

# Maurice Blackburn Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking



maurice  
blackburn  
lawyers

For the period 1 July 2023 to  
30 June 2024

# Reporting Entity

This Statement is made on behalf of Maurice Blackburn Pty Limited (ABN 21 105 657 949), the reporting entity under the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth) (**Act**), and this statement is made pursuant to section 13. It includes voluntary statements from the following entities as they operate under the same corporate policies and values as Maurice Blackburn:

- Claims Funding Australia Pty Ltd (ACN 158 551 967)
- Maurice Blackburn SA Pty Ltd (ABN 641 011 216)

This statement covers the reporting period of 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024.

Maurice Blackburn Pty Limited is an incorporated legal practice. For the purpose of this statement, 'Maurice Blackburn', 'we' and 'our' collectively refers to Maurice Blackburn Pty Limited (ABN 21 105 657 949).



# Operations, Supply Chain

## Operations

Maurice Blackburn is a national firm. We provide accurate and confidential advice without unnecessary legal jargon, and we recognise the varying financial circumstances of our clients and offer a flexible fee policy.

**We treat every client who walks through our door with the sincerity and respect they deserve.**

We provide a range of professional legal services including:

- Personal injury law;
- Class actions;
- Superannuation and insurance law;
- Financial services disputes;
- Wills and estates;
- Employment law; and
- Social Justice Law.

Our offices are located in Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Maurice Blackburn owns two subsidiaries:

<b>Claims Funding Australia</b> (ABN 158 551 967)	Litigation funding company. Office location: Australia
<b>Maurice Blackburn SA Pty Ltd</b> (ABN 641 011 216)	Entity established for trust purposes. Office location: South Australia

## Supply Chain

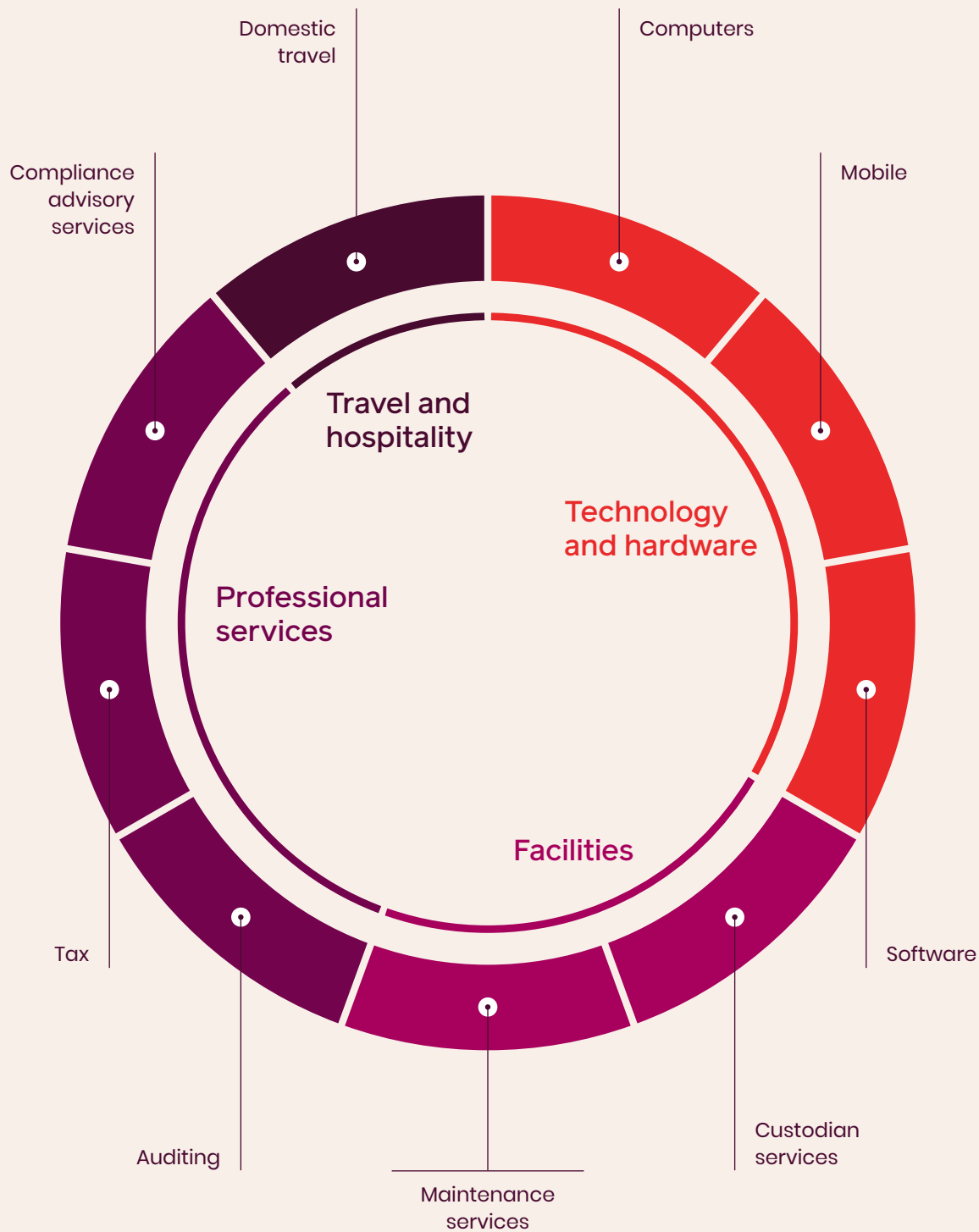
For our third-party engagement, the firm values trusted partnerships and prioritises maintaining long term relationships with suppliers that are fair and honest in their conduct.

At Maurice Blackburn, we engage professional services companies to provide essential business services, such as marketing, insurance, tax advisory and audits. We also procure the necessary services of specialist legal experts, such as barristers, on behalf of our clients. Maurice Blackburn is also responsible for maintaining supplier contracts in relation to lease agreements, IT equipment, custodian and maintenance services.

Our vendors are predominately located in Australia with some in the Netherlands, United States, and United Kingdom. The main types of goods and services we procure include:

- technology and hardware – computers, mobile, and software purchases;
- facilities – custodian and maintenance services for Maurice Blackburn locations;
- professional services – auditing, tax, and compliance advisory services; and
- travel and hospitality – domestic travel to connect with clients or other legal professionals.

**Figure**  
**Maurice Blackburn's Supply Chain**



# Modern Slavery Risk Identification

Like most professional service firms, the primary and most complex entry point for modern slavery comes from our supply chain. We are aware that no industry is immune to modern slavery and there is inherent risk in the goods and services procured by our direct suppliers. We engaged an external expert to interview staff across Facilities, Finance, and Marketing to identify potential higher risk supplier relationships including, but not limited to:

## Commercial cleaning services

Including any cleaning, restoration, and general building maintenance that has been contracted by Maurice Blackburn or our building manager. This sector traditionally has higher reports of underpayment and employees using higher rates of subcontracting to avoid paying entitlements and hence is a key focus for our firm in seeking to minimise this risk<sup>1</sup>.

## ICT purchases and offshore software development

Like many professional services firms, to maintain our online platform and online promotions we engage third party professionals to supply hardware and software as a service or one-off product. In a global market, these goods and services can be conducted overseas and within geographies that may not have the same level of labour protections afforded in the Australian workforce, and hence is another key area for vigilance.

## Branded merchandise

Maurice Blackburn may at times procure branded merchandise, including apparel, kitchenware, or novelty goods. It is likely that a number of these items or their components are produced overseas, where the risk of modern slavery is greater at assembly and/or manufacturing stages

<sup>1</sup> INCLEAN MAGAZINE, *The industry that's cleaning up modern slavery*. Published 23/10/2019 at <https://www.incleanmag.com.au/the-industry-thats-cleaning-up-modern-slavery/>

# Modern Slavery Risk Management

## Employment

We rely on a diverse pool of talented professionals to provide legal services to clients and operate vital business functions. We have an affirmation statement, *About Maurice Blackburn*, which speaks to our values including to “treat others fairly and with respect”. This translates into our ‘all in commitment’ on anti-discrimination and inclusion reflected in our:

New Starter and Induction  
Policy

Grievance Procedures  
Policy

Change of Employment  
Conditions Policy

Contractor Management  
Policy

We have implemented and continuously improve our payroll management systems and reporting mechanisms available in-house and through external partners. We believe that these policies, in conjunction with legal profession regulation that exists in the Australian states we operate in, does limit the risk of our workforce being subjected to modern slavery, but we are committed to continuing to take a proactive approach to these issues to ensure this remains the case.

## Governance

Our modern slavery initiatives have had the commitment of our senior leaders, Audit and Risk Committee and the Maurice Blackburn Board. Our Risk and Compliance Team with input from key staff, is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of our modern slavery response.

## Policies

Maurice Blackburn maintains two reporting mechanisms for employees to raise grievances and concerns:

Whistleblower Policy	Grievance Procedure Policy
Intended for internal and external reporting at Maurice Blackburn to submit reports of potentially criminal or unethical behaviour	Internal reporting at Maurice Blackburn to raise issues of management and personal grievances
The Policy is publicly accessible <a href="#">here</a>	Policy is available to staff on the intranet
Eligible whistle-blowers are encouraged to report concerns without fear of retaliation	Employees are encouraged to file a grievance when informal resolution tools have been exhausted
People and Culture team will investigate the report and the issue and may determine if corrective action is required.	People and Culture team will investigate the grievance and may determine if remediation is required.
Both policies are owned and operated by Maurice Blackburn's People & Culture Team	

Activities were undertaken during the period to raise awareness of these policies through a variety of communication channels. This included publicising through the firm's intranet, on employee payslips and signage in the firm's offices. We continue to raise awareness of these policies.

Maurice Blackburn also maintains a reporting and investigation process for responding to modern slavery reports. This has been shared with relevant stakeholders. The process supports the monitoring of our modern slavery reporting obligations.

Maurice Blackburn's policies are a key method for setting out expectations for our people, in the responsible conduct of the firm. We have several policies in place which reflect our firm's belief that ethics and integrity are fundamental in doing business including the following:

- Anti-fraud, Theft and Corruption Policy: which sets out rules with regard to minimising risks of bribery and corruption.
- Purchasing Policy: sets out the firm's expectation of ensuring we maintain the highest ethical standards when dealing with suppliers.

During this period, we developed a Human Rights Policy, which sets out our commitment to respect human rights. This will be implemented as part of our FY25 actions.

**As our approach to managing modern slavery risks in our supply chain has developed, we have adapted our policies accordingly. We continue to review these policies periodically.**

## Supplier Management

We continue to seek supplier agreement to our standard supplier contractual terms which includes warranties that the supplier will comply with the Act and responsibly manage the risk of modern slavery within their own supply chain.

As part of our onboarding of new higher risk relationship suppliers we require suppliers to complete and a third-party due diligence questionnaire, which includes questions pertaining to modern slavery. Responses are reviewed to assess whether there are any modern slavery concerns and follow up actions are required. This onboarding process allows the firm to have a deeper understanding of our suppliers' approach to modern slavery and management of their risks.

This questionnaire will be also utilised in our broader review of our Procurement Framework. This Framework will guide the firm in a way that ensures ethical behaviour, efficiencies, accountability and compliance with all applicable regulations, laws and policies including the Act, when sourcing goods and services. We continue to action the implementation of this Framework.

**As our modern slavery response matures, we will continue to take steps to assure our trust in vendors with practical due diligence stages and direct, honest engagement with our suppliers.**

## Awareness and Education

Maurice Blackburn's executive team and Audit and Risk Committee have been presented with the requirements of the Act and the actions the firm plans to undertake to address modern slavery.

**To improve awareness of modern slavery risks, we continue to require all new employees to review and be familiar with the firm's policies.**



# Assessing effectiveness

We assess the effectiveness of our actions in several ways:

- tracking our actions and the outcomes of our actions;
- monitoring for any reported incidents of modern slavery within our organisation and supply chain;
- undertaking reviews of our policies and procedures with regards to modern slavery;
- aiming to increase awareness of our relevant policies and procedures on an ongoing basis; and
- the number of people who have completed modern slavery training.

In the upcoming reporting period, we will:

- continue to assess new suppliers and undertake appropriate supplier due diligence;
- continue to raise awareness of our Whistle-blower policy and relevant reporting lines;
- continue to progress the development of relevant policy documents to ensure they can respond to modern slavery;
- publish a modern slavery training module for employees that deal with external suppliers; and
- conduct internal training to raise awareness of suppliers and modern slavery risk management processes.

# Consultation

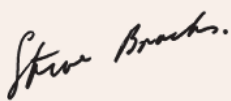
Maurice Blackburn recognises the importance of engaging with its subsidiaries on its risks of modern slavery. During the reporting period, Maurice Blackburn shared copies of its inaugural modern slavery statement and modern slavery strategy with the managing director of Claims Funding Australia and International. Managing directors of subsidiaries will be contacted by the Maurice Blackburn modern slavery working group to report on any new initiatives or changes in approach regarding modern slavery risk management.

# Other

At Maurice Blackburn, we believe our employees can be agents of positive impact and change on clients and the community. We believe that raising awareness and empowering people through knowledge creates small impacts in the workplace and our employees' personal lives which in turn can have a cascading effect across communities and Australia.

In addition to our legal services, Maurice Blackburn openly engages with the federal parliament, departments and agencies on labour rights, regulation and standards within Australia to provide legislatures with case studies and insights from front line workers.

This statement has been approved by the Board of Maurice Blackburn on 13 December 2024.



**Steve Bracks**  
Chair of the Board  
**Maurice Blackburn**

