

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2017**

**Attorney General's Department**

**Program: 1.2 AGD Operating Expenses - National Security and Criminal Justice**

**Question No. BE17-021**

**Senator Singh asked the following question on 24 May 2017:**

Senator SINGH: Yes, I understand how you are looking at the issue. I am actually after data. You mentioned referrals. I think that is the most concrete answer you have given so far. I am happy for you to take it on notice, but I would like to know how the department is provided with some kind of figure of the number of people in modern slavery. That leads to my next question, which is: how many are there? How many people are there currently on the department's books trapped in slavery or slavery-like circumstances in Australia?

Ms Hawkins: I think we might have to take it on notice, but I also say to you that, because of the nature of modern slavery—because it is such a complex and clandestine crime—it in itself is a difficult question to answer. But we will take it on notice and look at the sources—

Senator SINGH: So you have no idea—not even a rough estimate? The department does not even have a rough estimate of how many people in Australia are trapped in slavery or slavery-like conditions?

Ms Hawkins: I personally do not have it in front of me. I am sure that there are people who—

Senator SINGH: I can tell you. It is 4,300.

CHAIR: Why do you ask the question if you have got the answer?

Senator SINGH: It is up to the department to answer the questions that I ask, and I wanted to see if the figure that I have been provided, which is by the NGO sector, is correct and wanted to see how the department itself comes up with its own metrics to determine if this figure is correct.

CHAIR: Okay. Let's have Ms Hawkins give the answer she was about to give when I interrupted.

Ms Hawkins: I was saying that I am sure someone will have that answer, and we will take it on notice and get back to you.

**The response to the honourable Senator's question is as follows:**

Currently there is no internationally accepted estimate of the number of victims of modern slavery worldwide. The Walk Free Foundation's Global Slavery Index estimates there are 45.8 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, with 4,300 victims in Australia. The International Labour Organization estimates there are almost 21 million victims of forced labour worldwide. In March 2017, the Walk Free Foundation and International Labour Organization announced they will jointly develop a Global Estimate of Modern Slavery by November 2017.

The Australian Government supports civil society efforts to quantify the extent of human trafficking and slavery. As the Walk Free Foundation acknowledges, it is difficult to accurately estimate the prevalence of human trafficking and slavery.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Department of Social Services maintain detailed statistics about the number and characteristics of suspected trafficked people identified and assisted by the Australian Government.

Between 2004 and 30 June 2017, a total of 342 suspected trafficked people have been referred to the Government's Support for Trafficked People Program administered by DSS. Referral to the Support for Trafficked People Program is based on whether the AFP assesses the person is, or may have been, a victim of a human trafficking or slavery-related offence.

As at 30 June 2017, there were 54 people on the Support for Trafficked People Program, of whom:

- 46 were female;
- eight were male;
- seven were trafficked into sexual exploitation and 47 were trafficked for other purposes; and
- 20 were forced marriage clients (including eight minors).
  - Forty forced marriage clients have been assisted under the Support for Trafficked People Program since the criminalisation of forced marriage in March 2013.