

**VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY**

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA

MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT

2022



INTRODUCTION

Victoria University plays an important role in combating modern slavery. This is reflected by one of the University's core values – **'to always be ethical'**.

The University is committed to respecting human rights, acting ethically in our dealings with partners and suppliers, and taking real action to address any modern slavery risks within the University's direct control.

This statement is made pursuant to the *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018*, by Victoria University with regards to the 2022 calendar year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Victoria University (VU) acknowledges, recognises and respects the Ancestors, Elders and families of the Bunurong/Boonwurrung, Wadawurrung and Wurundjeri/Woiwurrung of the Kulin who are the traditional owners of University land in Victoria, the Gadigal and Guring-gai of the Eora Nation who are the traditional owners of University land in Sydney, and the Yulara/Yugarapul people and Turrbal people living in Meanjin (Brisbane). These groups are the custodians of University land and have been for many centuries. We acknowledge that the land on which our campuses stand is the place of age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation, and renewal. The Kulin, and Eora, Yulara/Yugarapul and Turrbal peoples' living culture continues to have a unique and important role in the life and culture of these regions.

VU is committed to Protecting Country to build better relationships and equal partnerships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. All staff, students and visitors to VU should acknowledge, understand and respect the significance of recognising and respecting Traditional Owners.

ABOUT US

Victoria University is a body corporate and politic in accordance with the *Victoria University Act 2010* (Vic).

For more than 100 years, VU (ABN 83 776 954 731) has offered accessible education to students in Melbourne's west and beyond from campuses across Melbourne's CBD and western suburbs. International students can also choose to study at VU Sydney.

VU has a subsidiary company, VU Online Pty Ltd (ABN 17 623 496 186), which is responsible for the University's wholly online course offerings.

Ranked in the top 3% of universities globally and with applied and impactful research that addresses the challenges of people, place and planet, VU offers world-class academic opportunities.

As a dual sector university, VU offers a complete pathway from high school, into TAFE, undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications, with multiple entry and exit points.

VU is also the only university in Australia to have a dedicated college for first-year students. The VU First Year College® helps students get university ready, allowing them to gain the skills, motivation and confidence to excel beyond first year. The VU First Year College® has redesigned the whole university experience, resulting in increased student satisfaction and retention, and introduced the VU Block Model® in 2018 – a revolutionary learning model where units are completed in four-week blocks.



\$423.3m
Consolidated Revenue



41,584
Students



2,200
Staff



7
Campuses



5,596
Suppliers

OUR PURPOSE

VU emboldens its people to design their future and has a deep commitment to protecting Country.

Our purpose is the heartbeat of our Strategic Plan 2022 – 2028: Start well, finish brilliantly. It is about why we do what we do, the impact we have on people’s lives and why we insist on excellence.

Victoria University emboldens and supports its students, colleagues, allies, partners, alumni and friends to shape not only their own futures but also the wider world in which they live – through learning, research, career opportunities and community and industry development. We are of the west and of the world.

Protecting Country is about people, place and planet. It is a community-driven movement towards long-term social, cultural, physical and economic prosperity and sustainability. We honour this commitment.



OUR VISION

To be a global leader in dual sector learning and research by 2028.

Our values

The VU Values are:

- ◆ always welcoming
- ◆ always ethical
- ◆ always shaping the future
- ◆ always together



OUR GOVERNANCE

Governance & Risk

Our governance framework ensures the responsibilities of the Council, the Academic Board and the executive team support accountability and meet the obligations of the *Victoria University Act 2010 (Vic)*.

Victoria University has risk management processes in place consistent with the Victorian Government's Risk Management Framework and the Australian Risk Management Standard (AS ISO 31000:2018). The processes are effective in supporting the Executive to understand, manage and control risk exposures.

Risk management is an integral part of Victoria University's planning and decision-making processes. In 2022 VU undertook a review of our risk management framework and methodology to ensure greater alignment with our strategic and operational planning cycles and improve the monitoring and reporting of risk to management and governance bodies. These changes also allow us to gain greater insight into the key risks faced by the University and ensure coordination of risk management strategies. The University Council, Compliance, Audit and Risk Committee and Vice-Chancellor's Group collaborated to develop a new risk appetite statement for Victoria University. This statement articulates our willingness to accept a measured degree of risk in pursuit of our strategic objectives, while balancing our commitment to good governance and ethical values. The statement serves to guide decision-making across the University.

Sustainability

We are contributing to a more sustainable future by reducing our carbon emissions to zero by 2025. The plan outlines opportunities to change processes, behaviours and infrastructure, expand our influence, and challenge our partner organisations to do the same. This will result in the reduction of the University's emissions from 37,000 tonnes of carbon in 2019 to Net Zero within four years.

After broad consultation with staff and students, 2022 saw the implementation of a number of impactful initiatives across the organisation, including:

- ◆ Working with retail suppliers to reduce their carbon emissions
- ◆ Reducing data centre emissions
- ◆ Installing solar panels
- ◆ Replacing end of life IT equipment
- ◆ Introducing computer stand-by controls
- ◆ Installing LED's across all campuses
- ◆ Plant and efficiency upgrades
- ◆ Replacing gas boilers
- ◆ Aligning Travel Policy to sustainability efforts with consideration of environmental impacts; a last option rather than first; and mandatory carbon offsetting
- ◆ Partnering with Green My Plate at student events to reduce takeaway containers in land fill
- ◆ Waste reduction, including promotion of BYO cup and Go-paperless campaign
- ◆ Refurbishing campus bike hubs
- ◆ Introducing sustainability subjects in the Business School and health courses
- ◆ Identifying more initiatives to improve sustainability in the Trades College
- ◆ Research programs that look at economic modelling work to support public climate policy.

OVERVIEW OF VU'S WORKFORCE

VU employ over 2,200 staff across our workforce, in both academic and professional roles. The majority of these employees are located in Australia, with a small number located off shore.

VU employees are required to comply with all internal policies and procedures, which require them to act lawfully, ethically and with integrity. VU have in place a Staff Complaints Resolution Policy which ensures that anyone who has concerns about any application or misapplication of a University policy, has a means of raising their concerns confidentially, including any suspicions of modern slavery.



OVERVIEW OF VU'S SUPPLY CHAIN

The University operates a centralised procurement model which is supported by a Purchasing Policy & Procedure. The Procurement function undertakes strategic procurement of goods and services on behalf of the University's departments as well as contracts centrally managed by Procurement.

The University is committed to a procurement process based on the following values:

- ◆ Open and effective competition – the procurement process is impartial, transparent and encourages competitive offers.
- ◆ Value for money – the principle by which the University will assess and rank proposals from suppliers, incorporating capability to meet the specification or requirements, price, risk and sustainability.
- ◆ Integrity – all business must be conducted in the best interest of the University, including meeting probity and ethical conduct requirement as specified in University policies.
- ◆ Ethical Model – the University is committed to being ethical in the way it operates through Protecting Country. The procurement of goods and services must consider the social and environmental impacts to our local and global community. Specifically supply and consumption risk in the following areas and the impact it has on VU, and the local & global community:
 - i. *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth) – supply chain management
 - ii. Supporting Victorian social enterprise and Australian First Nation business sectors
 - iii. Environmental Sustainability
 - iv. Diversity & Inclusion, specifically promoting and supporting LGBTIQ+, Gender Diversity, Cultural Diversity and supporting Accessibility

- v. Supporting suppliers who in order of preference operate in the West of Melbourne, in Victoria, in Australia

- vi. Health and Wellbeing

As a large educational institute, VU sources a wide range of goods and services.

In 2022 VU had 5,596 domestic and international suppliers, including credit card payments, for a total expenditure of \$197.8M, with 272 of the suppliers having expenditure of greater than \$100,000. Approximately 46% of VU's total spend was with the top 25 suppliers. The data collection for 2022 has been enhanced to now include foreign currency and credit card transactions.

VU purchase a wide range of goods and services, including:

- ◆ IT services, hardware and software
- ◆ Construction and building services
- ◆ Security and maintenance
- ◆ Marketing and advertising
- ◆ Consultancy services
- ◆ Electronics
- ◆ Call Centre and labour hire services
- ◆ Office supplies and promotional products
- ◆ Educational resources
- ◆ Telecommunications and utilities
- ◆ Fleet and motor vehicles

RISKS IDENTIFIED IN VU'S OPERATIONS AND SUPPLY CHAIN

Supply Chain

VU provided purchasing data for 2022 for AUPN FRDM supply chain mapping to identify the following high risk modern slavery categories:

- ◆ Computer hardware
- ◆ Mobile phones
- ◆ Clothing including promotional merchandise and uniforms
- ◆ Office products
- ◆ Contact centre and labour hire services

Staffing

VU is confident that its staffing model does not create or result in any modern slavery risks.



ACTIONS TAKEN

The following actions have been taken by VU in addressing modern slavery risk:

Legal and Governance

The VU Public Complaints Policy has been reviewed and updated to better reflect the grievance procedures required under the *Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018*.

A Modern Slavery Prevention Procedure has been drafted and is in the process of being approved, published and socialised.

Training

Key members of the Procurement and Legal teams have completed third-party training modules in modern slavery risks. Staff members have attended national and international webinars on subjects including:

- ◆ Modern Slavery Trends & Challenges
- ◆ Heading in a Rights Direction: Preventing & protecting children at risk of Modern Slavery in Australia
- ◆ Imminent legal changes to *Modern Slavery Act* & *NSW Forced Labour Act*.

In addition, 43 staff from Finance, IT and Facilities Management have completed modern slavery awareness training during 2022. Attendees included staff in key roles who are involved in the procurement of goods and services.

Current Due Diligence

The strategic procurement process assesses potential suppliers on their compliance with Corporate Social Responsibility including modern slavery. These requirements are regularly reviewed. Supplier membership in ethical trade associations such as SEDEX is well regarded and encouraged.

Preferred Supplier Model

VU currently has 127 preferred suppliers used by the University and managed by IT Services, Marketing, Facilities, Retail and Corporate business areas. These contracts are competitively negotiated to streamline the purchasing process for commonly purchased items to achieve the best value for the University and to help manage supply chain risk, which now includes modern slavery risk.

Supplier Assessment

The selection of suppliers considers modern slavery risk during the initial tender process. This provides the university community with assurance that contracted preferred supplier arrangements minimise the risk of modern slavery in the supply chain.

In 2022, 27 tenders were issued to market with 102 suppliers assessed for Modern Slavery risk.

AUPN

VU continues to be a member and attend monthly meetings of the Australian Universities Procurement Network (AUPN) Modern Slavery Working Group whose member institutions work collaboratively to improve excellence in procurement practice and in the skills of procurement professionals in the higher education sector. The AUPN have coordinated the collection of supplier data from member universities to facilitate the risk categorisation of suppliers using the FRDM supply chain mapping tool. Supplier data for 2022 was assessed by FRDM and the AUPN is finalising the approach for managing the high risk categories. Out of 2252 suppliers assessed, 15 suppliers were identified as high risk due to their industry category.

High risk suppliers will be required to complete detailed modern slavery risk questionnaires, and if required provide supplementary evidence of the supply chain controls that are in place to minimise modern slavery risk.

PLANNED ACTIONS

The following actions will be taken by VU within the next 12 months in continuing its commitment in the prevention of modern slavery:

- ◆ Further development of procedures and guidelines to sit under the VU Modern Slavery Prevention Policy which will also include formalising the process for reporting incidents or concerns of Modern Slavery in the University supply chain
- ◆ Enhancement of modern slavery clauses within agreement templates
- ◆ Further improve the supplier Modern Slavery Risk Questionnaires already in place
- ◆ Improving spend data classification and use of supply chain mapping tools to provide insights into supply chain risk
- ◆ Review the supplier on-boarding process to consider mandatory completion of Modern Slavery Risk Questionnaires for high risk supply categories
- ◆ Embed supply chain mapping into the selection of goods & services for high risk supply categories tendered
- ◆ Continue to run Modern Slavery Awareness training sessions within the University twice yearly



EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIONS

VU considers that the actions it has taken to date in addressing modern slavery risk demonstrate its commitment to the prevention of modern slavery, but acknowledges that there is more work to be done. Further actions (as outlined) will be important to continue to minimise risks of exploitation in our operations and supply chains.

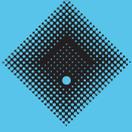
Consultation and additional information

VU Online have been consulted, and have identified no modern slavery risks in their operations or supply chain.

The Victoria University Modern Slavery Statement is endorsed by the Victoria University Council and signed by Professor Adam Shoemaker, Vice Chancellor.



Approved by Professor Adam Shoemaker,
Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University



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