

LATVIEŠU APVIENĪBA AUSTRĀLIJĀ UN JAUNZĒLANDĒ

LATVIAN FEDERATION OF AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND Inc

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29 January, 2020

Committee Secretary

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

Parliament House, Canberra, ACT 2600, Australia

In response to your invitation for submissions re inquiry into and reporting on whether Australia should enact legislation comparable to the United States *Magnitsky Act 2012* we would like to express our strong support for enacting such legislation.

The Latvian Federation of Australia and New Zealand represents all Australian and New Zealand Latvian organisations. Many of the members of these organisations have had either personal or family experience of human rights abuse and the exploitation of power through corruption. We are therefore acutely aware of the need to have strong legislation in place that protects Australians as individuals and prevents Australia becoming a haven for human rights abusers and gains from corrupt acts.

If the legislation is adopted and conscientiously implemented, it will serve as a further symbol of Australia's commitment to the rule of law and human rights, and act as another step in the government's ambition to create a hostile environment for criminals and their assets. The possibility of litigation is by no means a compelling argument against the adoption of a Magnitsky clause.

GMA represents a completely new and innovative instrument to secure **individual accountability** for human rights violations and corrupt acts. It will be a human rights protection instrument with real teeth. Let us follow the lead of America, Canada, UK, the Baltic States thus joining our allies to use targeted sanctions to fight human rights abuses.

To really convince foreign kleptocrats that there is a price to pay for their misdeeds, **a systemic and consistent response to the influx of tainted money is necessary**, of which the Magnitsky sanctions can be but one part.

We urge the Committee and wish it success to work through the complexities of introducing this legislation into our system so that its intent becomes a valuable tool in the joint fight.

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Janis Grauds

President of the Latvian Federation of Australia and New Zealand