

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

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

**Submission No:24**

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The Secretary  
Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission  
Suite S1.107  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

26 September 2003

Dear Madam/Sir

**RE: New Inquiry: Trafficking in Women – Sexual Servitude**

As individual, concerned citizens who seek to promote the human rights of women and children we would like to make a submission to this inquiry. We believe that the international traffic in women and children is an abuse of universal human rights which severely damages the lives of prostituted women, denigrates the social status of women generally, and diminishes Australian society as a whole. We believe that those that use, abuse and traffic prostituted women should be the primary subjects of prostitution legislation, rather than the prostituted women. The primary focus of governments should be for the safety and protection of prostituted women. As such, we expect the state and Commonwealth governments of Australia to take appropriate action to eliminate both the traffic of women and children into Australia and the local industries that support it.

With regards to the terms of reference for this inquiry into the Australian Crime Commission's response to the rising trend of trafficking in women, we would like:

- To support the work of the Australian Crime Commission in collecting and analysing criminal intelligence to establish the extent of the traffic of women and children into Australia for the purposes of sexual exploitation;

- To encourage the Australian Crime Commission to set as a *top national criminal intelligence priority* the investigation into traffic of women and children into Australia;
- To support the strengthening of the relationship between the Australian Crime Commission and relevant state and Commonwealth agencies to bring to prosecution the traffickers and users of prostituted women and children; and
- To endorse changes to current legislative frameworks so as to decriminalise prostituted women and penalise those that abuse women through prostitution.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to this, we would like to propose the following to guide you in this inquiry:<sup>2</sup>

1. That the Australian Government ratify the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children;
2. That legislative changes be made to better protect trafficked women, including women who have consented to do prostitution but who have been deceived about the conditions of that prostitution;
3. That legislative changes occur to prosecute traffickers, pimps and users of prostituted women;
4. That local, state, territory and federal governments work together to eliminate the local sex industries that implicitly and explicitly support and legitimate the continued trafficking of women and children into Australia;
5. That a whole-of-government approach to trafficking be developed that puts trafficked women and children's safety and protection at the centre of the approach, and involves NGOs and local, state and federal government authorities;

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<sup>1</sup> The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATW) Australia web site provides useful information regarding this: <http://mc2.vicnet.net.au/home/catwaust/files/catwaabout.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> These issues are based on those identified and provided by Project Respect. While we have used these as a basis for our submission we have also added to and amended them as we thought appropriate. More information about Project Respect can be found at [www.vicnet.net.au/~prespect](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~prespect).

6. That a trafficking-victims' visa be introduced to allow women to stay in Australia if they give information to police or testify in a trafficking case - such visas are available in the United States and other countries;
7. That the visa provides a 'reflection delay' of three months that allows suspected trafficked women to recover from the violence they have experienced and consider whether they wish to provide information to the authorities - such visas are available in the Netherlands;
8. That an alternative detention system be provided so that potential trafficked victims are not detained at Villawood or Maribyrnong Immigration Detention Centres if they are detained by DIMIA. These centres can have an atmosphere of trauma and isolation. Women leaving situations of abuse and violence need to be in a rehabilitative and caring environment;
9. That a full range of recovery services be provided to trafficked women, including accommodation, counselling, drug rehabilitation etc.;
10. That more overseas aid be directed at addressing the factors that make trafficked women vulnerable, including violence against women, war, poverty and discrimination;
11. That bi-lateral and multi-lateral initiatives be pursued to ensure that trafficked women who return to sending countries are linked in with support agencies in those countries; and
12. That state and federal governments support specialist NGOs who address trafficking in women and children.

In summary, we believe this is a vitally important issue that requires urgent, powerful and concerted action. We reiterate that government action and legislation regarding prostituted women should focus mainly on those that use, abuse and traffic prostituted women. We look forward to hearing the outcomes of this inquiry.

Yours faithfully

Emma Woodley

Jan Woodley

Simon Woodley