

**Submission
No 90**

**INQUIRY INTO MODERN SLAVERY ACT 2018 AND
ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

Organisation: Department of Classics and Ancient History, University of Sydney

Date Received: 10 October 2019

Date : 4 October 2019

To: The NSW Legislative Council's Standing Committee on Social Issues - Inquiry into the Modern Slavery Act 2018 and associated matters

Prepared by: _____, Department of Classics and Ancient History, University of Sydney.

To whom it may concern,

I write on behalf of the Department of Classics and Ancient History at the University of Sydney, Australia, to urge you to ensure that the NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 is brought into action as it was intended.

We are deeply concerned that the decision by the NSW Government to refer the NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 (NSW Act) to the Legislative Council Standing Committee on Social Issues for review rather than enacting the legislation has placed the intention, implementation and effectiveness of the Act at risk – and with it the lives of thousands if not millions of people living in modern slavery both in Australia and across the world.

The communities of Ancient Greece and Rome were slave-owning communities. Archaeological as well as textual evidence testifies to the horrendous conditions within which many of these slaves lived. Legally non-persons, slaves were among the most vulnerable in ancient societies. Rape, child-labour, forced separation from family members as well as poor living standards, limited freedom of movement and minimal educational opportunities characterized the experience of many ancient slaves. Distressingly, many of the same problems characterize the experience of modern slaves.

As individuals and as a Department we value the dignity of all human life and the fundamental human right to freedom from exploitation. We abhor the use of forced marriage as a means of enslaving girls and women and we seek your help to ensure the protection of children, to safeguard against the vulnerability of refugees, asylum seekers, displaced people, and those in greatest poverty, the homeless and people with mental health problems. As members of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, we well understand the importance of developing a culture of social justice.

No one wants Australia to be a society built on slavery. No individual wants to benefit from the exploitation of another human being. NSW should take pride in showing leadership on the world stage with this legislation and, having already determined to do so, you must now act.

Yours sincerely,

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