**Guideline for writing to a Member of Parliament**

**Date**

**Dear** [insert relevant name],

**Introduction.**

Who are you: You may describe your interest in the issue, your constituency, occupation, interests, political/cultural engagement, etc.

Who are you representing: Are you a concerned individual or writing on behalf of a group?

Why are you interested in the issue: Have you worked in the area or with potential victims? Are you concerned about the vulnerability of these people? Have you listened to a talk recently or read an article that has addressed the issue?

State your purpose: To express concern over the existing fragmented approach to victims compensation and call for a national compensation scheme for survivors of modern slavery.

**Outline the issue.**

Emphasise the importance of compensation and Australia’s duty/commitment to provide effective remedy to survivors of modern slavery. You may wish to touch on some of the following points.

Effective remedy for survivors of modern slavery serves the following functions.

* 1. Provides financial security to reduce vulnerability and the risk of re-trafficking.
	2. Enables survivors to better re-integrate into communities.
	3. Provides acknowledgement of the harm that survivors have suffered.
	4. May contribute to the punishment of traffickers.

Australia’s international commitments to effective remedy.

1. UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Palermo Protocol.
2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Right.
3. The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
4. The Convention against Torture
5. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

Address concern with the current state-based approach to compensation for survivors of modern slavery. You may wish to note the following issues.

Challenges with the state and territory schemes.

1. Differences in eligibility criteria.
2. Not all jurisdictions recognise subtle forms of violence that may be exerted by exploiters to coerce a person into forms of slavery such as debt bondage.
3. Differences in maximum compensation entitlements.
4. Not designed for the specific circumstances of modern slavery.

**Conclusion**

* Emphasise the need for a national scheme to ensure help proper justice for victims of modern slavery.
* Request that parliament introduce the national compensation scheme

If you do decide to act on this important matter, please share with us.

For more information on modern slavery and the need for a national scheme please visit our webpage:

<https://antislavery.org.au/justice-for-all> or contact jennifer.burn@uts.edu.au or morgan.southwick@uts.edu.au

**Example Letter**

[Date]

Dear [insert relevant name],

My name is [insert], and I am a constituent in your electorate of [Insert]. I am writing on behalf of [insert] regarding our deep and grave concern over the lack of a coordinated approach to compensation for survivors of modern slavery in Australia.

Effective remedy for these vulnerable groups is of vital importance. It can help to reduce the risk of re-entering slave-like conditions, help them reintegrate into their communities, and provide an important restorative function. Australia has committed itself to numerous conventions that require it to provide effective remedies including the Palermo Protocol. Yet, the current state-based approach to the federal crime of slavery means that it continues to fall short of these commitments.

Concerningly, there are gross discrepancies between each state regarding compensation including eligibility, the amounts payable and time frames for reporting. What’s more, is that using a state-based model for a federal crime that has no regard for state borders is both illogical and prohibitive for victims seeking justice.

I urge you to endorse a national compensation scheme in parliament. This is the only rational means to ensure a path to justice that is accessible, uniform, and responsive.

Sincerely,

[Name]