

Australian Parliamentary Inquiry into Modern Slavery

ASOS Submission

We welcome the Committee's inquiry and the opportunity to share our experience on the issue of modern slavery.

Context

ASOS is an online fashion destination, selling womenswear, menswear, footwear, accessories, gifts and beauty products via our website to millions of young 'twenty something' fashion lovers in 231 countries and territories. ASOS is committed to respecting, protecting and championing the human rights of all those who come into contact with our operations, including employees, stock and non-stock supply chain workers, customers and local communities.

We believe it is our business responsibility to carry out due diligence to identify and remediate potential human rights impacts in our supply chain. Modern slavery is fundamentally unacceptable within our business and supply chains, and is an important element in our overall approach to business and human rights. We are working with various stakeholders to address this issue, including an NGO who acts as our 'critical friend', helping us develop and implement our strategy. Earlier this year, we released our first [Modern Slavery Statement under the UK Modern Slavery Act](#), which provides a detailed overview of all the steps we are taking to mitigate risks of modern slavery where we have identified them, as well as our commitments for the future.

Why we support legislative reform in this field

We unreservedly support the development of legislation on modern slavery in Australia similar to the UK Modern Slavery Act. Australia is one of our key markets and we believe our 'twenty something' customer has a keen interest in knowing that the way in which companies behave do not contribute to egregious human rights abuses. We believe such legislation would drive greater transparency within our own sector and beyond, creating awareness of modern slavery and ultimately helping hold perpetrators to account.

To this end, we would recommend that the Australian government develop legislation similar to the UK Modern Slavery Act, which contains a mandatory reporting requirement. Furthermore, we believe the Australian government should seize the opportunity to build upon the UK legislation and strengthen it by:

- Publicising a list of those companies required to report;
- Ensuring their legislation covers both the private and public sectors;
- Enforcing penalties for failure to report; and
- Ensuring that both supply chain product manufacturers as well as third party service providers and suppliers of goods not for resale are explicitly covered in the legislation.

We believe such legislation will allow companies that are proactively trying to address modern slavery in their supply chain to highlight their efforts, whilst catalysing others into action. We look forward to hearing of the outcome of the Inquiry and thank you for inviting us to make this submission.

ASOS.com, May 2017.