

**Parliamentary Joint Committee on the  
Australian Crime Commission**

**Inquiry into trafficking in women for  
sexual servitude**

**Submission No:22**

**Received 26 September 2003**

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a global voice **for women**

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Friday, 26 September 2003

The Secretary,  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission,  
Suite S1107, Parliament House,  
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam,

Soroptimist International is a Global Voice for Women working through awareness, advocacy and action in over 110 countries.

A Worldwide organisation for women in management and the professions, Soroptimist International strives for Human Rights for all, Equality, Development and Peace through Goodwill and Understanding, and Friendship.

Soroptimist International is committed to service to Local, National and International communities and active participation in decision-making at all levels of society.

Soroptimist International encourages members to be aware of and involved in the issues of society but it is non party-political and non-sectarian.

Soroptimist International holds General Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council and has representation at UN centres in New York, Paris, Geneva, Vienna and with UN Agencies which have granted the organisation recognised status as an International Non Government Organisation.

We, Soroptimist Regional Council of Victoria (Australia), strongly urge the Australian Government:

1. to ratify the UN Protocol for the Suppression and Punishment of those involved in trafficking of persons, especially of women and children. Please note this is a separate issue to people smuggling;

2. to initiate legislative changes, which will better protect women who have consented to work as prostitutes, but have been deceived as to their working conditions;

In particular it should be forbidden to ask the women to hand over their passports. They should be informed on arrival that they have a right to retain their passports and advised to keep them in their possession at all times;

3. to make available an Australian Visa to any apprehended woman who is a victim of trafficking, to enable her to remain in Australia if she gives information to the police or is prepared to testify in a trafficking case. We understand such visas are available in USA and some other countries;
4. to co-ordinate a comprehensive governmental approach to trafficking, focusing on the protection of women and children, involving relevant NGO's, Local, State and Federal government authorities, and including accommodation and counselling in the recovery services;
5. to allow three-months on the visa for 'reflective delay' to be available to women apprehended and suspected of being trafficked. This would provide the opportunity for victims to commence their recovery from the violence they have experienced and enable them to decide whether they wish to supply information to the authorities, as happens in the Netherlands;
6. to supply alternative detention arrangements to Villawood and Maribynong if the woman is to be detained;
7. to address men's demand for access to trafficked women;
8. to direct increased overseas aid to addressing the underlying factors giving rise to the vulnerability of young women e.g. tolerance of violence against women, war, inequality and poverty;
9. to co-operate with support agencies in trafficked women's countries of origin, encouraging initiatives to counter the exploitation of women; and
10. to provide support for specialist NGO's such as Project Respect which provides information and support to trafficked victims.

Yours faithfully,

Jocelyn Hanby  
President, Soroptimist International of Victoria (Australia)