



# **EVERY GIRL DESERVES A CHILDHOOD AND A CHANCE FOR A **BRIGHT** FUTURE.**

## **Underage Forced Marriage.**

Australia offers great opportunities for its young people to fulfill their dreams. Everyone deserves the right to choose who they marry. Being forced to marry underage ruins a girl's chance for a brighter future. It limits their options for education and destroys the most important years of adolescence and childhood. It's also against the law. Let them choose a brighter future.

### **What is forced marriage?**

Forced marriage is when a person (or both people) marries without freely and fully consenting. They may be tricked, threatened or pressured into getting married.

### **How can someone be forced to get married?**

People can be forced to marry through physical and psychological means. This can include physical or sexual violence, threats, imprisonment, removal from school, or telling someone they will bring shame upon the family for not marrying.

### **What is underage forced marriage?**

Underage forced marriage, also known as forced child marriage, is when someone under the age of 18 is forced to marry.

Under Australian law, children under 18 cannot give their permission to marry. 16 and 17 year old children can only marry if they have the permission of the Court and their parents. No person under 16 can legally marry in Australia under any circumstance.

### **Who practices underage forced marriage?**

Underage forced marriage is not limited to any particular culture, religion or ethnicity.

### **Underage forced marriage is a crime in Australia.**

Underage forced marriage is against the law in Australia. So is forced marriage.

Anyone with a role in organising an underage forced marriage can be jailed for up to seven years. This can include family, friends, wedding organisers, marriage celebrants and religious leaders. The law applies even when the marriage or ceremony is a cultural or religious practice, and not a legally binding marriage.

It is also a crime when a person is brought to Australia from overseas for the purposes of a forced marriage, or taken from Australia to be forced to marry overseas. People involved in organising an overseas underage forced marriage can be jailed for up to 25 years .

### **What about arranged marriages?**

Forced marriage and arranged marriages are different.

An arranged marriage is when a person 18 or over is introduced to a possible spouse by someone else (usually family). Both people then choose whether they get married or not. Both have to freely agree to the arranged marriage.

Arranged marriage is legal in Australia.

### **If you suspect a child is being forced to marry, get help.**

It is often hard to know if a child or young person is being forced to marry underage. If you suspect someone is being forced to marry underage you should seek help as soon as possible.

It is important to consider both the safety of the person at risk of forced marriage and your own safety. If there is an immediate danger or threat of violence call 000.

### **Otherwise in NSW call the 24-hour Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.**

The Helpline can offer advice and assistance 24 hours a day for children and young people who are at risk of significant harm. This includes the risk of underage forced marriage.

There may also be someone you trust, like a doctor, teacher or family member, who you can speak to about a possible underage forced marriage.

If you speak a language other than English, contact the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 131 450 and ask to be connected to the Child Protection Helpline on 132 111.

### **More information**

End Exploitation (Australian Government initiative) [www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage](http://www.ag.gov.au/forcedmarriage)  
Anti-Slavery Australia, 02 9514 8115 [www.antislavery.org.au](http://www.antislavery.org.au)

**Call 132 111 for information and assistance.**

**UNDERAGE FORCED MARRIAGE IS AGAINST THE LAW IN AUSTRALIA  
LET THEM CHOOSE A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

**CHILD  
NOT  
BRIDE**