



Don Harwin
Special Minister of State

MEDIA RELEASE

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NSW GOVERNMENT SECURES LANDMARK LAWS AGAINST MODERN SLAVERY

Special Minister of State, Don Harwin, has announced that groundbreaking laws against modern slavery will come into effect on 1 January 2022.

Following important amendments to the *Modern Slavery Act* that passed the Parliament this morning, NSW is now set to be the first State or Territory in Australia to have standalone legislation in operation to take the fight against modern slavery.

NSW Government agencies and local councils will be required to take reasonable steps to ensure that the goods and services they procure are not the product of modern slavery. Statutory owned corporations will also be required to assess the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains. The Act will impose reporting obligations on all these entities.

“The NSW Government is leading by example to require itself – by law – to take action against possible modern slavery in its supply chains. The Government can achieve this by maximising transparency in its procurement practices,” Minister Harwin said.

Key to the operation of the scheme will be the establishment of Australia’s first Anti-slavery Commissioner. This independent office will have broad oversight over the Government to monitor its policies and action in combating modern slavery, issue codes of practice and maintain a public register that identifies government agencies that do not comply.

The Auditor-General will also have the authority to undertake risk-based audits of government procurement.

Steve Baird, CEO of International Justice Mission, said “this is a positive step forward in ensuring that NSW is addressing the scourge of modern slavery in our region, which we know is in our supply chains and contributing to everyday items on the shelf”.

Minister Harwin added “modern slavery is a horror has to be confronted seriously and these laws seek to achieve just that. I thank the IJM and the many faith-based groups who consistently and passionately advocate against modern slavery”.

The NSW Government will shortly commence its recruitment for the inaugural Anti-slavery Commissioner.