# PROJECT RESPECT

## Our Vision

Project Respect’s vision is a world where women are free from trafficking, prostitution, male violence, and sexual exploitation.

## Our Mission

Project Respect’s primary mission is to support and empower women in the sex industry and women trafficked, be guided and informed by the women we support and to advocate for the structural change needed to end all forms of sexual exploitation.

## Our Values

Project Respect is a feminist organisation, with all advocacy, support and programs based on a feminist philosophy. We position prostitution, trafficking, and sexual exploitation as a global, gendered and structural issue and our work is women-centred, collaborative, and respectful of women’s decisions. Our strong evidence-base supports proactive and courageous work.
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HIGHLIGHTS

Brothel Outreach

- 362 Total brothel visits
- 88 Individual brothels visited
- 716 Women met during outreach

Working with women

- 28 Women individually supported
- 28 Information and referrals
- 15 Women trafficked supported

Organisational

- 10 Volunteers
- 1000 Volunteer hours
- 7 Students
- 3,200 Student hours
- 1,824 Facebook Likes
- 2,343 Newsletter subscribers

Advocacy and Activism

- 4 Submissions
- 12 Print and online media
- 3 Guest speaker events
- 2 Capacity Building trainings

CHAIR REPORT

It’s hard to believe that another year has come and gone at Project Respect. This has been a year of growth and hope for Project Respect. It has also been another year of exhausting and satisfying work for those of us working to ensure not only the viability of this wonderful organisation, but the growth and realisation of our plans for the future. Project Respect has really gone through a period of rejuvenation and is now in a healthy and stable position. This is so important, because the work we do at Project Respect is crucial in being able to uphold the human rights and safety of women working in the sex industry and in educating other workers who work with our women.

This year has seen Rachel Reilly become our Acting Executive Director and she has steered the operations, staff, students and volunteers in doing some amazing work. I would like to personally thank Rachel for her commitment and integrity in everything she does. Two of my huge highlights for this year has been the roll out of the amazing Project Respect training to workers in the family violence sector following the appointment of our very talented Training Coordinator, Courtney, and the formulation of our Women’s Advisory Group (WAG). The WAG is a group of women dedicated to ensuring that our work speaks from the experiences of women who are or have been in the sex industry. Their contribution is vital to the integrity of all we do at Project Respect and I would like to thank this group of dedicated women for the work they are doing.

As a COM this year, we have faced a daunting workload that has not been without its challenges. We have developed the new strategic plan, worked on updating the constitution, developed a working risk appetite, a risk and compliance register, a new fund-raising strategy, developed several position statements as well as updating many of our governance policies. We have really cemented
the strategic direction and subsequent advocacy work that we will be undertaking for the next few years. We will continue to support women who are in the sex industry in a variety of ways and continue to advocate and work to lay down the foundations needed to pave the way for the introduction of an Australian Sex Buyers Law.

We have seen many changes from the wonderful women who have contributed their time, effort, skill and passion to the COM. While Aine McGrath and myself have continued throughout the year, at the last AGM we said farewell to Deanna Papo, Jacquie Ng, and Norelle Keem and through the year we farewelled Emily Reid, Cecilia Winterfox, Ada Conroy and Cindy Smith. We have also said a temporary farewell to Caroline Norma. I would like to thank them for their hard work on the COM, and while we feel their loss keenly, we appreciate the fact that so many wonderful opportunities present themselves to our COM members, and wish them well in their new endeavours both around Australia and internationally and trust that they all stay safe.

We have welcomed to the COM, Helen Makregiorgos, Natalie Francis, and Amy Poynton. I would like to thank these women for coming on to a COM where the work is consistent, but then, so are the rewards! We are always on the lookout for good women with good governance experience to help us steer Project Respect into the future.

Many people have contributed to the terrific success that has been part of the recovery and growth of Project Respects over the past year. Many departments and organisations. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Australian Attorney-General’s Department, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Premier and Cabinet, the DPC Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division, our amazing local Council areas including the Cities of Dandenong, Monash, Moreland, Port Phillip and Yarra. I would also like to thank the Inner North Community Foundation, the Sidney Myer Fund, the Box Hill Central Rotary Club, IBISWorld, Igniting Change and Street Smart. Without their continued support we would not have been able to continue with the work that we do.

This amazing support has meant that we have been very active at the local, State and Federal Government levels, keeping our work on their agenda, and we have been able to continue to map the epidemic of illegal brothels and the very concerning implications for women working in these spaces. We have seen the launch and successful roll out of our new business model with the training of workers in family violence agencies to ensure these workers better understand the issues faced by women who work in the sex industry and will ensure respect for these women when they approach services for assistance. Our commitment to working towards ending the violence to, and exploitation of, women and young girls in the sex industry is stronger than ever.

Thank you all.

CHRISTINE CRAIK
Chair
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

In July 2016, our very competent Executive Director, Cindy Smith, who steered Project Respect through our financial crisis in March 2016 resigned, to take up the helm in a much larger organisation, providing me with the opportunity to act up in the Executive Director’s role. However, this meant our already very small team of paid staff declined to the equivalent of 2.4 full time employees, and a lot of work to do! With a suite of committed students and volunteers to support the organisation, which was comparable to having two additional full time staff per week for the entire year, we were able to continue our important work with women, undertake our advocacy work, secure additional funding and achieve many other great successes which I hope you enjoy reading about in the pages which follow.

The constant flux of keeping a small, community organisation operational persisted throughout the 2016-2017 year. Sustainable, ongoing funding continued to remain elusive in the first half of the financial year, however, the significant financial pressures started to ease (temporarily) towards the end of 2016 and the start of 2017 when we were fortunate enough to be awarded with two medium sized grants from state government for the duration of two years. While there is still significant need to continue advocacy for state government funding for future years, we have been able to keep our doors open to continue our important work.

As a result of securing this funding, in March 2017, we employed Courtney Keefe, an exceptionally competent woman to become a part of our small team. Courtney has been responsible for developing and implementing our new Education and Capacity Building program (read more page 18), and is an absolute asset to the organisation. We are all excited about the anticipated results of the new program in reducing stigma and discrimination women in the sex industry experience when accessing services.
In May 2017, there were further changes to staffing when our wonderful Program and Advocacy Coordinator Lena Sivasailam-Pichler took leave to start a family. Lena and I have been working side by side supporting each other through the many ups and downs of Project Respect for the past two years, and, while I was excited for her to start a family, I was anxious about the prospect of finding a woman capable of filling Lena’s shoes. As a result of implementing our new service delivery model, we divided Lena’s role in two, and subsequently had two new wonderful women commence with us in May of 2017. Lisa Ashton, who was already working one day per week as our Outreach Coordinator came on board as our Intake and Assessment Worker, and Mish Colla joined the team as the Program Manager.

Not only was there considerable changes to staffing this year, but also to our office space. As a result of a small grant in 2016, we were able to undertake some much needed renovations to the office, creating a much better working environment and a welcoming space to all who visit us. It is amazing what a big clear out and a lick of paint can achieve for productivity and morale!

In addition to launching our Education and Capacity Building program, one of the standout highlights this year for me has been the re-implementation of our Women’s Advisory Group. The four women who attend have been involved with Project Respect in some manner over the last few years, and each month they volunteer their time to guide and direct Project Respect’s work. Each woman is compelled by her own experiences in the industry, and passionate about making change to ensure better outcomes for women. It is their stories and voices which consistently remind me how important it is that an organisation like Project Respect continues to exist. And on a personal note, it makes me smile to see the familiar faces and hear the voices of women back in the office. (More on page 21).

Over the past year, we have continued to work towards the structural change that is needed to ensure women in the sex industry and women trafficked are free from violence and exploitation which is so prevalent within the industry.

It is not possible to fully capture the energy, passion and drive of the women who are responsible for doing this work, nor is it possible to capture the voices and experiences of the women we support, but hopefully the very brief overview of our work in the following pages will provide some appreciation of the amazing women involved and engaged with Project Respect.

RACHEL REILLY
Acting Executive Director
**BROTHEL OUTREACH**

Brothel outreach remains a core component of Project Respect’s work and is often the first point of contact a woman has with the organisation. Outreach allows us to meet and engage with women in the sex industry, to inform them of Project Respect and our services, advise women of other services available to them and for us to hear firsthand the issues experienced by women in the sex industry.

Outreach is conducted in teams of two. Teams are supervised by the Outreach Coordinator, who is supported by staff, students and volunteers. Diversity in our outreach team allows us to connect with women through shared experiences, and we ensure we have team members who have lived experience in the sex industry and additional language skills.

Outreach teams distribute gift packs to women in brothels. The gift packs are filled with predominantly donated essential and luxury items, such as moisturisers, tampons and pads. We have found that they’ve been a great ice-breaker and conversation starter with women. The gift packs also provide the opportunity to discreetly distribute our business cards, in case a woman doesn’t want to disclose something to us in person.

We modified our state information kits, and created a list of state-wide services that women may need to access, including Centrelink, health services, counselling, employment services, domestic violence support services, housing support services, and legal support. We also distribute a similar local service list for each council area, listing service provider’s specific to that local area. We have observed these info-kits pinned to noticeboards in the women’s rest areas of numerous brothels.

There are currently 89 brothels operating in Greater Melbourne, with 3 being transgendered and 1 where Project Respect is unwelcome. We conducted a total of 362 visits to 88 brothels across Melbourne and were denied access on 84 occasions. 8 brothels consistently refused the team access. Please see Graph 1 for refusal of access statistics. We also monitored 6 brothels that were closed in previous financial years, in case they re-open under new ownership.

**Graph 1: Reason for refusal of entry during a brothel outreach**

- 27 all women were busy or in bookings
- 23 at owner’s direction
- 12 brothel not open when outreach attempted
- 8 other
- 7 women did not want to engage with PR
- 7 no reason provided
During outreach we met 716 women. Approximately 80% of the women we engaged with were from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) backgrounds, primarily East and Southeast Asian – Chinese background, Thailand and South Korea. Please refer to Graph 2 for breakdown of ethnicities.

**Graph 2: Women met during outreach**

Total number of women met: **716**

- 168 Thai
- 151 Australian
- 121 Ethnically Chinese
- 77 Korean
- 76 Anglo
- 51 Asian Unidentified
- 19 Vietnamese
- 18 European
- 8 African
- 8 Malaysian
- 7 Other
- 6 Japanese
- 2 European
- 2 Russian
- 2 South American

Often it is difficult for women to disclose issues they may be experiencing while we’re conducting outreach. This could be due to language barriers, not having the woman’s trust, or management listening to our conversations. Despite these barriers, we were able to engage with women and discussed a range of issues. Outreach teams were often asked questions about the woman’s rights at work. We found that overwhelmingly, women are not sure about their rights. This includes whether or not they can refuse a client, or what should happen if a client removes a condom during sex. This lack of understanding is further compounded by significant language barriers, where women don’t necessarily have the ability to ask if they don’t understand, know where to access information on what is acceptable or legal, or to say no to clients. Please refer to Graph 3 for commonly disclosed issues during outreach.
BROTHEL OUTREACH CONTINUED

Graph 3: Issues discussed during outreach

- 42 Financial hardship
- 33 Language
- 25 Impact of illegal sex industry on licensed sex industry
- 23 Homelessness / housing
- 21 Employment
- 20 Mental health
- 17 Education
- 13 Single mother
- 9 Drugs
- 9 Family
- 9 Health
- 7 Relationship Issues
- 6 Human trafficking
- 6 Sexual assault
- 3 DHHS
- 2 Child protection
- 2 Gambling

Brothel Outreach Narrative

During one outreach visit to a brothel in Melbourne’s east, we witnessed women being dropped off to work by elderly men. The women were of Asian descent and were carrying very large suitcases with them. The elderly men were seen handling large sums of money, and giving the women portions of this. Inside the brothel, Asian women were segregated in a common area on the other side of the brothel. We were advised that there was no interaction between women in the different common areas. The common area for the Asian women had 10 single beds, with large suitcases near each one. There were significant language barriers when trying to interact with the women in this brothel. Project Respect is concerned that women are being picked up directly from the airport and taken to work in brothels. We are concerned that women are experiencing secondary homelessness by sleeping in brothels for extended periods of time. Project Respect is also concerned that human trafficking could be occurring, as there are many indicators of trafficking. We witness similar situations on a regular basis.
DIRECT SERVICE WORK

Project Respect’s individual case support is available to any woman from the sex industry who requires assistance and support. Project Respect uses a strengths-based, women-centric approach. We have no wait lists for women to access our services, and there are no time restrictions on how long we offer support – it is available for as long as a woman requires it. This year, we provided individual support to 28 women, 18 of whom are still active in the sex industry.

Graph 4: Direct service work

- **28** Women individual case coordination
- **28** Anonymous information and referrals
- **25** Secondary consults for third party

The majority of the women we supported self-referred to Project Respect, often as an outcome of brothel outreach. Approximately 25% of referrals came from other agencies.

Graph 5: Source of incoming referrals

- **Intake referrals: 28**
  - **11** Brothel outreach
  - **10** Self-referral
  - **6** Referral by other agency
  - **1** Did not disclose

Approximately 45% of the women individually supported are from CaLD backgrounds. Please see Graph 6 for breakdown of ethnicities. Women from CaLD backgrounds often face additional issues due to language barriers, isolation and cultural differences between their home country and Australia. 8 of the women we support do not speak English at home, and 3 required interpreters during all communication. More than 20% of the women we supported do not have Australian Citizenship or Permanent Residency, and are therefore not entitled to government support including Centrelink or Medicare benefits. They also may be excluded from support from other services due to their immigration status. Please see Graph 7 for a breakdown of immigration and visa statuses of the women supported.

Graph 6: Ethnicities of women

- **10** Australian
- **6** Did not disclose
- **4** New Zealand
- **2** Hong Kong
- **2** United States
- **1** Czech Republic
- **1** Ireland
- **1** Philippines
- **1** Thailand
Women access our service for a range of issues, most commonly being financial hardship and housing and homelessness support. Through intake and assessment, many women disclose mental health issues, however often don’t seek support for this during the initial assessment. Please see graph 8 for breakdown of issues disclosed during intake.

**Graph 7: Residency and visa status of women**

- 16 Australian citizens
- 4 Did not disclose
- 3 New Zealand citizens
- 2 Bridging Visas
- 2 Permanent residents
- 1 Tourist Visa

“Women from CaLD backgrounds often face additional issues due to language barriers, isolation and cultural differences between their home country and Australia.”

**Graph 8: Current issues identified**

- 22 Financial hardship
- 19 Mental health
- 16 Homelessness
- 14 Employment
- 14 Centrelink
- 9 Family violence
- 9 Health
- 8 Legal
- 7 Education
- 6 Isolation
- 6 Drugs / Alcohol
- 6 Relationships
- 5 Immigration
- 5 Single mother
- 3 Child protection
- 2 Other
DIRECT SERVICE WORK CONTINUED

Of the 28 women we support, 9 disclosed they were currently experiencing family violence, with 4 experiencing multiple forms. An additional 3 women disclosed that they had experienced family violence in the past, with 2 of women experiencing more than one form of violence.

Graph 9: Family violence

9 Women disclosed current Family Violence
- 4 Emotional
- 4 Physical
- 4 Verbal
- 2 Sexual
- 1 Financial
- 1 Other

19 of the women supported disclosed they are currently experiencing mental health issues. Many of the women disclosed they experienced more than one mental health issue simultaneously.

Graph 10: Mental health

19 Women disclosed mental health issues
- 7 depression
- 5 Disclosed mental health disorders but not the disorder
- 4 Esteem
- 2 Grief
- 2 Personality
- 2 PTSD

Project Respect made 50 referrals to other organisations; primarily around housing services health services mental health services and family violence services, as seen below.

Women supported by Project Respect continue to experience stigma and discrimination because of their experiences in the sex industry, including when they access other mainstream services.
WORK WITH TRAFFICKED WOMEN

Project Respect continued to provide specialised support for 15 women who were trafficked into, or within, Australia. Support provided for women who have been trafficked ranges from long-term intensive case coordination, to provision of information regarding the woman’s rights, to assistance in accessing relevant services, or emotional support. 2 of the women were trafficked within their home countries, 1 woman was trafficked domestically within Australia and 12 were trafficked internationally into the Australian sex industry.

Please see Graph 12 for a breakdown of ethnicities of women who have been trafficked.

Graph 12: Ethnicities of women trafficked

Ethnicities of women who have been trafficked:

- 4 Malaysia
- 3 Republic of Korea (South)
- **3** Thailand
- 1 Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (North)
- 1 Democratic Republic of the Congo
- 1 Italy
- 1 Taiwan
- 1 Vietnam

All 15 women supported are from CaLD backgrounds, predominantly East and South East Asian. Language barriers were encountered with 14 women, and interpreters were required with 11 women. The women are at varying stages of their immigration processes, as depicted in Graph 13.

Graph 13: Immigration and visa status of women trafficked

- 6 Seeking asylum
- 3 Student visa
- **2** Australian citizens
- 2 Permanent resident
- 1 Did not disclose
- 1 Human trafficking visa pathway

Project Respect’s support for trafficked women is especially important for women who are ineligible to access or have been exited from the government funded Support for Trafficked People Program (STPP) delivered by the Australian Red Cross. Whilst Project Respect deeply respects the STPP, only 1 woman we worked with is currently able to access the program.

Graph 14: Access to the Support for Trafficked People Program

- 8 Previously on STPP
  - 4 Successful outcomes
  - 4 Exited
- 4 Not eligible
- 2 Given info but chose not to engage
- 1 Currently on STPP
WORK WITH TRAFFICKED WOMEN CONTINUED

The STPP can be inaccessible to women due to its conditional nature. The program requires survivors of trafficking to assist the Australian Federal Police (AFP) with investigations against their traffickers. Whilst some of the women we currently support were willing to assist the AFP, they were only able to access the STPP’s resources temporarily, or not at all. Other women chose not to engage with the AFP.

Reasons for this may be a fear of authorities, fear for their own personal safety or for the safety of their families in their home countries. In some countries, prostitution is illegal, so in some cases, there is an intensified fear that they will be prosecuted if they return home. Four women Project Respect support have been exited from the STPP and are at serious risk of deportation, as they are in their final appeal processes. 3 of these women risk being charged upon returning to their home country, as prostitution is illegal there. All 4 women are also at high risk of being re-trafficked.

The support provided to women who have been trafficked is oftentimes more intensive than the support provided during case coordination. Graph 16 highlights the issues women trafficked, face.
Case Study

Wei* was referred to Project Respect after an illegal brothel was proscribed. Wei had been charged with working illegally in the sex industry. Wei entered Australia on a student visa, and began working in a massage parlour with the belief she would only be performing massages. Wei advised us that she was threatened when she advised the owners that she wanted to leave. Wei suffered mentally from her experiences in the sex industry and began self-harming. Wei was fearful of the authorities, and fearful that she would be deported if found guilty. When Project Respect met her, she appeared very anxious. Due to her fear of authorities, Wei declined to be linked in with the AFP and subsequently had no access to the STPP. She advised she did not want to testify against her trafficker.

Thankfully, when Wei appeared in court, her charges were dropped. Project Respect provided Wei with emotional support during the process, and was able to support her in understanding her rights.

* This is a cumulative case study – the name and identifying information has been changed to protect the privacy and identity of the multiple women who have experienced this.

Project Respect made appropriate referrals to housing support services, language services, employment services, mental health services and health services.

12 of the 15 women supported disclosed mental health issues, most likely originating from their experiences of being trafficked, as seen below. Women also disclosed insomnia, paranoia, stress and grief.

Graph 17: Mental health issues experienced by women trafficked

12 women experienced mental health

10 in 12 women experience depression

1 in 12 women experience personality disorder

4 in 12 women experience PTSD
Two of the women we support faced criminal charges as a result of being trafficked. One woman was charged for illegal sex work when the illicit massage business she worked in was proscribed, despite the AFP identifying she had been trafficked. A second woman was charged with travelling into Australia on false documents, despite these being organised by her trafficker. Both charges were dismissed.

We would like to extend our gratitude to the Attorney-General’s Department for supporting our work with survivors of trafficking.

Case Study

Project Respect began working with Ji-Woo* in 2014. Despite assisting the AFP with investigations for 6 months she was exited from the STPP and informed that this was because the investigation was unlikely to result in a conviction. Ji-Woo has applied for a Protection Visa, and in late 2016, had her final interview with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP). Unfortunately, her lawyers have advised that a negative response on her application is likely.

As a likely result from the stress of the DIBP interviews, Ji-Woo experienced severe mental health decline, including paranoia, depression and anxiety. She was admitted into a psychiatric hospital in early 2017, where she remained for numerous weeks. Upon returning home, Ji-Woo was visited by Crisis Assessment and Treatment Team 4 times a week. She was unable to continue her education due to her mental health decline.

Project Respect provided intense emotional support during this period. She has been linked in with counselling services and receives medication to manage her depression and anxiety.

Ji-Woo’s mental health is slowly recovering, and she has found casual employment. Project Respect has helped explain her work rights. She has been linked in with English tutoring classes to improve her English skills and increase her chances of securing full time work. She has expressed an interest in returning to complete her studies in the future. She is currently exploring options with her lawyers, should a negative response be received. Project Respect has ongoing concerns for her mental health if an appeal process was undertaken.

* Name and identifying information has been changed to protect the privacy and identity of the individual in this case study.
EDUCATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Education and Capacity Building is a new program at Project Respect. We know from 18 years’ of brothel outreach and case coordination in this space that women in the sex industry are more likely to experience stigma and discrimination when accessing vital community, social and welfare support services. Australian and international research supports our findings.

As a result, Project Respect employed a Training Coordinator who has developed a professional development program designed to build the capacity of this sector to better support women in the sex industry to ensure they receive respectful, non-judgmental support.

Since launched in March, the Education and Capacity Building program has undertaken the following:

**Content development**

Content development began with undertaking an environmental scan of capacity building programs amongst the social services sectors in Australia and overseas. This process provided an understanding of the types of education that are currently available to increase knowledge of and enhance tailored support for women in the sex industry. The environmental scan led to the identification of key learning gaps in capacity building programs focussing on women in the sex industry. These gaps were translated into learning outcomes for the Education and Capacity Building program that was launched in May of this year.

Content was taken from Australian and international research and findings from our own outreach and intake support. The content was then further shaped by a steering group consisting of current and former women in the sex industry, representatives from the family violence sector, academics and Project Respect staff.

**Delivery**

The first workshop was delivered to a range of services who are part of a regional family violence integration network that come together for professional development opportunities related to gender-based violence. Two workshops were delivered in May to more than 25 participants from services including corrections, family violence, mental and physical health, community legal services and child protection.

**Partnerships**

The Education and Capacity Building program is supporting the establishment of a formal referral network to ensure that women in the sex industry receive quality support through warm referrals with organisations that have attended customised professional development.

With the establishment of this new program, Project Respect looks forward to increasing the knowledge of and capacity to support women in the sex industry amongst the community service sector well into the future.

"...women in the sex industry are more likely to experience stigma and discrimination when accessing vital community, social and welfare support services."
ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM

Project Respect undertook significant advocacy and activism this year. This was primarily due to the alteration in service delivery and subsequent increased engagement with external stakeholders, but also due to the political climate at local, state and national level.

Family violence
Project Respect worked hard this year to elevate the voices and experiences of the women we support to be included in the responses to the 227 recommendation from the Royal Commission into Family Violence. Project Respect was specifically consulted for recommendation 141: Family Violence Practice Guidelines for Family Violence Services Providers as well as recommendation 186: Victoria Police Code of Practice for the Investigation of Family Violence. Addressing family violence is central to Project Respect’s work, and we continue to advocate for the inclusion of women in the sex industry to be considered a specific and vulnerable cohort in response, policy and planning.

Slavery, slavery-like and trafficking advocacy work
Towards the end of 2016, Project Respect joined the Labour Exploitation Working Group (LEWG), with membership being derived from the National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery (which we continue to actively participate in). The LEWG had two phases: first to define the problem of labour exploitation in Australia, and, secondly to develop responses and recommendations to be presented to government. Project Respect stressed the high levels of labour exploitation which exists in the Victorian sex industry for both Australian born and migrant women, and the inadequacies in the current frameworks and regulations to prevent and protect women from being exploited. This is further compounded by the stigma and discrimination associated with the industry which deters women from speaking out about their experiences.

Further, in the early months of 2017, there was a swarm of activity regarding the announcement of the Inquiry into Establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia. As one of the few frontline organisations working in the trafficking space in Victoria, we were invited to participate in a number of consultations, including the Shadow Minister for Justice’s Roundtable, to provide our evidence based knowledge of the trafficking landscape within Australia.

Through the aid of three very competent volunteers, Project Respect prepared a submission to the Inquiry into Establishing a Modern Slavery Act in Australia. Our submission drew on our knowledge of working with women who have been trafficked, the issues which they experience and the gaps in the current system in ensuring they are adequately supported in Australia.

Thank you Tegan, Nicole and Cristabel
ADVOCACY AND ACTIVISM CONTINUED

Illegal/unregulated brothel industry
While Project Respect has a significant evidence base of the exploitation and harms prevalent in the regulated industry in Victoria, Project Respect has not, to date, worked in the illegal sector. There are estimates of the numbers of illegal brothels operating in Melbourne, and Project Respect wanted to understand if this number was accurate. We engaged two very capable students to commence mapping illegal brothels in certain locations as a sample of what could be applied across Melbourne. The data indicates the scope of the industry may be larger than the estimated 500 illegal brothels in operation.

Further to this, we engaged a student to undertake a discourse analysis of the online blogs reviewing the experience of men purchasing sexual services in illicit massage businesses. The results of this analysis highlighted the exploitation, coercion, violence and harm perpetrated against women in these spaces.

Project Respect also engaged with a number of different authorities and regulators to understand what happened to women if or when an illegal brothel was proscribed. It became clear that the health, safety and welfare of women was not the priority, and, in fact, women were being criminalised for being forced to sell sexual services when they had been trafficked and exploited. There are also no clear or formal referral pathways for women to access essential services, and, we suspect women are not being adequately screened for the human rights violations they may be experiencing in Australia. It also became apparent that there was no clear delineation of who is responsible for addressing the illegal sex industry in Victoria. We continue to advocate in this space.

Thank you Khali, Clare and Katie

Global Learning Collaborative
In May 2017, Project Respect’s Executive Director had the fortunate opportunity to attend a conference in New York. Safe Horizon, a New York based NGO working in anti-trafficking received funding to establish the Global Learning Collaborative (GLC). The GLC consisted of 8 skype conferences over a 10 month period for the participants from 10 NGOs from around the world to discuss best practice in a number of areas, and culminated a three and a half day workshop in New York to develop “Principles of Practice” in working with survivors of trafficking.

Despite there being a number of different opinions, the workshop was respectful and productive. It goes without saying, it is very humbling Project Respect has been chosen as a part of this world first global movement in supporting survivors of trafficking.

Media and presentations
There was significant media engagement this year, primarily as a result of Project Respect’s advocacy around illegal and unregulated brothels in Melbourne. Project Respect welcomed the opportunity to be able to highlight the issues, but always wanted to ensure that the media was aware that the issues prevalent in the illegal industry was also problematic in the regulated industry. This however wasn’t always the “scoop” the media wanted.

We also undertook a number of public speaking events to raise awareness around human trafficking and the sex industry.

Submissions
In addition to the Inquiry into Establishing a Modern Slavery Act, Project Respect also submitted to the UN Women Submission on Prostitution, and provided information to Australian Women Against Violence Alliance (AWAVA) submission to the federal governments Sexual Assault and Access to Justice
and Law Reform. Through this, AWAVA has realised how invisible women in the sex industry and women trafficked are in policy, and would like to work with us further to ensure the voices and experiences of women are included in federal level policy. Additionally, through our membership with Equality Rights Alliance (ERA), we highlighted trafficking of women into Australia as an issue, and the contingent nature of accessing government support in the ERA submission to the UN International Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights shadow report for Gender.

**Working groups**

We continued to be active in a number of advisory groups, working groups and committees. In addition to the Labour Exploitation Working Group, National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery, we are also active members of the AWAVA Advisory Group, Yarra Health and Wellbeing Plan Advisory Committee and the Monash Gender Equity Advisory Committee. Involvement in these spaces provides us with the opportunity to elevate the voices and experiences of women in the sex industry and women trafficked to be incorporated into planning and policy while also increasing awareness of the issues to foster a more collaborative approach and response.

**WOMENS ADVISORY GROUP**

In March 2017, we re-established the **Project Respect Women’s Advisory Group (WAG)** who meet once per month for two hours. The role of the WAG is to ensure Project Respect’s work remains informed by women with experience of the sex industry, and to provide the platform to amplify women’s voices and experiences. The women involved with the group have been connected to Project Respect in the past, either as women we have supported, as a volunteer or a student. While still in its infant stages, the commitment and drive of the women involved has seen the group already have many achievements, including playing an integral part in the development of the Project Respect training. Project Respect aims to continue to grow the WAG, both in size, and in terms of the input WAG members make to the organisation and are currently seeking funding to take the group to the next level. Watch this space!

**Thank you to SL, AM, LD, AE!**

**WAG In their own words**

The WAG reformed in March 2017 made up of 4 core members representing different parts of the sex industry, past and present. We meet monthly to share ideas and contribute to the direction of programs. We also seek to advocate for the women that Project Respect are engaged with. We attempt to ensure the information we are providing is current and relevant, reflecting on personal experiences of each WAG member during their time in the sex industry. We feel empowered by being a part of the WAG and feel that we are a voice for the voiceless. We support each other, and through these meetings we feel connected as we all have personal experience relating to stigma and social isolation within the sex industry. It is a welcoming, safe space we can speak freely in, without fear of judgement. We feel positive going forwards with Project Respect’s new sustainable model and hope to continue to be a valuable and active voice in future directions.
STUDENT & VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Project Respect continues to run the student and volunteer program. The significant contribution made by women enables Project Respect to continue to operate with limited funding, while providing a rich and rewarding learning experience for those engaged in the program.

This year, students and volunteers undertook a wide range of tasks, including research, direct service work, outreach, grant, submission and policy and procedure writing, communications and administrative duties.

Women with experience of the sex industry are actively encouraged to apply as this can assist in building work skills outside of the sex industry within a supportive work environment.

AWARDS

**The Kathleen Maltzahn Award**
Recognising outstanding commitment and support to the women of Project Respect
2015/2016 – Amy Evison
2016/2017 – Sayuri Leahy

**The Valli Mendez Award**
Recognising outstanding volunteers at Project Respect
2015/2016 – Mi Nguyen
2016/2017 – Tegan Larin

**Project Respect Student Award**
Recognising outstanding dedication from students while on placement
2015/2016 – Kathryn Reidie
2016/2017 – Kahli Commerford
THE TEAM

**Committee of Management**
Ada Conroy (resigned)
Aine McGrath
Amy Poynton (Secretary)
Cecilia Winterbottom (resigned)
Christine Craik (Chair)
Cindy Smith (resigned)
Helen Makregiorgos (Deputy-Chair)
Natalie Francis (Treasurer)

**Staff**
Angie Jackson (Outreach Worker)
Cindy Smith (Executive Director)
Courtney Keefe (Training Coordinator)
Lisa Ashton (Outreach Coordinator/Intake and Assessment Worker)
Lena Sivasailam-Pichler (Program and Advocacy Coordinator)
Mish Colla (Program Manager)
Rachel Reilly (Acting Executive Director)

**Students**
Claire Foreman
Hayley Joyce
Kahli Commerford
Katelyn Belt
Marija Nikolic-Paterson
Sharnie Parsons
Sayuri Leahy

**Volunteers**
Abby Stone
Emily Berkowitz
Georgia Collins-Jennings
Hannah Gordon
Minna Leunig
Mish Colla
Natasha Nicholson
Nicole Treanor
Sayuri Leahy
Tegan Larin

**Women’s Advisory Group**
AE, AM, LD, SL

**Pro-Bono Support**
Louise Gault - Annual Report
Peggy Kerdo - Migration Lawyer

THANK YOU

To our Funders, thank you for making all this work possible
Attorney-General’s Department
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Premier and Cabinet - Multicultural Affairs and Social Cohesion Division
City of Monash
City of Yarra
City of Moreland
City of Dandenong
City of Port Phillip
Inner North Community Foundation
Sidney Myer Fund

In addition to our funders, we had a number of large donations made to the organisation which assisted us with our work
Box Hill Central Rotary Club
IBISWorld
Igniting Change
Soroptimists International
Street Smart

Further, a number of organisations donate goods and services to Project Respect to assist us in supporting women
Foodbank
The Period Project
Pinchapoo
Share the Dignity
## FINANCIALS

### BALANCE SHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($)</th>
<th>2016 ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and Cash Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash at Bank</td>
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<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong></td>
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<td>121,336</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Property Plant and Equipment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Office Equipment - at Cost</td>
<td>325</td>
<td>325</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less: Provision for Depreciation</td>
<td>(325)</td>
<td>(324)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Motor Vehicles - at Cost</td>
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<td>32,800</td>
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<td>Less: Provision for Depreciation</td>
<td>(25,392)</td>
<td>(21,292)</td>
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<td>Less: Provision for Depreciation</td>
<td>(2,744)</td>
<td>(1,648)</td>
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<td><strong>Total Non-Current Assets</strong></td>
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<td>11,839</td>
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<td><strong>Total Assets</strong></td>
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<td>133,175</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($)</th>
<th>2016 ($)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade and Other Payable</td>
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<td>Accounts Payable</td>
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<td>GST &amp; PAYGW Payable to ATP</td>
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<td>Superannuation Payable</td>
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<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Income in Advance</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Employment Entitlement Provisions</strong></td>
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<td>Provision for Annual Leave</td>
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<td>Provision for Time in Lieu</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provision for Long Service Leave</td>
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<td><strong>Total Current Liabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>216,362</td>
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Equity

<table>
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<th>2017 ($)</th>
<th>2016 ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accumulated Members Funds</td>
<td>216,362</td>
<td>77,650</td>
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Complete financial audit undertaken by Collins & Co is available upon request.
## Financials: Income and Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017 ($)</th>
<th>2016 ($)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grant Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Australia Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Yarra</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Dandenong</td>
<td>4,000</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Melbourne</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Monash</td>
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<td>8,023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Moreland</td>
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<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>City of Port Phillip</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCP Funding Income</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHHS - Family Violence Funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inner North Community Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Myer Fund Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>R E Ross Trust</td>
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<td>Federal Attorney General (POCA)</td>
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<td>Capital Grant</td>
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<td>Victorian Multicultural</td>
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<td>Community Grant</td>
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<td><strong>Total Income</strong></td>
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<td>Accountancy Fees</td>
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<td>14,892</td>
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<td>AGM &amp; Annual Report</td>
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<td>Audit Fees</td>
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<td>Bank Charges</td>
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<td>Business Charges</td>
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<td>Committee of Management Expenses</td>
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<td>Conference &amp; Subscriptions</td>
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<td>Consultancy Fees</td>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>Fundraising Expenses</td>
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<td>Hire Expenses</td>
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<td>Information Technology</td>
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<td>Legal Costs</td>
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<td>Loss on Sale of Fixed Assets</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting Expenses</td>
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<td>487</td>
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<td>Repairs &amp; Maintenance</td>
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<td>Staff Training &amp; Welfare</td>
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<td>Storage Fees</td>
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<td>Telephone</td>
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<td>Translation/Consulting</td>
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<td>Travelling Expenses</td>
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<td>Depreciation and Amortisation</td>
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<td>Expenses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employee Expenses</td>
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<td>346,006</td>
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<tr>
<td>Premises Expenses</td>
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<td>Project costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenditure</strong></td>
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<td>453,068</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>NET DEFICIT ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE ASSOCIATION</strong></td>
<td>119,562</td>
<td>(118,670)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete financial audit undertaken by Collins & Co is available upon request.
HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT PROJECT RESPECT

DONATE
Your donations will help us extend our services and programs to support women in the sex industry across the Greater Melbourne Region. Whether you donate monthly or just once, your contribution will assist us in supporting women. Jump on to our website https://projectrespect.nationbuilder.com/monthly_donation_2 to donate today!

VOLUNTEER
We are always looking for skilled volunteers who are willing to donate their time to specific projects we need assistance with – such as producing the Annual Report! Or Fundraising!

Please contact info@projectrespect.org.au if you wish to get involved.

WORKPLACE GIVING
Workplace Giving is a great way to donate to us and provides an immediate tax benefit by reducing your taxable income! You will need to speak to your Payroll and/or Human Resources department to set this up, but there are a number of organisations out there who provide workplace giving platforms.

LEAVE A GIFT IN YOUR WILL
A bequest is a very significant way to make a positive difference to the lives and welfare of women in the sex industry and women who are trafficked.

Please contact us directly on (03) 9416 3401 if you wish to discuss this further.

SPONSORSHIP
Your organisation can play an important community role by sponsoring our programs or providing crucial pro-bono advice and support in a number of key areas.

Please contact us directly on (03) 9416 3401 to discuss ways your organisation can support us.

BECOME A FUNDRAISER FOR PROJECT RESPECT!
You can become a fundraising champion for us! There are many ways to fundraise for us, including involvement in fun runs or other fundraising events.

For further information or ideas, please email info@projectrespect.org.au