



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP**

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**NEWS REPORT**

<b>Headline</b>	<b>Calls for compassion towards victims of human trafficking</b>
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<b>Related articles</b>	March 3, 2009: Fed — New guidelines for treatment of trafficked people

There's been a call for more compassionate treatment of victims of human trafficking. The Federal Government has released a universal code for those working with victims, many of whom are migrant sex workers. Supporters say the policies are long overdue and may encourage more victims to seek help.

A victory for an unlikely alliance. A coalition of government agencies, church groups, charities and sex workers say they've achieved what many thought was impossible - a united front on the issue of human trafficking. Until now, there's been no code on how victims should be treated, and many, particularly those in the sex industry have complained about being judged by the very organisations that are supposed to help.

Elena Jeffreys, Scarlet Alliance: Migrant sex workers who may have experienced trafficking or slavery-type situations deserve human rights, dignity and respect.

In Australia, many trafficked people have been brought into the country and enslaved by brothel owners until their debts are paid. Sister Margaret Ng has worked with many former sex slaves, including one who was trafficked as a child to a brothel here in Australia.

Sister Margaret Ng, Support Worker: So they said, "Come to Australia, you will learn English." She had to leave school at the age of 12, and so she thought it was a great idea to be able to go back to study and to earn some money for the family.

But the new guidelines cater for victims outside of the sex industry as well.

Jennifer Burn, UTS Anti-Slavery Project: That person may be working in a kitchen, in a restaurant, in a field picking fruit, or in a factory.

Advocates hope the new policies will encourage more victims to come forward. Over the last few years, the Australian Federal Police has received a boost in funding to help its efforts in stamping out human trafficking in the region. Victim support groups say they've seen a positive improvement in relations between the AFP and other government departments that are working to tackle the problem in Australia. Home Affairs Minister Bob Debus says the Government is committed to not only preventing the human trade, but also to rehabilitating victims.

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