

FECCA SUPPORTS MODERN SLAVERY ACT

The Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia (FECCA) has thrown its full support behind moves for a Modern Slavery Act.

A committee of the Australian Parliament has issued a report into modern slavery, recommending that special legislation be introduced to outlaw slavery, including the appointment of an independent slavery commissioner.

The report, entitled *Hidden in plain sight: an inquiry into establishing a modern slavery act in Australia*, has been tabled in Parliament by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

The Chairperson of FECCA, Ms Mary Patetsos, said today: "FECCA contributed to this inquiry. We were part of a coalition of NGOs who worked together to lobby for a Modern Slavery Act, an Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, scrutiny of supply chains, and better protections for migrant workers, particularly those on temporary visas."

The Committee's report recommends:

- Changes to Australia's visa system to eliminate 'tied visas' which often lead to exploitation and modern slavery;
- A uniform national labour-hire licensing scheme; and
- A national compensation scheme for victims of modern slavery.

"Some of the stories heard by the committee were horrific," Ms Patetsos said.

"This inquiry—and others—have found that in Australia, exploitation of migrant workers and backpackers is commonplace, particularly in regional and rural areas."

"It is time this issue is addressed and FECCA believes, like the Parliament, that a modern slavery Act is essential," Ms Patetsos said.

The report can be found here [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade](https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Foreign_Affairs_Defence_and_Trade)

FECCA is the national peak body representing Australians from CALD backgrounds. FECCA's role is to advocate and promote issues on behalf of its constituency to government, business and the broader community.

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