

The business of slavery: information about criminal risks for in-house counsel

by Mark Burton

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“Directors and managers may be surprised to learn that they may be liable under Australian law if slavery is found in their supply chain, whether in Australia or in an overseas extension of the business. The potential liability is sobering: section 270.3 of the *Criminal Code 1995* (Cth) provides for a maximum penalty of imprisonment of 25 years for an individual convicted of an intentional slavery offence, and 17 years’ imprisonment where the offence was committed recklessly.

These are severe penalties which reflect the fact that slavery is a crime against humanity. Unlike ‘everyday’ kidnapping or assault, one case of slavery is a crime against all humanity, because slavery is an affront to the dignity and freedom of all persons, everywhere.”

**Extract from Foreword by His Honour Judge Michael McInerney
County Court of Victoria**

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