIA RELEASE

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Government strengthens Australia's response to modern slavery

The Turnbull Government will harness the power of big business to help combat modern slavery, through the establishment of a Modern Slavery Reporting Requirement.

The reporting requirement, which will be enacted through a new Australian Modern Slavery Act, will require more than 3,000 large corporations and other entities to publish annual public statements on their actions to address modern slavery in their supply chains and operations.

Assistant Minister for Home Affairs, Alex Hawke, said the Government will introduce legislation to Parliament by mid-2018 to establish the Modern Slavery Act, sending a clear message that modern slavery will not be tolerated in the community or in the supply chains of our goods and services.

"Modern slavery thrives in the shadows of global supply chains and involves serious crimes and human rights abuses," Assistant Minister Hawke said.

"It is a significant risk for Australian businesses as it undermines their competitiveness and can have substantial legal and reputational costs for businesses that fail to protect their supply chains.

"By introducing a mandatory reporting requirement for big business, we will reduce modern slavery risks in our goods and services supply chain by ensuring businesses are held to account."

In a world first, the Turnbull Government will also publish an annual statement covering Commonwealth procurement. This underlines the Government's commitment to leading by example in the fight against modern slavery.

To ensure the reporting requirement is implemented effectively, the Government has committed \$3.6 million through the Federal Budget to establish a new Anti-Slavery Business Engagement Unit in the Department of Home Affairs.

The unit will provide expert support and advice to business on modern slavery risks and manage a central repository of all Modern Slavery Statements.

The Department of Home Affairs will also award \$500,000 in funding over 2018-19 to support specialist civil society organisations working to prevent and address modern slavery.

This funding will build on more than \$5 million in funding awarded to anti-slavery non-government organisations since 2008.

Mr Hawke highlighted the importance of collaborating with civil society organisations to combat modern slavery.

“Our tireless civil society partners play a crucial role in identifying and supporting victims of modern slavery, and raising community awareness of these issues. This funding will support this important work over the coming year.”

A factsheet on the Modern Slavery Reporting Requirement is available at <https://homeaffairs.gov.au/consultations/Documents/modern-slavery/modern-slavery-reporting-requirement.pdf>

For further information: Assistant Minister’s Office – 02 6277 4430