

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2016 - 2017**

**1.7 National Security and Criminal Justice**

**Question No. BE17-159**

**Senator Pratt asked the following question on 05 June 2017:**

- 1) Has the practice of forced and early marriage been reduced as a result of actions under the National Action Plan?
- 2) Does the NAP articulate a specific target toward this aim which can be measured?
- 3) How do the implementers of the NAP measure whether their activities are succeeding in reducing prevalence of trafficking, slavery and slavery-like practices? (I.e. training of police and immigration officials)

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

The Australian Government criminalised forced marriage in March 2013. Since then, the number of referrals received by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) involving people in, or at risk of, forced marriage has generally increased (62 in 2016-17, compared with 69 in 2015-16, 33 in 2014-15 and 11 in 2013-14). The number of referrals is not necessarily reflective of the number of ongoing investigations, confirmed cases or individual victims.

The rise in referrals can partly be attributed to increased community engagement, education and awareness-raising efforts on forced marriage issues. The true extent of forced marriage in Australia is very difficult to quantify due to the complex and clandestine nature of the crime.

The primary mechanism for assessing initiatives and programs under the *National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking and Slavery 2015-19* (National Action Plan) is through the Government's annual Interdepartmental Committee on Human Trafficking and Slavery (IDC) report to the Australian Parliament.