Wine Australia



Protecting the people behind Australian wine

A Communications Guide

February 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

In the spirit of reconciliation, Wine Australia acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



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Your guide to ethical storytelling

This handbook sits alongside the Ethical Business Guide.

Together, they help grape and wine businesses act responsibly when it comes to workers, labour hire and supply chains and communicate those actions with confidence.



The handbook provides practical guidance on how to share your efforts to manage ethical risks in your workforce and supply chain with authenticity and credibility.

Use it to clearly explain what you do, respond to challenging questions and demonstrate progress in a way that builds trust with workers, retailers, consumers and industry peers.

Explaining ethical business in wine

Modern slavery occurs when people are forced to work or are trapped in unsafe, unfair or exploitative conditions.

For wine, ethical business means making sure that everyone involved in growing and making wine is treated with respect, kept safe and paid fairly.

Simple ways to describe it

"**Ethical business in wine means** knowing who works with us, paying them correctly and keeping them safe."

"**Modern slavery is when people are forced to work in unsafe or unfair conditions.** Our responsibility is to make sure this does not happen in our vineyards, wineries or supply chains."

"Just as provenance tells the story of where a wine comes from, **ethical business tells the story of how it was made.**"

Principles for good communication

01 Explain your purpose clearly

02 Be credible and avoid being misleading

03 Keep your messaging consistent

04 Show progress, not perfection

05 Shape your message for each audience

06 Choose the right channel and match the message

Principle 1

Explain your purpose clearly

Effective communication begins with clarity.

Before talking about ethical business or modern slavery, pause to define your purpose: what do you want people to know, feel and do? A clear purpose keeps your message focused, direct and easy for others to act on.

If you have completed Section 04: Doing what's right of the Ethical Business Guide, use it to help frame your communications.

Ask yourself

1. Are we sharing a genuine shift in our own practices?
2. Are we meeting a legal requirement, or going beyond it?
3. Are we aiming to inspire wider change across the sector?

A simple tool is to shape your purpose around what you want your audience to know, feel and do.

Know	Feel	Do
What facts, progress or actions do you want to share?	What emotion or reaction should your message evoke?	What action do you want the audience to take?

Example purpose statement for retail customers:

Know	Feel	Do
Our seasonal workers are employed directly	*Confident the supply chain is safe and fair*	*Continue to stock and promote our wine*

Choose words that build trust

Use

- ✓ "Prevent", "monitor", "improve"
- ✓ Descriptions of what you did and the result
- ✓ People-first language that is plain and specific

Avoid

- ✗ Combative terms like "fighting" or "battling" modern slavery
- ✗ Absolutes like "zero tolerance" or "100% ethical"
- ✗ Vague claims without proof

Principle 2

Be credible and avoid being misleading

Credibility comes from evidence. Every claim about ethical business or modern slavery should be backed by clear actions or records.



Without proof, words risk sounding misleading or exaggerated. This can damage trust and put your brand at risk. Substantiated claims are good practice and the law. The Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) is increasing its focus on misleading sustainability claims, and many Australian brands are already facing fines or legal action for unsubstantiated claims.

Strong communication shows what you did, how you did it and what changed as a result. If you have completed Section 04: Doing what's right of the Ethical Business Guide, use it to share your actions openly and with evidence. This approach will build confidence and trust, rather than doubt.

Show what you do

Be specific about the steps you are taking.

Explain how you identify risks, how you manage them and the progress you have made.

Eight checks for credible communication

Use this quick checklist, adapted from the ACCC guidance, to keep your messages accurate:

1. Are the claims accurate and truthful?
2. Is there clear evidence to back them up?
3. Has any information been left out or hidden?
4. Have you explained any conditions or context?
5. Have you avoided broad, sweeping claims?
6. Is language clear and easy to understand?
7. Do any visual elements give the wrong impression?
8. Have you been direct and open about ethical business and modern slavery?

Before you share your story, gather the basics so your message is clear, consistent and backed by evidence.

Use the **What to communicate** checklist in the Quick Tools section to capture the key facts.

Avoid saying

✕ "We ensure ethical labour compliance across our operations."

Instead say

✓ "We check right to work, pay slips and worker housing each season. Two issues were found and fixed this year."

Principle 3

Keep your messaging consistent

Consistency builds reliability.

Your message should stay the same across every channel, from your website and packaging to social media and retailer briefings. A consistent core story, with only small changes in tone or detail, ensures that your words align with your actions wherever people encounter them.

If you have completed Section 02: Why ethical business matters in wine of the Ethical Business Guide, use it to keep your story consistent across all channels so every audience hears the same message.



Ask yourself:

Would I be comfortable if this same sentence was read by a worker, a retailer, a customer or a journalist?

If the answer is yes, your message is consistent.

Example: Retailers and consumers

Avoid saying to retailers: → **Instead say to retailers:**

✗ "We provide evidence of fair pay."

✓ "We provide pay slip checks and safe housing records."

Then saying to consumers: → **And to consumers:**

✗ "We *just* care about making great wine"

✓ "We care for the people who make our wine by checking pay and housing conditions."

Example: Across channels

Avoid posting on social media: → **Instead maintain a consistent message everywhere such as:**

✗ "We are 100 percent ethical."

✓ "We are committed to safe, fair and respectful workplaces and we share updates on our progress each year."

While telling regulators:

✗ "We comply with minimum requirements."

Aligning with reporting and market requirements

Ethical communication is part of compliance. The way you share your actions should always match what you report to regulators, retailers and export partners.

Modern Slavery Act:
Use the same plain, evidence-based language in your Statement and public communication to avoid gaps or misleading claims.

Retailer audits:
Align audit responses with what appears on your website and in staff briefings to strengthen credibility.

Export markets:
Distributors look for clear evidence of fair and sustainable practices. Consistent language across reports and export documents helps protect your market access.

See Wine Australia Regulatory Services for guidance on compliance and market access. **The Modern Slavery Elevator Pitch Tool** in Quick Tools can also help you prepare one clear paragraph that works across your Statement, audits and export documents.

Principle 4

Show progress, not perfection

Progress builds more trust than claims of perfection.

Risks shift, challenges arise and no supply chain is ever static. The most effective stories share what has changed, what you learned and what comes next. Being open demonstrates commitment and accountability.

If you have worked through Section 04: Doing what's right of the Ethical Business Guide, use it to talk about progress in a way that is open, practical and focused on what comes next.

Examples of progress statements

1. We are working towards...
2. We have learned that...
3. We tried X with Y results, and here is what we are doing next.

Inviting feedback and conversation also builds credibility. You can do this by listening to workers and suppliers, sharing updates with all stakeholders and creating space for questions. When people see that you welcome dialogue it shows that you are genuine and committed to improvement.

Own your impact

Your impact extends beyond your vineyard. It includes worker conditions on site, the contracts you sign and the wages suppliers can pay because of your terms. Don't limit your story to direct actions alone. If you improve housing, provide transport or support worker wellbeing, say so. And be clear whether you are reducing harm, managing risks or creating positive change.

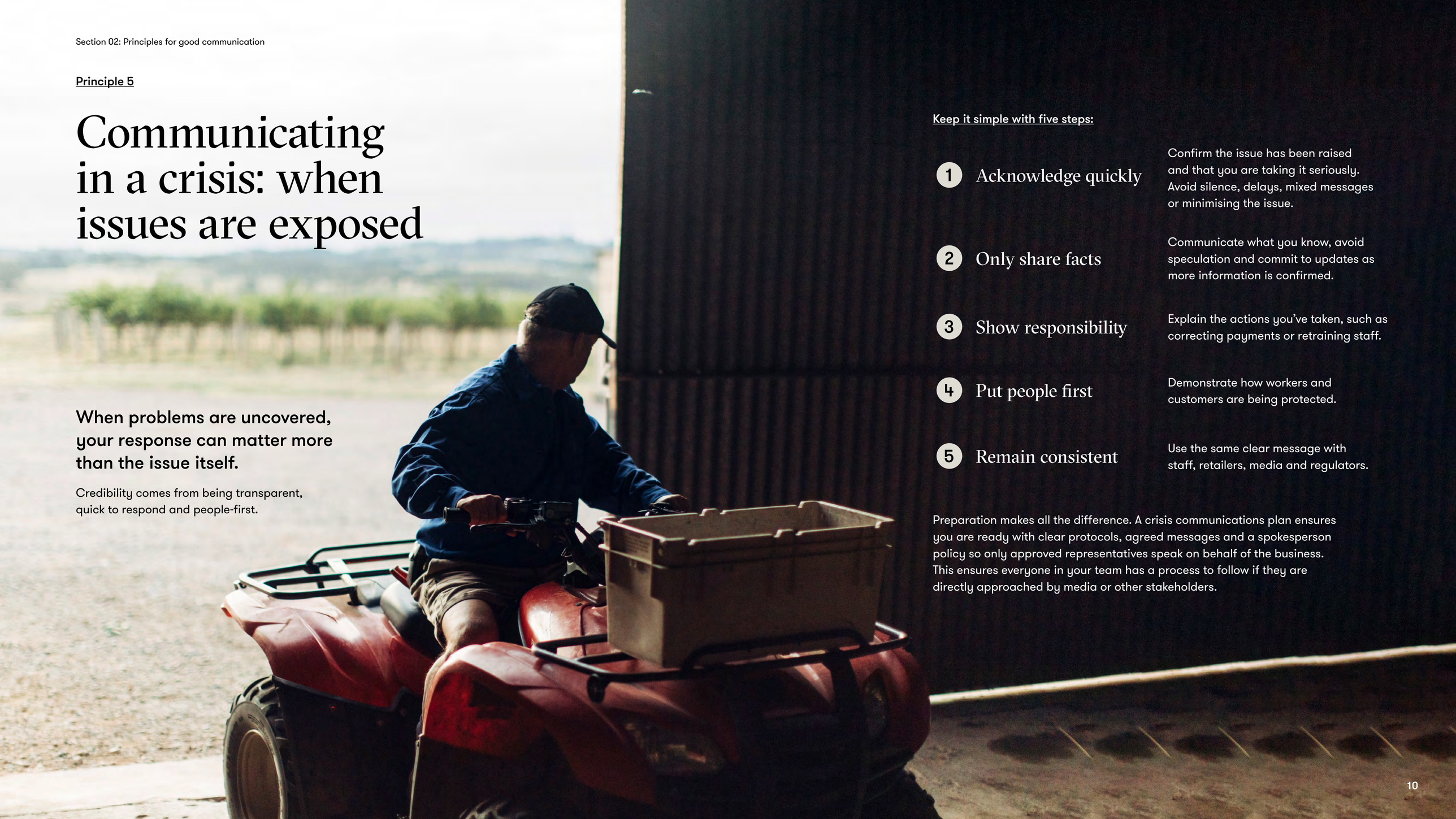
Take accountability

Stage	How to communicate it
Meeting requirements	"We comply with the Modern Slavery Act and are committed to improving our practices."
Beyond minimums	"We trained supervisors before harvest and now carry out mid-season pay slips checks."
Leading practice	"We run worker voice surveys and share anonymised results with our buyers."
Driving change	"We co-fund housing upgrades with contractors and encourage other growers in our region to do the same."



Principle 5

Communicating in a crisis: when issues are exposed



When problems are uncovered, your response can matter more than the issue itself.

Credibility comes from being transparent, quick to respond and people-first.

Keep it simple with five steps:

1. **Acknowledge quickly** — Confirm the issue has been raised and that you are taking it seriously. Avoid silence, delays, mixed messages or minimising the issue.
2. **Only share facts** — Communicate what you know, avoid speculation and commit to updates as more information is confirmed.
3. **Show responsibility** — Explain the actions you've taken, such as correcting payments or retraining staff.
4. **Put people first** — Demonstrate how workers and customers are being protected.
5. **Remain consistent** — Use the same clear message with staff, retailers, media and regulators.

Preparation makes all the difference. A crisis communications plan ensures you are ready with clear protocols, agreed messages and a spokesperson policy so only approved representatives speak on behalf of the business. This ensures everyone in your team has a process to follow if they are directly approached by media or other stakeholders.

Principle 6

Shape your message for each audience

Different audiences look for different things.

Retailers, consumers, suppliers, peers and media each have their own priorities. The most effective communication tailors the level of detail and type of proof you provide to the audience, while keeping the core story consistent.

What to do:

Identify who the message is for

Consider what matters to them and what proof they expect

Decide how much detail they need and the best place to reach them



Internal (workers and staff)

What they care about:
Safety, fair treatment, being informed

Your focus:
Share commitments early, explain what they mean day-to-day

One line you can adapt:

"Everyone on our sites has the right to safe work, fair pay and respect. We provide safe channels for people to provide feedback or raise concerns. If issues arise, we fix them quickly."



Wine sector peers

What they care about:
Practical lessons and collaboration

Your focus:
Share what worked, what changed and what's next

One line you can adapt:

"We are moving most seasonal workers to direct contracts and we're open to sharing our process with others."



Retailers

What they care about:
Assurance, compliance, low supply chain risk

Your focus:
Demonstrate policies, checks, measurable progress

One line you can adapt:

"We use licensed labour hire, check pay slips each harvest and inspect worker housing so you can stock our wine with confidence."



Media

What they care about:
Facts, transparency, verification

Your focus:
Provide clear and up-to-date statements, backed by evidence

One line you can adapt:

"This year we inspected worker housing and checked every pay slip. Two issues were found and corrected. A short summary is on our website."



Consumers

What they care about:
Values and fairness from grape to glass

Your focus:
Show care for people as well as product

One line you can adapt:

"We make sure the people who grow and make our wine are safe, fairly paid and respected."



Suppliers

What they care about:
Clear standards and support to meet them

Your focus:
Set expectations, provide training and simple checks

One line you can adapt:

"Our supplier code sets minimum standards for safe work and fair pay. We run pre-harvest training and check records during the season."

Talking with suppliers

Suppliers play a critical role in lifting standards. Many labour risks in the wine sector sit with contractors and labour hire firms, so the way you work with them directly affects your reputation and compliance.

The goal is to set clear expectations while showing you are prepared to work together to achieve them. Keep conversations simple, respectful and focused on shared goals. This helps shift the relationship from one of compliance to one of collaboration.





How to approach supplier conversations:

Say what you do

Be upfront about your own practices.

Ask for the basics

Request essential information such as right-to-work checks, pay records, safety measures and worker accommodation standards.

Write it into documents

Include expectations in contracts, purchase orders or supplier codes of conduct.

Frame it as collaboration

Position standards as shared responsibility, not a one-sided obligation.

For a step-by-step **Supplier Conversation Checklist,** see the Quick Tools section.

Principle 7

Choose the right channel and match the message

Each channel has a different purpose and sometimes a different audience.

The key is to adapt the level of detail, while keeping your core story consistent. Social media works for short updates, your website for detailed facts and proof and buyer briefings for case studies and evidence. Select the message that best fits the channel and audience and consider the most appropriate tone.

Channel Picker

Choose the channel.
Shape the message.
Tell a consistent story.



Cellar door

Use it for:
Building awareness and trust

Include:
One simple, people-focused sentence and invite questions

One line you can adapt:

"We check pay and housing each season and address issues straight away."



Website page

Use it for:
Facts and proof

Include:
Dates, checks, contact, link to PDF statement

One line you can adapt:

"This season we used licensed labour hire, checked right to work and pay slips, inspected housing and corrected two issues."



Packaging or QR

Use it for:
Quick signal of responsibility

Include:
One provable claim and QR link to your website

One line you can adapt:

"Made with care for people. Scan to learn more."



Social post

Use it for:
Sharing milestones and case studies

Include:
One action and a link for more detail

One line you can adapt:

"We reviewed pay slips and housing this harvest. Two issues were fixed. Read more on our website."



Retailer briefing

Use it for:
Assurance and documentation

Include:
Licence numbers, sample checks, next steps

One line you can adapt:

"We use licensed labour hire, check pay slips mid harvest and inspect housing. A full summary is attached."



Media statement

Use it for:
Verifiable facts and transparency

Include:
One paragraph, factsheet link, contact

One line you can adapt:

"We inspected housing and checked every pay slip this season. Two issues were discovered and corrected. Factsheet available on our website."



Supplier email

Use it for:
Alignment and accountability

Include:
Clear asks and due date

One line you can adapt:

"Please share your licence, right to work process, a pay slip sample, housing checks if used and a worker feedback pathway by X date."

Internal

Your team is central to how your business delivers on its ethical commitments.

Bring them into the conversation early so they understand what is happening and why it matters. When staff are involved in setting standards and tracking progress, they are more likely to feel a sense of ownership and help drive success.

Internal communications should:

1. Explain how everyday actions contribute to safe, fair workplaces
2. Create space for questions, learning and feedback
3. Explain the goals and why they matter
4. Provide simple tools and talking points staff can communicate with confidence



Quick tools for action

This section brings together practical checklists and conversation guides to support you before sharing a message, talking with suppliers or answering questions.

Each tool is designed to make your communication simple, specific and backed by evidence.



What to communicate checklist

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Talking with suppliers checklist

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Case study template

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Ethical practices elevator pitch tool

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What to communicate checklist

If you have completed Section 05: Tools to make it easier of the Ethical Business Guide, use these checklists to help explain your actions clearly and consistently.

What to communicate checklist

Before you write a post, send an email or brief a retailer, make sure you have the basics covered. This checklist helps you capture the key facts so your message is clear, consistent and backed by evidence.

Checks and actions

- [ ] Who did the work (direct employees, contractors, labour hire)?
- [ ] Did you check right-to-work papers?
- [ ] Did you review pay slips?
- [ ] Did you inspect housing if it was provided?
- [ ] Did you run supervisor training or pre-season briefings?

Findings

- [ ] Were any issues found?
- [ ] How were they fixed and by when?

Next steps

- [ ] What are you doing next season?
- [ ] When will you repeat checks or updates?

Checks and actions

- [ ] Do you have a record, licence, date or summary you can share?
- [ ] Can you link to a short factsheet or one-page summary for more detail?



Talking with suppliers checklist



- [ ] ## Say what you do first

Share your own checks or commitments so the conversation feels like alignment, not inspection.

"We use licensed labour hire and check pay slips each harvest. We'd like to align on how you are managing this too."

- [ ] ## Ask simply and directly

Keep requests practical and specific.

"Could you please confirm your licence number, right-to-work process and how workers can raise a concern?"

- [ ] ## Integrate into documents

Add short, plain questions to tenders or purchase orders.

"We want everyone in our supply chain to be safe, fairly paid and respected. To make this real, we ask for confirmation of worker entitlements, sample pay slips and safe housing where it is used."

Case study template

Use this template to share examples of action in practice.

Title

A short, compelling title that captures the essence of the story.

The challenge

Briefly describe the issue, risk or trigger for action, such as an audit finding, supplier concern, regulatory change or project learning. Explain why it mattered to workers, the business or the sector.

The action

Outline the practical steps taken and who was involved. Keep it concise and specific.

The impact

Describe what changed as a result, with measurable or observed outcomes where possible.

Optional quote

Include a short, authentic, approved quote from a business leader, worker or partner to bring the story to life.

Ethical practices elevator pitch tool

Every business needs a core narrative about ethical practices.

This short, consistent story is the anchor that all other communications can link back to. Having a clear ‘elevator pitch’ means you can adapt the detail to different audiences and channels, while keeping the heart of your message consistent.

To prepare a short overview of your approach to ethical business, follow these six steps:

Explain the:

Why

Why is safe, fair and respectful work important in your vineyard, winery and supply chain?

What

What are the risks or issues you are seeking to prevent?

Who

Who is affected by these risks and who are you working with?

How

What actions are you taking, and what are your proof points?

Value

What value does this create for workers, your business and your buyers?

Where

What channels do you use to share your story and raise awareness of ethical business?

Examples


TREASURY WINE ESTATES – CULTIVATING A BRIGHTER FUTURE REPORT 2025

Responsible supply chain

In F25 we purchased goods and services worth approximately $1.7 billion, sourced from around 50 countries. With this large global supply footprint, many of our social, ethical, and environmental impacts reside in our supplier relationships alongside our own activities. By working closely with our suppliers, we can reduce our impacts, manage risk and position TWE for growth.

We take care in the selection process to ensure constructive, long-term relationships with suppliers and partners that share our commitment to socially responsible and sustainable business practices.

Our approach includes:

- Clearly defined acceptable standards for suppliers via the Responsible Procurement Code (RPC)

Supplier governance framework

In F25, we continued to improve our supplier governance framework, which assesses suppliers against six categories of risk (refer to the table on the next page). This involved implementation of a new supplier onboarding and risk assessment platform scheduled for launch in 2025.

We continue to improve our strategic approach to key

Figure 1: Extract from Treasury Wine Estates
Cultivating A Brighter Future Report 2025

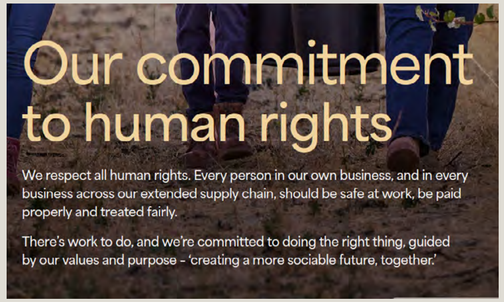


Figure 2: Extract from Endeavour Group
Modern Slavery Statement 2025

Wine Australia

