

653/1059



**THE HON NICOLA ROXON MP
ATTORNEY-GENERAL
MINISTER FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

MC12/12434

The Hon John Murphy MP
Chair
House of Representatives Standing Committee on Petitions
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

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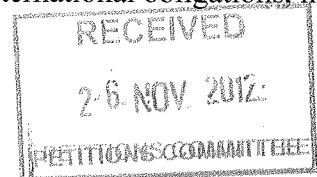
Dear Chair

Thank you for your letters of 23 August 2012 to the Minister for Home Affairs and Justice, the Hon Jason Clare MP, and the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, the Hon Jenny Macklin MP, about a Petition recently submitted for the consideration of the Standing Committee on Petitions regarding Australia's international obligations under Article 6.6 of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (the Trafficking Protocol).

I note that the Minister for the Status of Women, the Hon Julie Collins MP, has responded on behalf of Minister Macklin as the Commonwealth's Support for Trafficked People Program falls within Minister Collins' portfolio responsibilities. I am responding to your letter as criminal justice policy and matters involving slavery, slavery-like practices and people trafficking pertain to my portfolio responsibilities.

I note the petitioners' concerns regarding the welfare of victims of people trafficking. The Government shares these concerns. People trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices are heinous crimes and serious violations of human rights. As a result, the Government has a comprehensive strategy in place to target people trafficking in all its forms. The measures under this strategy address the full cycle of trafficking from recruitment to reintegration and reflect the four central pillars of Australia's anti-people trafficking strategy: prevention; detection and investigation; prosecution; and victim support and protection.

As you would be aware, Australia ratified the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* (the Trafficking Protocol), which supplements the *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime* (UNTOC), in 2005. The Australian Government takes its international obligations, including those under the Trafficking Protocol, very seriously.



Article 6.6 of the Trafficking Protocol states that each Party shall 'ensure that its domestic legal system contains measures that offer victims of trafficking in persons the possibility of obtaining compensation for damage suffered'. Under Australia's domestic legal system, compensation for victims of crime is a matter for States and Territories. Each State and Territory has a victims' compensation scheme, which may be available to victims of people trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices. I note that a number of these victims have accessed compensation from these State and Territory schemes.

As such, the Government's view is that Australia has implemented Article 6.6 of the Trafficking Protocol. Given these considerations, the Government does not support establishing a Commonwealth victims' compensation scheme at this stage.

Thank you for drawing the Petition to my attention. I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours in friendship


NICOLA ROXON