



# Modern Slavery Statement

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We stand together against Modern Slavery



Brotherhood of St Laurence  
Working for an Australia free of poverty

# Acknowledgement

The Brotherhood of St. Laurence acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land and waterways on which our organisation operates. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past, present and emerging.

# We oppose modern slavery in all forms



**Travers McLeod, Executive Director**

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For more than 90 years, the Brotherhood of St. Laurence (BSL) has worked alongside the most disadvantaged in the community to advance a vision of an Australia free of poverty. All of us across BSL's team, from our Board to those delivering services each day and the people who support them, are committed to ensuring we do our part to end modern slavery.

We acknowledge the need to be diligent, to engage and be active in conversations about modern slavery, and to advocate for those who are not always able to represent themselves. We also understand the importance of establishing and sustaining strong governance, policies and processes which allow us to review and identify potential slavery, and address any issues when they arise.

This statement is our public commitment to continue our progress on the modern slavery journey. It outlines the steps we have taken to date and the ambition we have for the next year to support an Australia where every person can enjoy the same freedoms and live in a society without slavery.

**Travers McLeod**  
Executive Director

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# 1. The reporting entity



**BSL is a not-for-profit entity domiciled in Australia**

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Detail	Response
Registered Business Name	Brotherhood of St. Laurence ("BSL")
Address of Registered Office	67 Brunswick St Fitzroy Melbourne VIC 3065
Postal address	67 Brunswick St Fitzroy Melbourne VIC 3065
Australia Business Number	24 603 467 024
Telephone	(03) 9483 1183
Email	<a href="mailto:info@bsl.org.au">info@bsl.org.au</a>

BSL's Charter and Life Members appoint the Board who govern the organisation's activities.

# 2. Organisational overview



## About us

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BSL is a social justice organisation working alongside people experiencing disadvantage to address the fundamental causes of poverty in Australia. We believe no one should live in poverty. Our mission is to pursue lasting change and create a more compassionate and just society where everyone can thrive. We are proud to be a strong voice for people experiencing disadvantage. It has been our way since the 1930s when Father Tucker's activism for social reform amid the Great Depression led to our inception. Today, we employ 1,460 people at some 90 site locations and tap into the community effort of a further 1,200 volunteers.

Using our strong focus on research in practice alongside our programs and services, we create evidence that informs design of innovative solutions for people of all ages. We also use this evidence to inform policymakers on making the right policy decisions to reduce poverty across Australia.

In addition to our research and evidence, our focus on partnerships is key to our success. We work together with people who experience disadvantage, and the organisations who assist them, to understand their lived experiences and amplify their voices to drive change. We develop models by working with other organisations, both locally and nationally, to broaden our impact. We then scale up these models and influence the structures that are often at the cause of poverty.

Today, our community programs and services support people right across the life span, from early years to seniors, and with support that enables people to develop their capability and capacity to overcome disadvantage, including education, training, employment support, care, and so much more. This includes our Local Area Coordination Service implementing the National Disability Insurance Scheme, where we are actively supporting people with a disability to make their own choices and decisions.

Complementing our delivery of research, advocacy and programs and services, is our social enterprise businesses, including our op-shops across Melbourne and Geelong, our online bookstore and our new container deposit scheme depot. These are supported by our volunteers and the community to raise funds for our innovative programs and policy development.

To learn more about BSL, visit [www.bsl.org.au](http://www.bsl.org.au)

# 3. Assessment of Modern Slavery risk



## Our understanding

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With a large and diverse supply chain to support our programs and activities, BSL recognises that modern slavery may exist somewhere in our operations supply chain, or in our suppliers' supply chain. As passionate advocates for the vulnerable and those experiencing poverty, we want to support those individuals who are impacted and affected by modern slavery and educate our supply chain to understand and be vigilant against slavery in all forms.

Our procurement function focusses on categories where BSL's annual spend is greater than \$150k or where there is a high degree of complexity or risk. However, lower value transactions may be dispersed and siloed with suppliers being engaged in a variety of ways which has the potential to increase our risk, particularly when sourcing from countries or categories where slavery is known to be more prevalent.

With a high number of suppliers, and many at a lower value transactional level, we acknowledge there is a degree of uncertainty in our supply chain. Our initial focus has been on the top 100 suppliers determined by the category and/or spend, and this will shift to other suppliers in our supply chain to assess, review and identify any potential issues.

Should modern slavery be identified, we will collaborate with the supplier to investigate and explore how the risk can be mitigated for both parties. We see identification as the first step in a conversation where BSL will explore opportunities to address the issue in partnership with the supplier. As our learning and awareness increases, we will continue to calibrate our approach and educate our people, at all levels, and inform and educate our suppliers, who may not be required to report modern slavery under legislation, to help deepen their understanding of modern slavery and the role we each can play.

# 4. Actions to mitigate the risk



## Our approach

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BSL has been involved in advocacy and programmatic initiatives to address modern slavery since the 1990s. Our first Modern Slavery Statement was published in 2020 with a goal to minimise the likelihood of modern slavery within our operations and supply chain, and develop appropriate governance and controls. These are overseen by the Audit and Risk Management Committee (“ARMC”) on behalf of the Board and are underpinned by our internal audit program.

Policies, frameworks and processes are subject to regular review, or updated when learnings and treatments are identified which can be incorporated to ensure continuous improvement.

These include:

- Enterprise level governance documents which support organisational activities, including but not limited to policies for Complaint Handling, Partnerships, Procurement and Contract Management, Quality, Recruitment, Risk Policy and Whistleblowing
- BSL Code of Ethics
- Employee assistance program for staff and volunteers
- Union recognition
- Bullying, stalking, cyber bullying and workplace violence policy
- Volunteer Manual; and
- Child Safe Statement and Child and Adult Safeguarding Policy



# 4. Actions to mitigate the risk



## Our approach (continued)

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In 2022, we conducted a review of our top 100 high and medium risk suppliers identified either by industry, geography or spend and introduced the Modern Slavery Questionnaire when on-boarding new suppliers engaged through a strategic procurement event, continued education with our workforce, and strengthened our tender documentation. We focussed on consolidation and aggregation of suppliers through delivery of our annual procurement plan, and provided ongoing communications to our workforce through Lunch'n'Learns for leaders in our organisation to help them understand their accountability, and The Bugle, our internal publication.

In 2023 we continued to review category spend to reduce the number of suppliers, working with BSL business units to consolidate and optimise commercial outcomes while accessing compliance to enterprise risk factors. Software which will assist in automating the questionnaire distribution and review process is being considered. Automation of certain aspects of our supplier vetting process which are currently undertaken manually, including in relation to the Modern Slavery Questionnaire, will assist to ensure a consistent approach.

# 5. Measuring success



## How we define success

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BSL has continued to recalibrate its approach to ensure that our focus remains targeted and focussed, and supports our goal to identify, assess and evaluate any modern slavery. As our approach evolves, new metrics and measures will be developed to ensure effective and targeted monitoring. The measures identified this far include:

- i. Continue to reduce the total number of suppliers year-on-year in collaboration with BSL Buyers, Finance and operations
- ii. Ensure all new expense contracts will, at a minimum, include Modern Slavery obligations
- iii. Any new suppliers will be asked to complete the Modern Slavery Questionnaire as part of their onboarding
- iv. Uplift our Modern Slavery Questionnaire and develop reporting to provide greater transparency to Audit and Risk Management Committee; Finance and operations
- v. Continue to update our workforce and educate and inform them on Modern Slavery
- vi. Explore what best practice approaches BSL can adopt to undertake supplier audits

# 6. Supplier questionnaire



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All new suppliers sourced by strategic procurement are required to complete the Modern Slavery Questionnaire as part of their engagement, existing suppliers will be asked to complete during extension or renewal of their agreement, and thereafter on an annual basis to attest there have been no changes which could increase the potential risk. We are also engaging existing suppliers which will be an ongoing task in collaboration with our internal contract managers to deepen our understanding of potential risks.

# 7. Other relevant information



## Our commitment

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This Modern Slavery Statement has been compiled by the General Counsel and Company Secretary and the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with relevant staff within the organisation.

We re-affirm our commitment to identifying, evaluating and managing modern slavery in our supply chain and operations.

This statement was approved by the BSL Board on 28 November 2023.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stephen Newton".

Mr Stephen Newton AO

Board Chair

Date: 06/12/2023

**Contact:**

Modern Slavery Working Group  
Email: [procurement@bsl.org.au](mailto:procurement@bsl.org.au)

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