



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Human Rights Sub Committee**

MEDIA RELEASE
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*Chair: Hon Laurie Ferguson MP
Deputy: Hon Philip Ruddock MP*

Committee to examine modern slavery

The Federal Parliament's Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade is launching an inquiry into modern slavery in Australia.

The trade of men, women and children through force or coercion is one of the fastest growing criminal activities in the world and the committee wants to examine Australia's efforts to combat the problem.

The United Nations estimates 2.5 million people worldwide are victims of this crime and 1.2 million of these are children. International efforts to tackle the problem will also be examined.

Australia has not escaped this serious form of exploitation: between 2004 and 2011, over 300 investigations and assessments of human trafficking and slavery offenses were conducted by the Australian Federal Police. Thirteen convictions resulted.

"People trafficking is rightly considered to be one of the most heinous crimes that can be committed against a person, and it's important that every country do as much as possible to combat this terrible crime," said Laurie Ferguson, Chair of the Human Rights Sub-Committee. "As part of this inquiry, we will be focusing on the best way to address the problem of people trafficking and all forms of slavery and, most importantly, how to prosecute offenders and how to protect and support the victims."

The Committee will also focus on:

- Ways to encourage effective international action to address all forms of slavery, slavery-like conditions and people trafficking.
- International best practice to address all forms of slavery, slavery-like conditions and people trafficking.

The committee is keen to hear from non government organisations, peak associations, academia, government departments and individuals. The committee will accept submissions, preferably by email, until Friday 28 September 2012.

Further details about the inquiry, including how to make a submission, can be obtained from the committee's website at <http://www.apf.gov.au/jfadt> or by contacting the committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313 or emailing jscfadt@aph.gov.au.

For media comment: please contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Laurie Ferguson MP on (02) 9829 7477 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 4290 (Parliament House)

For further information: please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313, via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.apf.gov.au/jfadt>