

**Submission
No 98**

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

Name: Ms Olivia Jackson

Date Received: 16 October 2019

Olivia Jackson

16 October 2019

Attention: Members of the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues

Cc Felicity Wilson, Member of NSW Legislative Assembly, Member for North Shore (postal address)

Cc Gladys Berejilkian, Premier of NSW

Dear Members of the NSW Standing Committee on Social Issues,

NSW Modern Slavery Act

I write to you in regard to the Inquiry the NSW government has asked you to undertake into the NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 passed unanimously by the NSW Legislative Council and the NSW Legislative Assembly in June last year and assented on 27 June 2018.

Born in New South Wales, I was extremely proud when the Act was passed in June this year. However, was severely disappointed the Act was not enacted on the first of July as the government previously committed. It was passed and assented nearly fifteen months ago, and the explanations given in the Legislative Council and the Terms of Reference do not do the government any credit. Rather alongside this Inquiry, they appear to be a retreat from an important piece of legislation that would benefit thousands of people, as the Premier herself proudly said in her second reading speech. Given the size of the NSW economy, statistics provided by the UN, ILO and Walkfree indicate the number of people who could benefit from the legislation would likely be millions.

I am a second-year student at the University of Melbourne, studying International Politics and Development. This has granted me a rich insight into the potential for both domestic and international policies to either perpetuate inequality and mistreatment or mitigating it

dramatically. Therefore, I believe that state-driven action is one of the most facilitative steps in engendering national action.

Additionally, living in a residential college with two hundred fellow university students creates an environment of politically engaged, driven and progressive young people who are keen to see our government take action on the issues which we see as posing an immediate and undeniable threat to humanity globally. Therefore, the failure to enact the Act has resonated strongly amongst this community, exacerbating sentiments of disillusionment with our government and its failure to act not only on issues which we, as young people, are voicing as important, but also on an issue which is objectively the most detrimental contemporary threat to human rights.

Consequently, I would like to convey my strongest dismay that such critical legislation has been treated with overt disregard, particularly in light of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, to which Australia has committed. I believe that the reasons this Act must be enacted immediately are threefold.

Firstly, New South Wales is the seventh largest economy in the Southern hemisphere, meaning that current state policies will play a critical regional and international role in shaping the future world in which my generation wants to live. According to ILO estimates, forced labour globally generates \$150 billion US dollars of illegal profit annually, making slavery the third most profitable criminal activity in the world. Therefore, assessing the issue of modern slavery through a purely economic lens reveals that the wealth produced through slavery, which remains external to taxation systems, is robbing individuals. This reinforces how modern slavery undeniably affects each and every one of us. Therefore, mitigating illegal capital generated through forced labour will economically benefit Australian society as a whole.

Secondly, I strongly believe that aligning state and federal policies with the ideologies of a growlingly progressive young voter population is in the political interest of all politicians. Therefore, from the viewpoint of political expediency, backing out of an Act such as this would have unfavourable political implications. However, I am of the opinion that reneging

on the legislation passed in June is more than just an unwise political move, but more significantly a matter of morality for humanity.

Therefore, I argue that the most critical reason this legislation must be enacted is the moral and ethical factors underlying it. Over forty million humans are victims of modern slavery and this number grows daily. As a result, the time that this legislation has been suspended will already see significant numbers of individuals being subjected to abhorrent acts of slavery and debt bondage, with their human rights grossly violated.

The NSW Modern Slavery Act 2018 (MSA) has the potential to be catalytic in a nation-wide, codified move towards anti-slavery, and even influence the progression of international action.

With these economic, political and moral factors in mind, I see it as undeniable that it is of urgent importance to ensure the Act becomes operational. Therefore, I encourage you to take immediate, tangible action.

Regards,

Olivia Jackson