

**HOME AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO  
AUSTRALIAN BORDER FORCE**

**PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY SPOKEN QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade

Inquiry into certain aspects of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Annual Report 2019-20 – Child and forced marriage

**25 August 2021**

**QoN Number: 01**

**Subject: List of Government funded community organisations - specific projects in relation to forced marriage**

**Asked by:** Kevin Andrews

**Question:**

CHAIR: In terms of the types of community based projects that have been supported by Australian government funding and developed and implemented by members of the national roundtable, are there any examples that you could give us for the record?

Ms Finney: With respect to the national roundtable, I could point to three examples. Reform in 2013 saw the introduction of offences to criminalise forced marriage. The national roundtable significantly contributed to the development of the offences in the new legislation. The national roundtable members have developed a forced marriage community pack that provides a suite of information around age, gender and culturally appropriate materials on forced marriages for frontline officers, teachers and vulnerable groups. Another example for the national roundtable is the development of three editions of the guidelines for NGOs working with trafficked people, providing particular advice for victims of modern slavery, including forced marriage.

In addition to those particular initiatives that may be associated with the national roundtable and the consultation, government has also funded community organisations to undertake some specific projects in relation to forced marriage—I actually have a list which I'm happy to provide to the committee on notice; it's quite an extensive list of grants funding that has been provided over the years. Most recently, under the current National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25, there are two grants rounds. The first was announced this month by Assistant Minister Wood. Within those grants that have been awarded, three are specifically for furthering the efforts to address forced marriage in our modern slavery policy.

CHAIR: We'd appreciate that information, .....

**Answer:**

The Australian Government (led by the Australian Border Force, and formerly the Attorney-General's Department) has awarded grant funding for the following forced marriage projects:

Financial years 2021-23 – under Round One of the *National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25* Grant Program

- \$249,027 was recently awarded to Good Shepherd Australia New Zealand to build a tailored family dispute and conflict resolution model to maintain family relationships for individuals facing forced marriage.
- \$250,000 was recently awarded to Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights to raise awareness and build capacity in the Australian Muslim community to challenge gender stereotypes, positively address family conflict and prevent forced marriage.
- \$250,000 was recently awarded to Taldumande Youth Services to build an early intervention response to increase awareness of forced marriage, provide case support and information resources to victims in secondary schools.

Financial year 2018-19 – under the National Community Crime Prevention Program Modern Slavery Grant Opportunity

- \$125,000 was awarded to Anti-Slavery Australia to build awareness of modern slavery practices, including forced marriage, amongst culturally and linguistically diverse communities in rural, regional and remote New South Wales.
- \$125,000 was awarded to the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights to address the root causes of forced marriage through a prevention and intervention program that targeted young Muslim girls and boys, and Muslim community leaders.

Financial years 2017-18 – Under the National Community Crime Prevention Program Human Trafficking and Slavery Prevention Grant Opportunity

- \$125,000 was awarded to Anti-Slavery Australia to maintain and improve [www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au), Australia's first Government-funded website dedicated to preventing and addressing forced marriage.
- \$125,000 was awarded to Australian Catholic Religious Against Trafficking in Humans for three streams of work, one of which included raising awareness of forced marriage among school teachers and counsellors, parents, union groups and marriage celebrants.
- \$125,000 was awarded to the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights to address the socio-cultural root causes of forced marriage in the Muslim Community in Victoria, Australia.

### 2014-17

- \$355,393 was awarded to Anti-Slavery Australia over 2014-17 to develop [www.mybluesky.org.au](http://www.mybluesky.org.au), Australia's first dedicated website to preventing and addressing forced marriage.
- \$69,532 was awarded to the Australian Muslim Women's Centre for Human Rights over 2014-15 to develop a pilot education and training program aimed at increasing the capacity of frontline community organisations to respond to forced marriage.

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**25 August 2021**

**QoN Number: 02**

**Subject: Further information on Dowry abuse**

**Asked by:** Julian Hill

**Question:**

Mr HILL: It's a little bit of a tangent, but I'm curious whether, in the work you're doing on these issues and also with the communities affected, there's any information about what I might call tangential harm, such as dowry and dowry abuse. I've done some work on this previously with some of these communities, and it's pretty clear that dowry and dowry abuse is a key cause of family violence and extortion in many of these communities. I'm just curious about whether you've come across that in your work and whether there are any links to trafficking or forced marriage.

Ms Finney: Yes, certainly. The best response I can provide at this point is that, as an example, we are engaging at the moment with civil society representatives who are directly involved in providing services and/or have expertise in the area of forced marriage. This is with respect to the forced marriage protection order model. We're in a sense co-designing that model with civil society and with a range of other stakeholders that I'm happy to brief the committee on. But, as part of that, one of the considerations is how the issue of dowries plays out, if you like, with respect to people being coerced into entering a forced marriage—whether dowries are part of that consideration and part of that pressure that may be applied to potential victims of forced marriage. So it's certainly a conversation that's happening right now in the co-design of the forced marriage protection order model.

In terms of another related or potentially related initiative and work that's happening at the moment with the Family Law Amendment (Federal Family Violence Orders) Bill, which has just returned from committee consideration, the report and recommendations of which the government is currently considering, this has been managed by the Attorney-General's Department. The reason I'm mentioning that is that we're working closely with the Attorney-General's Department to make sure that whatever we're doing with regard to the forced marriage protection order model will be complementary to legislation and initiatives that may be related to this.

Mr HILL: Thank you. If you have any further information and you could provide it around anything to do with dowry and the links that would be really appreciated. It's an issue of great concern in the many communities that we're talking to.

**Answer:**

Australia's *National Action Plan to Combat Modern Slavery 2020-25* (National Action Plan) acknowledges the intersection between modern slavery practices, such as forced marriage, and dowry abuse. The National Action Plan recognises that dowry may be a driver for parents to force a marriage or be part of the coercion experienced by those within forced marriages that prevent them from being able to leave.

Under action item 23 of the National Action Plan, the Government has committed to developing a model for enhanced civil protections and remedies for people in, or at risk of forced marriage. As part of consultations in this process, the Australian Border Force is working closely with civil society to identify risks and harms experienced by people in, or at risk of, forced marriage. These risks and harms include dowry abuse.

The ABF will continue to work closely with civil society to consider how a model for enhanced protections may be sensitive and responsive to the challenges posed by the intersection between forced marriage and dowry abuse.

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**25 August 2021**

**QoN Number: 03**

**Subject: Detail on the International Working Group and its forward plan of action or activities**

**Asked by:** Kevin Andrews

**Question:**

CHAIR: When I look at the report Trafficking in persons: the Australian government response 1 July 2016 – 30 June 2017, which was tabled in 2020, there's a reference to the international working group but there doesn't seem to be much detail about what it actually does. You can take this on notice if you like. It would be useful for the committee to know what that working group is doing. And I think you just referred to a forward plan of action or activities. To the extent that you can provide that to us, I think that would be useful as well.

Ms Finney: Certainly, Chair. I can provide some information now if that would assist.  
CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Finney: I will take it on notice in relation to IP-JuSP—the forward work plan of the working group out to 2023. In terms of engagements through IP-JuSP, it involves information sharing on forced marriage over the past couple of years. I'll just list them: a meeting of the Bali process working group, which I mentioned, held virtually on 10 November 2020, providing a chance to share information on these issues; the Vietnam-Australia dialogue on victims of human trafficking cases, hosted in Canberra and Melbourne in February 2020; a workshop on Fiji's national action plan to combat human trafficking and slavery, which was hosted by the Fiji government in December 2019; the Thailand-Australia dialogue on human trafficking, held in Canberra and Melbourne in September 2019; and workshops on Vietnam's judges' council resolution on human trafficking held in Ho Chi Minh City in August 2019.

Those engagements give a sense of some of the activities that have been done by Australian Border Force and Home Affairs in relation to these issues internationally.

CHAIR: Thank you. If it's possible to provide us with what the forward activities are, that would be useful as well.

Ms Finney: Yes, Chair. We are meeting with the working group in September. I'll just need to check whether we're able to release the work plan publicly prior to its launch. I'll check all of those potential sensitivities, but we will certainly provide what we can. We'll come back to you on notice.

**Answer:**

The *Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime* (Bali Process) is a forum for policy dialogue, information sharing and practical cooperation to help the Asia-Pacific region address people smuggling, trafficking in persons and related transnational crime. The Bali Process is Co-Chaired by Indonesia and Australia, and includes the Ad Hoc Group which brings together those most-affected member countries, and relevant international organisations, to address specific irregular migration issues in the region.

Under the Ad-Hoc Group, Australia (the ABF) and Indonesia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) Co-Chair the *Bali Process Working Group on Trafficking in Persons* (TIPWG), which aims to promote more effective and coordinated law and justice responses to combat trafficking in persons in the region. The TIPWG provides a platform for member countries to share information, best practice and emerging trends, and identify capacity building opportunities to combat modern slavery and human trafficking in the region. The TIPWG brings together experts on trafficking in persons from 16 countries and three international organisations that form the Ad Hoc Group membership.

The TIPWG Forward Work Plan 2021-23, endorsed by member countries and organisations in June 2021, articulates the TIPWG's key priorities and activities over the next two years. This includes consideration of, and sharing experience related to, trafficking in persons for the purpose of forced marriage, and identifying areas for future research to increase members' understanding of forced marriage.

The Forward Work Plan will be published on the Bali Process website following the TIPWG's Seventh Annual Meeting on 21 September 2021. It is intended to be a 'living' document that can be amended to reflect new and emerging TIPWG priorities.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade leads the whole-of-government International Working Group on Human Trafficking and Slavery.