



Bendigo Kangan Institute

Modern Slavery Act Statement

2021





Acknowledgment of Country

Bendigo Kangan Institute's footprint spans the ancestral lands of the Gunung-Willam-Balluk and Wurundjeri peoples, the Jaara people of the Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wollithiga people of the Yorta Yorta Nation.

Bendigo Kangan Institute pays its respects to the traditional custodians of these lands and to their cultural heritage, and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders, past and present.

The Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) came into force on 1 January 2019. It requires Australian entities with a minimum consolidated revenue of \$100 million to report on the risk of modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. It also requires entities to identify the steps they are taking to respond to these risks.

Bendigo Kangan Institute is a reporting entity for the purposes of the Act and this is the Institute's first modern slavery statement. This statement sets out the actions the Institute is taking to address modern slavery and human trafficking risks in our business, operations and supply chain.

Our role in fighting modern slavery

Everyone has rights to freedom, justice and fair labour conditions. The Institute believes all workers regardless of where they work have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

We are committed to ensuring our operations are responsible, fair and reflect the highest ethical standards. We will realise this commitment by taking proactive action to set expectations in the way our contractors and supply partners engage with people and incorporate mechanisms that help us ensure our supply chains are free from modern slavery.

We expect our suppliers to provide a fair and ethical workplace, uphold human rights and address risk of Modern Slavery. To reflect this, we have enshrined principles associated with fighting Modern Slavery into our *Supplier Code of Conduct*.

Our *Improper Conduct Policy* and the Institute's *SpeakUp* program provides anybody, anywhere, anytime, a mechanism to report suspected improper conduct and modern slavery. The Institute commits to thoroughly investigating all allegations of modern slavery. This policy and access to our *SpeakUp* program are available to the public via our website.

Who we are

The Institute trains and educates students at 10 campuses in regional Victoria and metropolitan Melbourne. Our footprint stretches from Cremorne to Echuca and also includes Docklands, Moonee Ponds, Essendon, Broadmeadows, Castlemaine and Bendigo.

We're amongst Australia's largest and most trusted vocational education and training providers with a proud history dating back to the 1850s.

We provide modern specialist training facilities offering courses across more than 40 study areas. We're well equipped to respond to changing industry needs and we work with employers to review our course offerings to ensure they remain relevant to industry needs.

The Institute also operates two distinct business areas:

- **eWorks** – One of Australia's leading e-learning delivery and consultancy specialists, offering a range of products and services to help businesses maximise the benefits of online education.
- **VETASSESS** – Australia's leading assessment provider. Our key services are skills assessments for migration purposes across a range of trade and general professional occupations provided to the Australian Government's Department of Home Affairs. We also provide a range of occupational and course entry tests, and consultancy services around education and training to governments in Australia and offshore.

Governance and compliance

As a public sector entity and vocational education provider established under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)*, the Institute abides by a number of public sector specific compliance obligations.

These include but are not limited to:

- The *Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)*, which reflects the key public sector values of integrity, impartiality, responsiveness, respect for human rights, accountability and leadership. The Institute has adopted these values into its own organisational policies, including its *Employee Code of Conduct*.
- The *Financial Management Act 1994 (Vic)*, which requires the Institute to adopt governance practices to support compliance with regard to the *Victorian Government Risk Management Framework*; Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Accountabilities, Sponsorship, Asset Management, Public Construction and financial practices and controls.
- Our own internal policies, procedures and controls relating to supplier code of conduct, conflicts of interest, fraud and corruption conduct, public interest disclosures and improper conduct, gifts and benefits, discrimination and workplace behaviour, occupational health and safety, accounting and financial practices.

Procurement, due diligence and supply chain assurance

In addition to governance and compliance frameworks, the Institute's procurement policies and procedures support it to address the risk of modern slavery in our supply chain.

Our *Procurement Strategy* and associated policies and procedures are underpinned by the Victorian Government Purchasing Board requirements, which include the Ministerial Directions and Instructions for Public Construction Procurement. The strategy sits alongside our existing contractor prequalification, insurance verification processes and our *Supplier Code of Conduct* that is issued to all contractors and suppliers, together with any amendments to the Code.

The Institute's approach

The Institute is both a reporting entity for the purposes of the *Modern Slavery Act 2019 (Cth)* and a public entity under the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*.

Modern slavery practices include human trafficking, slavery, forced marriage, forced labour, debt bondage, deceptive recruiting, physical abuse, restrictions on the freedom of movement, confiscation of passports and identity records, wage theft and child labour. Any form of these practices are serious breaches of human rights.

The Institute does not tolerate any form of breach of human rights in any part of its operations or supply chain.

The Institute recognises it can be difficult to identify instances of modern slavery. People and organisations engaging in modern slavery practices may be motivated to reduce costs and conceal aspects of their operations. The Institute is incorporating oversight of its industry and commercial partners to ensure the use of public funds and public sector opportunities do not create a platform for modern slavery to occur.

In March 2021, the Institute conducted a *Modern Slavery Risk Assessment*. This risk assessment was informed by the unique insights of key Institute departments that relate to the risk of modern slavery. This included examining the Institute's operations associated with Procurement, International Students, Human Resources and Finance. We also examined the operations of our commercial arm; VETASSESS.

As part of this assessment, we asked ourselves three key questions:

1. How do we take action to confirm workers in our supply chain or directly within Bendigo Kangan Institute are not coerced, threatened or deprived of personal freedoms?
2. What are we doing to assess and address these risks in global and domestic operations?
3. What treatments do we need to put in place to strengthen our Anti-Modern Slavery approach?

Our key modern slavery risks

The Institute has identified three key modern slavery risk areas. Our highest exposure is in areas outside of the Institute's direct control, which require proactive action to identify and eliminate the potential for modern slavery.

Lack of visibility:

A lack of direct visibility and control over supplier conduct means that the Institute's public funds and business opportunities could be used by people outside of the Institute to engage in and conceal modern slavery practices. The Institute has a large number of active suppliers in direct and indirect supply chains across a number of international borders including China, India, Iran, Philippines, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Nepal, Vietnam and Pakistan.

External recruitment services:

It is possible that the external recruitment services that the Institute engages do not always reflect the same standards of human rights that the Institute expects of itself, leading to the opportunity for modern slavery.

International Agents:

As part of our operations, we engage the services of international student acquisition agents. These agents are not themselves subject to anti-modern slavery standards and without effective controls or contractual obligations, could lead to human rights breaches or the potential that people are misled or coerced into enrolling into the Institute's educational services.

Our Controls

The Institute has a number of controls that support our management of our modern slavery risks. These include our;

- *Supplier Code of Conduct*, which sets out requirements for our contractors and vendors to adopt modern slavery principles into their practices, including to identify and manage risks.
- *Integrity and Feedback Frameworks*, which include a publicly available SpeakUp portal, enabling anonymous reporting of suspected improper conduct, human rights breaches and modern slavery practices.
- *Procurement Strategy*, which includes our standard service level agreements and controls that apply to most of our suppliers and provide guidance to suppliers, consistent with human rights principles.
- *Recruitment Policy* and supporting procedures that provide specific guidance to Institute staff engaging in recruitment activity.
- *Child Safety Policy* and associated procedures that are aligned to the Child Safety Standards and assist to protect child human rights.
- Mandatory processes for all international student acquisition services, which include student guarantors, student visa procedures and compliance with Department of Home Affairs procedures.
- Strategic Internal Audit Plan, which enables the Institute to direct resources into assessing our controls. This year, the Institute is examining transaction probity associated with our commercial arm, VETASSESS, and its industry partners in India and China.

Our Future commitments and actions – addressing our modern slavery risks

Bendigo Kangan Institute recognises the role public sector agencies to ensure the use of public funds and public sector opportunities drive stronger protection for all workers. We do this through extending anti-modern slavery standards to others through our agreements and contracts. There are additional steps we can take to strengthen our anti-modern slavery approach.

The Institute commits to progressing the following Anti-Modern Slavery initiatives over the next year:

1. Aligning our organisation to the requirements of the Victorian Government Purchasing Board, which includes policies, procedures and prequalification checks for all suppliers.
2. Working with suppliers to check how they are progressing their own anti-modern slavery initiatives.
3. Conducting an annual modern slavery risk assessment to identify our progress and revise key activities.
4. Exploring how we can include key performance measures into existing contracts to enable review of anti-modern slavery practices.
5. Retiring existing contracts that do not enable sufficient mechanisms to examine anti-modern slavery practices and ensuring all new contracts reflect modern slavery prevention standards and the capacity for the Institute to audit arrangements, where possible.
6. Conducting desktop audits of key risk suppliers, partners and vendors across Procurement, Recruitment and International Student Agents to identify and address the prospect of exploitation occurring within supply chains.
7. Updating our International Agent Agreement to require all agents to adopt and comply with modern slavery standards.
8. Implementing a Human Rights and Anti-Modern Slavery Policy.
9. Implementing an Institute-wide *Compliance and Self-Assurance Framework*.

Approved by Bendigo Kangan Institute's Executive Leadership Team on **30 June 2021**, subject to approval by its Board of Directors.



Sally Curtain
Chief Executive Officer



Kangan Institute campuses

Broadmeadows

Pearcedale Parade
Broadmeadows VIC 3047

Docklands

1 Batmans Hill Drive
Docklands VIC 3008

Essendon

38 Buckley Street
Essendon VIC 3040

Moonee Ponds

Level 1, 21-31 Hall Street
Moonee Ponds VIC 3039

Cremorne

85 Cremorne Street
Cremorne VIC 3121

Bendigo TAFE campuses

Bendigo City

136 McCrae Street
Bendigo VIC 3550

Bendigo Charleston Road

62-104 Charleston Road
Bendigo VIC 3550

Myers Street

21 St Andrews Avenue
Bendigo VIC 3550

Castlemaine

65-67 Templeton Street
Castlemaine VIC 3450

Echuca

Corner Hare and Darling Streets
Echuca VIC 3564

VETASSESS and eWorks

5/478 Albert Street
East Melbourne VIC 3002