



Forced and Early Marriage

Forcing anybody to get married is a serious crime in Australia.

In Australia, people are free to choose whether to get married and who they want to marry. Usually, a person must be over **18 years** of age to be legally married. In some circumstances, a person over the age of **16 years** can marry a person over 18 years, but this requires a court order.

It is against Australian law to force, threaten or trick anyone into getting married. It is also against the law to encourage or help organise a forced marriage, and to be party to a forced marriage if you are not the victim. This applies to legal, cultural and religious marriages.

An arranged marriage, where both people freely consent to get married, is different to a forced marriage. Arranged marriages are legal in Australia.

If you or someone you know is in danger call the police on **000**.

Police in Australia are safe and can be trusted.

If you need a free interpreter call **131 450**.

It is illegal to take or send someone to another country for a forced marriage or get someone else to organise this.

Sometimes people are taken overseas against their will or are deceived into going overseas to be forced into a marriage. This is against the law and can result in imprisonment.

Are you, or is someone you know, at risk?

If you or someone you know is in, or at risk of, a forced or early marriage, you can contact the **Australian Federal Police (AFP)** on **131 237** (131AFP) for help.

The AFP can keep you safe, provide initial advice and refer you to other services for support, such as accommodation, financial support, counselling and legal and immigration advice. Further information is on the **AFP website** at **www.afp.gov.au**.

There are other services in Australia that can help.

My Blue Sky is Australia's national website and helpline dedicated to forced marriage prevention, information, referrals and free legal advice.

Call **(02) 9514 8115**, text **0481 070 844**, email **help@mybluesky.org.au**, or go to the **My Blue Sky website** at **www.mybluesky.org.au**

1800RESPECT is Australia's national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling service. It provides free, confidential telephone and online counselling and information. Counsellors will listen to you, answer questions and can refer you to other support services in your local area.

Call **1800 737 732** or go to the **1800RESPECT website** at **www.1800RESPECT.org.au**.

Do you need an interpreter?

Call the **Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)** on **131 450**. An interpreter from TIS can help you to communicate with other services, however TIS does not provide counselling. All calls are free and confidential.

For more information on forced marriage:

Visit the Department of **Home Affairs website** at **www.homeaffairs.gov.au** and search for “forced marriage”.