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**SUPPORT BY NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS (NGOs) FOR VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS; AUSTRALIA**

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Victims of trafficking in persons are able to access assistance outside of the government's Support for Victims of People Trafficking Program through taking advantage of the programs carried out by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). This document outlines the work done by eight prominent organisations working in this sector, assessing the availability of their services for trafficked persons and their links to government bodies. The NGOs discussed here have been selected on the basis of the services they offer. Organisations engaging in advocacy only are not considered here.

In assessing the work done by these eight organisations, it is apparent that Australia is lacking a national support organisation for victims of trafficking. The services provided by the groups listed here are restrictive in their application, with the majority of organisations based exclusively in Victoria. While this state has been the most frequent location for the detection of trafficked persons, it is disappointing that there are either extremely limited or no services available for victims of this crime in Australia's other states and territories.

In addition, there are almost no organisations providing specialist support for trafficked persons. Most of the groups surveyed offer help with areas such as immigration law or sexual assault counselling, which may be of use to victims of trafficking, but overall they lack the expertise to provide expert assistance. In spite of these deficiencies, the NGOs discussed below provide their services freely and play a vital role in the rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking.

## **1. Project Respect**

[www.projectrespect.org.au](http://www.projectrespect.org.au)

Project Respect is the most prominent NGO dealing with trafficked persons. Founded in 1998 by Kathleen Maltzahn, it supports women in the sex industry, with a particular focus on female victims of trafficking. Project Respect has both service and prevention areas of practice and its main aims include empowerment, education, advocacy and activism. It takes an abolitionist stance on prostitution and a strongly social-justice focused approach to its activities.

### *Place of operation*

The service delivery of Project Respect is centred on Victoria, with a head office in Collingwood, Melbourne. Its advocacy work and training programs are national.

### *Accessing the services offered*

Project Respect's services are freely available to all persons working in the sex industry. The services of its outreach can be accessed by contacting (03) 9416 3401 or [outreach@projectrespect.org.au](mailto:outreach@projectrespect.org.au).

### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

Project Respect offers a variety of services specifically for trafficked persons. These programs include:

- Emergency accommodation; and
- Ongoing support

Many of the other services offered may also be available to trafficked persons, but are not explicitly noted as such on Project Respect's website.

### *Other services offered*

The organisation offers a range of other services to people in the sex industry, including:

- Outreach to brothels in Victoria (visiting brothels), holistic support and individual counselling;
- Newsletters for workers in the sex industry;

- Referrals and information regarding services for health, housing, the law, child custody, domestic violence, drug and alcohol, and other issues;
- Support for education and alternative employment pathways;
- Community development activities, including weekends away and advocacy training; and
- Legal support. Project Respect also conducts training programs which are offered to community organisations and government organisations (including the police). They also aim to raise awareness of sex-worker issues within the community at large.

#### *Connections to other NGOs*

There are no links to other groups mentioned explicitly, although Project Respect's website features links to ECPAT International. Their work for the Victorian government is also collaborative, involving work with the Refugee and Immigration Law Centre in Melbourne, the Red Cross, the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, and the Victorian Centres against Sexual Assault.<sup>1</sup> Project Respect additionally contributes to the National Network Against Trafficking in Women and Girls for Prostitution, which takes an inter-NGO approach based on sharing information and creating a database of resources and services for trafficked women.

#### *Connections to Government*

Project Respect conducts programs on behalf of the Victorian Government's victim support program for trafficked persons not covered by the federal scheme.<sup>2</sup> It also regularly lobbies all levels of government on sex worker and trafficking issues. It has lodged submissions with both the Draft Exposure Bill, Criminal Code Amendment (Trafficking in Persons), 2004 and the Parliamentary Joint Committee to examine Australian Crime Commission's Response to trafficking in women for sexual servitude, September 2003.

## **2. Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre Inc** [www.rilc.org.au](http://www.rilc.org.au)

The Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre is a community legal centre which services the legal needs of migrants, asylum seekers (including those in detention) and refugees, with no specific aims regarding trafficked persons. It is the largest independent provider of migration law services in Australia and was founded in 1998 after the merger of the Victorian office of the Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS) Australia Inc. and the Victorian Immigration Advice and Rights Centre (VIARC) Inc.

#### *Place of Operation*

The Centre operates solely in Victoria, with a head office in Fitzroy, Melbourne.

#### *Accessing the services offered*

An advice line provided by the Centre is available two days a week (Wednesdays 10am-4pm, Fridays 2-4pm; (03) 9483 1144). There is also an enquiry form included on the website for persons seeking more information about their services. An evening Advice Session is also held on Mondays but can only be accessed by persons who have booked through the advice line. Clinics are held once a month on Sundays and are only available to persons who have been assessed as eligible by RILC after they have attended an evening Advice Session. Ineligible persons will be referred elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

*Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

There are no specific services mentioned on their website, although Fiona David's report noted their collaboration with the Victorian Government's support program for trafficked persons.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, general services offered for persons seeking migration law advice could potentially assist victims of trafficking, who may also need guidance on their immigration status.

*Other services offered*

The RILC offers a number of other services to their clients, including:

- Telephone immigration advice for eight hours a week;
- A weekly Evening Advice Session providing face-to-face advice;
- Application casework and legal representation in cases before the Department of Immigration, Refugee Review Tribunal, Migration Review Tribunal and Administrative Appeals Tribunal (only on visa cancellation and 'character' grounds);
- Community and professional education programs;
- Monthly Offshore Refugee 'Family Reunion' Visa clinics conducted by registered migration agents for refugees and former holders of Temporary Protection Visas and special clinics for refugee and humanitarian visa holders;
- Referrals for legal advice and representation in the courts; and
- Referrals for counselling and other health and welfare services.

The Refugee and Immigration Law Centre also advocates for migration law reform, arguing for improvements in the system to make immigration fairer and more humane. In addition, it provides education and training for professionals and communities in relation to Australia's immigration system.

*Connections to other NGOs*

No links to other NGOs are mentioned specifically on the RILC's website, but it notes that the organisation has close relationships with other community service providers supporting migrants and refugees. Its website also has links to a variety of other NGOs.

*Connections to Government*

There are no such links mentioned on the RILC's website, although Fiona David's report notes the work done by this organisation for the Victorian Government's support program for victims of trafficking.<sup>4</sup>

**3. Victorian Centres against Sexual Assault (CASA)**

[www.casa.org.au](http://www.casa.org.au)

This organisation provides support to victims of sexual assault of any age or gender. It also campaigns for the elimination of sexual violence and advocates for law reform and further research on sexual assault. CASA conducts its own collaborative research on issues relating to sexual assault. Its centres also provide community education on sexual assault to professionals and community groups.

*Place of operation*

CASA is based in Victoria, with 15 offices in Melbourne's CBD and in regional areas.

<sup>3</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

<sup>4</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

### *Accessing the services offered*

The services listed above are available through contacting CASA directly. Services provided are all free of charge.

### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

There are no specific services for trafficked persons mentioned on the website, but CASA could be of use to victims of trafficking who have experienced sexual assault (which is a particularly important service given the numbers of reported victims found to have been working in brothels).

### *Other services offered*

CASA provides support to victims of sexual assault through its centres and the after-hours Victorian Sexual Assault Crisis Line. Its other services include:

- A free and confidential 24-hour support line (1800 806 292), which can refer users to medical care and legal support;
- Emergency and crisis care;
- The provision of information about sexual assault and resources for victims;
- Free short and medium-term counselling to victims and their families, including telephone counselling (on (03) 9635 3610), group work and referrals to other services; and
- Fact sheets for survivors of sexual abuse, which are available for free on CASA's website.

### *Connections to other NGOs and government*

None are mentioned on CASA's website, but the organisation has been cited as a contributor to the Victorian Government's victims of trafficking support scheme.<sup>5</sup>

## **4. Red Cross Australia**

[www.redcross.org.au](http://www.redcross.org.au)

Red Cross Australia is the Australian branch of the international humanitarian NGO. Its services in Australia are divided between ongoing community programs, emergency and disaster relief services, and blood services.

### *Place of operation*

The Red Cross organisation operates in every state and territory in Australia.

### *Accessing the services offered*

The Red Cross's programs are accessed through various methods depending on the services required.

### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

There are no specific services mentioned on the website of the organisation, but many of their programs could be of use to trafficked persons who are awaiting confirmation of their immigration status, are in detention or are seeking refugee status.

### *Other services offered*

The Red Cross provides 66 local services in various locations around Australia. Many of these programs target refugees and asylum seekers, some of whom may have also been trafficked into Australia. Some programs which may be relevant to trafficked persons include:

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<sup>5</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

- The Asylum Seeker Assistance Scheme;
- The Community Care Pilot;
- The Immigration Detention Program; and
- The Community Detention Program.

#### *Connections to other NGOs and Government*

The immigration detention support schemes run by the Red Cross have operated in conjunction with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) since 1996 to support detainees and to raise issues of humanitarian concern where appropriate. Many of their other immigration and asylum seeker programs are funded by DIAC. Fiona David's report additionally indicates that the Red Cross provides services to trafficked persons under the Victorian Government's support scheme.<sup>6</sup>

### **5. Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC)**

[www.asrc.org.au](http://www.asrc.org.au)

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre was established in 2001 to provide support to asylum seekers.

#### *Place of operation*

The ASRC is based in Victoria, with a head office in Melbourne.

#### *Accessing the services offered*

The means of accessing its services are not explained on the website, seemingly by contacting ASRC directly on its office number: (03) 9326 6066.

#### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

No specific services are mentioned on its website, but many of the ASRC's programs could be of benefit to trafficked persons seeking assistance who may not qualify for other schemes.

#### *Other services offered*

A variety of other services are provided by the ASRC. These include:

- Welfare and Advocacy programs including campaigns, casework, counselling, advice on human rights law and health services;
- Community Development Programs aimed at building the community's knowledge and understanding of asylum seeker issues;
- Employment assistance for asylum seekers (ASSET, the Asylum Seeker Service for Employment and Training);
- English language classes;
- Aid teams to distribute food and essential items to clients who are unable to access welfare or income support payments. This is carried out through a program of community meals, and a Foodbank;
- Children's services;
- Small business advice; and
- Social and recreational programs.

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<sup>6</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

### *Connections to other NGOs and Government*

The ACRC's website lacks any links to government bodies and it explicitly notes its lack of government funding, but the organisation is listed in David's summary of NGOs working for the Victorian government to support victims of trafficking.<sup>7</sup>

## **6. Scarlet Alliance**

[www.scarletalliance.org.au](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au)

Scarlet Alliance is an advocacy group supporting the sex workers of Australia with an aim to achieve their social, legal and political equality. The group also provides training to sex workers in health safety, and educates community leaders with a view to eradicating stereotyped images of the profession. Scarlet Alliance also undertakes a number of research oriented projects funded by organisations such as the AIDS-Trust. In addition, they aim to act as a forum where information can be shared between sex workers.

### *Place of operation*

Their head office is located in Surry Hills in Sydney, NSW, however the services provided by this organisation are national.

### *Accessing the services offered*

The information dissemination arm of Scarlet Alliance operates mainly over the internet and information can be found at their website above or by emailing [info@scarletalliance.org.au](mailto:info@scarletalliance.org.au). Information on events organised by or involving Scarlet Alliance, as well as training programs, can also be found at these locations, or by calling (02) 9326 9455.

### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

There are no specific services of this nature mentioned on their website. However, given their substantial presence among sex workers, the organisation may play a crucial role in victim of trafficking identification.

### *Other services offered*

Scarlet Alliance mainly acts as a support and advocacy organisation for sex workers in Australia nationally. Because of their distinct role, they are well connected to the needs and opinions of sex workers, providing a basis on which to develop law reform policies and other awareness-raising activities. The organisation regularly holds events aimed at increasing public knowledge of prostitution and also improving the workplace knowledge of individual sex workers.

### *Connections to other NGOs*

Scarlet Men is a branch of Scarlet Alliance dealing exclusively with men in the sex industry. Their website also lists various other NGOs involved in sex work in each state, nationally and globally.

### *Connections to Government*

The association is involved in the Working Group of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking, which also includes a number of Federal government departments. Scarlet Alliance is also linked to the Australian Institute of Crime's research and development forums, and have played an active advocacy and advisory role in relation to law reform in the area of trafficking in persons.

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<sup>7</sup> Fiona David, *Trafficking of Women for Sexual Purposes*, Canberra (ACT): AIC, 2008, 17.

## **7. Samaritan Accommodation**

Samaritan Accommodation does not have a website. Contact details for the service can be found under the general Salvation Army website at <http://salvos.org.au/contact/social-services-and-programs>. A brochure on Samaritan Accommodation can be found at the Anti-Slavery Project website at <http://salvos.org.au/contact/social-services-and-programs>

Samaritan Accommodation is a hostel facility specifically designed for victims of trafficking or slavery and is the only service of its kind in Australia. Apart from accommodation, which can be accessed for up to 12 months, they are also able to provide support and guidance to victims. The staff are available 24/7 for support to residents. The services are restricted to women aged 18 and over.

### *Place of operation*

The hostel is located in Sydney. There is only one of this kind and specificity run by Salvation Army in Australia.

### *Accessing the services offered*

Samaritan Accommodation can be accessed by calling (02) 9211 5794. If translation services are required, they recommend calling the Translation and Interpretation Service on 131 450 and asking them to contact the facility. The services are limited to women aged 18 and above in conditions of slavery or trafficking.

### *Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

Samaritan Accommodation caters for victims of trafficking as well as victims of slavery. As well as accommodation, the organisation provides:

- Legal support;
- Medical support; and
- Assistance with understanding other problems faced by the victim and help with making longer-term decisions.

### *Other services offered*

Other than the services provided by the umbrella organisation, the Salvation Army, Samaritan Accommodation does not offer services other than accommodation. General information on the work done by the Salvation Army can be found at their website <http://www.salvos.org.au> or by calling the Care Line on 1300 36 36 22 or 13 SALVOS.

### *Connections to other NGOs and Government*

Samaritan Accommodation is run by the Salvation Army, a non-profit Christian organisation in Australia. The service has no other mentioned links to other NGOs, although they are referred to by the UTS Anti-Slavery Project. There are no mentioned affiliations with any Government Agencies in any of the information available about this organisation.

## **8. Anti-Slavery Project & UTS Community Law Centre**

[www.antislavery.org.au](http://www.antislavery.org.au)

The Anti-Slavery Project focuses on slavery and human trafficking on various levels. It is a prominent organisation in both advocacy and law reform arenas, and also provides direct assistance to victims of these crimes in the form of legal support and connecting the victim with other agencies.

*Place of operation*

University of Technology in Sydney.

*Accessing the services offered*

PO Box 123, Broadway NSW 2007

(61 2) 9514 9662

[antislavery@uts.edu.au](mailto:antislavery@uts.edu.au)

*Specific services offered for victims of trafficking*

The Project's work centres specifically on victims of slavery and trafficking, and does not limit services based on whether the victim is one of trafficking or slavery. The Anti-Slavery Project provides:

- Legal support and advice, including initial support when dealing with police and investigations;
- Immigration law support;
- Housing assistance;
- Assistance with obtaining civil compensation; and
- Social support services.

The Project also provides support to individuals and other NGOs in identifying cases of slavery and trafficking. They also form part of an extensive network of trafficking related organisations to which other support matters, such as counselling or housing, can be referred.

*Other services offered*

All services offered by the Anti-Slavery Project relate to the issue of human trafficking and slavery, both in Australia and globally. They are also actively involved in advocacy and law reform in the issue, as well as training for NGOs, legal groups and other interested individuals in providing support for victims.

*Connections to other NGOs*

The Anti-Slavery Project is closely linked to the UTS Community Law Centre, which funds and provides legal support for this service. It is also linked to organisations including Scarlet Alliance, the Fair Trade Association and various smaller organisations focused on welfare and human rights. Details on some of these organisations can be found on the Anti-Slavery Project website listed above.

*Connections to Government*

The Anti-Slavery Project is represented on the Working Group of the National Roundtable on People Trafficking, which contains several Federal government departments. The Project has also made submissions to the Federal Government concerning amendments to trafficking legislation in Australia. However, there are no specific links between this organisation and any government departments.