

## **AUSTRALIAN TELECOMMUNICATIONS LEADERSHIP STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS & MODERN SLAVERY**

**2nd December 2020**

The Australian telecommunications industry represents annual revenues of over \$40 billion, employing more than 70,000 people and providing essential connectivity for almost every business, home and consumer in Australia.

The industry has extensive and complex supply chains across Australia, as well as much of the Asia Pacific region. Its operations and supply chains have a significant environmental, economic and social footprint.

The Telco Together Foundation provides a unified platform, bringing together 21 of the leading organisations in the Australian telecommunications industry, to make an important social contribution, by drawing on their core capabilities, strengths and access to technology.

Members of the Foundation's Industry Impact Hub establish collaborative industry approaches to issues confronting our community. Modern Slavery has been identified by members as one of two initial areas for collective action, with the other being Domestic and Family Violence.

With the increasing focus on doing business responsibly and the introduction of Australia's Modern Slavery Act 2018, larger Telco Together Foundation members are now required to identify, manage and mitigate the risk of modern slavery in their day-to-day operations and extended supply chains.

The term 'modern slavery' refers to any occurrence of debt bondage, deceptive recruiting for labour or services, forced labour, forced marriage, servitude, slavery, trafficking in persons and the worst forms of child labour. The term does not include practices like substandard working conditions or underpayment of workers, but these are also illegal and harmful and may be present in some situations of modern slavery. Such practices may also escalate into modern slavery if not addressed properly.

The United Nations (UN) and Walk Free Foundation estimate there are over 40 million victims of modern slavery around the world; around 25 million of these victims are in the Asia Pacific region, and 16 million are exploited in the private economy. The nature and extent of modern slavery means there is a risk that it is present in the telecommunications industry's operations and supply chains; for example, in the working conditions of some contracted labour or the manufacturing and distribution processes of some products.

With these factors in mind, the undersigned Telco Together Foundation members are united in our belief that there is no place for modern slavery practices in our operations or supply chains. In addition to publishing individual Modern Slavery Statements, and undertaking action across our respective organisations, we are committed to working cooperatively to eliminate these practices where they are identified and to share cases of best practice.



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Broadband**

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## Telecommunications Industry Modern Slavery Leadership Principles

We recognise that, in many areas, cooperating around shared principles and examining where we can work together can achieve more than our individual actions.

We commit to upholding the following principles, which draw on best practice standards for business conduct set out in the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights:

1. We acknowledge and respect human rights in our operations and supply chains, and understand the importance of identifying and addressing human rights impacts.
2. We seek to cooperate across our value chain, in areas where we can add more value than working independently; to identify issues, share insights, and continually learn.
3. We understand the complexity of supply chains and, subject to law, will undertake to share insights, aiming to increase transparency, visibility and facilitate cooperative responses.
4. We acknowledge the risk of modern slavery and harm to people as a key driver for business action, to be considered along with other risks such as financial, market, operational or reputational risk.
5. We recognise the importance of working in partnership with our suppliers to mitigate risks, supporting them in their efforts to address modern slavery in their own supply chains.

We will take a strategic approach, exploring where cooperation will achieve greater impact, and continue to progress year on year.

We invite other telecommunications companies to complement their individual Modern Slavery Statements and human rights strategies by acknowledging this Leadership Statement and adopting the Leadership Principles in their own practices.



Andrew Penn  
Chief Executive Officer  
Telstra



Kelly Bayer Rosmarin  
Chief Executive Officer  
Optus



Iñaki Berroeta  
CEO & Managing Director  
TPG Telecom



Kevin Russell  
Group Managing Director & CEO  
Vocus Group



Phillip Britt  
Managing Director  
Aussie Broadband



Peter O'Connell  
CEO & Managing Director  
Amaysim

