

26 February 2020

Professor Jennifer Burn  
Anti-Slavery Commissioner  
GPO Box 5341  
Sydney NSW 2001

Dear Commissioner

### **Modern Slavery and Refugees**

I write to follow up concerns about modern slavery affecting refugees and asylum seekers who live in New South Wales. In response to my January 2019 request on this matter, you said that you were consulting with victims' advocates and community and would consider this as an important matter.

Feedback from constituents and community service providers reinforces my concern that refugees and asylum seekers may be vulnerable to modern slavery, through forced labour, trafficking and debt bondage. Abolition of the Commonwealth Status Resolution Support Services program has removed the only income and support for a number of refugees.

Homelessness service providers report that the number of refugees needing accommodation has grown significantly and many refugees they meet have been or are being subject to criminal and predatory threats and intimidation to force vulnerable people to work extensively long hours on miniscule pay. People in this situation are not eligible for social housing and many government services. I have disturbing reports about women on partnership visas in precarious circumstances, who are subject to victims of domestic and sexual assault.

Many refugees and asylum seekers have few income options, lack family and community support networks and fear authorities, leaving them vulnerable to those wanting to take advantage of them. The stigma and dehumanisation from some political and media spheres adds to their vulnerability.

I share community concern that the use of refugees as forced labour needs urgent attention and would appreciate meeting with you to hear about your investigations and plans for action.

***Could you please meet with me and homelessness service providers to discuss modern slavery impacts on refugees and asylum seekers and measures to protect them from harm and abuse?***

Yours sincerely



Alex Greenwich  
**Member for Sydney**

