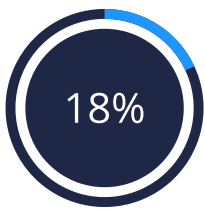




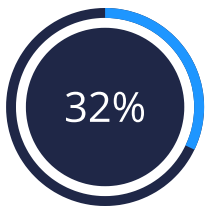
# Higher Education



of statements met Unchained's **satisfactory** compliance rating.



of statements met Unchained's **minimal** compliance rating.



of statements met Unchained's **unsatisfactory** compliance rating.

**Overall, an analysis of the quality of current statements highlighted the opportunity for further improvement to mitigate modern slavery risks.**

This insight paper is based on Unchained Solutions Modern Slavery Statement Sector Review Report on the Higher Education Sector. To review and assess their approach to the issue of modern slavery in their supply chains and operations. It compares their approach to implementing and complying with the Modern Slavery Act 2018 (Cth) ("the Act") and highlights which higher education providers are demonstrating best practices in making a positive social impact on this human rights violation.

## Risk Areas

### Vulnerable Workforce

Modern Slavery risks are present in the operations of Higher Education Facilities. Domestic risks of modern slavery are found in recruitment companies such as hiring cleaning, construction, maintenance and security services. These industries have a well-documented history of labour rights breaches. The services are provided onsite, contributing to heightened University risk.

### Low-tier suppliers in high-risk geographies

Modern Slavery risks are present in the supply chains of higher education facilities. University merchandise such as stationary, clothes and bags is a modern slavery risk. These products are made fast, in bulk and cheap usually in high risk countries such as China. IT and software equipment is an industry known for human rights and labour abuses, reliant on low skilled and low paid workforce.

### Lack of transparency in supply chains

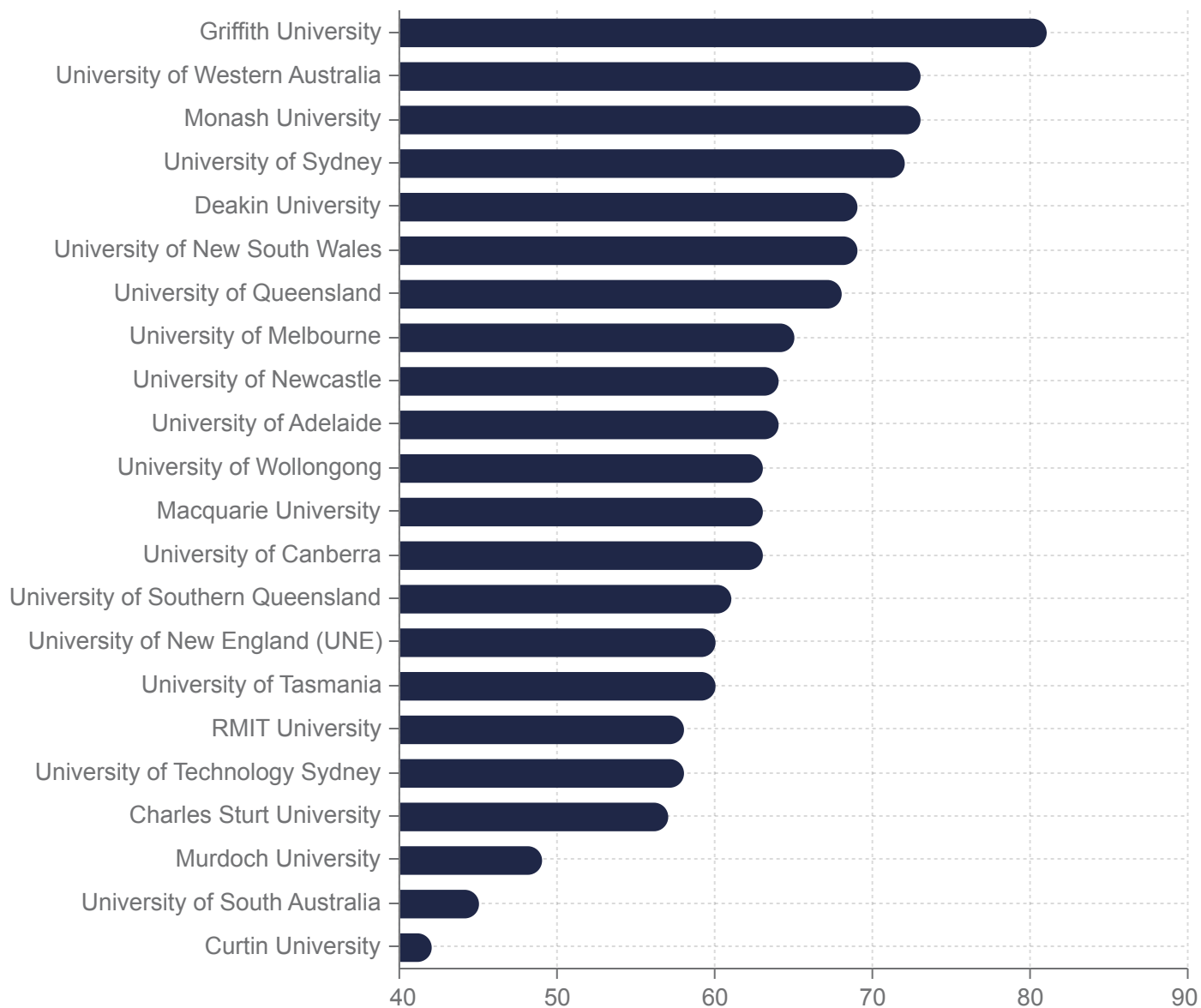
Sourcing higher education equipment involves complex multi-tiered supply chains, resulting in the limited visibility of modern's slavery risks. These risks are most prevalent in procuring high-risk goods and services, such as IT equipment.



# Higher Education Sector Overview

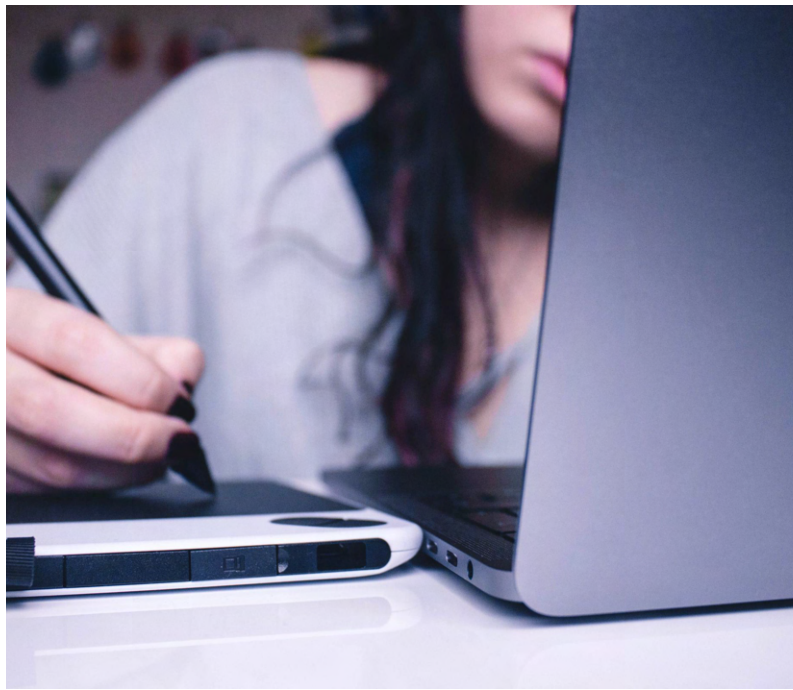
Based on the Unchained Social Impact Measurement Framework, 27 criteria were established in alignment with the seven mandatory requirements by the Act.

The graphic below shows Griffith University, the University of Western Australia, and Monash University scored higher than all other universities, with Griffith University being recognised providing the best evidence of good practice.



# Case Study

## The abandonment of International Students during Covid-19



1 in 7

had in fact been homeless for a period of time since March 1

1 in 7

reported they had performed work in return for food rather than wages

48%

indicated that they were unable to pay rent at some point

25%

experienced racism in the form of verbal abuse from March 1

59%

were less likely to recommend Australia as a place to study following their experience during COVID-19

Due to the impact of the pandemic, international students studying in Australia who were financially supported by family found themselves with less or no support from the Australian government or their education providers. As a result, reports emerged that many international students were struggling to meet their basic living needs such as food and rent.

International students were excluded from governmental support such as JobKeeper and JobSeeker and other support packages for those unemployed due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Students felt abandoned, neglected and treated disgracefully after being told to “go home” by the Prime Minister of Australia. Some regret their decision to study in Australia due to their treatment in the covid-19 pandemic. The abandonment of these students will cause damage to Australia’s reputation in the international education market.







# Opportunities for Improvement

## Engaging

While the statements reviewed in this study revealed efforts to educate people in general matters, building capacity on internal procurement teams about modern slavery is present in only 27% of the statements. None of the statements was considered compliant on building capacity with suppliers.

## Assessing

Many statements omitted any clear depiction of supply chain spend (based on locations and category), nor did they include a comprehensive map of risks associated with suppliers. The analysis of supply chain rarely featured offshore suppliers, the procurement of products, or the inclusion beyond tier-two supply chains. This significantly limited the quality of transparency within reports.

## Addressing

The base-skill workforce for the higher education sector, including the construction, maintenance and cleaning facilities, is commonly recruited through labour-hire firms, elevating the risk of modern slavery or exploitation within supply chains. However, only 27% of the entities assessed and created actions to mitigate the risk associated with recruitment activities and practices used by suppliers.

## Influence

Higher education has a unique standing in that they are able to have incredible influence. They can:

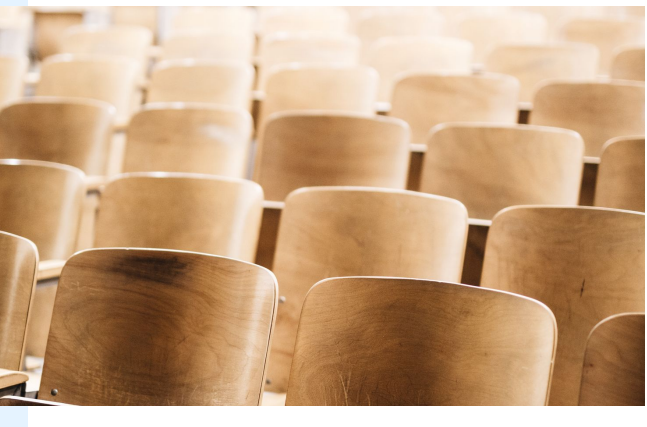
- lead academic research initiatives to provide context, information and resources to help with the fight against modern slavery.
- Fundraise for NGO's & NFP's in the modern slavery space to create a positive impact
- Create educational programs and provide training on modern slavery
- Collaborate and share experiences and insights with other partner Universities
- Invest ethically with people in mind

## Collaboration

The Australian Universities Procurement Network (AUPN) represent the Australian and New Zealand higher education sector, who work together to improve excellence in procurement practice. Collaborating to create benchmarking procurement and ensure best practice is updated.

Within the higher education sector there is much room for collaboration between universities to share information, research and best practices.





# Good Practice

## Highlights from Griffith University 2021 Modern Slavery Statement include:

- An outstanding description of structure, operations and supply chain.
- A Full description of all the related research institutes and centres.
- A comprehensive description on the process adopted to review the supply chain and assess risks.
- Detailed information regarding the plan and activities of the AUPN's Modern Slavery Working Group which also covers areas of Continuous Improvement and Audit and Compliance.
- A deep investigation of the high-risk suppliers and mitigation process.
- A clear understanding of the support the AUPN provides, and they expand on this assessment work.

### ENGAGING

Most universities reported satisfactorily on entity details, accessible language, and the Board's involvement in signing the statement. Some mentioned their effort to build staff capacity and the importance of establishing a working group. However, only the University of NSW included a case study in their 2021 statement.

### ASSESSING

The University of Melbourne was considerably more detailed in its response, demonstrating a strong commitment and leadership in responsible business practices. The only university to map beyond its first-tier suppliers was the University of Newcastle. The University of Melbourne's statement can be considered good practice when formulating policies and engaging suppliers.

### ADDRESSING

Some statements accurately identified recruitment as a potential risk in addressing and mitigating risk, but only the University of Technology Sydney disclosed their current practices. Although many organisations described their mitigation process, most did not report well on their remediation policy and process. Griffith University demonstrated best practices in addressing risk in its operations and supply chain.

### MONITORING

In terms of monitoring risk, Griffith University excelled in establishing KPI's and well-defined goals for next year. The University of Melbourne was the leading organisation in providing a whistle-blower policy and grievance mechanisms.

## References

Unchained Solutions Higher Education Sector report 2022.

Berg, L. Farbenblum, B. 2020, 'As if we weren't humans; The abandonment of temporary migrants in Australia during covid-19', *Migrant Worker Justice Initiative*.

## Further questions

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## Obligations under the Australian Modern Slavery Act

