

Australian Catholic University

2022 Modern Slavery Statement

Disclosure note

This statement has been made on behalf of Australian Catholic University.

This statement covers all entities owned or controlled by ACU.

ABN 15 050 192 660

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Statement from Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Zlatko Skrbis

At ACU, we draw inspiration from Saint Josephine Bakhita, patron saint of modern slavery victims and human trafficking, and also patron saint of our Blacktown Campus, as we work to address the injustices inflicted upon the most vulnerable members of our communities. As a member of the Domus 8.7 committee, I am personally committed to promoting awareness of modern slavery practices and acting to support those affected.

ACU has committed to submitting our annual Modern Slavery Statement to report on the risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains, and the actions we have taken to address those risks.

As a Catholic university, our obligation to both the students and communities we serve is upheld by leaving things in a better position than how we found them. For this reason, we are committed to upholding the dignity of every individual and community with any connection to the university's supply chain.

We actively encourage wide engagement with modern slavery training modules developed by the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network to raise awareness on how the impact of modern slavery plays out in everyday life and business. We have taken the further step in our procurement processes to hold our partners, suppliers, vendors, and tenderers to the same standard by making these modules available to anyone who wishes to engage with ACU commercially.

We remain committed to continuing our close relationships with our friends at the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney. We also continue to find collaborative ways for our students and staff to serve our communities.

These small but important measures contribute to the collective action we take every day as a university community in supporting Pope Francis's call to action in *Laudato Si'* (LS 146): "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act".

ACU's strong commitment and approach to anti modern slavery measures, acknowledges the indivisible link between social, economic, and environmental sustainability and our university's future.

Our responsibility extends to steering our students towards helping create a better world. Our students' preparedness to step into the conversation and uphold a standard of service and accountability instils a sense that the future holds promise and hope.

As a university community, we prioritise these important areas not only because they are deeply embedded in our Catholic mission to honour the dignity of each person and to care for our common home, but also because it is the right thing to do.

On behalf of the ACU Senate and all ACU staff and students, I hereby endorse this report to government on ACU's commitment to do what it can and to play a role in eliminating the scourge of modern slavery from the world.

Signed:



Professor Zlatko Skrbis
Vice Chancellor and President
Australian Catholic University

This Modern Slavery Statement is signed by a responsible member of Australian Catholic University as defined by the Act.

This Modern Slavery Statement was approved by the principal governing body of Australian Catholic University as defined by the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) ("the Act") on 8 June 2023.

Criterion 1: About Australian Catholic University (ACU)

ACU was established in 1990 through incorporation as a public company limited by guarantee, incorporated pursuant to the Corporations Act. ACU is a public university, funded by the Commonwealth Government, and is open to students and staff of all religious beliefs.

ACU has approximately 33,000 students and 2,400 staff, across seven Australian campuses in Ballarat, Blacktown, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, North Sydney and Strathfield, with three leadership centres (in Adelaide, Townsville and Brisbane) and one international campus in Rome. ACU's headquarters are in North Sydney.

ACU is a world-leading research university in our priority areas of education, health, theology and philosophy. Our culture of research excellence is founded on the principles of social justice and attracts global experts, students and collaborators. Refer: [ACU Key statistics/Research excellence](#).

Our research institutes collaborate with strategic partners across Australia and internationally to create real impact in our priority areas. Their research is founded on the principles of social justice and the common good.

ACU's 2022 annual consolidated revenue is \$563,396,000.



ACU mission

Within the Catholic intellectual tradition and acting in Truth and Love, Australian Catholic University is committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good.

Mission, identity and values

We are guided by our clear mission, strong sense of identity and firm set of values. All three influence the decisions we make as an institution of higher education and guide our staff and students in their day-to-day lives.

Our mission is at the heart of everything we do at ACU. It guides our approach to learning and teaching, our welcoming and engaging on-campus culture, and our commitment to building a better society by producing graduates willing to invest in this same commitment. In this mission, we engage the Catholic intellectual tradition to bring a distinct perspective to higher education.

Our university is founded on a long history of commitment to our core values of truth, academic excellence and service. But there are other important values that enhance the ACU experience for students and staff – including equity, diversity, accessibility, wellbeing and sustainability.

Modern slavery risk management - 2022 and prior

ACU is committed to tackling modern slavery practices at every level. This statement commits us to consolidating the actions commenced in 2020 and 2021, and to continue to work with associated entities, industry groups and specialist anti-slavery service providers to help understand and remediate slavery activities in global supply chains where they impact the operations of ACU.

Detailed information about specific initiatives and steps undertaken in, and prior to, 2022 can be found under the relevant Criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 headings. These include:

- ACU's continuing membership of, and close working relationship with, key affiliated associations including both the [Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network \(ACAN\)](#) and the [Australian University Procurement Network \(AUPN\)](#) anti-modern slavery working groups, to achieve desired outcomes (read more under Criterion 4)
- the establishment of ACU's Eradicating Modern Slavery (EMS) Working Group (read more under Criterion 4)
- Modern Slavery as an important objective in the ACU Strategic Plan 2020-2023 (read more under Criterion 2).
- Increasing Modern Slavery e-learning modules completed by staff: [Modern slavery training modules](#).
- the inclusion of modern slavery as an important objective in the ACU Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023 (read more under Criterion 2).



ACU initiatives, developments and plans for 2023 and beyond

A few select high-level initiatives are listed below. You can find the details of other specific initiatives, projects and steps commenced or undertaken prior to 2023, and their development into 2023 and beyond, under the relevant Criteria 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7 headings.

ACU Vice-Chancellor and President's ongoing commitment to Domus 8.7 Committee goals

Professor Skrbis was appointed to the Domus 8.7 Committee a little more than two years ago and continues his commitment to **Domus 8.7**: to promote awareness of modern slavery practices, and to support and remediate those impacted.

ACU's Thomas More Law School pro bono work

ACU is proud of the pro bono work our law students are doing under the leadership of the Dean of the Thomas More Law School, Professor Patrick Keyzer.

The students continue to complete their pro bono placements with the Anti-Slavery Taskforce of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney.

To date, the collaboration has contributed more than 5,000 hours of review, analysis and ranking. In total, 70 ACU law students have analysed more than 1,500 modern slavery statements, making it the largest study in the country.

In May 2022, the Thomas More Law School and the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce held the third in a series of webinars on the topic of eradicating modern slavery. ACU was represented by four of our final-year law students – Adeline Kassis, Eve Van Rhine, Patrick Beer and Phoebe Straube – who presented the findings of their analysis of dozens of modern slavery statements.

Staff training

All staff members involved in purchasing and procurement decision-making are required to undertake, and have undertaken, the available ACAN modern slavery training modules.

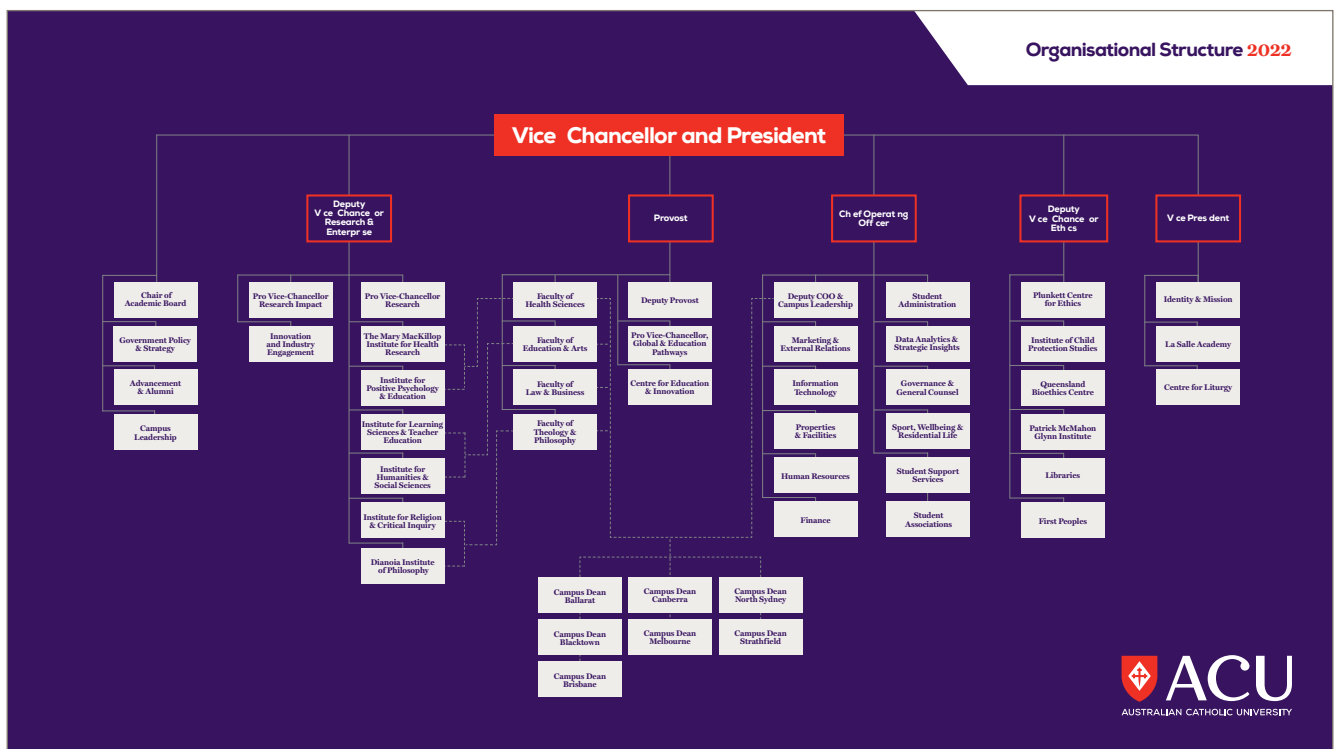
Other interested staff members are actively encouraged to increase their awareness and understanding of the impacts of modern slavery by undertaking the modules.

To date, approximately 300 staff members have completed the two initial modules, 'Modern Slavery 101' and 'Business Relevance'.

Criterion 2: ACU's structure, operations and supply chains

About ACU

The diagram below represents ACU's organisational structure at the end of 2022.



Our governance framework

ACU's anti-modern slavery initiatives have been incorporated into the governance structure, requiring the approval of ACU's Audit and Risk Committee and ACU's Senate. Our key leaders and governance bodies are as follows:

CHANCELLOR

ACU's Chancellor chairs the Senate, the chief governing body of ACU.

PRO-CHANCELLOR

The Pro-Chancellor sits on the Senate, acts as deputy to the Chancellor, and chairs the Finance and Resources Committee.

CORPORATION

ACU is a public company. The Corporation, as enshrined in our constitution, is responsible for maintaining a university that adheres to the Catholic faith and is committed to the pursuit of truth through academic enquiry.

VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT

The Vice-Chancellor and President is the chief executive officer of ACU, represents the university both nationally and internationally, and provides strategic leadership and management.

PROVOST AND DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC)

The Provost is responsible for the Academic Portfolio: ensuring academic quality is maintained, overseeing the faculties, and providing the operational delivery of ACU's academic programs.

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND VICE-CHANCELLOR'S EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee (VCAC) is an advisory forum with the purpose of advising the Vice-Chancellor and President on key strategic and operational

university matters. Strategic matters discussed at VCAC are referred to the Vice-Chancellor’s Executive Board (VCEB), the university’s key management committee, for ratification.

THE UNIVERSITY CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The University Consultative Committee (UCC) includes leaders from across various ACU leadership groups and is chaired by the Chair of Academic Board. This committee meets twice a year, once virtually and once in person, providing the opportunity for strategic discussion, information sharing and engagement.

VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President is responsible for Catholic-related operations of the university. This portfolio includes the Directorate of Identity and Mission, Campus Ministry and ACU Engagement. The Office of the Vice President animates programs and activities that engage, celebrate and support the university community’s development in and understanding of the mission, Catholic identity and living traditions.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for the Corporate Services Portfolio. This portfolio covers a broad range of areas including properties and facilities, student administration, information technology and finance.

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (RESEARCH AND ENTERPRISE)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) oversees this growth area for ACU and works with researchers to foster ACU’s culture of research excellence and maintain our world-leading research outputs.

DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ETHICS)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Ethics) has responsibility for projects aligned to the university strategic priorities as assigned by the Vice-Chancellor. The position provides intellectual leadership, particularly in the fields of philosophy and ethics.

SENATE

The Senate is ACU’s chief governing authority. Its members’ roles include managing the budget, creating policy, overseeing university operations, and ensuring adequate risk management procedures are implemented and followed. ACU’s Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor head up our Senate and ensure ACU is governed in accordance with our constitution.

STATE CHAPTERS

To connect ACU with local communities, we have State Chapters in the Australian Capital Territory, New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. These chapters report to the Senate and act as advisory bodies but have no direct governance role.

ACADEMIC BOARD

Our Academic Board reports to the Senate and is responsible for all academic matters, including conducting quality assurance, developing academic policy, recommending new courses to the Senate, and initiating course reviews.

SENATE AND BOARD ELECTIONS

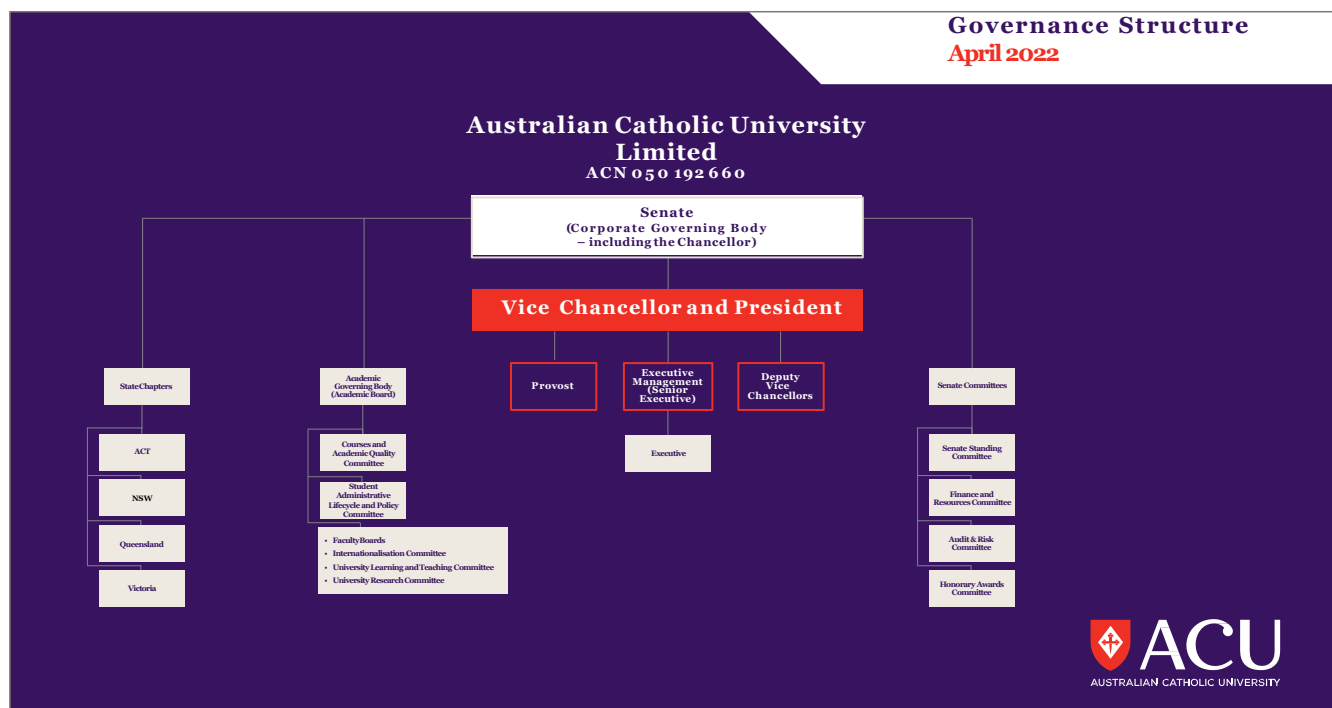
Elections are held to appoint members to the Senate and Academic Board from the university’s academic and student bodies. The Senate also holds elections to appoint a professional staff member.

For a visual representation of the governance structure of ACU, please see the governance chart.

ACU’s Governance Directorate has a suite of policies and procedures which relate to the conduct, decision making, risk management, internal organisation and management of the university.

These are in the process of being reviewed and updated to capture anti-modern slavery initiatives.

ACU’s Eradicating Modern Slavery (EMS) Working Group, comprising members of the ACU senior executive, other key ACU personnel and representatives from the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney’s Anti-Slavery Taskforce, was established in 2020. Its remit is to look at further eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking risks in ACU’s operations, policies, procedures, supply chains, business partnerships and employment.



Our operations

ACU is a publicly funded teaching and research organisation with four primary faculties (education and arts, health sciences, law and business, and theology and philosophy) and a corporate services division, itself made up of a number of directorates including legal, property, human resources, finance, facilities management, capital development, student administration and engagement, libraries, operational performance and risk management.

Students are both domestic and international.

ACU operates across seven Australian campuses – Ballarat, Blacktown, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, North Sydney and Strathfield – with one international campus in Rome. Our headquarters are in North Sydney.

The following details are provided about ACU as a university. Some of this information is in a process of change or being updated.

The year the data represents is indicated where applicable.

- Approximately 2,400 staff (FTE) (2022)
- Approximately 33,000 students (2022)
- More than 132,000 alumni (2022)
- Approximately 3,600 international students from 101 countries enrolled (2022)
- More than 200 international partners (2022)
- More than 1,000 ACU students have studied at our Rome Campus (2022)
- Top 7 in Australia for graduate employment (Graduate Outcomes Survey – Longitudinal, 2022)
- ACU has the highest energy efficiency of any Australian university with its Australian campuses 100 per cent powered by renewable electricity

Our strategic plan

Modern slavery has been included as an important objective in the [ACU Strategic Plan 2020-2023](#), under the headings:

- **1. All our endeavours, grounded in mission**
1.8. Strengthen our leadership role in creating and sustaining child-safe organisations and the prevention of harm to children, through education, research and industry partnerships.
- **6. Service, stewardship and sustainability**
6.8. Take bold and decisive action on environmental, social and economic sustainability, and the eradication of modern slavery.

ACU has a [Strategy Execution Framework](#) which underpins our approach to strategy implementation, performance reporting and analysis. Detailed performance reports against ACU's suite of KPIs are provided bi-annually to the ACU Senate.

Criterion 3:

Modern slavery risks in operations and supply chain

ACU has submitted data to the risk assessments platforms undertaken on behalf of both the Australian Catholic Anti-Slavery Network (ACAN) and the Australian University Procurement Network (AUPN).

These assessments present an overall picture of risk based on the types of goods and services being procured and the country of origin. Such assessments help ACU to focus our attention on what are generically regarded as high inherent risk activities.

Operational risks

Since key operational activities are performed by Tier 1 suppliers, the potential for operational risk is the risk posed with respect to the provision of services.

These risks are therefore being addressed under supplier risk categorisation and action.

Otherwise, measures to address operational risks are by assessment of the extent to which internal processes and practices are sufficiently updated to reflect necessary requirements. Please refer to the Modern Slavery Gap Analysis (under Criterion 5).

ACU's commitment to the principles of eradicating modern slavery is demonstrated by their inclusion for risk assessment, focus and action within ACU's Operational Risk Registers, and by the implementation of mitigating control measures to ensure ACU meets and complies with Australian Federal and State's Anti-Slavery reporting obligations.

A PRODUCT AND RISK CATEGORISATION SYSTEM AND SOFTWARE TOOL

Both ACAN and the AUPN have developed risk categorisation systems based on various aspects of the supply chain, such as the type of goods or services, and where services are provided or made.

ACU has submitted our data and spend to the AUPN. Further analysis is being undertaken to categorise risk for key areas of spend.

The purpose of the software tools can be broadly described as follows:

- to describe the product and risk categorisations
- to allocate specific suppliers to their respective product and risk categorisations, which may include the assignment of primary, secondary or other tier levels of risk
- to enable the collation of suppliers' information
- to enable suppliers to provide information directly to the tools via portal access
- to collate suppliers' actions
- to enable suppliers to provide a sector-wide response
- to be a single point of contact for all suppliers to avoid suppliers having to make multiple responses to different entities.

The tools will help with ongoing supplier risk assessment and actions required within supply chains to help mitigate modern slavery activity.

Our supply chain

ACU's annual consolidated revenue in 2022 was \$553,969,000, with 73.9 per cent of this revenue derived from government grants.

We have more than 3,500 suppliers of goods and services in our supply chain. However, just over 100 of these suppliers represent the top 80 per cent of spend. Based on an overall supplier spend of approximately \$280 million in 2022, the major categories that represent the top 80 per cent of spend are as follows:

LEVEL 1 SPEND CATEGORY	2022 APPROX. SPEND (\$000S)
Building and construction:	\$108,185
Information technology – equipment and services:	\$24,165
Student placements:	\$18,228
Property and realty services:	\$21,009
Facilities management:	\$11,375
Consulting services:	\$11,231
Marketing and communication services:	\$9,743
Utilities:	\$4,871
Other office and workplace supplies:	\$5,443
Cleaning:	\$4,666
Student recruitment – international:	\$5,942
Plant and equipment:	\$6,060
Security services:	\$3,585
Insurance premiums:	\$2,553
Travel and accommodation:	\$8,216
Library books, systems and services:	\$8,171

* ACU 2022 Annual Report

Sourcing of goods and services

Our supply chain activities include working with supply chains from many different sectors. Goods and services may be sourced from overseas, as well as locally, generally via Tier 1 suppliers and not directly. Therefore, ACU has in the supply chain those areas and geographic locations that at some stage in the overall chain would be regarded as representing some type of modern slavery risk. The university, through our finance division, also engages in investment activities.

ACU uses a spend categorisation system. This system best explains the variety of goods and services procured across ACU to meet our many operational demands.

Therefore, goods and services may be sourced in any of the following categories, which have been simplified and amalgamated for this report:

- architectural design services
- audio visual equipment and services
- building and construction – supplies, fit outs, demolition and services
- business and finance systems
- civil engineering and construction services
- cleaning – equipment and services
- clothing and footwear – corporate, promotional and general
- conservation and heritage services
- education services
- environmental services
- equipment disposal services
- event management services
- facilities management – bookshops, catering, maintenance, landscape/gardening and security
- financial services, including valuation services
- health – equipment, consumables and services
- hire equipment and services
- human resources services – employee assistance, recruitment, training and other HR services
- industrial supplies – electrical, hardware and chemicals
- information technology – computer desktops, laptops, copiers, printer and other peripherals
- information technology – software, systems, design, installation and implementation services
- information technology – training, web services, cybersecurity and other professional services
- insurance – providers, brokers and consultancy services
- laboratory supplies – equipment and consumables

- library – books, periodical, equipment, software and services
- marketing and media services – advertising, creative, photography and digital services
- office supplies – equipment and consumables
- printing services
- other professional services – asset management, auditing, legal, procurement, risk and quality
- property and realty services
- safety apparel, equipment and consumables
- telecommunications – commodities, equipment, carrier and installation services
- transportation and logistics services – courier, freight, postal, relocation and warehousing
- travel and accommodation – agencies, hotels, airlines, trains and vehicles
- utilities – energy, water, equipment, maintenance and related services

- vehicles – supply, rental, fleet management and cleaning services
- waste management services
- water treatment and sewage services
- workplace health and safety services.

Professional services are generally provided by locally based Tier 1 suppliers. In some cases, these Tier 1 suppliers utilise overseas support staff to conduct some of the more transactional aspects of their service offering. This may include services provided out of countries such as India, China and the Philippines.

Equipment, commodities and clothing will generally be sourced from overseas, mainly China and South-East Asia, once again via Tier 1 suppliers located in Australia.

ACU, through our membership with Supply Nation, is looking to increase sourcing from locally based Indigenous suppliers, who may nevertheless source some of the items from overseas manufacturers.

Modern slavery risks in investments

The investment sector has very specific benchmarks around ethical investments. There are specific fund managers who only undertake ethical investments; these managers will only invest funds with an organisation where they can obtain complete satisfaction that the organisation is trading ethically and as stated. However, modern slavery risks in the investment sector could potentially include low visibility

across multi-tiered international supply chains, which may involve other high-risk sectors and geographies. In addition to the resulting potential exploitation of victims of modern slavery, identified modern slavery in ACU's investment providers' supply chains could lead to reputational risk which could have a negative impact on the organisation.

Modern slavery risks to students

During the reporting period, ACU began to consider the risks of modern slavery to international students posed by education recruitment agents in its network overseas. These risks may include unlawful and deceptive recruitment and misleading information by agents, which can lead to debt bondage or increase vulnerability of students to exploitation.

We have 30 clauses in our agreements with international student recruitment agents outlining their responsibilities to:

- promote the university in an honest and ethical manner
- provide accurate information on courses, the university

and services offered to students

- comply with the ESOS Act 2000 and National Code 2018 with a particular focus on Standard 4 and Standard 6 of The Code
- maintain confidentiality
- act in the best interest of the students.

ACU anticipates that approximately 8,000 international students will be recruited from overseas over the next five years.

Our people

ACU has a diverse workforce of staff with different cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and genders. We have a Code of Conduct in place as well as a comprehensive suite of policies and procedures that reflect terms and conditions as well as expected standards of behaviour. All policies and procedures are documented, available on the ACU website, and reviewed and updated in accordance with quality review protocols on a scheduled and as-needed basis. Included is a policy relating to protected disclosures.

Our People Plan 2022 – 2025 was launched in 2022 and sets out a suite of initiatives in support of ACU’s mission and strategic priorities. These include building leadership capability, enhancing health, safety and wellbeing, and supporting a diverse workforce and culture of inclusiveness.

ACU has an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA) in place, which comes into effect in February 2023. In December 2022, the 2022 – 2025 EBA was approved following 18 months of extensive consultation and negotiation between ACU management, the Community Sector Union and the National Tertiary Education Union.

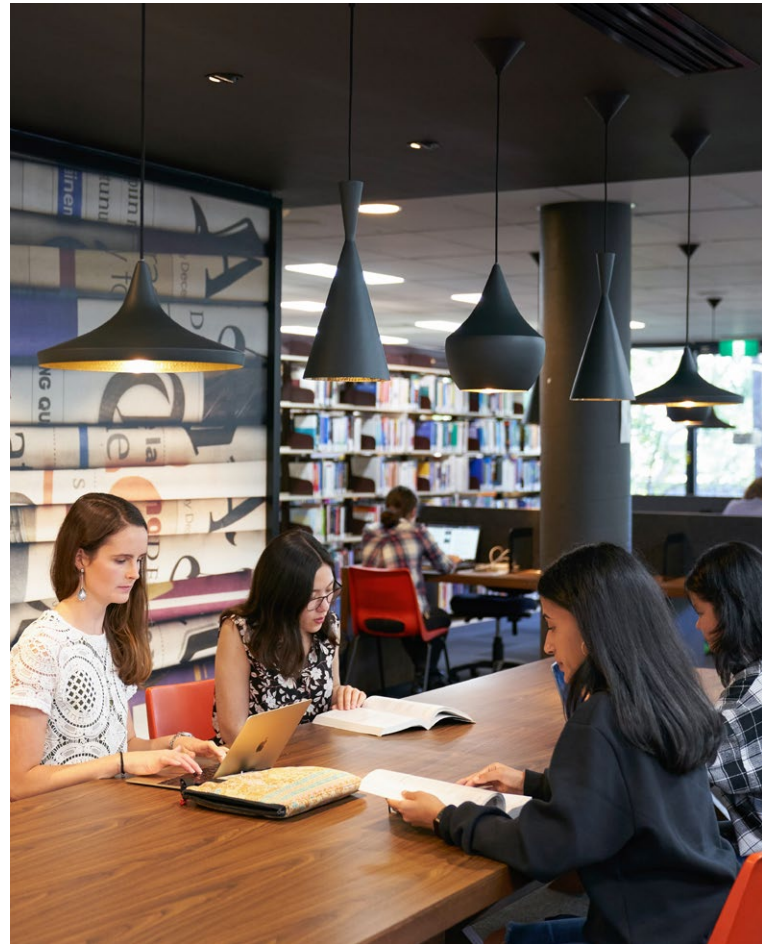
Further related information may be found in the latest ACU annual report:

[ACU Annual Report 2022](#)

Supply chain risks

SPEND RISK ASSESSMENT

ACU undertakes a number of risk assessments. These assessments are provided in part to ACU from platforms developed by the AUPN. These platforms help to inform ACU where attention may be directed to help address or mitigate modern slavery activities, in conjunction with other means. The data upon which this analysis is based is subject to review and may be regarded as not fully complete in this preliminary assessment; however, it forms an excellent basis for developing ongoing planned activities.





Criterion 4:

Actions to assess and address risk

Below is a summary of some of the actions taken by ACU to date. Some of these items are referred to, or elaborated on, in this and other sections of this report:

- Participation in ACAN and AUPN working groups (to share knowledge and assess compliance requirements and risk), including participation in ACAN's year two modern slavery risk management program and ACU's Eradicating Modern Slavery (EMS) Working Group.
- Collation and submission of spend data, including supplier information, to both ACAN and AUPN risk assessment systems.
- Involvement of key managers and directors from the most at-risk sectors within ACU in supplier engagement workshops.
- Discussions with key suppliers in identified high-risk supply chains, such as construction, clothing and critical services. Plans underway to have further interactions with prioritised suppliers to address compliance and verification strategies in relation to anti-modern slavery initiatives.
- Implementation planned of additional reporting and compliance requirements through the use of the ACU Tender Portal.
- A vendor category of 'fair trade' has been created in the vendor master of ACU's purchasing system. This allows certified fair trade companies to be identified for future purchasing activity.

Specifically, the following actions are in progress or planned:

- a) To continue to use toolsets created by both ACAN and the AUPN to gather information about modern slavery, anti-modern slavery activity, and legislative requirements.
- b) Further engagement with ACU's national and state-based managers to reinforce their role and obligations regarding anti-modern slavery measures when making purchasing decisions.
- c) To deploy to all ACU personnel the online training programs developed by ACAN on the broad requirements of anti-slavery measures and activities.
- d) To continue to use the gap analysis to monitor continuous improvement across any impacted areas of ACU.
- e) To develop aspects of the ACU Tender Portal to allow it to be used as a due diligence tool to help education suppliers and to monitor supplier compliance activity in relation to anti-modern slavery measures.
- f) To continue the engagement with key suppliers in areas of high risk.
- g) To deploy a SharePoint site which will contain all the initiatives that ACU is currently undertaking in response to modern slavery.

ACU's Properties Directorate – Addressing modern slavery risks

Facilities management, a responsibility within ACU's Properties Directorate, is a recognised area of high risk – particularly in relation to cleaning and security. To this end, the Properties Directorate has undertaken a number of measures to mitigate this risk, as follows:

- Ensuring all national tenders have a mandatory Q&A field in relation to this issue with respect to:
 - o supply chain management
 - o wages, salaries, benefits and sub-contracting.
- Continuing to audit and retain documentation of three levels of supply chain for selected high-risk items; level one is ACU, then the Tier 1 supplier (ie the engaged service provider), and then the Tier 2 supplier (ie Tier 1's sourcing supplier).
- Annually seeking, for all engaged service contracts, a statutory declaration from the vendor and/or their staff confirming the following for each member of staff engaged to provided services to ACU:

- o their name
- o they are a direct employee of the engaged contractor (vendor) with ACU
- o they are employed at the specified ACU campus
- o they are paid in accordance with the modern industrial award stated in the service agreement
- o they receive all their salary benefits, including insurance, superannuation and leave entitlements
- o the statement is made under their own free will and without influence.

Where this information is not able to be provided directly by the vendor's personnel, ACU will verify the information by audit or other validation process.

Development and expansion of Sedex to monitor, report on and mitigate ACU supplier risk

Sedex is the world's largest online platform for collecting, sharing and auditing ethical supply chain information. Sedex enables self-reporting of suppliers against industry sector databases.

In mid-2021, ACU signed an ACAN agreement to use Sedex and, in late 2021, commenced the supplier onboarding process. We initially invited 49 high-risk ACU suppliers to join Sedex, requesting they complete a detailed self-assessment questionnaire about their organisation and connect with ACU. This process will be ongoing to allow us to gain strong visibility and compliance capabilities over our supply chain and its inherent risks.

The tool has a number of useful capabilities, and it is our intention to continue into 2023 and beyond to expand our knowledge and use of these. The Sedex platform/process can be used to:

- easily find existing suppliers within the sector and create relationships with them
- check supplier progress as they complete the steps in the onboarding process
- review each supplier individually and engage with them around improvement
- put higher-risk suppliers into an audit program
- create intuitive data reports and insights
- identify deficiencies for discussion in more detail with the supplier
- pull out specific topics of concern and take a specific issue-based approach.

Sedex representatives continue to offer training to member staff, depending on where they are on their supplier compliance journey, offering assistance and guidance to use the tool effectively.

This will complement the similar process also being undertaken through the AUPN tool.

ACU PROCUREMENT POLICY

Supplier engagement is in accordance with the ACU Procurement Policy, which underwent substantial revision in 2014 and again in 2022. In 2022, a clause was introduced stating ACU's commitment to tackling modern slavery practices at every level, including that:

“Staff purchasers of university goods and services are required to take steps to identify and minimise any modern slavery risks and to take into consideration the principles of the **Modern Slavery Act 2018** (Cth), the commitments made by ACU to date towards **eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking**, and to ensure suppliers to ACU:

- 8.1.14.1. conduct their businesses in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the Modern Slavery Act; and
- 8.1.14.2. “take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no modern slavery in the supply chains of their agents, contractors, and/or sub-contractors or any part of their respective businesses or dealings.”

The Procurement Policy sets out how sourcing decisions may be undertaken by ACU staff. The policy is underpinned

by procedural and reference materials, which establish minimum requirements for key suppliers.

ACU SOURCING PROCESS – TENDER, MINIMUM SUPPLIER AND NEW SUPPLIER REQUIREMENTS, AND RELATED DOCUMENTATION

We have transitioned to addressing modern slavery as it relates to our new supplier touchpoints upfront – when undertaking tenders and onboarding suppliers, and as existing supplier contracts are extended or renewed – while continuing to review our existing supplier base.

ACU has included requirements for sustainable and ethical sourcing, including anti-slavery measures, in our tender and contract template documentation for a number of years. These continue to be upgraded, with input from ACU legal counsel, to reflect more stringent requirements, and have been applied to all procurement activities that utilise ACU's formal sourcing processes.

These have included sourcing in relation to high-risk sectors such as corporate apparel supply. These minimum requirements reference sustainability, ethical sourcing and anti-slavery requirements. ACU requires suppliers to provide information about countries and places of manufacture and what auditing and compliance requirements they have in place.

To this end, specific and robust anti-modern slavery clauses have been built into ACU's full suite of tender and contract template documentation (which includes tailored documentation for services, goods, contractors, consultants and technology). Our online 'New Supplier Request Form' contains a comprehensive modern slavery questionnaire to be completed by each new supplier prior to onboarding into our finance system.

All suppliers of goods to ACU in tender situations must answer a detailed tender assessment criterion titled 'Commitment to Ethical Sourcing', which requires a supplier's comprehensive written response as to their commitment, policies, processes and actions in relation to sustainability, ethical sourcing and modern slavery. This question is also included in our 'Minimum Requirements For Suppliers of Goods and Services to ACU – In Non-Tender Situations'. This is to provide transparency that everything possible is being done to avoid slavery practices in the supply chain.

Supply arrangements resulting from formalised tender processes are generally managed under formal contract agreements involving key performance indicators for effective performance management. Contract and tender documentation is maintained in SharePoint databases, and formal tendering processes for sourcing projects utilise a hosted tender portal arrangement.

MODERN SLAVERY – STAFF TRAINING

ACU has used the online training program modules developed by ACAN to educate key directors and managers across ACU on the broad requirements of anti-slavery measures and activities. This was supplemented by an in person workshop run by ACAN. ACU's HR worked with ACAN to add the training modules developed by ACAN to the suite of training modules available to all ACU personnel.

Directors and managers were advised that while all staff would have the option to elect to complete the training modules (as also communicated in ACU's Staff Bulletin), it is a mandatory requirement for certain staff groups (as follows), including those that make purchasing and procurement decisions as part of their role, including:

1. Group 1. Management Levels 5 and 6 including National and State Managers.
2. Group 2. Faculty Finance Managers, Finance Portfolio Management Accountants, Finance Procurement personnel, Properties Facilities Managers at site or state level and Properties Capital Development and Project Managers, if not at Levels 5 or 6.

3. Group 3. Designated purchasing staff within a Faculty or Directorate as nominated by Management Level 6 or higher.

At the end of 2022, approximately 300 staff (including directors and managers) had completed the two introductory modules 'Modern Slavery 101' and 'Business Relevance'. Two additional modules and will be rolled out to relevant staff by end 2023.

ACU membership of key affiliated associations

ACAN Anti-Modern Slavery Working Group. Nine teleconference meetings and supplementary webinars were attended by ACU representative(s) in 2022.

AUPN Modern Slavery Working Group. Nine meetings were held in 2022.

ACU's Eradicating Modern Slavery (EMS) Working Group was established towards the end of 2020. Four meetings were held in 2022. The EMS Working Group comprises members of the ACU senior executive, other key ACU personnel, and representatives from the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney's Anti-Slavery Taskforce.

The EMS Working Group's objectives are to:

- provide input and advice to the university on issues related to modern slavery
- actively support the development and implementation of ACU's Modern Slavery Action Plan

- help ACU to determine priority actions to be undertaken and to establish annual goals and targets
- monitor and review actions taken to assess and address modern slavery risks and evaluate their effectiveness
- ensure ACU meets the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth)
- raise awareness across ACU, including among students and professional and academic staff.

In 2022, key focus points for ACU's EMS Working Group included:

- the redesign, expansion and enhancement of the ACU website's eradicating modern slavery information page
- actions to support the successful embedding of modern slavery as an ongoing subject in ACU's Core Curriculum unit UNCC300.



ACU's general framework for addressing the potential for modern slavery

ACU has developed a planned response and adopted the following measures to aid the eradication of modern slavery in supply chains.

ACU's five anti-modern slavery (AMS) pillars of support

Throughout our anti-slavery initiatives, ACU will consider and consolidate into our actions five fundamental pillars of support to help eliminate slavery in our supply chains.

For several years, ACU staff have actively contributed to the anti-slavery working groups of both ACAN and the AUPN.

A number of the actions required to give effect to the following five pillars of support are joint endeavours being managed either by ACAN or the AUPN, while some are ACU's specific responses.

These actions are detailed under the following anti-modern slavery (AMS) pillars of support.

PILLAR 1: A PURCHASING COMMITMENT

A definitive statement on the position of ACU in having sourcing arrangements with suppliers which have identified slavery practices in their supply chains:

- It is ACU's policy not to have supply arrangements with suppliers that have modern slavery practices in the supply chain of the goods or services being provided. New tendering opportunities and contractual arrangements are to specify this requirement. Where it becomes evident that an existing supply arrangement has modern slavery practices within the supply chain of a supplier, then to the extent that the supplier is directly responsible for this practice, this will be a cause for immediate termination of the supply arrangement, unless satisfactory remedial action is able to be taken and it can be shown there were mitigating factors to help exonerate the supplier from any deliberate or criminal behaviour. Before any decision to terminate, the supplier will be given the opportunity to address the issues raised.
- Where it becomes evident that an existing supply arrangement has modern slavery practices within a supplier's supply chain, then to the extent that the identified practice is linked to the immediate supplier and that the immediate supplier is not directly responsible for this practice, the immediate supplier will be given a timeframe (to be negotiated, but generally no greater than 12 months) to take the actions necessary to eliminate or mitigate the identified modern slavery practices in its supply chain, which can be verified to ACU's satisfaction.
- Where modern slavery practices are understood to exist within global supply chains and are not readily amenable to corrective actions, or where taking such action may severely impact those personnel to whom anti-slavery initiatives are designed to protect, then ACU will collaborate with organisations to help mitigate slavery practices, protect the people concerned, and help bring about positive change to the extent possible given the circumstances.
- This commitment extends to illegal, unethical, unfair and exploitative practices in relation to the engagement of workers in the supply chain, where those practices are able to be established, and the same responses as detailed above shall apply.

ACTION: ACU has anti-modern slavery requirements built into all of our template contract and tender documents. These are subject to ongoing review.

PILLAR 2: ONGOING TRAINING AND EDUCATION

To use both sector-based resources and ACU-specific resources to help educate both ACU employees and suppliers about the existence of modern slavery, how it may be identified, what actions they can take to mitigate modern slavery activity, and what ACU's expectations of them are.

ACTION: The following are in progress and in various stages of completion:

- ACU has access to the toolsets created by both ACAN and the AUPN in relation to information about modern slavery, anti-modern slavery activity and legislative requirements.
- ACU has provided information to ACU's national and state-based managers, who have a responsibility for purchasing decisions, about pending activity associated with anti-modern slavery measures.
- ACU has used the online training programs developed by ACAN to educate key directors and managers across ACU on the broad requirements of anti-slavery measures and activities. This was supplemented by an in-person workshop run by ACAN.
- ACU HR worked with ACAN to add the training modules developed by ACAN to the suite of training modules available to all ACU personnel. Two modules have been rolled out and another three will be made available to suitable ACU staff by the end of 2023.
- ACAN has provided an online self-assessment tool to assist participating ACAN entities to assess where additional education and action from different sections may be required. This Gap Analysis has been completed for ACU (in 2020, 2021 and again in 2022) and is used to further garner the involvement of the various impacted departments of ACU.
- The ACU Tender Portal will continue to be used to provide information to suppliers on modern slavery, anti-modern slavery activity and legal requirements, and to obtain from suppliers a response to their awareness of the issue, and measures they have taken, or are taking, to address this

issue to the extent their supply chains may be impacted.

- Key suppliers to ACU have been contacted directly or been asked to participate in online education forums about modern slavery, the risks in their industry, and what they need to be doing to address them. This includes ACU's key apparel provider for health sciences uniforms and key construction and facilities maintenance suppliers.

PILLAR 3: A PRODUCT AND RISK CATEGORISATION SYSTEM AND SOFTWARE TOOLS

Both ACAN and the AUPN have developed a risk categorisation system based on various aspects of the supply chain, such as the type of good or service, and where services are provided or made.

ACTION: ACU will continue to provide data and spend to identify relevant risk categorisations. The supporting software tools will be utilised to further analyse the data as well as:

- to describe the product and risk categorisations
- to allocate specific suppliers to their respective product and risk categorisations, which may include the assignment of primary, secondary or other tier levels of risk
- to enable the collation of suppliers' information
- to enable suppliers to provide information directly to the tools via portal access
- to collate suppliers' actions
- to enable suppliers to provide a sector-wide response
- to be a single point of contact for all suppliers, to avoid suppliers having to make multiple responses to different

entities.

The tools will help with ongoing supplier risk assessment and actions required within supply chains to help mitigate modern slavery activity.

PILLAR 4: REMEDIAL ACTION

Remedies to identify modern slavery practices will take a variety of forms, as summarised below:

- managing supplier relationships in accordance with Pillar 1: A Purchasing Commitment
- using specialist organisations (when selected) to help identify modern slavery practices in existing supply chains, and to advise or assist with remedial action
- adopting an appropriate remedy pathway of Domus 8.7 as promoted by ACAN.

ACTION: ACU will implement the above.

PILLAR 5: REPORTING CONSISTENCY

Reporting needs to meet legislative requirements and be consistent with the reporting format of the organisation, or organisations, with which ACU is participating in producing a consolidated report, where that may occur.

ACTION:

- ACU will continue to collaborate with ACAN to submit a consolidated report.
- Key ACU personnel responsible for generating the ACU report have attended ACAN report writing workshops.
- ACU is using guidance and feedback provided by ACAN to create its annual report.



Modern slavery action plan and road map

ROADMAP OF AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER ACTIVITY IN RESPONSE TO BRIDGE THE GAP ANALYSIS (REFER CRITERION 5)

The roadmap below is based on the Bridge the Gap assessment and indicates the key areas of activity required to be implemented. It summarises ACU's current position and indicates where additional undertakings are required.

The columns below represent the five categories of the Bridge the Gap analysis.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS	HUMAN RESOURCES AND RECRUITMENT	PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN	RISK MANAGEMENT	CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS
ACU Senate and management commitment to anti-modern slavery (AMS).	Management across ACU is aware of modern slavery. Further involvement through planned training platforms will extend this knowledge.	AMS requirements have been incorporated into processes and tender and contract documentation. These need to be reviewed and updated as necessary.	MS risks have been captured in ACU's formal Risk Management System. The documented risks are to be periodically reviewed and actioned as required under ACU's risk management protocols.	ACU's customers are students and shareholders, who are themselves underpinned by the Sustainability Bond. The mission and values espoused by ACU make AMS initiatives of critical interest and importance to its customer and stakeholder base. ACU will continue to engage with these vital groups to present our activity in this area.
Further integration into business processes is required.	Hiring policies and HR systems need to be further reviewed to ensure key requirements relating to AMS initiatives are incorporated.	A more formalised mechanism to assess MS risks is to be considered for inclusion into sourcing and contracting activities.	Some aspects of the key supply chain could be susceptible to MS risks, especially in: the construction sector due to the large amount of capital infrastructure underway; critical facilities services, such as cleaning and security; and key commodity supplies such as apparel and computers, including computer recycling and e-waste services. Although these are understood and monitored accordingly, ACU will continue to be vigilant in these aspects of our supply chain.	ACU is keen to openly share our AMS activities through various public fora. This includes this statement, the ACU Tender Portal when that function is developed, the Catholic Archdiocese newsletters and other publicly available media. In doing so, suppliers will not be named, confidential information will not be shared, and the privacy of entities with which ACU has dealings will be respected.
Further action is required to educate suppliers and verify their AMS initiatives.	Key staff including senior managers and directors have been involved in supplier training workshops and have undergone training themselves. Two of a series of five training modules developed with ACAN have been made available to all staff and made mandatory for certain groups including managers and those who make purchasing and procurement decisions. The remaining modules are expected to be rolled out to relevant staff by the end of 2023.	ACAN and AUPN tools, in conjunction with other data analysis tools, are to be used to provide updated supplier and spend MS risk assessments, including the use of specialist service providers.	Risks in the extended supply chain are to be monitored via the industry-based tools being made available to ACU from both ACAN and the AUPN.	ACU is to develop a more formalised mechanism to receive feedback about MS issues from inside the university as well as from suppliers.
Development of organisational and supply chain reporting of modern slavery (MS) risks.	AMS initiatives are made known during recruitment and to relevant agencies. This needs to be reviewed to ensure existing practices are adequate.	Tools are being developed to enable MS initiatives and requirements to be made readily available to all suppliers to ACU.	MS risks are reported through the ACU Risk Management System. Other reporting mechanisms will be considered for development.	ACU needs to consider what methods may be appropriate to allow direct communication with workers in supply chains in order to receive feedback directly and not from management in a candid, private and non-threatening manner.
		The above tools will enable supplier MS risks to be monitored and corrective actions taken to address concerns where they arise.		
		A continuing effort to engage with, and provide opportunities to, certified fair trade organisations.		

Actions to address modern slavery risks in investments

As investors, we have a responsibility to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that modern slavery does not occur in the companies in which we invest, including in their supply chains. The university supports investments in the charitable, religious and educational works of the Catholic

Church as well as ethical and socially responsible investments (SRIs), and ensures investments are only made with entities that have corporate practices that promote environmental stewardship, consumer protection, human rights and employee diversity.

Actions to address modern slavery risks to students

In late 2022, ACU Global Engagement committed to reviewing all agreements issued to overseas-based education agents for the recruitment of international students. The revised agreements are expected to be finalised in 2023 and will include references to the university's anti-modern slavery requirements, based on the content provided by ACU Procurement to vendors, and in consultation with relevant internal ACU stakeholders, including the Office of the General Counsel.

Any arrangements between students, their families and education agents outside of the above agreements are difficult to monitor in source countries. However, through direct communication, ACU can empower international students to understand their rights, disclose and seek support, including counselling and legal support, to address any unethical arrangements with recruiters or any exploitation experienced through work, housing or other arrangements post-arrival. ACU will consider what kind of communication is appropriate for international students and how to best deliver it to them in 2023.

All students at ACU, including international students, have access to free, confidential counselling services on campus. ACU counsellors are experienced and trained psychologists or social workers who deliver specialised programs in the areas of mental health, emotional wellbeing and enhancing

mental resilience. All students can access six free counselling sessions per year. Each face-to-face session runs for 50 minutes and provides the opportunity to discuss any issues of concern in a supportive environment. Two 30-minute drop-in sessions are also available on campus each day.

In 2022, ACAN program managers delivered training to 12 ACU counsellors on how to identify and respond safely to disclosures of modern slavery, and made a recording of the session as an internal resource that can be viewed by new staff. ACAN program managers also created a new referral resource for counsellors that will help any students who disclose modern slavery indicators to seek further advice and assistance, including legal advice.

ACU students, including international students, have access to two free, confidential 45-minute legal advice sessions with a private law firm that includes access to written advice. ACAN program managers conducted outreach to the law firm in 2022 to discuss training for their staff on how to increase awareness of and respond to any indicators of modern slavery in 2023.

ACU Global Engagement provides information on Australian work rights each intake for commencing international students, based on a collaboration with the Fair Work Ombudsman.

Criterion 5: Effectiveness assessment

Modern slavery gap analysis

To assess the ongoing level of maturity and progress made across all areas of ACU, a self-assessment is performed annually. ACU continues to use the yearly gap analysis to monitor improvement across any impacted areas of the university, as well as to improve our modern slavery practices through internal staff education and engagement with suppliers.

The 2022 result for ACU is as follows:



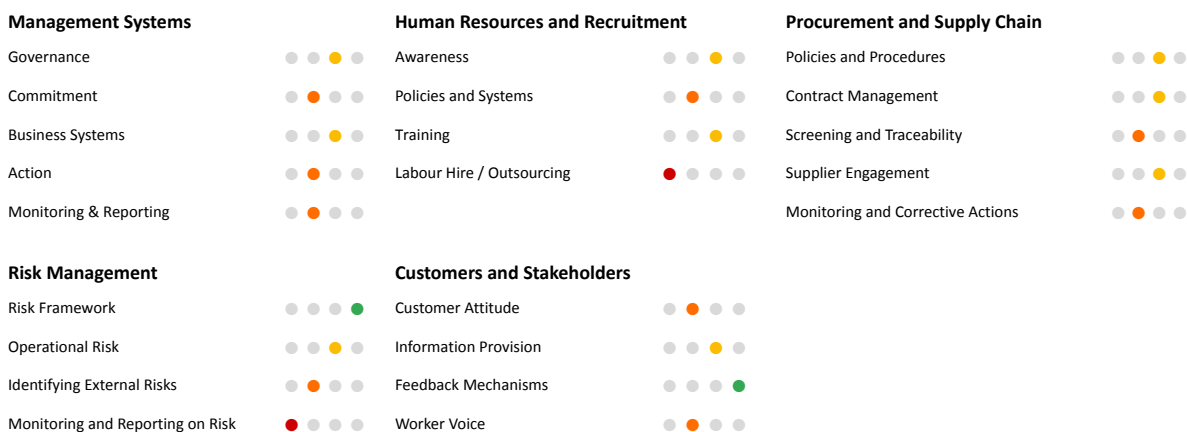
GAP ANALYSIS REPORT

Based on your answers in the questionnaire, the following heat map has been generated.

This is based on your responses (available later in this report), and it serves to indicate where the gaps are in your organisation.

Further in-depth review and analysis may be needed, but if the responses are accurate this is a good representation of the gaps.

Heat Map



Disclaimer: This Modern Slavery Gap Analysis Report has been automatically generated. It is based on the respondents interpretation of the questions and the choice of /and between possible answers. The outcome is indicative and further validation is recommended. Responsibility for the answers and actions taken on the basis of this report is entirely that of the respondent and the entity analysed.

The preliminary assessment has been shared across all affected areas within ACU. These areas will be subject to ongoing review to track activity aimed at continuous improvement.

MEASURES TO ASSESS EFFECTIVENESS OF ANTI-MODERN SLAVERY MEASURES – IN USE OR IN DEVELOPMENT

The following measures are either already in use or in development to assess the effectiveness of anti-modern slavery measures and requirements, with respect to both Tier 1 suppliers and other suppliers further along the overall supply chain:

- contract review meetings and measurement of performance against key performance indicators
- self-reporting of suppliers against industry sector databases where they exist (eg Sedex)
- use of third-party tools to investigate and assess anti

modern slavery performance (eg Sedex)

- use of ACU reporting tools to receive information about performance (eg use of the ACU Tender Portal)
- receipt and assessment of supplier action plans designed to ensure modern slavery practices are avoided within the supply chains of Tier 1 suppliers
- establishment of auditing processes to verify compliance and performance by ACU and third-party auditors, including the review of audits initiated by suppliers.

These measures apply to all ACU campuses and operational personnel. The national and state managers are responsible for all of our campuses in Australia.

**ACU SUSTAINABILITY RISK MITIGATION CASE STUDY
- SAINT TERESA OF KOLKATA BUILDING SOLAR
PANELS**

ACU's 12-storey Saint Teresa of Kolkata Building at the Melbourne Campus is designed to achieve very high levels of sustainability in its construction and in its operation. The building's sustainable design includes an array of solar panels to generate around 93,000 kWh per year, or nearly 2.5 million kWh over the panels' 25-year lifetime.

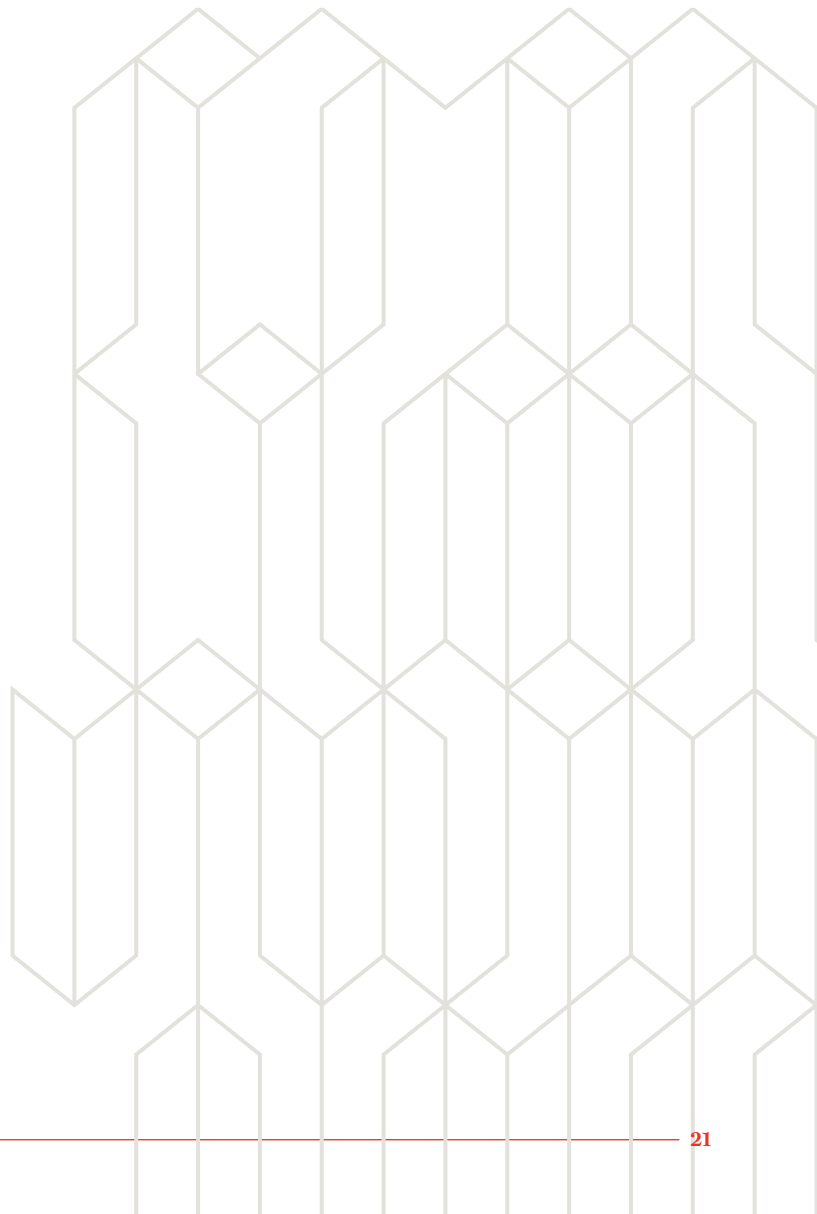
In 2022, ACU identified a modern slavery risk associated

with the proposed supplier of the building's solar panels. To identify that risk, ACU relied on the Sheffield-Hallam University report 'In Broad Daylight: Uyghur Forced Labour and Global Solar Supply Chains'. The report detailed evidence that the proposed supplier's supply chain included the forced labour of Uyghur peoples from China's Xinjiang province.

Accordingly, ACU chose to reject the proposed supplier's solar panels and, instead, purchased and installed solar panels from an alternative supplier that neither operates in Xinjiang nor purchases materials from Xinjiang.

Criterion 6: **Process of consultation with entities owned or controlled**

ACU does not own or control any other entities and therefore this criterion is not applicable.



Criterion 7: Other – modern slavery related initiatives, projects and programs

ACU CORE CURRICULUM AND SESU SCHOLARSHIP PROJECT 'DOMUS LINKS: MODERN ANTI-SLAVERY TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE WORKFORCE

ACU Engagement champions community-engaged, mission-focused scholarship and research. We invite academics to deepen their commitment to the ACU mission by establishing deep, mutually beneficial, non-hierarchical partnerships with our community for the common good. Involving the community in research design is imperative to address key areas of social, cultural and economic need.

The Stakeholder Engaged Scholarship Unit (SESU) is ACU Engagement's flagship initiative, established in 2020, to equip the university with a centralised avenue for initiating and activating partner-led scholarship.

In 2022 SESU partnered with the Anti-Slavery Taskforce of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney to deploy, 'Domus Links: Modern Anti-slavery Training for the Future Workforce', which introduces the topic of modern slavery to young people before they embark on their professional journeys. This project integrated modern slavery into the ACU undergraduate curriculum to enable future professionals to identify and respond to modern slavery in the workforce. The efficacy of the new e-learning materials was measured following a pilot in Semester 2, 2022, and as such, modern slavery will remain as a topic of study in the ACU Core Curriculum.

A total of 18 staff and 772 students across all ACU campuses (except Rome) were enrolled in UNCC300 in Semester 2, 2022.

A suite of 15 educational video resources and an animation entitled What is Modern About Modern Slavery? <https://vimeo.com/769646656/aa16b9f8d9> were produced for this project to provide a range of perspectives on modern slavery.

An additional output from the project was an online information and training session for ACU's and the University of Notre Dame's counsellors as well as ACU's Campus Ministry staff. The session, hosted by Ms Jenny Stanger, Executive Manager of the Anti-Slavery Taskforce, provided them with an introduction to modern slavery and provided specific advice on how best to respond to the needs of students if they feel affected by learning about modern slavery or if they identify that they themselves or someone they know is/has been a victim of modern slavery or is at-risk. The session took place on 13 July 2022 and there were a total of 16 participants and the recording was also accessed by several others afterwards.

ACU ENROLLED IN SEVEN-YEAR JOURNEY TO IMPLEMENT THE SEVEN GOALS OF THE LAUDATO SI' ACTION PLATFORM

Inspired by Pope Francis's second encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home* in 2015, universities around the world were invited to commit to a global implemental plan. ACU announced a commitment to the *Laudato Si'* Action Plan in October 2021, to mark the Feast of St Francis Assisi, who is the inspiration behind *Laudato Si'*. Universities registered to be on the action platform before 22 April 2022, Earth Day, are now officially enrolled in the "journey towards sustainability in the spirit of integral ecology".

In his *Laudato Si'* encyclical, Pope Francis writes, "Injustice is not invincible" (*Laudato Si'* 74), and, "Strategies for a solution demand an integrated approach to combating poverty, restoring dignity to the excluded, and at the same time protecting nature" (*Laudato Si'* 139).

As a university, we view modern slavery as integrated with Pope Francis's call to action in *Laudato Si'* (LS 206) and that, "Purchasing is always a moral – and not simply economic – act."

We believe it is critical that modern slavery work is not siloed from this effort.

As a *Laudato Si'* university, we will chart our own course through the journey, with the assistance of the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform. We are in the process of gathering a group of faculty, students, administrators, staff and neighbours to develop a *Laudato Si'* Action Plan that will integrally and boldly advance each of the seven *Laudato Si'* goals (or pillars):

Pillar 1: Respond to the Cry of the Earth

Pillar 2: Respond to the Cry of the Poor

Pillar 3: Foster Ecological Economics

Pillar 4: Adopt a Sustainable Lifestyle

Pillar 5: Offer Ecological Education

Pillar 6: Develop Ecological Spirituality

Pillar 7: Support Local Communities (Please see more detailed information related to this commitment under Criterion 7).

ACU Executive Dean for the Faculty of Theology and Philosophy Professor Dermot Nestor and *Laudato Si'* Consultant at ACU Jacqui Rémond are among the university's representatives on the Vatican's University Working Group, established by the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to encourage the higher education sector to enter the platform.

As part of their work, Professor Nestor and Ms Rémond co-designed a webinar series on *Laudato Si'* for the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities (SACRU).

Professor Nestor said ACU was honoured to be the first

university in Australia to take up the challenge since Pope Francis announced the platform in May 2021. “ACU is now officially committed to Pope Francis’s call for all areas of the Church, including universities, to go on a journey towards integral ecology,” he said. “We are proud to lead the Australian higher education sector in taking proactive measures over the next seven years to reduce our ecological impact and heal the earth, as the Pope has called all of us to do.”

To support universities that are interested in registering for the platform, the Vatican launched University Pathways, an online guide for colleges and universities which are considering taking up the global initiative.

Ahead of its official enrolment in the global platform, ACU celebrated its commitment towards sustainability at an online event hosted by SACRU. That event brought together 26 doctoral students from eight Catholic universities around the world to present their research on sustainability. ACU doctoral student Judith Pridmore, whose research illustrates how sustainability can be understood in an education setting, spoke of “the beauty of Laudato Si’”, saying, “It enables us to see that it’s not just about the physical world, but it’s about the connectedness of people and the world together.”

Laudato Si’ is a powerful call to action to stop the commodification of people and the planet. It recognises that climate change and environmental destruction are inextricably linked.

Climate change has made millions vulnerable to modern slavery especially in regions where people already live in poverty, do not have access to a social safety net, cannot exercise their workers’ rights or whose livelihoods depend on a stable climate. Displacement and migration because of climate change creates a nexus of harm that pushes people to accept work that actively contributes to environmental destruction of forests, fisheries, waterways and land. Weak regulation and enforcement, corruption, a lack of political will and the lure of profits combined with vulnerability of people creates a vicious circle of opportunity for forced labour, child labour, debt bondage and slavery.

Addressing the UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 8.7 to end modern slavery, and the environmental SDGs, will require those with expertise in modern slavery and the environment to urgently combine their efforts. This joint work will be crucial for the development of impactful interventions by governments, academics, faith leaders, communities, NGOs, workers and business.

ACU will take the following steps to facilitate the inclusion and recognition of modern slavery in relation to its own Laudato Si’ commitments:

- Consult modern slavery experts from the Archdiocese of Sydney Anti-slavery Taskforce in relation to ACU actions (LS Pillar 7)
- Co-sponsor a webinar on modern slavery, climate change and environmental destruction (LS Pillars 2 and 5)
- Pilot modern slavery learning with students via collaboration with the Archdiocese of Sydney’s Anti-Slavery Taskforce (LS Pillars 3,4 and 5)
- Mainstream modern slavery learning in the ACU Core Curriculum to reach 15,000 ACU students each year beginning in 2023 (LS Pillars 2,3,4 and 5).

UN INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY – 2ND DECEMBER 2022

ACU marked the UN International day for the Abolition of Slavery to raise awareness of contemporary forms of slavery around the world and the related initiatives to eradicate modern slavery, by sharing an informational webpage for staff which included a short, anonymous staff survey geared to help in informing the development of our response to modern slavery through the Australian Catholic Anti-slavery Network (ACAN).

SAINT JOSEPHINE BAKHITA – PATRON SAINT OF ACU BLACKTOWN CAMPUS

As we work to address the injustices inflicted upon the most vulnerable members of our communities, we draw inspiration from Saint Josephine Bakhita. She is the patron saint of our Saint Josephine Bakhita Campus in Blacktown, and patron saint of modern slavery victims and human trafficking

**Australian Catholic
University (ACU)**
**Modern Slavery
Statement 2022**

