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## **Australia must have a Modern Slavery Act to protect the human rights of working people**

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) today commends Federal Labor for its proposal to establish a Modern Slavery Act.

The ACTU believes there must be government legislation to promote transparency and good practice in business supply chains to protect vulnerable people from being forced into slave labour.

Labor's proposed Act complements the ACTU's proposal for an Act earlier this year and prevents good practice from being undermined by less responsible companies down the supply chain.

Labor's proposed Act would go a step further than the United Kingdom's modern slavery act, in that it mandates that corporations must provide an annual statement listing all companies involved in their supply chain.

It also establishes an independent authority which we hope will provide much needed oversight.

This is a great first step but the ACTU would like to see companies being required to conduct full investigations of their supply chain partners to ensure that no workers are being enslaved at any point of production.

### **Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:**

"Most people would be shocked to learn that slavery exists in modern times. Slavery is a crime, no matter where it exists and there should be no place for it in our society."

"Too often we are horrified when we hear stories of workers who are exploited, threatened with deportation and forced into debt bondage – the Modern Slavery Act is a huge step forward in dealing with these problems."

"The proposed Act ensures there is transparency in business supply chains and will help end the scourge of slavery."

"Labor's proposed Act sends a clear signal to companies whose business model exploits people in the worst way. They have been put on notice."

"We commend the ALP for their initiative but hope that in future companies will be required to identify and deal with the risk that any part of their organisation is embroiled in slavery."

"We commend Labor for showing leadership and bringing together so many diverse organisations to tackle this issue."

ENDS

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