

PARLIAMENTARY JOINT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS
CHAIR'S TABLING STATEMENT

Tuesday, 21 August 2018

I rise to speak to the tabling of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights' *Human Rights Scrutiny Report 8 of 2018*.

Of the new bills examined in this report, 7 have been assessed as not raising human rights concerns as they promote, permissibly limit, or do not engage, human rights. The committee has also requested further information in relation to the human rights compatibility of 2 bills and concluded its examination of a number of other pieces of legislation.

I would like to highlight one of the bills in respect of which the committee is seeking additional information: the Modern Slavery Bill 2018. As set out in the report, the bill promotes multiple human rights, including the right to freedom from slavery and forced labour, by requiring certain entities to prepare annual statements on actions to address modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains. The report notes that, while Australia has a number of measures in place that prohibit slavery and related practices, the measures introduced by the bill address a gap in Australia's capacity to identify, investigate and respond to instances of modern slavery. These proposed reporting requirements are therefore to be welcomed from a human rights perspective. In order to complete its technical assessment against Australia's international human rights law obligations, the committee has also requested some further

information as to the compatibility of an aspect of the measures with the right to privacy.

I would like to conclude by noting that, last week, I was pleased to launch a database containing the committee's reports developed by the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII) with the support of the University of New South Wales Faculty of Law. While the committee's reports are available on its website, it is very welcome that these reports are now accessible, in searchable form, as part of AustLII's broad range of online legal materials. I trust that this database will be a valuable resource for all those interested in the committee's work and I thank AustLII for including the committee's reports in their collection.

I encourage my fellow Members and others to examine the committee's latest scrutiny report to better inform their consideration of proposed legislation.

With these comments, I commend the committee's *Report 8 of 2018* to the Chamber.