

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017

Attorney General's Department

Program: 1.2 AGD Operating Expenses - National Security and Criminal Justice

Question No. BE17-023

Senator Singh asked the following question on 24 May 2017:

Senator SINGH: So when you analyse and quantify all of those different figures, what figure do you end up with as the current estimate of the number of people trapped in slavery or slavery like conditions in Australia?

Ms Hawkins: We are aware of the Walk Free number. I did not have that to hand before. But when we were talking before dinner my staff, as I knew, did have that number to hand, and they are aware that that is the estimate that Walk Free puts on the situation. The kinds of figures that we have got are broken down according to what I am letting you know. It is very difficult to quantify. That is why I am giving you the specific data that we do have in this IDC report in terms of referrals, investigations and clients who are actually on the support program. We are happy to take it on notice and provide you with anything else that we have got, but I just wanted to share with you what was actually in the IDC annual report.

Senator SINGH: I appreciate that, and I would like that on notice. Can you provide an estimate, as Walk Free does, of the number of people that this government estimates are trapped in slavery or slavery like conditions? I cannot understand how the government can actually work out how it is going to deal with this issue if it does not know many people are enslaved.

The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:

Currently there is no internationally accepted estimate of the number of victims of modern slavery worldwide. The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index estimates there are 45.8 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, with 4,300 victims in Australia. The International Labour Organization estimates there are almost 21 million victims of forced labour worldwide. In March 2017, the Walk Free Foundation and International Labour Organization announced they will jointly develop a Global Estimate of Modern Slavery by November 2017.

The Australian Government supports civil society efforts to quantify the extent of human trafficking and slavery. As the Walk Free Foundation acknowledges, it is difficult to accurately estimate the prevalence of human trafficking and slavery.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Department of Social Services maintain detailed statistics about the number and characteristics of suspected trafficked people identified and assisted by the Australian Government.

Between 2004 and 30 June 2017, a total of 342 suspected trafficked people have been referred to the Government's Support for Trafficked People Program administered by DSS. Referral to the Support for Trafficked People Program is based on whether the AFP assesses the person is, or may have been, a victim of a human trafficking or slavery-related offence.

As at 30 June 2017, there were 54 people on the Support for Trafficked People Program, of whom:

- 46 were female;
- eight were male;
- seven were trafficked into sexual exploitation and 47 were trafficked for other purposes; and
- 20 were forced marriage clients (including eight minors).
 - Forty forced marriage clients have been assisted under the Support for Trafficked People Program since the criminalisation of forced marriage in March 2013.