

## Resolution of Council

**24 June 2024**

### **Item 14.6**

#### **City of Sydney Council Condemns Modern Slavery**

Original motion moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Weldon.

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) the New South Wales Anti-Slavery Commissioner describes modern slavery as situations where offenders use coercion, threats or deception to exploit victims and undermine their freedom. It is an umbrella term used to encompass a number of exploitative practices including forced labour, slavery, servitude, debt bondage, human trafficking, deceptive recruiting for labour services, the worst forms of child labour and forced marriage;
- (ii) in November 2021, NSW Parliament passed the Modern Slavery Amendment Act 2021 No 39 (NSW). Obligations on local government commenced on 1 July 2022;
- (iii) the City of Sydney's Chief Executive Officer, under delegation, approved a City of Sydney Modern Slavery Policy on 20 November 2023, with the purpose of outlining the City's commitments to:
  - (a) identifying, managing and minimising the risk of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains;
  - (b) taking steps to ensure that City of Sydney suppliers and others we do business with are adequately managing modern slavery risks;
  - (c) ensuring the City of Sydney is compliant with obligations under the NSW Modern Slavery Act; and
  - (d) ensuring that City of Sydney of Sydney employees are aware of the City of Sydney's requirements in relation to Modern Slavery;

- (iv) the City of Sydney's Modern Slavery Policy outlines it will comply with our reporting obligations under the Local Government Act 1993 (NSW), as well as take steps to identify, manage and minimise risks and instances of modern slavery in supply chains and business operations;
- (v) the City of Sydney Modern Slavery Policy includes the following types of exploitation:
  - (a) trafficking in people – the recruitment, harbouring and movement of persons for the purposes of exploitation through modern slavery. This includes sexual exploitation, forced labour or services and slavery and practices similar to slavery;
  - (b) slavery – when a person exercises power of ownership over another;
  - (c) servitude – a situation where an individual's freedom is significantly restricted, for example they are not free to stop working or to leave their place of work;
  - (d) forced labour – where violence or other methods (for example accumulation or debt, retention of identity papers) are used to coerce victims to work;
  - (e) forced marriage – where an individual is forced or deceived into marrying;
  - (f) debt bondage – where a victim's services are pledged as security for a debt and the debt is excessive, the length and nature of services are not defined or the value of the services is not applied against the debt;
  - (g) deceptive recruiting for labour or services – where a victim is deceived about the conditions in which they will be working; and
  - (h) the worst forms of child labour - situations where children are subjected to slavery or similar practices, or engaged in hazardous work which could harm their health and safety;

(B) Council further note that:

- (i) on 21 December 2023, councils were made aware by Office of Local Government circular that the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner had published a document providing guidance on steps government agencies are required to take to manage modern slavery risks in their supply chains;
- (ii) the document provides comprehensive guidance over 180 pages and contains seven key areas for progressive improvement and implementation into financial year 2026 with a plan for continuous improvement over that period;
- (iii) the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner published a template modern slavery policy in late May 2024;
- (iv) further guidance material from the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner, including a risk management framework for modern slavery has been foreshadowed but is yet to be published;

- (v) City staff are working to understand the guidance material and are developing an approach to update and implement changes to existing measures, including resourcing to support this significant ongoing work;
  - (vi) Council's Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee were provided with an initial update on the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner's guidance at the March 2024 meeting and advised that a further update would be provided at the June 2024 meeting; and
  - (vii) annual attestation against the requirements of the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner's guidance will be required as the minimum standard from the 2024/25 financial year;
- (C) Council condemn acts of modern slavery in the strongest possible terms;
- (D) Council note:
- (i) that modern slavery has an horrific personal impact on the millions of people subjected to it around the world;
  - (ii) that the City of Sydney has an ethical, reputational and financial imperative to act to prevent modern slavery in all its forms, and to set the highest standards of accreditation, compliance and reporting as a result; and
  - (iii) that safeguarding human rights is important to long-term City risk mitigation and sustainability, and that we will act to do this in our operations internally as well as with our outsourced providers and supply chains; and
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
- (i) amend the current City of Sydney Modern Slavery Policy to reflect these aspirations and the NSW Anti-Slavery Commissioner's template policy;
  - (ii) continue work to establish a three-year plan to achieve the Anti-Slavery Commissioner's guidance for compliance, performance and reporting on modern slavery risks in its supply chains;
  - (iii) bring an amended City of Sydney Modern Slavery Policy back to Council for consideration; and
  - (iv) report back to the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee and Councillors via the CEO Update on progress on the above.

Amended motion carried unanimously.

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