



Christine Middap

Editor

The Weekend Australia Magazine

Via email: letters@theaustralian.com.au

17 June 2014

Dear Ms. Middap,

Anne Barrowclough's cover story on forced marriage last weekend failed to highlight the role of child protection authorities in responding to forced marriage. Community workers and other professionals are required by law to notify statutory child protection authorities in cases involving abuse of a young person including forced marriage.

Statutory child protection authorities have an established legal framework to ensure the safety and rights of children and young people are upheld. Continued underreporting of forced marriage cases denies children and young people access to this framework. It also keeps the issue hidden.

Forced marriage is an issue that requires collaboration and consultation between the community, service providers and government. Increased reporting will catalyse the government to build targeted frameworks, which includes resourcing specialist services, education and capacity building of local communities.

The Salvation Army's Safe House for victims of trafficking and slavery supports women and young women at risk or subjected to forced marriage. Child protection authorities have an important role in addressing forced marriage, and communities need to be proactive in engaging with them to build a response that keeps children and young people safe.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Laura Vidal".

Laura Vidal

Campaign Coordinator

The Salvation Army

the Freedom Partnership – *to End Modern Slavery*

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