

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF CRIMINOLOGY

Question No. 64

Senator Barnett asked the following question at the hearing on 25 May 2010:

What is the extent of the sex workers survey being conducted through the Scarlet Alliance as part of the current study on human trafficking?

The answer to the honourable senator's question is as follows:

While there is a growing body of literature on trafficking in Australia, little research has been undertaken to examine the migration experiences of migrant sex workers. In particular, little is known about the vulnerabilities to trafficking reported by migrant sex workers; the protections that they are aware of and employ against trafficking, and highly exploitative practices more generally; and their access to law and justice agencies in Australia to assist with trafficking in persons issues.

The project aims to fill the gap identified in the literature by examining sex workers' experiences in Australia, identifying the vulnerabilities to trafficking that sex workers may face and exploring the strategies used by sex workers to reduce the risks of trafficking.

The AIC has funded Scarlet Alliance to undertake this project in two (2) phases:

- the first phase is a survey of sex workers in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and is almost complete, at a cost of \$100,000.
- the second phase, was recently initiated and is still in progress. It is comprised of an extension of the survey to Queensland (Brisbane and Townsville), Western Australia (Perth and Kalgoorlie) and the ACT, together with some enhancements in Sydney to the survey distribution in order to ensure a wider cross-section of migrant sex workers are surveyed, at a cost of \$73,000.

It is currently expected that a minimum of 500 sex workers will have been surveyed over the life of the project.