

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

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

**Submission No:34**

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**Secretary**

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## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**That, in accordance with paragraph 55(1)(a) and (d) of the Australian Crime Commission Act 2002, the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime Commission inquiry into and report on the Australian Crime Commission's response to the emerging trend of trafficking in women for sexual servitude with particular reference to:**

- (1) the Australian Crime Commission's work in establishing the extent of people trafficking in Australia for the purposes of sexual servitude;**
- (2) the Australian Crime Commission's relationship with the relevant State and other Commonwealth agencies; and**
- (3) the adequacy of the current legislative framework.**

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**Submission by the Australasian Council for Women and Policing Inc.  
to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on the Australian Crime  
Commission inquiry into and report on the Australian Crime  
Commission's response to the emerging trend of trafficking in women  
for sexual servitude.**

The Australasian Council for Women and Policing (ACWAP) is deeply concerned about the trafficking of women to Australia for the purposes of sexual slavery. While we are aware that much work has already been undertaken by the Australian Government to address the issue, we consider that more needs to be done to address the issue in a way that recognizes the needs and human rights of women trafficked to this country.

The ACWAP is a national non-government organisation which aims to improve policing for women. It was established in August 1997 and is a group of women and men within police services and the community who are working together and striving to:

- create an Australasian link in the global networking of women in policing;
- improve the position of women within policing; and

- improve the relationship between policing and women in the community.

At its recent conference, *Women and Policing Globally*, (October 2002), ACWAP heard first-hand testimony from women police officers and NGOs from around the world about the escalation in the trade of women and children for sexual slavery. Papers from that conference are available at: [www.women-police.asn.au](http://www.women-police.asn.au). ACWAP has also consulted widely with current and former Australian police officers investigating trafficking.

Specifically, issues of concern to ACWAP include:

- (1) The lack of recognition of the issue as one of priority by Australian police services. There has been inadequate resourcing by police services to address the issue, despite an awareness of the issue since at least the early 1990s. More recently, the disbanding of state police vice-squads in most Australian police services has meant the loss of any residual local intelligence by police services into trafficking at local levels;
- (2) The lack of recognition of the issue of trafficking as an issue of violence against women, whether women have consented to be trafficked to Australia or not. It is clear that once in Australia, many of the women are deprived of basic human rights and freedoms and thus require the protection of the law. It appears that some Australian police and law enforcement organisations regard trafficked women as offenders rather than victims;
- (3) Legislative changes are required to better protect trafficked women, including women who have consented to do prostitution but who have been deceived about the conditions of that prostitution;
- (4) A whole-of-government approach to trafficking that puts trafficked women and children's protection at the centre of the approach, and involves NGOs and local, state and federal government authorities;
- (5) Trafficked women need visas and victim support, including court support services and witness protection to allow them to remain in Australia to testify in court. We are aware that such visas are available in other countries, including the Netherlands;
- (6) Trafficked women are victims of sexual assault and other crimes. They require sexual assault counseling and other support services, including short and medium-term crisis accommodation;
- (7) Australian police services should focus their attention on the demand for trafficked women by the clients of brothels. Men using sex workers, whether in Australia legally or illegally, are able to deny the humanity of the women they abuse and must, therefore present a threat to the community. If brothels must exist in our community, brothel users

should be required to register their identity (eg. drivers license) when using brothels.

- (8) The Australian Government needs to ratify the UN *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children* and show that it is committed to both the principles and practice of the prevention of trafficking in women and children;
- (9) Australian police services should work closely with NGOs such as Project Respect to support trafficked women and children to deliver successful prosecutions of traffickers and to train police and other government officers working with victims of trafficking.
- (10) There should on-going government support for specialist NGOs, such as Project Respect that provide services to victims of trafficking.

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21 September 2003

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