

Domestic Servitude

Domestic Servitude is a form of slavery which occurs in households, and in most cases effects women and children. Domestic workers are brought into a country or are transported within a country; many suffer abuse by their 'employer' including sexual assault. Domestic workers have been trafficked into private homes as well as Embassies and Consulates. Visas often require that a domestic worker remains with the original employer or face deportation; this discourages a worker from reporting any abuse.

Melbourne husband and wife who held a woman in slavery in their home for eight years have been jailed. This is the first time a case of slavery by domestic servitude has been heard in an Australian Court. The wife, deemed to be more culpable, was sentenced for eight years with a non-parole period of four years. Her husband received a six year sentence with a non-parole period of three years. The enslaved woman was forced to cook, clean and care for the couples children and suffered physical abuse. Working for up to 23 hours a day she received only \$3.39 per day.

In sentencing the couple in the Victorian Supreme Court Justice John Champion commented we need to review our image of slavery. "We must rid ourselves of ingrained images of rows of men chained together at the oars of a galley or men, women and children working in fields in bondage. Slavery can be much more subtle than that, and may not involve physical restraint. It must be reaffirmed that possessing or using a person in a condition of slavery is repugnant, degrading of the human condition, and a gross breach of human rights."

Modern Slavery Snapshot



50 million people live in slavery globally



71% are female (women and girls)



Only 1 in 5 victims are detected in Australia

From ACRATH Website