

What is slavery?

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WHAT IS SLAVERY LINKS ABOUT?

Slavery Links and the Slavery Links Library exist because:

- Slavery did not stop two hundred years ago
- Slavery has been found in Australia in recent times
- You, we and others in Australia can help to prevent slavery

WHAT IS SLAVERY?

Slavery exists when one person acts like he or she owns another person.¹

In Australia, the Commonwealth Criminal Code defines some offences of slavery and slavery-like practices. Slavery has been found in Australia.

In the Wei Tang case (2008), the High Court upheld the conviction of a brothel keeper who kept women in a state of slavery in Melbourne.

Slavery-like practices have also been found in agriculture, construction, restaurants and other parts of Australian life.

THE EXPERIENCE OF SLAVERY

Think about the experience. What would you be, how would you feel:

- If you were owned by someone else?
- If you were a slave owner or a slave trader?
- If you were the owner or manager of a business that was found to use slave labour?
- If you were a shareholder, who found that profits or a dividend came from slave labour?

1. The precise words are “the exercise of any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership”. These words come to us from two international agreements about slavery: The International Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery 1926 and the Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery 1956.

WHAT THE LAW SAYS ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE OF SLAVERY

After the 1990s Balkans war, an International Tribunal² was established to deal with crimes that had been committed. The Tribunal defined eleven tests to indicate if ownership and enslavement had occurred.

(These tests were called *indicia* or indicators of slavery. The *indicia* were used by Australia's High Court in the case of R v Wei Tang, 2008.)

The tests of ownership and enslavement were:

- Control of movement
- Control of environment
- Psychological control
- Control of escape
- Force
- Threat of force or coercion
- Durance (duration of toil, forced confinement)
- Assertion of exclusivity
- Subjection to cruel treatment and abuse
- control of sexuality
- forced labour

In a Library exhibition or when we provide a Library talk to a lay audience, we shorten the list to five points:

- Force
- Cruelty
- Control
- Coercion
- Abuse

2. The trial, by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, (Prosecutor v. Kunarac, Kovac and Vukovic, Case No IT-97-25-T, Judgement, ¶ 353 and nn. 955-57 [Mar. 15, 2001]) was cited in Anne Gallagher (2009) Human Rights and Human Trafficking: A Quagmire or Firm Ground? A response to James Hathaway, [Virginia Journal of International Law](#), Vol 49, No 4, page 807.

WHAT IS THE SLAVERY LINKS LIBRARY?

Slavery Links is a [community association](#) with a six-year track record of research and action to minimise the harm arising from modern slavery.

The Slavery Links Library has a solid [catalogue](#) of evidence-based and historical works about slavery. The Library supports research activities and [exhibitions](#) as well as academic seminars, briefings about slavery, evidence-giving to parliamentary inquiries, and workshops with adult education groups, community groups, interest groups, secular and faith groups.

The Slavery Links Library also supports the development of education materials. The Library has supported the development of [sixteen workshop topics](#). The Library supported the book [Australians and Modern Slavery](#). The Library has supported the preparation of papers for [judicial officers](#), [human rights staff](#) and [family practitioners](#).

How does the Library operate?

The Slavery Links Library is funded by members, not by Government, philanthropic trusts or appeals for public money. We do accept donations.

What difference do we make?

The internet is not a reliable source of information about slavery.

The Slavery Links Library collects and disseminates information to support better business decisions, more informed consumers, more engaged members of Non Government Organisations. The Library supports increased community awareness and community action. Library information assists organisations to recognise their anti-slavery roles more fully.

We encourage you to [join the Library](#), as:

- A member
- A student member
- A donor member

We invite your support, to:

- Provide professional advice
- Provide practical support
- Donate an early edition of a book about slavery
- Donate original research or historical papers about slavery