

Modern Slavery Statement

HWL Ebsworth Lawyers

Year ended 30 June 2021

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Modern Slavery Statement

1. Introduction

This statement (**Statement**) is made pursuant to the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* (Cth) (**Act**) on behalf of THE MARTINEZ HWL PRACTICE TRUST & THE EAST HWL PRACTICE TRUST & THE WARAT HWL PRACTICE TRUST & THE MARIN HWL PRACTICE TRUST & OTHERS trading as HWL Ebsworth Lawyers (ABN 37 246 549 189) (**HWLE**). HWLE is a reporting entity for the purposes of the Act.

This Statement relates to the reporting period commencing 1 July 2020 and ending 30 June 2021 (**Reporting Period**) and sets out the actions taken by HWLE and its controlled entity, HWLE Consulting Pty Ltd (ACN 158 617 497) (**HWLE Consulting**), to identify, assess and address modern slavery risks within their operations and supply chain.

2. HWLE's structure, operations and supply chain

2.1 Legal structure and corporate details

HWLE is Australia's largest legal partnership with origins dating back to the 1890s. It is a firm which operates in 9 locations which span across every state and territory in Australia.

HWLE's legal structure as a partnership involves a partnership of the practice trusts of each of its 271 partners.

As at 31 December 2021, HWLE consisted of 261 capital partners, 55 fixed draw partners, and employed another 886 legal staff and 362 support staff.

2.2 Operations

HWLE operates within the Australian legal market and predominantly provides legal services and advice to its diverse client base which includes, but is not limited to, government department and agencies, corporate clients across numerous industries, including finance, insurance, construction, resources and property and high net worth individuals.

HWLE provides a full service, multi-faceted offering across all major areas of commercial law, including Corporate & Commercial, Litigation, Insurance, Property, Construction & Infrastructure, Banking & Finance, Workplace Relations & Safety, Australian Government and other industry-based practice groups, including Transport, Planning & Environment and Health.

HWLE Consulting offers consulting services to clients of the partnership, utilising partners and staff seconded from HWLE.

2.3 Supply Chain

As HWLE is an Australian-based professional services business, its supply chain does not directly include any product manufacturers, but rather is a simple supply chain consisting of suppliers that provide various goods and services to support HWLE's general operations and to provide support for its technology, systems and infrastructure.

Accordingly, HWLE's supply chain consists of information technology (IT) service providers, suppliers of IT equipment, hardware and software, insurance providers, external consultants, external legal counsel, banks and other financiers, knowledge subscription and media providers, document storage providers, postal and courier services, cleaning contractors, facility managers, travel and accommodation providers, recruitment agencies, hospitality providers, property agents, office supplies and kitchen supplies.

During the Reporting Period, the significant majority of HWLE's contracted suppliers were based in Australia. A small amount of other suppliers were based in New Zealand, Great Britain and the United States of America.

Given HWLE's desire to maintain a disciplined and effective operating model and financial model, its relationships with its key suppliers are typically structured as stable, long-term relationships, rather than short-term arrangements.

HWLE's supply chain also consists of a broad range of indirect suppliers that provide goods and services to the suppliers that directly service HWLE. By way of example, these can include the suppliers of photocopiers that HWLE leases, office equipment to HWLE's insurance providers and external consultants, the cleaning equipment providers that provide such equipment to HWLE's cleaning contractors or the manufacturers of IT equipment that provide goods to HWLE's IT product and service providers.

3. Risk Profile

HWLE has undertaken a detailed assessment of its exposure to modern slavery risks. This included a fundamental review of HWLE's employment and staff management processes and a review of its business partners and suppliers. A similar analysis has been undertaken in respect of HWLE Consulting.

Based on its most recent assessment of its exposure to modern slavery risks, HWLE considers the risk of modern slavery within its operations and supply chain (and that of HWLE Consulting) to be low for the following key reasons:

- (a) the nature of operations of HWLE and HWLE Consulting primarily involves the provision of legal services and advice to clients in Australia, which are services that carry a low risk of exposure to modern slavery practices;
- (b) the primary location of the operations of HWLE and HWLE Consulting is Australia, and all direct suppliers of goods and services are located in countries

that are rated low for modern slavery practices in accordance with the Global Slavery Index¹;

- (c) the employees of HWLE consist only of skilled professionals, and not from groups of people where modern slavery is a key risk. HWLE Consulting does not employ any staff but utilises staff of HWLE under secondment arrangements;
- (d) we have undertaken a comprehensive review of our employment and secondment arrangements to ensure that we are in compliance with all legislative and award based requirements;
- (e) HWLE and HWLE Consulting procure the majority of their goods and services from well-established suppliers, many of whom HWLE understands have robust policies and processes in place to reduce the risk of modern slavery in their own operation and supply chain; and
- (f) the nature of goods and services that HWLE and HWLE Consulting procure from third party suppliers do not present a high risk of modern slavery.

Nevertheless, HWLE recognises that it and HWLE Consulting may be indirectly exposed to a higher risk of modern slavery through their supply chain including the suppliers of their direct suppliers.

4. Actions taken by HWLE to assess and address these risks

HWLE adopts a number of processes and procedures to assess and address any potential risks of modern slavery within its operations and supply chain (and those of HWLE Consulting). These processes are detailed below.

4.1 Assessing risks

HWLE continues to adopt processes and procedures to assess the risk of modern slavery, including through a comprehensive process of risk mapping its operations and supply chain. The Management and procurement team consider the risk of modern slavery when making operational decisions and during the process of on-boarding of new suppliers.

¹ See <https://www.global-slavery-index.org/>.

4.2 Addressing risks

(a) **Responsible Procurement Policy**

HWLE has adopted a Responsible Procurement Policy which sets out its objective to engage suppliers that share HWLE's approach to ethics, diversity and sustainability.

The Responsible Procurement Policy provides that HWLE expects its suppliers to comply with requirements including:

- (i) respecting fundamental human rights, including worker representation;
- (ii) adopting ethical business practices with respect to the business behaviour of individuals and the organisation as a whole;
- (iii) having a positive impact on the communities in which they operate;
- (iv) maintaining and evidencing responsible health and safety practices; and
- (v) committing to a comprehensive policy of equal opportunities in employment.

The Responsible Procurement Policy also states that HWLE expects its suppliers to maintain management systems and practices that ensure the prevention of modern slavery, fraud, bribery and corruption.

(b) **Supply contracts**

Where possible in respect of major supply arrangements, HWLE seeks to incorporate language into the contract reflecting its expectations of the supplier in respect of human rights and ethical procurement.

(c) **Supplier due diligence**

HWLE's procurement team undertake risk based due diligence in respect of all direct suppliers before they are on-boarded.

(d) **Training**

HWLE has implemented new policies that require all new partners, staff and contractors to undertake training in relation to the firm's policy on modern slavery at the time of engagement, and all partners, staff and contractors are required to attend refresher sessions on a bi-annual basis.

(e) **Remuneration arrangements and advice**

The remuneration arrangements of HWLE relate to places of employment within Australia and are based on a combination of award and contractual employment arrangements. HWLE monitors its obligations under the *Legal Services Award 2020* and all other applicable awards and continually obtains industry

specific remuneration information to ensure that it pays its employees at or above industry levels. HWLE also ensures that it complies with all relevant legislative requirements in relation to salary, superannuation contributions and leave.

More broadly, HWLE operates a significant and national team of Workplace Relations & Safety specialists who routinely advise the business itself on the rights of its employees.

All staff seconded to HWLE Consulting are remunerated by HWLE under the arrangements described above.

5. Remediation Actions

HWLE expects complete compliance with its Responsible Procurement Policy and all other firm policies by all partners, staff, contractors and suppliers.

If a supplier was found to be engaging in modern slavery practices or there was a concern that a supplier may be the subject of a risk of modern slavery, HWLE would immediately address the risk with the relevant supplier. If the supplier was not able to demonstrate that the risk has been addressed within a reasonable period of time, HWLE would seek to discontinue its relationship with that supplier immediately.

6. Measuring the Effectiveness of Our Actions

HWLE has implemented practices to measure the effectiveness of the processes it has put in place to identify, assess and address modern slavery risks. Those practices include:

- (a) annual assessment and analysis of supplier activity (for example, whether HWLE has refused to on-board any supplier due to concerns regarding the risks attached to their operations or supply chain, and whether any suppliers have been terminated for such reasons);
- (b) auditing the participation of staff in modern slavery training; and
- (c) conducting internal audits of suppliers to determine if mitigation measures have been consistently adopted by such suppliers.

7. Future activities

HWLE continues to critically examine its practices and procedures in respect of modern slavery risk in order to ensure it is implementing appropriate measures that reflect the level of risk attached to its operations and supply chain. HWLE will implement enhancements and new measures as appropriate, during the course of the 2022 reporting period. For example, HWLE is considering the introduction of a Code of

Conduct to provide a framework for decisions and actions in relation to conduct, and to set out the standards of behaviour expected of HWLE's employees and contractors.

8. Consultation with HWLE Consulting

As the management team of HWLE and HWLE Consulting are the same, HWLE Consulting has been directly consulted in respect of the preparation of this Statement and each of the activities described within it. All relevant stakeholders within both HWLE and HWLE Consulting are aware of and consulted on all practices and procedures described in this Statement, as well as in the preparation of this Statement.

9. Approval

This statement was approved by Juan Jose Martinez in his capacity as Managing Partner of HWL Ebsworth Lawyers (ABN 37 246 549 189) pursuant to the powers delegated to him by the partnership under the HWL Ebsworth Partnership Deed.

Signed:



Name: Juan Jose Martinez
Title: Managing Partner