



12 May 2021

## Public Hearing on child and forced marriage

A public hearing on **Friday, 18 June 2021** will examine Australia's role internationally in promoting the elimination of child and forced marriage.

It is estimated that over 15 million people globally are living in a forced marriage, and this has been exacerbated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNICEF anticipates that as a result of the pandemic, up to 10 million more girls will be at risk of becoming child brides over the next decade.

Hon Kevin Andrews MP, Chair of the Human Rights Sub-committee said 'Australia has played a strong international role in efforts to combat modern slavery and there are aspects and considerations between those abhorrent practices which often have a greater impact on women and children'.

Deputy Chair, Mr Chris Hayes MP said, 'the Sub-committee is particularly interested in how combatting child and forced marriage can be a targeted, coordinated and effective focus of Australia's international development strategy and programs'.

The hearing is being held as part of its inquiry into aspects of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual Report 2019-20. One public hearing is planned so far, although there may be opportunities for future engagement.

The Sub-committee looks forward to hearing evidence from government departments, civil society organisations and other interested parties on these issues.

### Public hearing details

People interested in participating in the public hearing are asked to contact the Secretariat **by 1 June 2021**, by submitting a short email (up to 150 words) to [jscfadt@aph.gov.au](mailto:jscfadt@aph.gov.au) describing your interest or views on one or all of the below questions:

1. How does Australia currently engage internationally to promote the elimination of child and forced marriage?
2. What additional steps can Australia take to advocate for the elimination of child and forced marriage? For example, by:
  - a. engaging with international institutions and likeminded countries;
  - b. cooperating with non-government organisations;
  - c. bilateral engagement or other diplomatic activities; and
  - d. other appropriate means.

The Sub-committee will review the expressions of interest, and prepare a public hearing program that best accommodates all views in the time available. Expressions of interest will not be published.

Written submissions in response to the above matters are also [welcome](#) and these may be published at a future time. Submissions should be lodged with the Secretariat **before 1 June 2021**.

More details on arrangements for the hearing will be available from the [Committee's website](#) when they are finalised.

### Media inquiries

Hon Kevin Andrews MP, Sub-committee Chair

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### For background information

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