

Forced Marriage in Australia - Background information.



Ahead of the upcoming Good Conversations forum on Thursday 7 June, at the Melbourne Town please find below further information about Forced Marriage in Australia.

Forced Marriage Happens in Australia

Around the world, 1 in 5 girls are said to be married before the age of 18. There are over 650 million women alive today that were married as children¹. Child, early and forced marriage is a global human rights abuse that cuts across countries, cultures, religions and ethnicities—and Australia is not immune.

- Forced marriage was criminalised in Australia as a practice of slavery under the Commonwealth Criminal Code in 2013;
- A forced marriage is when a person get married without freely and fully consenting because they have been coerced, threatened or deceived;
- A forced marriage is distinguished from an arranged marriage—which is a marriage entered into freely, and is not against the law in Australia.

The true extent of forced marriage in Australia is unknown as available data is not comprehensive. Over the last 5 years, the Australian Federal Police have investigated over 170 cases of alleged forced marriage—this number is only the tip of the iceberg.

Upcoming Events

[Good Conversations](#)- Forced Marriage, Slavery and Family Violence, 7 June 2018

¹ <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/where-does-it-happen/>

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Good Shepherd in the Media

- Good Shepherd welcomes government step toward improving protection for victims of forced marriage [<https://www.goodshep.org.au/news-events/good-shepherd-welcomes-government-s-step-toward-improving-protections-for-victims-of-forced-marriage>]
- Good Shepherd speaks out for victims of forced marriage [<http://www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org/index.php/justice-network/resources-a-information/item/2622-good-shepherd-speaks-out-for-victims-of-forced-marriage>]
- Child marriage victims can now access support without dobbing family into police [<https://www.sbs.com.au/news/the-feed/child-marriage-victims-can-now-access-support-without-dobbing-family-into-police>]
- Pressing for progress on forced marriage in Australia [<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/news/pressing-progress-forced-marriage-australia/>]
- Good Shepherd calls for a focus on forced marriage in Australia [<http://cathnews.com/media-releases/media-releases-2016/232-160220-good-shepherd-calls-for-focus-on-forced-marriage-in-australia-20feb2016/file>]

Research & Resources

- The Right to Refuse: Examining Forced Marriage in Australia [https://www.goodshep.org.au/media/1222/right-to-refuse_final-report_v2.pdf]
- Developing Innovative and Best Practice Solutions to Address Forced Marriage in Australia [<https://www.churchilltrust.com.au/fellows/detail/4179/Laura+Vidal>]
- Australia's response to forced marriage better, but still lacking [<http://www.powertopersuade.org.au/blog/australias-response-to-early-and-forced-marriage-better-but-still-lacking/26/2/2018>]
- Australian Government 2017 Law Enforcement Inquiry on Human Trafficking— Forced Marriage [https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/Law_Enforcement/Humantrafficking45/Report/c05]
- Hidden Exploitation: Women in forced labour, marriage and migration [*attached*]
- Forced Marriage in Australia: Definitely not the usual suspects [<http://www.e-ir.info/2015/09/23/forced-marriage-in-australia-definitely-not-the-usual-suspects/>]
- Forced Marriage: When the family home is no longer safe [<https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=359298028997467;res=IELHSS>]
- Forced and Servile Marriage Case Book [<http://apo.org.au/node/57417>]

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- Good Shepherd Position Paper on Forced Marriage
[https://www.goodshep.org.au/media/1271/g sanz_forced-marriage-in-australia_positionpaper.pdf]

Policy Advocacy

Forced marriage is defined as a practice of slavery in Australia. We identify forced marriage as a practice that occurs along a continuum and Australia must consider a range of responses to both prevent the practice and meet the needs of those at risk.

We work with civil society, state and federal governments to identify best-practice interventions in prevention and protection. We are one of five key drivers of the Victorian Forced Marriage Network, and an active member of the New South Wales Forced Marriage Network.

Our position:

- In addition to understanding forced marriage as slavery, we recognise forced marriage as gender-based violence. We call for the recognition of forced marriage within nation-wide family violence and child protection frameworks.

We advocate for:

- Expanding the definition of family violence to include forced marriage
- Full de-linking of support for victims of forced marriage from engagement and participation with law enforcement
- Introduction of Forced Marriage Protection Orders
- Development of a central point of coordination for government and civil society stakeholders

Policy Submissions

- Statement to the Commission on the Status of Women- Session 62 (2018)
[attached]
- Trafficking in Persons Report 2018
[attached]
- Submission to the Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence
[<http://www.rcfv.com.au/getattachment/24167688-0844-44CD-964B-61C254F230E8/Good-Shepherd-Australia-New-Zealand>]

Get Help

If you or somebody you know is experiencing forced marriage there is help available.

In an emergency, always contact 000 and speak to the police.

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- Make a report to the Australian Federal Police [<https://www.afp.gov.au/what-we-do/crime-types/human-trafficking>]
- My Blue Sky is an online resource and legal service responding to forced marriage in Australia. A list of organisations who can provide assistance across Australia is also available through the site [<https://www.mybluesky.org.au>]
- Legal Aid Family Law Early Intervention Unit can provide confidential legal assistance about family law options [<https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/family-law/family-law-early-intervention-service>]
- The Salvation Army Trafficking and Slavery Safe House can be contacted for assistance with case management and accommodation—1300 473 560 [<https://endslavery.salvos.org.au/index.php/get-help/the-safe-house-for-trafficking-slavery/>]
- InTouch Multicultural Centre for Family Violence can be contacted for assistance with case management and community support—1800 755 988 [<http://www.intouch.org.au>]

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