



THE CASE FOR AN AUSTRALIAN MODERN SLAVERY ACT

GUIDE TO FILING SUBMISSIONS

On 15 February 2017, the Attorney General, Senator the Hon George Brandis QC, asked the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, to inquire into and report on whether the Government should introduce an Australian Modern Slavery Act.

We have prepared this brief guide for those who are not familiar with the inquiry process, how to file a submission or what to focus on. This information is designed to complement, not replace the official and detailed information available from the [Inquiry Homepage](#), or the detailed research resources available online from [Walk Free Foundation](#), which we would encourage you to visit.

WHY: IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This Committee is one of the highest profile and significant within Parliament. The [members](#) of this inquiry are from all major parties, with some influential Senators and Members of Parliament. The calling of this inquiry demonstrates a strong commitment of the Government to consider the pressing issues of modern slavery, particularly focusing on its prevalence within supply chains and accountability of businesses. The issues have already garnered significant bipartisan interest and support.

This current inquiry builds upon the recommendations within the 2013 report, [Trading Lives: Modern Day Human Trafficking](#). We encourage you to read this report which frames the context within which the Government will be considering these issues. Several foundational issues surrounding modern slavery have already been considered by this report. This inquiry should be also viewed within the context of current initiatives within Australia and internationally, including:

WITHIN AUSTRALIA

- Australian [National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-2019](#), which included the convening and filing of recommendations (not yet public) by the Supply Chain Working Group
- Growing momentum for an [Australian National Action Plan](#) for implementation of [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)
- Intensive lobbying by groups over many years, including the recent campaign by the [Australian Freedom Network](#)
- [Ministerial working group](#) to protect vulnerable foreign workers

OVERSEAS

- Not only the introduction of the [UK Modern Slavery Act 2015](#), but also international equivalent laws or proposed laws being debated in the [US](#), [France](#), and across [Europe](#).
- Recommendation [8.7](#) of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) – see [Alliance 8.7](#), namely to eradicate forced labour, modern slavery, human trafficking and child labour by the year 2030
- The 2016 [priorities of the German G20](#) presidency to “enhance and improve employment” by creating sustainable global supply chains

HOW: FORM OF SUBMISSION?

There is no set format for a submission. Submissions may be in the form of a:

- letter
- short document
- more substantial paper
- video, an audio clip or other multimedia format

Strong submissions will be those that are persuasive and succinct, with clear recommendations. You should avoid repeating information already in the public domain or previously considered by the Government. Current case studies, experiences from businesses and focusing on your area of expertise will be most valuable. The Inquiry home page has more information on [how to submit](#), [form of submissions](#) and [appearing as a witness](#).

WHAT: TO INCLUDE?

The most useful submissions for the Committee will be those that focus on your area of expertise and link back to the [Terms of Reference](#).

Walk Free Foundation, Salvation Army and other members of the Australian Freedom Network have discussed extensively on the top priorities for legal reform. Full details are available in our publication online – [The Case for an Australian Modern Slavery Act](#).

We recognise there are many areas for legal reform, but you may wish to join us in our call for laws that introduce as a priority these top 3 asks:

- 1. The appointment of an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner to lead Australia's fight against modern slavery, with powers and responsibilities similar to the appointed UK Anti-Slavery Commissioner (currently Kevin Hyland).**
Why: Independent oversight is vital to the success of any efforts to tackle the multifaceted crime of modern slavery which requires a response from a vast range of stakeholders across the public, private and community sectors.
- 2. At a minimum, legislation that requires all large organisations doing business in Australia to publish an annual "modern slavery statement" reporting on steps taken to eradicate modern slavery within their organisation and supply chains.**
Why: Large businesses have the power to influence change within supply chain networks, to drive up standards and remove the profitability of modern slavery.
- 3. The creation and maintenance of a free public central repository for all modern slavery statements.**
Why: a repository is needed to ensure laws are effective in bringing change and is an identified gap in the UK framework. A repository, and reports generated from it, can be used to measure the progress of organisations, improve public accountability and review social impact.

WHO: CAN SUBMIT?

Any interested persons and organisations can file a submission.

WHEN: TIMING?

Submissions from Australian organisations are due by **Friday, 28 April 2017**.

Submissions from International organisations and governments are due by **Friday, 19 May 2017**.

WHERE: DO I FILE?

The Committee prefers submissions filed [online](#).

Letters for submissions should be addressed to:

Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

ANYTHING ELSE:?

If you need any further information, or would like to sign up to our monthly newsletter and be kept informed of events in the lead up to the inquiry, please reach out to us at either:

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