

## Coliban Water's Introduction

The Modern Slavery Statement is provided as a statement under section 14(1) of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Act) for the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021 (statement) for Coliban Water ACN 149 633 116.

Coliban Region Water Authority was established on 1 July 1992 under the Water Act 1989 (Vic) (the Act) as a Regional Urban Water Authority. The Authority became the Coliban Region Water Corporation on 1 July 2007 and operates as Coliban Water. Our shareholder is the Victoria Government. Our responsible Minister for the period of 1 July 2020 until 30 June 2021 was The Hon. Lisa Neville MP, Minister for Water.

## Coliban Water Modern Slavery Statement

Our purpose is to deliver, water services for community needs now and into the future. We provide urban water and wastewater services in accordance with the provisions of Part 8- Water supply and Part 9- Sewerage of the Water Act 1989 (Vic). Rural customers are supplied under Part 4 Division 2 Section 51 of the Act.

Our services include:

- Water Harvesting
- Water Storage
- Water Treatment
- Water Distribution
- Urban wastewater collection
- Treatment, re-use and disposal, including trade waste
- Water purchase
- Recycled Water
- Rural water supply

## Coliban Water's Commitment to the Modern Slavery Act 2018

Coliban Water is committed to ensuring that there is no form of modern slavery or human trafficking within our organisation or supply chains.

We are committed to ensure that our approach to tackling modern slavery in our own business and throughout our supply chains is consistent with Coliban Water's disclosure obligations under the Modern Slavery Act 2018.

This statement sets actions undertaken in 2020/21 to ensure there was no modern slavery in our business and that in so far as possible, our suppliers hold the same ethos.

Coliban Water's commitment to tackling modern slavery can be demonstrated through our ongoing involvement with the VicWater Social Procurement Working Group (VSPWG). This group have enhanced the modern slavery risk management practices and provided an opportunity to share resources, lessons learned and standardise expectations and processes for the suppliers in order to mature the industry-wide responses to modern slavery.

The water industry resources that have been developed and shared include but are not limited to:

- VicWater member education material;
- Labour Rights and Modern Slavery risk identification tool;

- Supplier education material;
- Supplier questionnaire and guidance;
- Supplier continuous improvement guidance;
- Supplier compliance checklist and
- Grievance and remediation guidance.

## Coliban Water Business

Coliban Region Water Authority, a Regional Urban Water Authority under the Water Act 1989 (Vic) is committed to ensuring that its staff and any supply chains are not subject to behaviour or threats that may amount to modern slavery.

The assets we manage to deliver our services include a net book value of infrastructure assets, property, plant and equipment of \$1.89 billion, covering:

- 396 kilometres of rural channels and pipelines
- 2036 kilometres of sewer mains
- 34 raw water reservoirs and service basins.
- 2363 kilometres of water mains (potable and non-potable)
- 180 wastewater pump stations
- 16 water treatment plants
- 72 water pump stations
- 147 kilometres of water distribution pipelines and channel system
- 1 recycled water factory
- 59 kilometres of recycled water infrastructure
- 16 water treatment plants
- 14 Water reclamation plants

## Coliban Water Supply Chain Risk

The heat maps, risk scores and commentary produced by the completion of a supply chain risk assessment by the VSPWG identified human rights risks, including modern slavery risks, across all six portfolios of typical water corporation procurement spend. The categories of spend within each of these portfolios that presented human rights risks are outlined below:

- Asset Maintenance portfolio: Ongoing operations and maintenance of facilities (including cleaning), grass cutting, herbicide application/edge treatment
- Construction portfolio: Construction labour (minor and major projects) and offshore engineering services
- Corporate portfolio: Temporary staff, labour hire and traineeship programs, security
- Customer portfolio: Debt collection services, customer research services
- Equipment and Material portfolio: Mechanical and electrical equipment, chemical products
- Information Technology Consulting portfolio: Offshore IT Services

Of these categories, offshore engineering and cleaning services presented high human rights risk, including modern slavery, and were prioritised for the development of a mitigation strategy. Additionally, given this was not just a sustainability risk but also an opportunity assessment, an opportunity to address diversity and inclusion in water treatment services was also prioritised for strategy development.

## **Coliban Water Policies and Procedures**

The employment and employment relations policies at Coliban Water help to ensure all recruitment policies are consistent and applied fairly and reduce the risk of modern slavery for our people.

All organisational policies are assessed for against the Human Rights Act 2006, prior to being applied.

## **Coliban Water Risk Effectiveness**

In FY16-17, Victorian water corporations, through their membership of Victorian Water Industry Association (VicWater), came together to create a Social Procurement Working Group (VSPWG). The establishment of the VSPWG as a community of practice has enabled increased transparency and knowledge-sharing between Victorian water corporations. By collectively identifying and addressing common sustainability issues, including human rights, and working together to capture opportunities, the Group is more rapidly able to determine which actions are consistently effective in achieving their desired outcomes, and share the lessons they have learned. By bringing the Victorian water corporations together, this introduces a level of accountability to each other to contribute to the progress of initiatives, which sets the Group up for a culture of continuous reflection and improvement. The Group has worked together since its inception to develop and implement a collaborative, ongoing program of work with the ambition to take an industry-leading position in how it responsibly manages its operations and supply chains.

In order to effectively address modern slavery risks, it is of critical importance to build the modern slavery capability of the individuals involved in making procurement decisions and managing relationships with suppliers. It was recognised that an understanding of the Modern Slavery Act and its intent would be beneficial, so the VSPWG co-prepared and facilitated (with a third-party specialist) a one-hour webinar to provide fundamental awareness of human rights, modern slavery, the Modern Slavery Act, business drivers to manage modern slavery risks and typical practices in relevant industries.

Following this webinar, a full day interactive action planning workshop was co-prepared and facilitated (with a third-party specialist) to support Victorian water corporations to develop a draft action plan responding to the intent of the Modern Slavery Act.

Twenty-eight individuals from thirteen Victorian water corporations (including Coliban Water) attended this action planning workshop and took away a draft modern slavery action plan and associated tools for application within their own organisations. The tools have been further developed in 2020/21 and now form a toolkit of resources to manage Modern Slavery Risk as detailed earlier in this statement.

## **Coliban Water Future Commitments**

Our communities, customers, people and business were all impacted by COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, which unfortunately impacted the progress of Modern Slavery updates and face-to-face awareness sessions with our supply chain, however plans are underway to recommence engagement in 2021/22.

We recognise that to eradicate modern slavery, dedication is required to make a difference to people's lives and as such we plan to progress the following actions across the 2021 and 2022 financial years.

## **Building our understanding and capabilities**

- Deliver training for our people and increase their understanding and awareness of modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chain using the VicWater member educational material.

## **Enhanced engagement with our suppliers**

- Build awareness and capability to manage Labour Rights and Modern Slavery Risk within our supply chain by utilising the VicWater supplier toolkit:
  - Supplier education material;
  - Supplier questionnaire and guidance;
  - Supplier continuous improvement guidance;
  - Supplier compliance checklist and
  - Grievance and remediation guidance.

## **Improving our processes**

- Imbed the principles of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 into our procurement policy, procedures and templates.

This statement was approved by the Board of Coliban Water in their capacity as principal governing body of Coliban Water on 17 December 2021.

*Bob Cameron*

**Bob Cameron**  
**Chairperson**  
**Coliban Water Board**

Date: 21 December 2021