

Banyule City Council's (Voluntary) Modern Slavery Statement

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1. Introduction and Background

This is Council's inaugural Voluntary Modern Slavery Statement for Banyule City Council, as informed by the *Modern Slavery Act 2018*.

Banyule City Council is dedicated to contributing to the global fight against modern slavery, aligned with UN Sustainable Development Goal 8.7. This goal specifically calls for immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking, and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour. Our future goals aim to improve ethical compliance within our supply chains, enhance transparency and accountability, and strengthen global collaborations.

It is important to note that this voluntary Modern Slavery Statement has not been formally submitted to the Attorney-General's Department as a voluntary Modern Slavery Statement.

What is the Modern Slavery Act 2018?

The *Modern Slavery Act 2018 (the Act)* came into effect on 1st of January 2019. *The Act* requires entities based or operating in Australia, which have an annual consolidated revenue of more than \$100 million to report annually on the risks of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains, and actions taken to address those risks. This legislation plays a crucial role in raising awareness and promoting corporate responsibility to tackle modern slavery.

The Act explicitly excludes state and territory governments from the reporting requirement. Consistent with this approach, local government entities are not required to comply with the reporting requirement. This ensures that local government entities are treated in the same way as state and territory governments under *the Act*.

Local governments have an important role to play in combatting modern slavery, particularly as they often have significant procurement activities. Local government entities are encouraged to voluntarily comply with *the Act*, where they have the capacity to do so.

Definition of Modern Slavery

Modern slavery is a serious violation of an individual's dignity and human rights. Exploitative practices, including human trafficking, slavery, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage and forced marriage, are all considered modern slavery and are serious crimes under Australian law.

The Act defines Modern Slavery comprehensively. The following provides a high-level summary of types of Modern Slavery.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking entails the recruitment, harbouring, or transportation of individuals into exploitative circumstances using violence, deception, or coercion, compelling them to engage in labour against their volition.

Slavery

Describes situations where the perpetrator exerts control of ownership over the victim, including the power to make a person an object of purchase and use their labour in an unrestricted way.

Servitude

Describes situations where the victim's personal freedom is significantly restricted, rendering them unable to cease working or depart from their workplace voluntarily.

Forced Marriage

Describes situations where coercion, threats, or deception are used to make a victim marry or where the victim does not understand or is incapable of understanding the nature and effect of the marriage ceremony.

Debt Bondage

Describes circumstances where the victim's services are used as collateral for a debt and the debt is manifestly excessive or the victim's services are not applied to repay the debt, or the length and nature of the services are not limited and defined.

Child Labour

Describes situations where children are:

- exploited through slavery or similar practices, including for sexual exploitation or
- engaged in hazardous work that may harm their health, safety or morals or
- used to produce or traffic drugs.

The worst forms of child labour can occur in a variety of contexts and industries.

Deceptive Recruitment

Describes situations where the victim is deceived about the types of services or labour they are being engaged for.

This Statement aims to outline the approach to ensuring that Banyule City Council (Council) has robust frameworks and processes to minimise the risk of modern slavery in our organisational operations and supply chain.

While Council does not meet the financial threshold of \$100 million for legally requiring a mandatory statement, we recognise its imperative to proactively address modern slavery risks within our operations and supply chain.

The decision to prepare this voluntary statement is also consistent with our organisational values which are outlined in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Banyule City Council values.



We uphold human rights as a core value, essential for the long-term stability of our organisation and the well-being of the community we serve. At Council, this means conducting our business in a way that acknowledges and respects the rights of the community and service providers to be free from modern slavery practices, including forced labour, human trafficking, and child labour.

2. About Banyule City Council

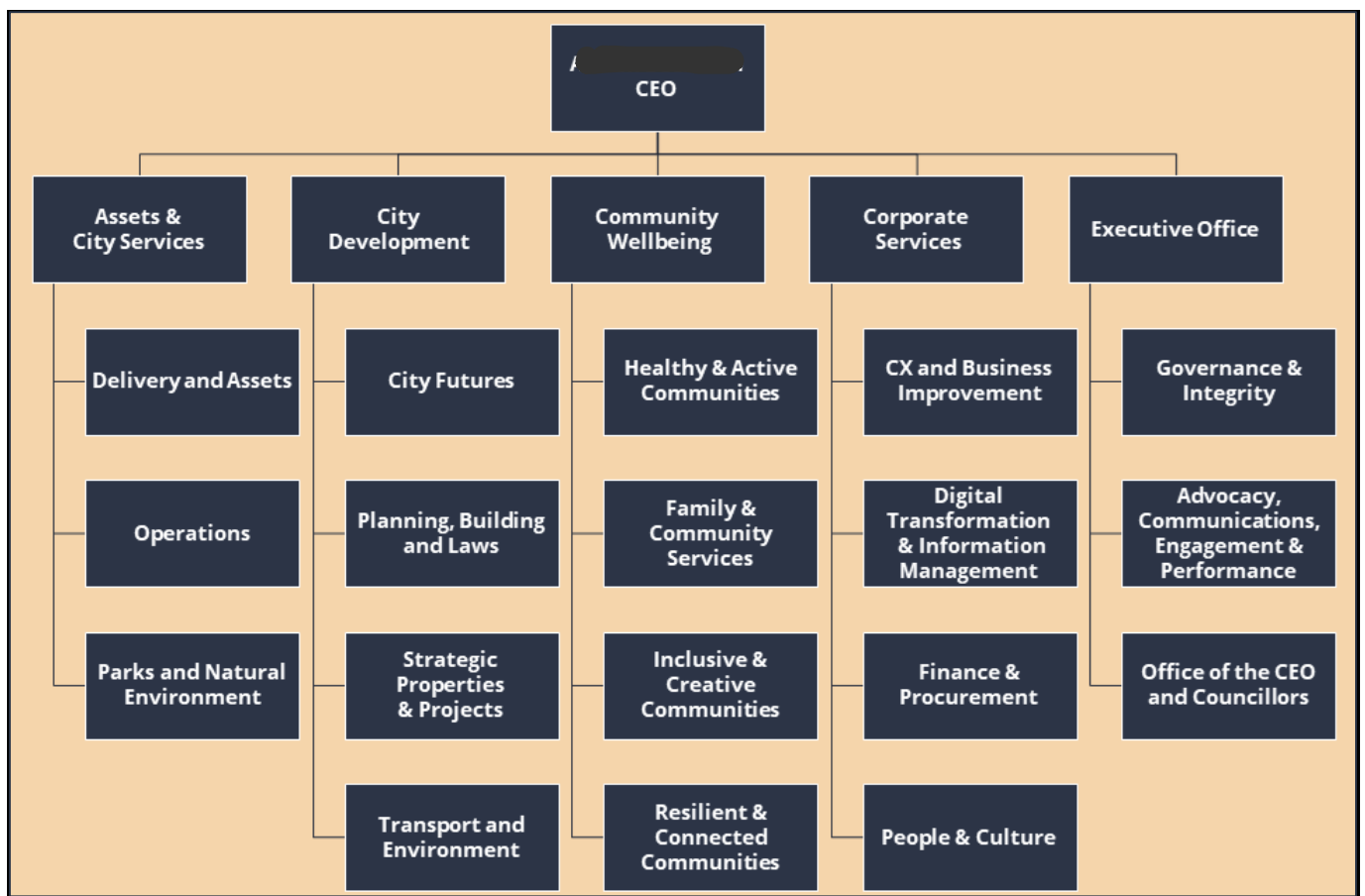
Banyule City Council (ABN 16 456 814 549) is an Australian Local Government Entity, located between seven (7) and 21-kilometres northeast of central Melbourne and consists of 21 suburbs with a population of just under 130,000 residents. Council is a significant employer, boasting a workforce exceeding 1,000 staff members. Reference: Banyule City Council Annual Report (2022/2023).

Council delivers over 100 services, from youth and family services, community and health services, local laws, open space planning, waste management and community building to economic development.

Organisational Structure

Figure 2 provides an overview of Council's organisational structure. There are five directorates comprising of 18 different departments.

Figure 2 – Banyule City Council organisation



Our operations and supply chain

Council's supply chain includes the purchase and sourcing of work, products and services for the organisational day-to-day operations including:

- Construction and capital works projects
- Parks and leisure centres
- Cleaning services
- Technical and professional services
- Waste management
- Office supplies
- Recruitment and training of staff
- External legal advice
- IT infrastructure.

Our key operations and supply chains are illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Banyule City Council key operations and supply chains.

Operations	Supply Chains
Assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations & Maintenance of Council's Facilities and assets • Cleaning Services
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waterways treatment services • Landcare services and conservation management
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engineering and Construction • Major Projects • Consulting and technical services • Building Services
Corporate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purchase and lease of properties • Staff education services
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilities (Gas, Electricity, water) • Freight, Couriers and mail • Temp labour hire • Cleaning Contractors • Professional Services • IT and technology services • Purchasing of fleet. • Leasing, maintenance and operations of fleet • Stationery and office equipment • Security, insurance and legal services • Marketing and Advertising
Customer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing bills and services • Customer survey and research services • Call Centre Services • Storage of documentation • Debt collection services
Equipment and Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire of construction and other equipment • Supply and storage of chemicals • Service and maintenance of Equipment • Consumable Supplies
Information Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of IT hardware • Information Security • Telecommunications • Licenses and software • Cloud services • IT Services
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Procurement • Legal Services • Privacy Services • HR Services • Contractors • Recruitment, Training and development

3. Our policies and procedures

Council has several formal policies in place to promote ethical and legally compliant business conduct. Council's policies contribute to our commitment to preventing violations of human rights such as modern forms of slavery in our business. The identified policies that contribute to our approach are listed in *Table 2 below*.

Table 2 – Relevant Policies

Policies	Brief Description
Workplace Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Policy to assist Council in being a role model for inclusive behaviour, building inclusive teams, and accepting responsibility for Diversity and Inclusion.
Bullying Harassment and Discrimination Policy	The policy outlines Council's commitment to creating a workplace free from bullying, harassment and discrimination, promoting respectful, fair and equitable treatment for all individuals in the workplace.
Gender Equity Action Plan	Council's action plan to promote and support gender equality in the workplace. To promote our Policies, Programs and Services to the Community relating to gender equity.
Staff and Councillor Code of Conduct	Commitment to staff's fair dealing and high standards of ethical behaviour in caring for and managing our municipality.
Procurement Policy	Specifies the principles, processes and procedures applied in respect of the purchase of goods and services and carrying out of works by Council.
Occupational Health & Safety Policy	The purpose of this Policy is to outline the occupational health and safety requirements for Council and provide guidance for occupational health and safety management across Council.
Sexual Harassment Prevention Action Plan	A comprehensive plan structured around six key standards: Knowledge, Prevention, Organisational Capability, Risk Management, Reporting and Response, and Monitoring and Evaluation.
Sexual Harm Policy	The purpose is to provide a working environment that is safe, inclusive, respectful and free from sexual harassment.
Working with Children Policy	This policy demonstrates the commitment to creating and maintaining a child safe organisation that is consistent with the Child Safe Standards.
Child Safety Policy	This policy demonstrates our commitment to providing a safe environment, where children and young people are safe and feel safe.
Recruitment Policy	Ensures recruitment and selection processes reflect our commitment to high standards of ethical behaviour that contribute to a respectful and productive workplace.
Employee Assistance Program	The Employee Assistance Program is a free and confidential personal counselling and referral service for all Council employees and their immediate family members, volunteers, community group members and others.
Contract Management Framework	The Framework has been developed and designed to ensure consistency, compliance, and efficiency in managing contractual agreements and contractors and suppliers.
Fraud and Corruption Policy	Includes what Council does to prevent any instances of fraud or corruption occurring, systems for detecting fraud or corruption, and what would be Council's response to any suspected or identified instances of fraud or corruption.



4. Addressing the risk of modern slavery practices

Council intends to incorporate an approach to address the various risks of modern slavery practices in its corporate governance processes, such as procurement and risk management. This strategic approach is vital due to the ethical imperative of combating modern slavery and the associated risks it poses. Importantly, alongside the ethical considerations, there are significant financial and reputational risks at stake.

Failure to address modern slavery practices within the supply chain can lead to severe reputational damage for Council. Any association with such practices can tarnish its image, erode public trust, and diminish community confidence.

By actively addressing modern slavery risks, Council upholds its ethical obligations and mitigates reputational, financial, and operational risks. It sends a clear message to stakeholders that it prioritises responsible and ethical business practices, fostering trust and goodwill among the community, staff and partners. Thus, incorporating measures to combat modern slavery is morally imperative and essential for safeguarding Council's reputation and financial stability.

5. Actions

What have we done so far?

In 2021, Council adopted a Key Performance Indicator (KPI13) to 'Prepare and submit an annual (voluntary) Commonwealth Modern Slavery Statement'. The KPI sits within Council's Sustainable Procurement Framework (SPF 13) together with other KPIs.

Over time, Council intends to combat and prevent modern slavery in our supply chain through a framework with targeted supply chain mapping, risk assessment and partnering with contractors and suppliers to address modern slavery risks. The aim is to develop mitigation strategies for high-risk procurement activities. To date, we have undertaken the following:

- Employed a Sustainability Procurement Officer to promote and drive the sustainable procurement project in which raising awareness and minimising modern slavery within Council's supply chain is an integral part.
- Conducted an audit of current procurement policies, templates and processes.

- Conducted trials where questions relating to the Modern Slavery Act have been included in Council's tender documents to raise awareness and gauge suppliers' and contractors' understanding of the Act.
- Updated Council's Business Ethics Guide to include Council's Labour and Human Rights view.
- Identified a third-party reporting resource to determine which categories of spend are high, medium or low risk for exposure to modern slavery.

Future commitments

It's important to note that this approach is phased and could extend beyond the initial two-year Phase 1 implementation. Over the next two (2) years, Council's key focus areas will be:

- Analyse our supplier register and identify low, medium, and high-risk suppliers and categories of spend.
- Adopt an annual supplier questionnaire to gain a better understanding of our supply chain with respect to modern slavery practices.
- To identify suppliers in high-risk (and potentially medium risk) categories to complete a self-assessment where relevant.
- Commence internal awareness training and education on modern slavery principles to relevant Council officers.
- Undertake actions to implement mitigation strategies for high-risk categories, building contractor relationships and improving supplier engagement.

It is expected that focusing on the above key areas will deliver the following outcomes;

- Council's tender and quotation documents will include contractual clauses for prospective contractors to comply with *the Act* including compliance questionnaires for tenderers to complete.
- Existing procurement guidelines and training documentation will be updated to provide guidance for Council staff on how to assess, identify and prevent modern slavery in the supply chain.
- Education and understanding of the risks of modern slavery practices in Council's own (direct) and contractors' (indirect) supply chains will be enhanced.
- Development of internal controls and procedures to identify and work towards mitigating the risk of modern slavery practices in Council's supply chain are being assessed.
- Building the knowledge across Council staff on the implications of modern slavery practices in Council's and Council's contractors' supply chains will be undertaken.

Council understands the need for ongoing reviews and updating of procurement processes to minimise the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain. Adding an assessment process, will enable Council to consider risks that may cause, contribute and/or be linked to modern slavery practices. Council will also need to consider other risk factors such as industry and sector developments, products and services, geographic locations and business models in which we have/or will gain in our supply chain.

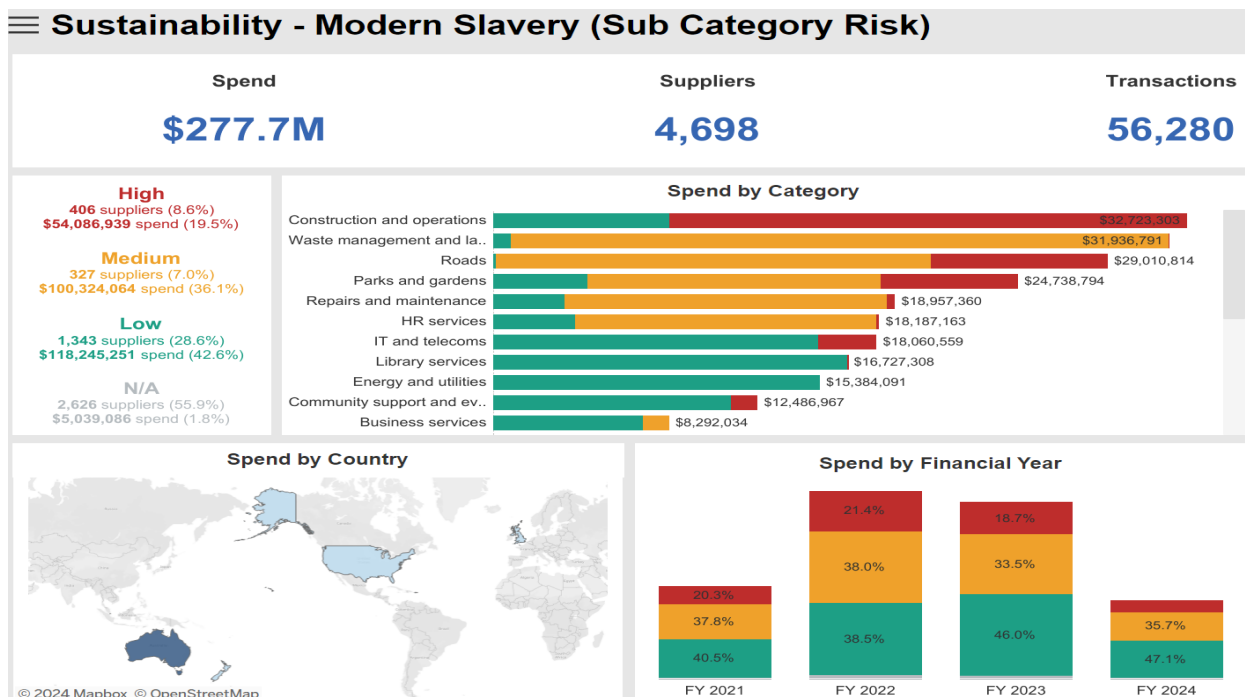
6. Effectiveness

As we continue to lay the groundwork for an increasingly robust modern slavery risk management regime, the data insights we collate through our internal spend data, supplier and contractor due diligence improves. This, in turn, paves the way for a more effective assessment of Council's impact on the supply chain.

It is important to note that although Council (as an agency in local government) is several tiers removed from the source of raw materials and manufacturers, there are actions Council can take to strengthen knowledge and awareness around suppliers' supply chain.

The intention is to provide Councillors individually, Council and the Executive Leadership Team oversight of the implementation phase as we embed requirements into Council's existing corporate governance processes. The Procurement Team (or other relevant Business Unit) will initiate consultation with operational areas of the organisation to assist with assessments of modern slavery risks.

In addition to the insights generated from improved supplier and contractor due diligence procedures, our monitoring procedures ahead of our future statement will drive continuous actions to assess and further improve the effectiveness of our approach. We are committed to communicating transparently regarding the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain. Picture 1 Sustainability – Modern Slavery (Sub Category Risk) illustrates Council's supplier profile and supply chain over the last 3 years (January 2021 to December 2023).



Picture 1 – Sustainability – Modern Slavery (Sub Category Risk) illustration.

The data identifies categories and suppliers at high, medium or low risk for modern slavery incidents. Council will use this data for targeting the right suppliers within the relevant categories for self-assessments and mandated requirements within public tenders. The Arcblue LEAP Program by the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) may also assist with some benchmarking based on other Victorian local councils that use the tool.

The excerpt from the report in Picture 1 refers to the period January 2021 to December 2023 and informs that 8.6% of Council's suppliers are in the high-risk categories for potential modern slavery practice being prevalent. These are the suppliers Council primarily should target.

7. Consultations

This statement has been developed through research of various bodies and organisations involved in, and committed to, detection, prevention and removal of modern slavery. The Attorney General's website has provided in-depth information and guidance throughout the process.

Procurement staff have attended numerous webinars as well as liaised with other external bodies to inform themselves as well as discussions with colleagues and peers. Procurement staff have also researched submitted mandatory and non-mandatory modern slavery statements from various public and private bodies and organisations.

Consultations with Banyule City Councils Leadership Network provided valuable insights relating to future potential actions and policies considerations.

A Gender Impact Assessment workshop was conducted with internal staff.

8. References

For more information about modern slavery, see the Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index at: <https://www.globalslaveryindex.org/>

For more information about Banyule City Council see <https://www.banyule.vic.gov.au/Home>

There are also several other sources for information about Modern Slavery such as;

[Who we are | RESPECT](#)

[Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network \(acan.org.au\)](http://acan.org.au)

[Guidance on Reasonable Steps \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au)

Banyule City Council has no further information to report in this, our first Modern Slavery Statement, beyond confirming our current work and commitment to progressing work to address modern slavery risks as outlined above.



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