

## MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT 2024

This statement is made by Baker & McKenzie (ABN 32 266 778 912), an Australian partnership, pursuant to section 13 of the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* for the financial year ending 30 June 2024.

### Introduction

"Modern slavery" is defined in the *Modern Slavery Act 2018* in a way which includes slavery, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, trafficking in persons,<sup>1</sup> forced marriage, deceptive recruitment and the worst forms of child labour.<sup>2</sup> In this statement this term is used broadly to describe situations in which coercion, threats or deceptions are used to exploit individuals and undermine their freedom.

Our Firm acknowledges that modern slavery is a global problem that has the potential to taint the operations and supply chains of most large businesses. This statement sets out the steps that we have undertaken, and are continuing to take, to minimise the risk that modern slavery is taking place within our operations and supply chains.

### *UN Global Compact*

We strive to act ethically and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships. As part of a wider initiative, our global Firm is a signatory to the UN Global Compact.<sup>3</sup> The UN Global Compact is the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative aiming to mobilise a global movement of sustainable companies and stakeholders. Among its principles the UN Global Compact seeks to eliminate all forms of forced and compulsory labour, abolish child labour and encourage businesses to support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights, ensuring that businesses such as ours are not complicit in human rights abuses.

In our Annual Sustainability Report 2024<sup>4</sup> (which is our annual report addressing the UN Global Compact), we re-stated our commitment to uphold the Ten Principles of the Global Compact,<sup>5</sup> the first six of which focus on human rights and labour, and we outlined our support for the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>6</sup> These commitments are reflected in our strategies, policies and standards, ensuring we continue to deliver long term commercial success, whilst simultaneously responding to the evolving expectations of our clients and the communities in which we operate.

In September 2023 we joined the UN Global Compact's *Forward Faster* initiative, a wide-reaching endeavour that calls on the private sector to take measurable, credible and ambitious action in areas where it can collectively make the biggest, fastest impact to accelerate progress across the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals to meet the 2030 Agenda. Specifically under this initiative, we have committed to a gender equality target to drive equal gender representation, participation and leadership across all levels of management by 2030.

As a continuation of our co-patronage of the UN Global Compact's Action Platform for Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), which concluded in 2021, in 2022 we began collaborating with the UN Global Compact's Think Lab on Transformational Governance, formed with corporate representatives from diverse geographies, to operationalise the "transformational governance"

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<sup>1</sup> This term is more fully defined in Article 3 of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, done at New York on 15 November 2000 ([2005] ATS 27)

<sup>2</sup> This term is more fully defined in Article 3 of the ILO Convention (No. 182) concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, Geneva, 17 June 1999

<sup>3</sup> [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

<sup>4</sup> [baker-mckenzie-annual-sustainability-report-2024.pdf](#)

<sup>5</sup> [The Ten Principles | UN Global Compact](#)

<sup>6</sup> [THE 17 GOALS | Sustainable Development \(un.org\)](#)

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approach - a principles-based approach to governance that goes beyond traditional compliance and asks businesses not only what is legal but also what is right. Transformational governance offers businesses a comprehensive view on internal governance that can help transform corporate culture and behaviour and go beyond legal confines to drive more responsible business practices.

In 2023, we participated in the UN Global Compact's Private Sector Forum in New York where we engaged with our third-party partners including the UN Global Compact and participated in on-the-ground initiatives. Convened annually by the UN Global Compact during UN General Assembly week, the Private Sector Forum brings together world leaders for an exclusive dialogue and networking opportunity to further partnerships to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The 2023 Private Sector Forum focused on ways the private sector can work together with other stakeholders to accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and showcased how direct, real economy investments in critical areas of sustainable development can unlock scalable private sector contributions to the Sustainable Development Goals. During UN General Assembly week, we also participated in the 2023 SDG Summit USA Roundtable on Living Wages, with our Chief Sustainability Officer (Alyssa Auberger) joining a dialogue that explored strategies to promote the living wage initiative.

## *World Economic Forum*

We are a signatory to the World Economic Forum's Compact for Responsive and Responsible Leadership which expresses our conviction that society is best served by businesses that have aligned their goals to serve the long-term goals of society, with the Sustainable Development Goals offering a useful roadmap for such alignment. This Compact also confirms that short-term financial gains should not distract from the corporate and societal goals of long-term economic prosperity and social welfare.

As in previous years, in 2023 a Baker McKenzie delegation attended the World Economic Forum's Annual Meeting in Davos, engaging in discussions on the global economic outlook, geopolitical issues and their impact on business, energy transition and sustainability practices across the value chain. Baker McKenzie experts also attended the World Economic Forum's 2023 Global Summit, participating in a panel on what a new framework for parity, equity and inclusion across business and policy could look like. We strive to conduct our business consistently with the corporate responsibility provisions of the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.<sup>7</sup>

## *Other programs*

In 2017, Baker McKenzie was the first law firm to join the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD), a CEO led community of international organisations, and in 2022, we became a member of the WBCSD-led Business Commission to Tackle Inequality (BCTI). This is a cross-sector, multi-stakeholder coalition of leaders with the mission of mobilising the private sector to tackle inequality. We regularly collaborate on WBCSD and BCTI projects to drive awareness, make progress and shape future policy, including on Inclusion Diversity & Equality. For example, as part of the 2023 WBCSD Tackling Inequality project, which seeks to equip member companies with the tools and frameworks needed to achieve a truly inclusive, equitable and diverse organisation, our Chief Sustainability Officer participated in a WBCSD Diversity, Equity and Inclusion masterclass on "Ensuring an Inclusive Culture," in which she shared insights on how Baker McKenzie fosters inclusive behaviours, the challenges of conflicting perspectives and what initiatives have worked well to drive inclusion.

We are a signatory to the UN Women's Empowerment Principles, a set of principles offering guidance to businesses on how to promote gender equality in the workplace, marketplace and community.

We are a member of the Valuable 500, a global business collective made up of 500 CEOs and their companies innovating together for disability inclusion.

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<sup>7</sup> [GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR\\_EN.pdf \(ohchr.org\)](#)

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We are a member of the Institute for Human Rights and Business and have assisted the Mekong Club, a leading anti-slavery organisation that fights human trafficking and forced labour risks, to create resources for companies who discover forced labour or poor working conditions in their supply chains, focusing on Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, China, Malaysia and Hong Kong. This assistance has included the revision of the Mekong Club's summary of Asian labour laws and its Labour Law Tool.

We have also partnered with the Thomson Reuters Foundation to share business best practices on issues relating to human rights and modern slavery.

## *Looking internally*

As previously reported, in 2018 our global Firm undertook a materiality assessment in order to identify and prioritise the environmental, social and governance issues impacting and impacted by our Firm. We used the outcome of that assessment to align our business with the Sustainable Development Goals with which we feel we can make the most significant and positive difference<sup>8</sup>. The Sustainable Development Goals that we have aligned with reflect our own and our clients' commitments to inclusion and diversity, climate action, anti-corruption and ethics, as well as our commitment to collaborating with like-minded companies and organisations around the world.<sup>9</sup>

While we have not conducted a new materiality assessment since 2018, the Covid-19 pandemic stress-tested the conclusions from that assessment and our resultant approach and, more importantly, confirmed to us that those conclusions remain valid and are the right approach for us and for our business.

Aligning with these Sustainable Development Goals not only provides us with a comprehensive framework to advance our corporate social responsibility efforts, it also gives us an opportunity to partner with like-minded people – our clients, governments, multilateral organisations and civil society – to work together to realise the vision of a sustainable world. We recognise that business cannot operate effectively in a world hampered by poverty, inequality, conflict and environmental deterioration.

Our Consumer Goods & Retail Industry Group continued its relationship with Positive Luxury in 2023. Positive Luxury's work and Butterfly Mark put ESG transparency at the heart of the consumer experience and allow consumers to identify and purchase goods that are produced responsibly. In 2023, we collaborated with Positive Luxury to release the second edition of the ESG Policy Guide – the Future of Sustainability Legislation.

In this reporting period, Baker McKenzie also provided internal and external training sessions on the modern slavery framework in Australia to staff, clients and other attendees.

In relation to our Inclusion, Diversity and Equality efforts, our firm was fortunate to receive a number of awards in 2023 including: Human Rights Campaign Best Places to Work for LGBTQ+ Equality (US, Mexico) 2023; Euromoney Women in Business Law Awards "Firm of the Year 2023"; Stonewall "Gold Award in Global Workplace Equality Index of Top Global Employers" for LGBTQ+ inclusion; Women in Business Law Asia Pacific Awards 2023 "International Firm of the Year"; and Women in Business Law Asia Pacific Awards 2023 "Work-Life Balance International Firm of the Year" and "Career Development International Firm of the Year". Our Firm continues to advance Inclusion, Diversity and Equality efforts through various affinity networks, such as BakerPride & Allies and BakerWomen.

In relation to carbon emissions, since 2020, we have been reporting our global carbon emissions on an annual basis to CDP. We use CDP reporting to benchmark our performance and to evaluate our data measurement processes and quality. In 2023 we received a B grade for Climate Change, reporting on our

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<sup>8</sup> They being - Gender Equality, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Reduced Inequalities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions and Partnerships for the Goals

<sup>9</sup> For further information, see our Communication on Progress Report 2020

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2022 emissions. This places us in the “management” band and recognises that we are taking coordinated action on climate issues. Our B score is higher than the average for the specialized professional services sector.

## *Our principles*

In 2020, our Global Chair (Milton Cheng) joined more than 1,200 Chief Executive Officers from companies in over 100 countries to demonstrate our Firm’s support for the United Nations and inclusive multilateralism by signing on to the powerful [Statement from Business Leaders for Renewed Global Cooperation](#).

The Firm’s Chief Sustainability Officer, who reports into our Executive Committee and to our Global Chair and who places responsible business at the core of what we do, has been advancing our global sustainability strategy and ensuring it remains central to the Firm’s overall priorities. In her words:

*"In addition to our contribution to advancing the SDGs [Sustainable Development Goals] in the actions we take across our own operations, we firmly believe that as lawyers, we have a unique role to play in advancing broader business progress on the SDGs through our work with clients to advise them on how to embed sustainability across their operations — and for this reason, we have developed a holistic, multi-practice sustainability client solution. By combining our legal expertise with real-life experience from our own sustainability journey, we are committed to making sustainability aspiration a reality."*

## **Structure**

We are a law firm constituted as a partnership in Australia. We have offices in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane and as at 30 June 2024 had 75 partners and 439 employees. We are a member of Baker & McKenzie International, which is a Swiss Verein with member law firms around the world. Together we operate in 74 offices in 45 countries with a total of 1,502 partners and a total global headcount of 12,702 as at 30 June 2024.

The Australian Firm is serviced by B & McK Services Pty Ltd, which is trustee of the B & McK Services Trust. The Australian partnership controls two other companies – B & McK Nominees Pty Ltd and B & McK Nominees (VIC) Pty Ltd. Neither of these companies trade.

## **Operations**

We are a law firm providing professional legal services to a diverse range of local and global clients in a wide range of industries. The largest portion of our work is domestic legal advice and representation provided by Australian registered lawyers in Australia from our Australian offices. Sometimes this is done for Australian based clients, sometimes for clients based overseas. We also work with our colleagues from our overseas offices (and, sometimes, from non-Baker McKenzie firms) when they seek assistance on behalf of their clients with respect to, for example, transactions with an Australian element or they otherwise have a need for Australian legal advice. Equally, we arrange for lawyers from our overseas offices and affiliated firms to assist Australian clients with their foreign work. We also co-ordinate the provision of legal services from multiple jurisdictions, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, for clients with global operations.

Some of our support services (both for the benefit of our Firm and our clients) are provided by the global Firm’s owned and operated service centres in Belfast (Ireland), Manila (the Philippines), Buenos Aires (Argentina) and Tampa (Florida, USA).

Within Australia, we are regulated by State based statutory bodies and professional associations.

The Australian Firm is managed locally, with an overlay of regional and global interaction and management.

## **Supply chains**

Our supply chains consist primarily of:

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- professional legal services provided by other Baker McKenzie offices and by barristers;
- professional services provided by expert witnesses, accountants and a range of consultants; and
- support services provided by our services company (such as secretarial and administrative support, reception services, human resources, library services, marketing, finance, accounting, event management, hospitality and catering).

As mentioned, we also source some support services from global Firm owned and operated service centres in Belfast, Manila and Tampa.

Each of our Australian offices is responsible for a small amount of their own local procurement for things such as litigation support, printing and document services, transcriptions, library subscriptions, training, entertainment and catering.

Each of our Australian premises is leased and all property related services (such as maintenance, cleaning and security) are provided by our landlords.

Beyond the above, our procurement is managed centrally by the global Firm, for example in relation to technology, telecommunications, travel, accommodation, finance and training. We also receive a range of other business support services from the global Firm.

## **Risks of modern slavery practices in operations**

Being an extensively regulated legal practice operating in a highly transparent professional services environment in Australia, we believe the risk of modern slavery practices occurring in our operations is very low.

The service centres in Belfast, Manila and Tampa are owned and operated by our global Firm and staffed by employees of the relevant Firm entity. Many of these staff members are legally qualified or are information technology professionals. All these staff work in highly visible workplaces controlled by our global Firm. In 2021 our Manila centre was honoured to be named one of the “Best Companies to Work for in Asia” by HR Asia. We believe the risk of modern slavery practices occurring in these service centres is very low.

Locally, we occasionally secure the services of migrant workers, chiefly foreign qualified lawyers and graduate lawyers. We also occasionally source temporary labour from reputable Australian based labour hire companies. The circumstances of these individuals have been considered and there is no indication of modern slavery. We do not engage any itinerant workers.

## **Risks of modern slavery practices in supply chains**

Given the bulk of our supply chains are of a professional nature or involve business support services provided either locally in Australia or by one of our own service centres, the risk of modern slavery practices is very low.

We acknowledge this risk increases with supply chains involving the manufacture of information and other technologies, telecommunications equipment and office supplies where these supply chains reach into higher risk geographies and involve high risk substances, particularly when traced back to raw materials. We also acknowledge this risk exists in relation to travel, accommodation and other services provided in higher risk geographies around the world which our staff visit.

## **Actions taken to assess and address these risks**

### **Our policies**

We operate a number of policies to ensure that we are conducting business in an ethical and transparent manner. These include our Code of Business Conduct and Code of Business Conduct Hotline.

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## *Code of Business Conduct*

We developed the Baker McKenzie Code of Business Conduct to ensure that every partner, lawyer and employee in the Firm knows the principles that are to guide us in the choices we make and in the way we behave. The Code spells out our legal and ethical obligations and responsibilities in a number of areas. It also provides guidance on how to act when specific, clear policies are not available. This Code reflects our commitment as a signatory to the UN Global Compact to align our policies and operations with the UN Global Compact's principles in the areas of human rights, fair labour, the environment and anti-corruption.

This Code also makes it clear that we engage only suppliers who comply with all applicable laws, including those related to human rights, labour rights, and applicable employment, environmental, anti-corruption, fair competition and intellectual property laws. If employees have any doubts or concerns about a supplier, they are required to contact the Global Procurement team for assistance or to choose another supplier.

Baker McKenzie requires staff to complete an annual Code of Business Conduct training session each year.

A copy of the Code of Business Conduct can be found here: [Our Code of Business Conduct | About Us | Baker McKenzie.](#)

## *Code of Business Conduct Hotline*

Suspected violations of our Code of Business Conduct can be reported internally (through a variety of channels) or externally via our Code of Business Conduct Hotline. This Hotline is a confidential report tool managed by Navex Global, the world's leading provider of ethical and compliance hotlines and help lines.

## *Our suppliers*

It is important to the Firm that we engage only suppliers who comply with all applicable laws. We make sure our major suppliers are aware of our Code of Business Conduct and expect them to adhere to our high standards.

Our global procurement team has in place a process for vetting suppliers including checks for compliance with all applicable laws, including those in relation to modern slavery.

Previously, a desktop risk based analysis was undertaken to assess our exposure to modern slavery risks. This relied on research from a range of resources including the US State Department's Country Reports on Human Rights, the US Department of Labor's List of Goods Produced by Child Labor or Forced Labor, the ILO's country information and data, the Global Slavery Index and the Corporate Human Rights Benchmark. Materials were also obtained and reviewed from Know the Chain and the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre. This research was supplemented by materials produced by Australian Legal Sector Alliance, the Law Council of Australia and our local Law Societies.

Recognising that achieving sustainability goals demands collaboration across the entire value chain and that no one organisation can make meaningful progress in a silo, we proactively engage with our most significant suppliers to help them integrate sustainable business practices into their processes and report on their progress. We look to our suppliers to join us in advancing sustainable business practices and to align with our sustainability commitments and those of our clients. After a review of our procurement practices in 2022, we developed sustainability provisions for inclusion in our standard global supplier terms and conditions. These provisions, which we began including in global supplier contracts in 2023, set out the expectations we have of our suppliers regarding the improvement of their environmental and social performance, and require compliance with a certain number of minimum responsible business standards. 68% of our global supplier contracts entered into in 2023 included sustainability provisions. And because improving sustainability performance requires continuous effort and evolves in accordance with market practice and regulatory provisions, we continually evaluate and refine our sustainability requirements and reflect supplier feedback to ensure their relevance, reasonableness and effectiveness.

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Our global procurement team has inserted into our template supply agreement a suite of modern slavery related clauses, including obligations on our suppliers to conduct due diligence of their suppliers. Any new supply agreements entered into in this reporting period contain these clauses.

## EcoVadis

We report under EcoVadis, a leading sustainability and supply chain ratings provider and complete an annual questionnaire with modules covering labour and human rights, ethics, environment and sustainable procurement. We earned a silver rating in 2023.

In 2023, 67% of our top 30 global suppliers participated in CDP or EcoVadis assessments.

## Remediation

If, at any stage, we were to identify an increased risk of modern slavery within our business or supply chains, we would conduct a thorough investigation of that risk and promptly mitigate that risk and any adverse impacts. This would include engaging with the supplier and terminating its contract if appropriate remedial action was not taken. We would then also collaborate within our industry to ensure the broader risk is eradicated.

Additionally, we would ensure that any victim was appropriately compensated and protected from ongoing exploitation.

## Effectiveness of actions

We have continued to grow awareness in our business about the existence of modern slavery and the processes we have put in place to address the risks of modern slavery practices occurring in our operations and supply chains.

Taking further steps to raise awareness of modern slavery among our local suppliers and to more precisely identify risks within our local supply chains will become a means of measuring the effectiveness of our actions.

We are continually assessing the effectiveness of our actions in identifying and managing modern slavery risks by undertaking regular reviews of our policies, practices and template agreements and by partnering with external bodies with expertise in this area. Based on the results of these processes we will endeavour to continually improve our responses to the modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chains.

## Consultation

This statement was prepared by a collaboration between our operations team, procurement staff, risk and compliance lawyers, human resources team and our lawyers with expertise in modern slavery law.

This statement was also prepared in consultation with the management of our services company and each of our subsidiaries, all of which share and rely upon the expertise referred to above.

## Approval of this statement

This statement was approved by the Management Committee<sup>10</sup> of Baker & McKenzie, an Australian partnership, on 18 December 2024.

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<sup>10</sup> The Management Committee is the principal governing body of the Baker & McKenzie partnership in Australia.

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This Statement was signed by Anne-Marie Allgrove, National Managing Partner and member of the Management Committee.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Allgrove', written in a cursive style.

Date:

18 December 2024