

## MEDIA RELEASE: Walk Free applauds passing of Australian Modern Slavery Act

*The Modern Slavery Bill is now an Act of the Australian Parliament.*

29 November 2018 -- Walk Free Foundation Founder, Andrew Forrest AO, today commended the momentous passing of Australia's first federal Modern Slavery Act, a major step towards stamping out slavery in Australian company supply chains.

Under the new laws, large businesses operating in Australia will be required to report on the risks of modern slavery in their supply chains, both domestically and internationally. The Bill is modelled on the UK Modern Slavery Act and will apply to all businesses with an annual turnover of more than \$100 million.

Mr Forrest thanked the Government for bringing the bill forward and acknowledged all sides of politics for their bipartisan support for anti-slavery legislation.

"An Australian Modern Slavery Act is essential if Australia is going to play a role in making slavery a thing of the past," Mr Forrest said.

"This Act will help us ensure the goods we buy are slave free. We cannot continue to allow the often-invisible victims of modern slavery to be stripped of their freedoms. The products they produce are found in the supply chains of Australian and international companies that provide the food that we eat, the clothes that we wear and the consumer goods we use.

"It is our responsibility to end this criminal abuse of human rights, and this world-class legislation will help us do that."

Mr Forrest said the Modern Slavery Act cemented Australia's strong international leadership in the global movement against modern slavery, a cause the Walk Free Foundation is proud to have championed and put on the national and international agenda.

"Australia now has the chance to lead by example and convince other nations to legislate their own 'Modern Slavery Acts'," Mr Forrest said.

Chevaan Daniel is Group Director of Sri Lanka's Maharaja Organization, and a member of the Bali Process Government and Business Forum, which is co-chaired by Australia with the aim of encouraging cooperative efforts against trafficking and people smuggling in the Indo Pacific region.

"Today, Australia is giving the world renewed hope," Mr Daniel said.

"With the adoption of the Modern-Day Slavery Bill, the Australian people have risen above the encumbrances of politics and commerce. The adoption of this Bill is a forerunner to what will be a wave of similar legislature in the region, freeing millions in the process.

"The people of these nations will soon begin to ask their governments, 'If Australia can, why can't we?' Indeed. Why can't we?"

The Business Council of Australia and major Australian businesses supported the enactment of the new laws to ensure that modern slavery is eradicated from Australian supply chains.

Aditi Wanchoo, senior manager of development partnerships at sportswear manufacturer Adidas, said: "Adidas welcomes the enactment of Australia's Modern Slavery legislation, which recognizes the shared responsibility of all actors – be it the state, business or civil society – to work towards the common goal of eradicating modern slavery."

The Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, produced by Walk Free and the International Labour Organization in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (both U.N. agencies), estimated that there were 40.3 million people in the world subject to conditions of modern slavery.

This includes an estimated 25 million in forced labour, and 15 million people, predominantly women and girls, in forced marriage.

Walk Free's Global Slavery Index estimates 15,000 people are living in slavery in Australia.

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