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# The Freedom Partnership End Modern Slavery



The Salvation Army's Freedom Partnership welcomes recommendations for Australia in the 2016 Trafficking in Persons Report, released by the U.S. State Department's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Among the recommendations were to:

- Vigorously investigate and prosecute trafficking offenses, with increased focus on labor trafficking, and convict and stringently sentence sex and labor traffickers;
- Increase efforts to train police and other front-line officers to recognize indicators of trafficking and respond to suspected cases of both sex and labor trafficking;
- Increase training for prosecutors and judges on Australian trafficking laws;
- Strengthen efforts to proactively identify trafficking victims among vulnerable groups, such as undocumented migrants or workers filing civil grievances;
- Require social service providers to be present when conducting initial screening interviews with potential victims and ensure such interviews are conducted in a safe and neutral location; continue efforts to expedite visas for victims; and
- Continue to implement or fund awareness campaigns, particularly among rural communities and migrant populations;

"These recommendations are spot on", said Heather Moore, National Policy and Advocacy Coordinator for the Freedom Partnership to End Modern Slavery, which runs the country's only safe house for women recovering from slavery and slavery-like conditions. **"The TIP Report rightly acknowledges the great work Australia has done to establish a robust framework to prosecute slavery offences; but it also illustrates we have a lot more to do to identify and protect victims and prosecute offenders."**

Of particular importance is vulnerability of undocumented migrants and workers who have employment claims before the Fair Work Commission and Ombudsman. "The line between labour exploitation and slavery is extremely fine. We would like to see greater clarity on how government is using the improved 2013 legislation to identify victims amongst employer sponsored workers and international students," Ms. Moore said.

**"The number of reports of worker exploitation across a range of visas shows we have a serious problem. We have cast an industrial relations lens over these cases, but we also need to consider whether some of these cases actually cross over into the criminal area."**

In addition to the above recommendations, The Salvation Army is also recommending a framework to link foreign workers into an appropriate community-based organisation to educate them on employment rights and support them should they experience unlawful workplace conduct; a licensing and regulation scheme for labour hire companies; a right of stay for workers who have a claim before Fair Work Australia; and embedding human trafficking specialists in immigration compliance operations, such as Taskforce Cadena.