
Thomson Geer

Lawyers

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Modern Slavery Statement

FY 2023

Reporting Entity

This modern slavery statement covers the following entities:

- Thomson Geer (a Partnership) ABN 21 442 367 363
- Thomson Geer Services Pty Ltd ABN 74 727 422 472
- TG Legal + Technology Pty Ltd ABN 34 657 374 902

Structure and Operations

Thomson Geer (TG) is a major Australian corporate law firm. We are trusted by companies, governments and institutions to act for their commercial and legal interests. With more than 650 people, including over 140 partners, operating out of our offices in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Adelaide and Canberra, we are one of the 10 largest firms operating in Australia. Thomson Geer is a full service firm and many of the firm's practitioners are acknowledged as leading lawyers in their fields.

The firm structure is a partnership with a Chief Executive Partner (CEP) and Board, all of whom are ultimately accountable to the partners, the owners of the firm. A National Executive Team report to the CEP.

Lawyers and professional staff are employed by the partnership. Our shared services function and administrative staff are employed by a services trust, Thomson Geer Services Pty Ltd.

TG has also assisted a range of clients in developing their business' approach to modern slavery.

TG is a professional services practice, with our core business activity being the provision of legal services to our clients.

TG's operations are based in Australia but we provide legal services to a variety of clients based both in Australia and overseas. As a full service commercial firm, we are able to call on expertise in a wide variety of practice areas and provide our clients with comprehensive solutions for all their legal needs.

We offer national best practice specialist skills and experience across Banking, Construction, Corporate and Commercial, Disputes and Litigation, Employment, Intellectual Property and Information Technology, Property and Tax.

Our supply chain consists predominantly of goods and services procured for the purpose of enabling our people to deliver legal services to our clients.

The main goods and services TG procures include:

- cleaning;
- computer hardware;
- computer software and software development services;
- accounting and audit;
- hospitality and catering;
- recruitment;
- marketing and merchandise;
- equipment supply;
- couriers and postage;
- travel and taxis;
- training at Registered Training Organisations;
- insurance;
- telecommunications; and
- parking.

We also procure the following on behalf of our clients:

- barristers;
- document management and eDiscovery; and
- data rooms

TG had a growing team dedicated to institutional legal work offering specialist services in areas like secured recoveries, asset & mortgage enforcement, leasing & conveyancing, workcover, government and utilities. On 1 July 2022 this part of our business was largely transferred to a company owned by the then Partners, an incorporated legal practice.

From **1 July 2022** this institutional high volume practice operated as **TG Legal + Technology Pty Ltd**. In practice the team currently acts as a division of the firm and responsibility for risk and compliance systems remains with Thomson Geer, the Partnership under a service agreement.

The restructure and rebrand provides a platform for cost effective bespoke solutions often integrated with clients system and delivered a corporate environment for increased capital for investment into those business processes and efficient systems. Also the restructure supports development of a dedicated workforce rewarded for KPI performance instead of billable hour targets, different to a traditional law firm.

Risks in TG’s operations and supply chains

As a professional services firm TG has a low number of suppliers, however TG appreciates that modern slavery can take many forms.

Some modern slavery practices across the globe in our contemporary world include slavery, human trafficking, servitude, forced labour, child slave labour and debt bondage.

Risks of modern slavery may be present in TG’s supply chain as a result of the geographic location of some suppliers and source materials used in products supplied to TG.

TG also accepts that there are additional risks of modern slavery that may exist in areas where TG lacks insight into the second tier suppliers and source materials behind products and services supplied directly to TG.

Despite that, a review of TG’s suppliers show they primarily fall into the following categories which are at low risk for modern slavery:

- large Australian organisations that are required to comply with the Modern Slavery Act and have submitted Modern Slavery Statements in accordance with that Act; and
- small, local organisations whose primary business activities are providing services wholly within Australia.

Our approach to modern slavery

In our operations

TG has no modern slavery practices within its own operations. We have a dedicated human resources team with representatives on the ground in each of our offices. We also regularly seek advice from our own large team of employment law specialist lawyers regarding applicable minimum entitlements for our staff. We comply with relevant Australian workplace laws, including those that deal with employment conditions and safety, and other community expectations and ethical standards. We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive and safe environment for all staff members, which includes treating workers with dignity and respect, and providing a workplace free from discrimination and harassment.

We aim to achieve this through our policies on Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying and Work Health and Safety, as well as through providing annual training to our staff. TG has also included modern slavery as a topic in its compulsory continuing professional development sessions, which all professional staff are required to attend.

We do not have any employees outside of Australia.

In our supply chain

In the 2023 financial year we further rationalised our supply chain reducing the number of suppliers over the materiality threshold from 337 in the 2020 financial year to approximately 180 in the 2023 financial year. The size of the firm increased, and with the addition of our Canberra office we were not able to further reduce the number of suppliers.

We also continued rolling out our Third Party Supplier Audit Questionnaire. We were unable to increase our response rate above the 60% achieved last year.

There were no risks identified in the responses which were received.

We did focus on our suppliers to TG Legal + Technology and were able to get responses from all material suppliers.

Our Modern Slavery Policy was reviewed and updated to ensure it remained relevant and effective. The policy applies to any person or entity working for or on behalf of, or providing services to or doing business with, Thomson Geer in any capacity, including all suppliers, employees, officers, contractors, subcontractors and consultants.

The policy sets out:

- our requirements for suppliers in relation to their treatment of workers and compliance with labour laws and standards;
- how we aim to address risks of modern slavery;
- the consequences of breaching the policy; and
- how concerns about modern slavery can be reported to TG.

As part of our Reconciliation Action Plan we have also reviewed our supply arrangements to prefer First Nations owned and operated suppliers to continue towards more ethical sourcing in our supply chain.

This includes the use of an independent, Aboriginal-owned and operated company dedicated to elite standards and best practice in the supply of promotional merchandise and apparel. Their vision is to be a supplier of choice for corporate Australia, and to deliver tangible social impact for Aboriginal Australians through the investment of profits into their Social Impact Fund. Through the employment of Aboriginal staff, providing vocational training and real-life business experience, Position Promo is creating an environment that offers Aboriginal Australians valuable experience and a launch pad from which they may start their business careers.

Reviewing our systems

TG is committed to effectively assessing and addressing modern slavery risks in its operations and supply chain. TG has implemented an annual review of the arrangements it has in place to address modern slavery risks in its operations and supply chain to determine whether they are effective.

In this year's review we targeted our biggest suppliers (which were primarily used by TG Legal + Technology) ensuring they all completed a more detailed questionnaire. We were comfortable with the responses.

Consultation

TG's board has responsibility for governance across its business and therefore has oversight into risks of modern slavery across its operations. As TG's procurement is managed through a central system, it has insight into risks of modern slavery in its supply chain that may exist across its all parts of its business.

Other information

Legal services

TG recognises its position to assist its clients with their own approach to modern slavery.

TG has also assisted a range of clients in developing their business' approach to modern slavery including assisting them to understand how they can approach assessing and addressing risks to modern slavery in their operations and supply chains.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Whilst the below initiatives do not directly address risks relating to modern slavery, as a member of the wider Australian business community TG recognises its responsibility to make a meaningful commitment to corporate social responsibility, diversity and sustainability.

These initiatives aim to improve the welfare, living standards and access to justice of others, which ultimately promotes a society in which basic human rights (including the right to proper working conditions) is valued. The firm is a member of the Australian Legal Sector Alliance which is an organisation focused on working with law firms to promote best practice sustainability across the legal sector, encompassing sustainable and inclusive workplaces, community support, environmental conservation and responsible governance.

Pro bono

At TG, we understand the importance of giving back to our community. This involves helping to ensure that all members of that community have access to legal representation and advice, and seeking opportunities to provide support for worthwhile causes. An initiative our firm is committed to is the provision of pro bono legal advice to marginalised and disadvantaged groups across the States in which we operate.

TG is a signatory to the National Pro Bono Resource Centre's aspirational target of 35 hours of pro bono legal work per practitioner per year (in fact, our lawyers can spend up to 100 hours per year on approved pro bono matters and receive financial credit for this time).

We are constantly looking for ways that we can connect our lawyers with pro bono opportunities that will utilise their skills to make a meaningful contribution to our local communities. The firm offers pro bono services to many clients aligned with the firm's priorities and positioning. This includes clients such as (this list is not exhaustive):

This includes clients such as (this list is not exhaustive) St Vincent's Hospital, Mercy Health Foundation, Choice Passion Life (formerly Cerebral Palsy League of QLD), Diabetes NSW + ACT, Arthritis Australia, HIV/AIDS Legal Centre, Together for Humanity Foundation, Gayaa Dhuri (Proud Spirit) Australia among others.

The firm also works with a number of structured pro bono referral programs such as Justice Connect and Homeless Persons Legal Service.

Diversity and inclusion

At TG, we firmly believe in equal opportunity, diversity and inclusion, which is reflected in our Diversity and Inclusion Statement.

Diversity is inherent to the way we operate and is core to the success of any business operating in a competitive market. Across the firm, we have a number of initiatives focused on developing a diverse and inclusive work environment. We have adopted the Law Council of Australia's Equitable Briefing Policy where we aim to brief women in at least 30 per cent of all matters and pay 30 per cent of the value of all brief fees.

TG is a member of the Australian Network on Disability. Every year we celebrate fundraising and awareness initiatives. As part of our membership of AND we participate in the AND Stepping Into program. Stepping Into is a national internship program that connects university students with disability to workplaces.

The firm also has social inclusion policies focusing on prioritising support for Indigenous Australians including through our purchase of promotional products from an Indigenous owned organisation and pro bono work for organisations supporting Indigenous Australians.

Thomson Geer participates in the CareerTrackers internship program. CareerTrackers is a national non-profit that works with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young adults from university, linking them with employers for paid internships. The program matches university students based on their degrees and career goals, with the end goal to convert an internship to a full-time position upon graduation.

Approved by the Board of the Partnership of Thomson Geer and signed with authority of both the Board of the Partnership and the Partnership by:



Adrian Tembel
Chief Executive Partner
20 December 2023

