



Submission No 77

Inquiry into Slavery, Slavery-like conditions and People Trafficking

Organisation: Anti-Slavery Australia – Supplementary submission

Jennifer Burn
Director
Anti-Slavery Australia
UTS Faculty of Law
PO Box 123
Broadway
NSW 2007 Australia



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Human Rights Sub-Committee
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2601

To the Secretary,

Response to Questions on Notice

I am writing to respond to questions on notice during my appearance before the Sub-Committee's hearing into slavery, slavery-like conditions and people trafficking on 22 April 2013. I apologise for the delay in replying to the questions.

- 1. Senator PARRY: ...In relation to the roughly 50 per cent of your clients that are in sexual servitude or debt bondage, as you indicated—that is about 30 clients or thereabouts—do you know or, if you do not know definitively can you even anecdotally indicate, how many of those come from legal brothels and how many come from the illegal side of the trade?**

It is not possible at this point to determine how many, or what percentage, of those in sexual servitude are to be found in licensed as opposed to unlicensed brothels. This is due to the nature of our legal practice, the number of clients represented (some hundreds of clients and their families over the past decade) and the past practice of destroying files seven years after the time that the file was closed. I can say that over 50% of our clients have experienced slavery, sexual servitude or debt bondage in Australia.

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- 2. Mr SLIPPER: I cannot profess to know anything particularly about the industry; however, surely, if a brothel is registered, there must be some higher level of supervision by some governmental authority than for an organisation that is not registered. If that is the case, picking up on Senator Parry's question, one would imagine that, if there were checks of legal brothels, it would be easier to work out if people working in those institutions were in fact being subjected to sexual servitude. If not, why not? Maybe that is something that other levels of government could look at. If you could weed the problem out of the legalised brothels then you would obviously reduce a substantial degree of the problem. Is that a fair comment?**

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, in a Report dated 18 May 2012, outlined a number of concerns regarding the level of training available in Australia to officers of federal and state law enforcement agencies. These pointed to a reduced level of capability to identify and to protect trafficked individuals. It may well be, that increased training of relevant front-line government officers at all levels of government, would lead to earlier identification and support of exploited people. It is foreseeable that an increased focus on identification and support could lead to changed business practice, in the sex industry and more generally.

I would like to thank the Human Rights Sub-Committee for inviting Anti-Slavery Australia to contribute to this significant and historic inquiry.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Burn