



Submission No 61

**Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People
Trafficking**

Organisation: Australian Human Rights Commission –
supplementary submission



Australian
Human Rights
Commission

Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery- like conditions and People Trafficking

**AUSTRALIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TO THE
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE, HUMAN RIGHTS
SUB-COMMITTEE**
30 April 2013

ABN 47 996 232 602
Level 3, 175 Pitt Street, Sydney NSW 2000
GPO Box 5218, Sydney NSW 2001
General enquiries 1300 369 711
Complaints info line 1300 656 419
TTY 1800 620 241

Australian Human Rights Commission
www.humanrights.gov.au

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1 Introduction

1. The Australian Human Rights Commission makes this response to the Questions on Notice issued on 13 March 2013 by the Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in its Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking.

2 Summary

2. The Australian Human Rights Commission welcomes the opportunity to provide a response to the Questions on Notice issued by the Committee, in addition to the submission the Commission provided the Committee on 5 October 2012.

3. Responses

1.1 ***Does the Commission play a role in combatting slavery, slavery-like conditions or people trafficking either domestically or internationally?***

3. The Commission undertakes policy work in the area of combatting slavery, slavery like conditions and people trafficking. The Commission has recommended that any action taken by the government in this area is consistent with international human rights principles and Australia's human rights obligations.
4. The Commission's activities in this area include:
 - The Commission made submissions on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012¹ and the Draft Exposure Bill 2012².
 - The Commission called for amendments to the People Trafficking Visa Framework in 2009, which were introduced in the *Migration Regulations 2004* in 2009.
 - The Commission has reported on human rights issues in people trafficking and slavery in Australia to human rights bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Council, under the Universal Periodic Review.
 - The Commission met with and provided a submission to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, during her Australian mission in November 2011.³ The Commission also co-hosted with a group of non-government organisations, a Public Forum and an NGO Roundtable on trafficking in persons for the UN Special Rapporteur's mission. The Commission made a statement at the UN Human Rights Council, welcoming the Special Rapporteur's mission report, when she tabled it in 2012.

- The Commission attends the annual meetings of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking, including the Senior Officers meetings.

1.2 Has the Commission provided training or raised community awareness about slavery, slavery-like conditions or people trafficking?

5. The Commission has raised community awareness about slavery, slavery-like conditions and trafficking in a number of ways.
6. As outlined in our submission to the Committee, in 2008 the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick, chaired the 'Working Group of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking to assist Non-Government Organisations working with trafficked people'. A number of government and non-government agencies participated in the working group. The working group produced the *Guidelines for NGOs Working with Trafficked People*.⁴
7. The Guidelines promote the best interests of victims of trafficking including the importance of informed consent, privacy protection and culturally appropriate services. The Guidelines provide practical advice to NGOs dealing with victims of all forms of trafficking, including sexual servitude and labour exploitation.
8. The Guidelines were revised by the Attorney-General's Department in 2010 to reflect reforms in victim protection and the trafficking visa framework introduced by the Australian Government in 2009, and to reflect the evolving body of good practice in this field. The Department also translated the Guidelines into six languages in 2012.⁵
9. The Commissioner has also raised community awareness of slavery, slavery-like conditions and people trafficking issues in her public addresses. The Commissioner's speeches can be accessed at: <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/news/speeches> .

1.3 The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs administers the Government's support program for victims of trafficking. Do you have a view on the effectiveness of the support program?

10. The Support for Victims of People Trafficking Program is a critical element of Australia meeting its obligations under article 6 of the *United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the Convention on Transnational Crime* (the Trafficking Protocol), namely, to provide assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking in persons.
11. The Commission notes that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in its review of Australia in 2010 commended Australia for introducing the Support for Victims of People Trafficking Program.⁶ The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking similarly also commended the program for providing some fundamental services to victims of trafficking in her Australian Mission Report.⁷

12. The Commission supports the Special Rapporteur's comments that the Program could be strengthened by:
- de-linking the provision of ongoing support services from any contribution to criminal processes the victim may make;
 - extending the 45-day reflection period to 90 days for all persons;
 - increasing the funding to access housing and accommodation services for victims and fund the provision of dedicated accommodation for victims of trafficking.
 - increasing access of victims of trafficking on Criminal Justice Stay Visas to government services, such as public housing or higher education.
 - providing financial support for relocation and travel costs to Australia or settlement support upon arrival, to dependents of victims of trafficking who have been granted permanent residency to migrate to Australia.⁸

1.4 In your submission you call on the Government to establish a compensation scheme for victims of Commonwealth crimes. Do you have a view on how the scheme would work? I note that victim compensation schemes vary across States and Territories. Is it more appropriate to standardise schemes rather than create a Federal scheme?

13. Given the many inconsistencies in State and Territory victims of crime compensation schemes, standardisation of these schemes, including in their application, would be a welcome development.
14. However, there would still remain a need for a federal compensation scheme for victims of trafficking and slavery crimes, where such crimes may not be sufficiently covered under the state and territory victim crime compensation schemes. For example, the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 1996* (Vic) (VOCAA) provides that victims of 'acts of violence' may be awarded compensation. A victim of slavery or trafficking may not be a victim of an act of violence, as defined in the VOCAA, in all instances.
15. Accordingly, the Commission remains of the view that the Australian Government should establish a specific federal compensation scheme for victims of trafficking and slavery and to ensure that compensation is available for individuals who have been victims of such federal crimes.
16. The Commission notes the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee recommended in its inquiry into the *Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012* that the Australian Government investigate the establishment of a Commonwealth scheme for victims of people trafficking and slavery.⁹
17. The Commission notes that the Special Rapporteur, in her Australian mission report recommended the Australian Government establish, at the federal level, a comprehensive compensation scheme for victims of trafficking.¹⁰ The

Special Rapporteur further noted that if established, a federal compensation scheme would be in accordance with the obligations of Australia with respect to remedies under the Trafficking Protocol and international human rights law.¹¹ The Commission refers the Committee to the UNDOC *Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons*¹² and the submission of Anti-Slavery Australia to this Committee, for further views on possible models for a federal compensation scheme and how such a scheme might work.¹³

1.5 *I note your submission recommends that the Australian Government undertake comprehensive data collection and research on the prevalence of child trafficking and sexual exploitation. Do you have a view on how Australia could gather better data on slavery or trafficking?*

18. In June 2012, the Australian Federal Police, the Australian Crime Commission and state and territory police agencies established a National Human Trafficking Desk on the Australian Criminal Intelligence Database and Australian Law Enforcement Intelligence Network. The National Human Trafficking Desk is administered by the Australian Crime Commission. The Australian Crime Commission has indicated that while in its infancy, the National Human Trafficking Desk is functioning as a centralised point for the collection and dissemination of information and intelligence relating to people trafficking.¹⁴ The National Human Trafficking Desk will be a key source of data on slavery and trafficking.
19. Further, the Australian Institute of Criminology has been funded to develop a better practice framework for monitoring of trafficking of persons in Australia and its regions. This project will include the establishment of a minimum data set. Consultation with stakeholders across government and non-government sectors is an important part of the work of the Australian Institute of Criminology. The Australian Institute of Criminology's submission to the Committee provides an overview of the work it is undertaking in this area.¹⁵
20. Given the recent introduction of these data collection and monitoring initiatives, it will be important to monitor the progress of both the Australian Crime Commission and the Australian Institute of Criminology's initiatives, particularly on the inclusion of data collection and research on the prevalence of child trafficking and sexual exploitation.

1.6 *You also recommend that the Australian Government provide accessible and appropriate awareness raising programs on forced marriage. Can you please elaborate the programs? How would they be administered?*

21. The Commission considers that provision of accessible and appropriate awareness raising programs could include:
 - providing appropriate and accessible information for communities within which forced marriage may be occurring, including provision of culturally aware and linguistically appropriate information;

- culturally appropriate forms of engagement with communities within which forced marriage may be occurring;
 - age appropriate information and programs for engaging with young people at risk of forced marriage;
 - cultural competency training to service providers, Australian Federal Police and legal and judicial services dealing with forced marriage cases; and
 - ensuring any victims of forced marriage are able to access culturally appropriate accommodation, counselling, legal and other support services.
22. Such initiatives should be developed and delivered in consultation with communities within which forced marriage may be occurring and with community service providers who are working with these communities.
23. Noting that the issue of forced marriage is a form of gender-based violence, such initiatives should be informed by a gender analysis and a human rights based approach, to ensure any gender discrimination is not perpetuated.
24. The Commission notes the work of the National Children's and Youth Law Centre in Australia developing *Best Practice Response Guidelines on forced child marriage*. The Commission also notes work in this area in the United Kingdom by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Forced Marriage Unit.¹⁶
- 1.7 *The Department of Immigration and Citizenship provided evidence to the Committee that the 45-day period has been sufficient to get an indication of engagement from people who have been involved in trafficking and wish to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies. (Transcript, 21 November 2012, pp. 21-22). Do you agree with that view?***
25. The Commission is not of the view that the 45 day maximum period for which the Minister may grant a Bridging visa F is sufficient.
26. The Commission supports the Special Rapporteur's recommendation to extend the 45-day period for which a Bridging visa F is available to 90 days for all persons identified or provisionally identified as having been trafficked. The Commission notes that this is a period in which the victim of trafficking will need to make some critical decisions and it would be more appropriate and in accordance with article 6 of the Trafficking Protocol to extend the period for a Bridging visa F to 90 days.
27. The Commission further notes the Special Rapporteur's recommendation to disconnect ongoing support for victims (ie beyond the assistance provided under the Bridging F visa), from participation in criminal justice processes.¹⁷

1.8 Does the Commission have a view on Australia’s aid programs that are focussed on combatting Slavery, Slavery-Like conditions or people trafficking such as the Australia–Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons program?

28. The Commission welcomes the Australian Government’s efforts undertaken through its international development assistance program to prevent and combat trafficking and slavery. The Commission notes the Special Rapporteur also spoke positively of the measures being undertaken through Australia’s Aid Program, in particular the Australia–Asia Program to Combat Trafficking in Persons program.¹⁸ The Special Rapporteur noted the importance of such measures being continued and noted that they could be expanded particularly in terms of bilateral engagement with source countries.¹⁹ The Commission would support future measures under Australia’s Aid Program being informed by a human rights based approach.

1.9 What is the Commission’s role on the National Roundtable on People Trafficking?

29. The Commission attends the annual meetings of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking, including the Senior Officers meetings. The Commission submits agency updates to the meetings. The Commission has also engaged through the Working Groups of the National Roundtable where relevant, for example, by chairing the ‘Working Group of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking to assist Non-Government Organisations working with trafficked people’ in 2010.

1.10 In your submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, the Commission calls for every victim of child trafficking who would face danger if returned to their country of origin to be eligible for a permanent visa, regardless of whether they participate in law enforcement processes. Should this be expanded to all victims of trafficking? Should a temporary visa be provided for rehabilitation?

30. Currently, a Witness Protection (Trafficking) (Permanent) visa may be offered to a victim of trafficking who has contributed to or cooperated in law enforcement processes and who would be in danger if returned home.

31. The Commission has recommended that the availability of a permanent visa be extended to a victim of child trafficking who would face danger if returned to their country of origin, regardless of their involvement in law enforcement processes.

32. The Commission notes that the protection afforded through the visa framework to victims of trafficking could be further enhanced. The Commission notes the recommendation made by the Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee in its inquiry into the *Crimes Legislation Amendment*

(*Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking*) Bill 2012, for the Government to review the People Trafficking Visa Framework and consider establishing an ongoing visa which is not conditional on a victim of people trafficking providing assistance in the criminal justice process.²⁰ The Commission further notes the recommendation made by Anti-Slavery Australia in its submission to this Committee to consider granting a permanent visa in compassionate circumstances, where victims of trafficking are unable to participate in a criminal investigation.²¹

1.11 *Slavery Links Australia has recommended that the Commission establish an Ambassador for the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery. Do you have a view on this recommendation?*

33. Ambassador positions of this nature are more commonly established by government and the Commission's functions do not provide for the creation of such positions.
34. The Commission notes that there are currently other Global Ambassador positions such as the Australian Global Ambassador for Women and Girls and the Australian Ambassador for People Smuggling Issues. The Commission notes the calls from World Vision for a Global Ambassador on Trafficking.²² The Commission also notes that the Special Rapporteur also recommended that the Government consider appointing an ambassador for human trafficking to further strengthen the country's already high and positive international profile on this issue and to complement the work of other existing Ambassadors.²³

1.12 *Slavery Links Australia has also recommended that the Commission have a human rights focus for slavery. Does the Commission have a slavery or people trafficking function?*

35. Whilst the Commission does not have a dedicated Commissioner relating to slavery or people trafficking, the Commission undertakes this work pursuant to several of its functions.
36. Under the *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth) (AHRC Act) the Commission has functions to:
- to promote an understanding and acceptance, and the public discussion of human rights in Australia; and
 - to undertake research and educational programs and other programs, on behalf of the Commonwealth, for the purpose of promoting human rights, and to co-ordinate any such programs undertaken by any other persons or authorities on behalf of the Commonwealth; and
 - on its own initiative or when requested by the Minister, to report to the Minister as to the laws that should be made by the Parliament, or action

that should be taken by the Commonwealth, on matters relating to human rights; and

- on its own initiative or when requested by the Minister, to report to the Minister as to the action (if any) that, in the opinion of the Commission, needs to be taken by Australia in order to comply with the provisions of the Covenant, of the Declarations or of any relevant international instrument.²⁴

37. Further, under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) the Commission has the functions to:

- undertake research and educational programs, and other programs, on behalf of the Commonwealth for the purpose of promoting the objects of this Act; and
- to examine enactments for the purpose of ascertaining whether they are inconsistent with or contrary to the objects of the SDA;

38. The Sex Discrimination Commissioner has undertaken work in this area, focusing on the rights of women who are trafficked, or in situations of slavery or slavery-like conditions, noting that women in such situations face a range of human rights violations, including discrimination and gender-based violence. Similarly the Commission has also focused on the rights of children in these situations, in its work in this area, and notes the appointment of the inaugural Children's Commissioner at the Commission in 2013.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission, *Submission to the Senate Inquiry on the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012* (2012). At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate_Committees?url=legcon_ctte/completed_inquiries/2010-13/slavery_and_people_trafficking/submissions.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

² Australian Human Rights Commission, *Submission on the Exposure Draft Bill Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery Like Conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012* (2012). At http://humanrights.gov.au/legal/submissions/2012/20120120_trafficking.html (viewed 18 April 2013)

³ Australian Human Rights Commission, *A human rights approach to trafficking in persons: Submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, Australian Mission* (2011). At <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/human-rights-approach-trafficking-persons-2011> (viewed 18 April 2013).

⁴ *2008 Guidelines for Working with Trafficked People* (2008). At http://www.hreoc.gov.au/sex_discrimination/publication/traffic_NGO/index.html (viewed 18 April 2013).

⁵ Attorney-General's Department, *People trafficking guidelines and factsheets*. At <http://www.ag.gov.au/CrimeAndCorruption/PeopleTrafficking/Pages/Peopletraffickingguidelinesandfactsheets.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

⁶ CEDAW Committee *Concluding Observations Australia* (2010), UN Doc CEDAW/C/AUL/CO/7, at 30 and 31.

⁷ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, para 53. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013)

⁸ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, p14. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

⁹ Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, *Report of its Inquiry into the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012* (2012).

¹⁰ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, para 64. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹¹ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, para 64. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹² UN Office on Drugs and Crime, *Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons* (2008). At <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/2008/electronic-toolkit/electronic-toolkit-to-combat-trafficking-in-persons---index.html> (viewed 18 April 2013). See also, United Nations High Commissioner For Human Rights, *Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights and Trafficking* (2002), UN Doc E/2002/68/Add.1. At <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/instreetraffickingGuidelinesHCHR.html> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹³ Anti-Slavery Australia, *Submission to the Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking* (2012), Submission No 34. At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/slavery_people_trafficking/subs.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁴ Australian Crime Commission, *Supplementary Submission to the Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking*, (2013), submission No 53. At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/slavery_people_trafficking/subs.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁵ Australian Institute of Criminology, *Submission to the Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking* (2012), Submission No 18. At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/slavery_people_trafficking/subs.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁶ UK Foreign office and Commonwealth, *Forced Marriage Unit*. At <https://www.gov.uk/forced-marriage> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁷ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia*, (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, p 20. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁸ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, paras 76-77. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

¹⁹ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, para 78. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

²⁰ Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee, *Report of its Inquiry into the Crimes Legislation Amendment (Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking) Bill 2012* (2012).

²¹ Anti-Slavery Australia, *Submission to the Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking* (2012), Submission No 34. At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/slavery_people_trafficking/subs.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

²² World Vision, *Supplementary Submission to the Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking* (2012), Submission No 57. At http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=jfadt/slavery_people_trafficking/subs.htm (viewed 18 April 2013).

²³ Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, *Mission to Australia* (2012), UN Doc A/HRC/20/18/Add.1, p 22. At <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Trafficking/Pages/Visits.aspx> (viewed 18 April 2013).

²⁴ Section 11(1)(g)-(k) *Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986* (Cth). The AHRC Act defines 'human rights to include the rights and freedoms recognised under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the rights recognised or declared by any relevant international instrument. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a relevant international instrument that outlines rights relating to slavery.'