

project respect women matter

To our wonderful supporters,

We wanted to keep our final newsletter of the year short, but as usual, there has been so much going on it is almost impossible!



The picture above means a lot to us here at Project Respect. In April of this year, as many of you are aware, we almost had to close our doors due to lack of funding. During this time we said goodbye to some long term staff, a large number of volunteers as well as students while our future remained uncertain. Our vibrant, friendly and effervescent work place dwindled to two, sometimes three staff members who were tasked with undertaking actions to cease our operations.

While we still have minimal paid staff, this photo represents how far we have come since those rather disheartening days. We are back to having our office filled with fantastic women who are assisting and supporting the work which we do. We cannot wait for the new year - a fresh start and all the new and exciting initiatives we will be implementing.

Speaking of which....

As we have mentioned on numerous occasions, we have been redesigning our service delivery model to make the organisation stronger and more sustainable, and all this hard work has paid off – last Friday, the Andrews Labor Government announced they would provide Project Respect with funding for the next two years! [You can read more about this via the official press release.](#)

This means we are looking to hire a fantastic woman to join our team and assist us in the new year with our new program area. If you have a strong background in developing and implementing training, then [please have a look at our advertisement and put in an application](#) – we'd love to hear from you.

As always, a big thank you goes out to everyone who has supported us over the past year. We are always amazed at the goodwill of people towards Project Respect.

On behalf of the Project Respect Team, we'd like to wish you a healthy and safe festive season a happy 2017. We look forward to sharing our work with you in the new year.

Rachel Reilly

Acting Executive Director

Quick update from the Outreach Team

In November the Outreach team visited 43 brothels, across 13 different local government areas. We visited brothels in Brimbank, Bayside, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Monash, Port Phillip, Whitehorse and Wyndham. Of the 43 visits, we were refused access 13 times.

During November Outreach, we met 101 women in the sex industry, the majority of which were from culturally and linguistically diverse (CaLD) backgrounds – approximately 30% of women were from Thailand, and 15% from China and Korea respectively. Approximately 25% of all women encountered were of non-CaLD backgrounds.

We engaged with 7 women who advised they were experiencing financial hardship, 2 women who were experiencing homelessness, 5 women requiring legal assistance and 3 women who enquired about employment pathways. Numerous other women sought assistance around health and education.

Safer sex signage remains the most prominently displayed signage, along with anti-slavery signage and business license details. We noticed an increase in the display of signage relating to Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). There was notable a lack of pornography playing in the brothels.

The Outreach team are currently focusing on overcoming barriers to entry into the brothels, and how we can better engage with the women we meet, and look forward to implementing fresh ideas during the new year.

Lisa Ashton

Outreach Worker

8th National Roundtable on Human Trafficking and Slavery Senior Officials' Meeting - 28th of November 2016

Whilst support systems for survivors of Human Trafficking and Slavery exist such as the Support for Trafficked People Program and visa pathways for survivors, Project Respect continues to see that people trafficked may not be eligible to access those forms of assistance.

In Australia survivors of Human Trafficking are required to participate in criminal justice proceedings and provide evidence in the investigations against their traffickers. This means that access to support is conditional in Australia and not an option for everyone.

Further, we have supported women who provided evidence and assisted in police investigations, which were later closed. As a consequence the women were exited from the government Support for Trafficked People Program and were no longer entitled to visa pathways designed for survivors of human trafficking. The women had no other option than to seek humanitarian visas pathways. We are currently concerned about a new trend – so far, one woman was denied the humanitarian visa, and was deported to her home country and four more women are now at risk of being denied the visa and deported, despite the fact that they experienced serious crimes in this country, assisted with the investigations against their traffickers. It is not safe for them to return to their home countries due to assisting police against their traffickers.

We are very concerned that Australia's response to protecting survivors of human trafficking has a strong prosecution rather than survivors' focus and we believe in the need for an unconditional response.

The Roundtable offers a great opportunity for us to highlight these issues and to advocate for a human rights approach, especially in relation to protection of survivors of human trafficking. We believe that as the demand for trafficking is here in Australia and as these crimes happen here in Australia, rehabilitation for survivors of such crimes is our responsibility.

Project Respect also recently joined the Labour Exploitation Working Group. This is also facilitated by the Attorney's General Department. We attended our first meeting in November to address issues in relation to Labour Exploitation in Australia. We have witnessed multiple women being exploited in the sex industry and we will be highlighting issues women experience in this high risk industry.

To find out more about the Roundtable and the November meeting, you can click on [this link to have a look at the press release](#) from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop.

Lena Sivasailam-Pichler

Programs and Advocacy Coordinator