

**Submission  
No 91**

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

**Name:** Mr Mark Wallis  
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**MARK WALLIS**

To: NSW Parliament Standing Committee on Social Issues  
Subject: Inquiry into the Modern Slavery Act 2018  
Ref: The NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 and Commonwealth Modern Slavery Act 2018  
Date: 7<sup>th</sup> October 2019

My name is Mark Wallis, an Australian citizen born and raised in Sydney. I have a personal 'vested' interest in the NSW and Commonwealth Modern Slavery Acts and was delighted and proud to see my state and my country introduce both last year. In particular, the NSW Act seemed to set a new world standard and gave some real hope that the appalling crime of slavery might be addressed in our century.

I am however now extremely concerned and disappointed that the New South Wales Act whilst passed and assented was not implemented on July 1 this year as it should have been. With the general definition of "modern slavery" as "the forcing coercing, threatening, deceiving somebody else to exploit them for slavery, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage and forced marriage", it is beyond belief that the Government or indeed anyone would not remain committed to providing the best possible model of legislation as a matter of absolute urgency.

My distant relative (great, great, great Uncle) was a gentleman named Granville Sharp. The grandson of Dr John Sharp, the Archbishop of York, Granville Sharp was a leading light in the abolitionist movement at the end of the 1700s and early 1800s and played a major role in the ending of transatlantic slavery and subsequently slavery across the British Empire. A plaque located in Poets Corner of Westminster Abbey (erected by the African Institution of London in 1816) states "He was incessant in his labours to improve the condition of mankind founding public happiness on public virtue. He aimed to rescue his native country from the guilt & inconsistency of employing the arm of freedom to rivet the fetters of bondage & established for the Negro race, in the person of Somerset, the long disputed rights of human nature, having, in this glorious cause, triumphed over the combined resistance of interest, prejudice & pride. He took his post among the foremost of the honourable band associated to deliver Africa from the rapacity of Europe by the abolition of the slave trade. Nor was death permitted to interrupt his career of usefulness till he had witnessed that act of the British Parliament by which the "abolition" was decreed" etc.

As you can see from the above inscription on the plaque commemorating him, Granville Sharp spent his entire life working for the abolition of Slavery and was successful in his endeavours. He has been and continues to be an inspiration for our extended family and thus the NSW Modern Slavery Act was greeted by us all with great delight and pride, that our state two centuries later and on the other side of the world would also take such a lead.

The Commonwealth legislation is a positive step in the right direction but it is quantifiably less substantial than the NSW Act. If the NSW Act is abandoned in favour of the Commonwealth Act as appears to be the major question facing this Inquiry, we will be left with supply chain legislation only and a AUD\$100m threshold twice that operating in the UK and twice that of the NSW legislation. If the Commonwealth Act is only reviewed and one would hope strengthened in another three years many thousands more people will suffer in the meantime.

The abhorrence and inhumanity of this crime must be eradicated now, not in years to come! We have a moral obligation to fast-track the work being done by many people and organisations such as Stop The Traffic, Oxfam and War On Slavery to name but a few organisations I know to have banded together to provide a co-branded submission.

To walk away from the stronger legislation this state passed would leave the “moral imperative” the NSW Premier identified unheeded and appear at least negligent if not a crime in itself - not to mention the stain on the lifetime of work by my forebears and many others.

I would be happy to discuss this with anyone who has a vested interest in seeing slavery abolished and outlawed in our modern world.