



Believing In  
Children,  
Young People,  
Families &  
Their Future.

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# **Berry Street**

## **Modern Slavery Statement**

### **Financial Year 2022- 2023**



Berry Street is committed to the principles of social justice. Berry Street acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies, and waterways across Australia. We pay our respects to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders past and present.

We acknowledge Elders as holders, protectors, and educators of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We pay respect to the emerging Elders and support the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people in our care to connect to their cultures, countries, and communities.

Berry Street recognises that sovereignty was never ceded and acknowledges the continuing impact colonisation has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to date. We commit to ensuring all staff understand our true history, as an organisation and country, and recognise the importance of acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the lands in which we operate.



Berry Street is committed to the principles of social justice.  
Berry Street supports the LGBTIQ+ community and celebrates diversity.

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# Introduction

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This is the first Modern Slavery Statement (“the Statement”) submitted by Berry Street Victoria, pursuant to the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth).

This Statement covers the reporting period from 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023.

The purpose of this Statement is to report on the steps Berry Street has taken during the financial year ending 30 June 2023 to identify and assess the risk of modern slavery practices in our operations and supply chains, and to describe our actions to respond to those risks.

Berry Street welcomes the increased transparency and obligations introduced by the Modern Slavery Act 2018 in working to eradicate the risk of modern slavery and human trafficking in Australia. Berry Street is committed to identifying and minimising risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chains which aligns with our guiding principles of social justice, inclusion, child safety and wellbeing. These principles drive the way the organisation operates, reflects, changes, and improves.

## Reporting Entity

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### Our Vision

Together we will courageously change lives and reimagine service systems.

### Our Purpose

We believe children, young people and families should be safe, thriving, and hopeful. Learn more how we will work towards our vision and purpose in our [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#).

### Our Services

Berry Street has provided services to children, young people, and families for over 140 years, and today Berry Street is one of Australia’s largest independent family service organisations.

Berry Street exists to help those experiencing poverty, violence, and abuse, and to help families stay together in safe and healthy homes so they can create the future they imagine for themselves. This is what we mean by ‘believing in children, young people, families and their future.’ We want to see fewer children in care and more children safe with families who know how to nurture and support them. We want vulnerable learners connected to appropriate education so they can reach their potential in life. We want less family violence in our communities, and more support for victim-survivors to recover.

# Berry Street's Structure, Operations and Supply Chains

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## Structure

Berry Street Victoria (ABN: 24 719 196 762) is an incorporated body under the Associations Incorporation Act 1981 (No. A0030034E). Berry Street is a registered charitable organisation with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. It does not own or control any other entities.

**The Berry Street Board of Directors (the Board)** is the principal governing body that is responsible for establishing Berry Street's purpose and vision and ensures its integration in all aspects of Berry Street operation and services. The Board's overarching role is one of governance, it is accountable for the overall performance of Berry Street and for ensuring that Berry Street is managed in a responsible and competent manner.

**The Quality and Risk Subcommittee of the Board** has oversight of Berry Street's risk and compliance obligations, including modern slavery reporting. This committee addresses strategic issues relating to the quality improvement, safety, and risk management, and provides risk guidance and oversight.

**The Chief Executive Officer** is responsible for providing visible leadership and commitment to our organisational values, commitment to continuous improvement and risk management regarding modern slavery. Driving a safe and open culture that empowers staff to speak up and raise quality and safety concerns.

The following internal functions are in place to manage Berry Street's modern slavery risk:

- **The Executive Leadership Team** is responsible for:
  - reviewing risks and actions identified through the Modern Slavery Statement Working Group,
  - providing support for resourcing and planning activities to ensure cross portfolio collaboration is effective and,
  - managing all related dependencies.
- **The Quality Governance Committee** is chaired by the Executive Director Organisational Effectiveness, membership includes members of Senior Leadership across Berry Street and is responsible for:
  - the implementation and review of the Berry Street Compliance and Quality and Risk Frameworks,
  - supporting a child safe culture of risk awareness, continuous quality improvement and learning,
  - establishing and supporting implementation of organisation-wide systems and
  - ensuring all quality improvement actions are communicated effectively across Berry Street.
- **The Modern Slavery Working Group** was established in 2023 and comprises senior staff from Corporate Services, People and Culture, Statewide Services, Strategic Engagement and Organisational Effectiveness and is chaired by the Senior Manager of Quality. The Modern Slavery Working Group reports to the Quality Governance Committee and is responsible for:

- Ongoing risk assessment processes to identify modern slavery risks or practices, and
- Embedding processes within relevant business areas that prevent and or limit Berry Street’s participation in modern slavery.

## Operations

Berry Street provides a diverse range of programs to approximately 35,000 people in Victoria each year. Some of our key programs and services are:

- family violence support services
- education services, including the Berry Street Education Model and Berry Street School
- trauma services, including our Victoria-wide therapeutic service, Take Two
- out-of-home care
- parenting and family services.

Berry Street’s head office is located at 588 Swan St, Richmond, Victoria with regional offices in Shepparton, Mt Helen, Morwell, and Noble Park and smaller offices located across the State. The Berry Street School operates from four campuses, located in Ballarat, Shepparton, Morwell, and Noble Park. Services are delivered in Victoria, except for the Berry Street Education Model that delivers training and services to schools across Australia and limited services delivered internationally.

As a community service organisation, Berry Street’s operations predominately include employing staff to deliver services to children, youth, and families. Berry Street employs approximately 1600 staff in a range of full time, part time and casual roles. The Berry Street Enterprise Agreement 2020 covers employees of Berry Street who are employed in a role below that of a Senior Manager. It covers items such as wages, employment types, hours of work, leave and public holidays, performance and discipline and termination of employment. We also use labour hire agencies which must be licensed under the Labour Hire Licensing Act 2018. The labour hire agencies are used as required in Berry Street’s out of home care programs. These staff must be registered on the Victorian Carer Register and comply with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Labour Hire Agency Checklist which includes proof of their right to work in Australia.

Berry Street engages a mix of long-term and short-term suppliers for the provision of goods and services. Our long-term suppliers include suppliers of Information Technology (IT) equipment, financial services, and vehicles. A list of preferred suppliers is also accessed by our central and regional offices as required. Short-term or “changeable” suppliers for consultancy services, consumables, clothing, and furnishings are also used in response to the requirements of our operations and or service users.

Berry Street has a long, successful history of forming strategic and collaborative partnerships with other organisations. We believe in the power of partnerships for enhanced services, research, and public policy advocacy on behalf of families, children, and young people. Many of our partnership relationships within services and programs, and across networks and alliances, are defined in memorandums of understandings (MoUs).



## Supply Chain

Berry Street's Procurement Policy articulates that we endeavour to source goods and services aimed at generating social value in accordance with the spirit of the principles contained within the Victorian Social Procurement Framework. This approach seeks not only to avoid abuse or harm through our procurement processes but to use our buying power to make a real difference to peoples' lives. Whether it be creating job opportunities or skills-based training in areas of disadvantage, addressing structural and systemic inequalities, or delivering environmental benefits for local communities.

Berry Street is also committed to ensuring the safety of children and young people and requires all contractors and external suppliers to comply with Berry Street's *Code of Conduct* and *Child Safe and Wellbeing Policy* when servicing Berry Street's physical and online locations or spaces where vulnerable community members are present.

Berry Street procures a range of products and services including:

- IT equipment, software, and services
- Clothing and homewares
- Furniture, office supplies and white goods
- Food and consumables
- Digital, marketing, and fundraising services
- Motor vehicles
- Utilities
- Financial services
- Labour hire
- Cleaning and property maintenance
- Construction and facilities management
- Transport and travel services
- Consultancy services

Our first-tier suppliers are predominantly located in Australia. Second-tier suppliers for our major contractors have been identified across the world including in some high-risk geographic areas and sectors.

Second-tier suppliers for smaller or changeable products and service are generally connected to the major Australian department stores. The Modern Slavery Working Group has reviewed the Modern Slavery Statements for these department stores and will continue to monitor their efforts to identify, address and monitor risks identified in their supply chains.

Berry Street's investment portfolio consists of corpus investment fund plus working capital investments. The Finance and Investment Committee directs the management of the investment policy in accordance with Berry Street's Investment Policy. Our Investment Policy stipulates that Berry Street incorporates Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) principles in its investment decision making. When considering the appointment of investment managers, the Finance and Investment Committee considers the policies of those managers with respect their SRI principles.

# Risks of Modern Slavery Practices in the Operations and Supply Chains of Berry Street

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The Modern Slavery Working Group utilised the Modern Slavery Risk Screening Tool provided within the *Addressing Modern Slavery in Government Supply Chains – A toolkit of resources for Government procurement officers*. The group mapped potential modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chain by assessing risks based on the categories provided in the screening tool. The categories include sector and industry risks, product and services risks, geographic risks, and supply chain risks. By undertaking this assessment, Berry Street considered areas of vulnerability particularly in areas of low or no visibility in our supply chains which may cause, contribute to, or directly link to, modern slavery practices.

Berry Street considers the risk of modern slavery within our direct operations to be low. Risks were identified in second-tier suppliers or service providers in high risks sectors such as in the components mined for use in computer equipment and vehicles, financial investments, consultancy services which outsource to casual and or base-skilled labour in high-risk countries, and in the labour practices of textiles industry sourced overseas and in the fresh food grown in Australia and overseas.

Berry Street has a range of investments, the majority of which are in Equity funds managed by external professional Fund Managers. These equity funds include real estate and infrastructure, and a mix of sector investments across international and Australian funds. Investments decisions are made by Fund Managers from whom Modern Slavery Statements have been obtained, except from one to be released during the remaining of 2023.

Given modern slavery is a pervasive issue, we acknowledge that specific industries and geographies (such as those in emerging markets) are more exposed to underlying risk. To help mitigate this, we regularly utilise fund managers that are large, reputable, global organisations with regulatory obligations to undertake due diligence and remediation actions within their own supply chains.

## Actions Taken by Berry Street to Assess and Address These Risks

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In 2023 the Executive Leadership Team and Quality and Risk Subcommittee of the Board were briefed regarding requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2018. Following this, Berry Street established the Berry Street Modern Slavery Working Group, a subsidiary of the Quality Governance Committee. Members of the group completed the Modern Slavery e-learning modules available on the Attorney General's Department website and met regularly to map modern slavery risks in our operations and supply chain. The risk assessment process will be repeated each year. In addition to the mapping exercise the group looked at over twenty examples of companies which supply Berry Street with services or products valued over \$200,000.

Members of the Modern Slavery Working Group reviewed Berry Street's Procurement Policy and Investment Policy and identified improvements required to ensure due diligence is embedded across



the organisation. These improvements have been added to our Modern Slavery Annual Action Plan 2023-2024.

Berry Street does not own or control any other entities.

## Due Diligence

In line with the UN Guiding Principles (Principles 15 and 17), Berry Street is working to improve our due diligence processes to identify, prevent, mitigate, and account for how we address actual and potential adverse human rights impacts in our operations and supply chains. In this reporting period the mapping and assessment process was developed, and improvements to new contractor and tendering processes identified. All currently available Modern Slavery Statements from our existing contractors and service providers were reviewed and identified during our risk assessment process.

Regarding improvements to assessing new contractors or service providers, a new statement has been drafted by the Modern Slavery Statement Working Group regarding our commitment to preventing modern slavery in our supply chain and services which will be added to our Investment Policy in 2024.

Berry Street is committed to broadening and deepening use of the modern slavery risk screening which was conducted for the first time this financial year.

## Remediation Processes

Berry Street did not identify any instances of modern slavery practices within our operations or supply chain and therefore no remediation processes were enacted.

# Assessing the Effectiveness of Our Actions

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Berry Street is committed to continuous quality improvement and utilises internal audit and review processes to inform our activities and measure effectiveness. Over this reporting period, Berry Street focused on building an understanding of modern slavery and establishing assessment processes for existing modern slavery risks.

Berry Street made significant progress in mapping the potential risks of modern slavery in our operations and supply chain. We have identified policy and governance areas where further improvements will assist us to ensure modern slavery risks are identified prior to engaging new contractors.

We will continue to build our due diligence and processes to identify and minimise modern slavery risk and ensure these processes include ways to review the effectiveness of each step. Berry Street's Modern Slavery Annual Action Plan will be lodged in our Quality Improvement Register and will be reported on to the Quality and Risk Subcommittee of the Board annually.

# Approval

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This statement was approved by the Berry Street Board and the Chief Executive Officer on 21st December 2023.

Dr Joanna Flynn  
Berry Street Board Chairperson



Michael Peruso  
Chief Executive Officer of Berry Street.

