

MEDIA RELEASE – STAMP OUT SLAVERY

Anti-slavery activist and author, Kathleen Maltzahn, has written to the ACT Chief Minister John Stanhope urging him to take action on sexual slavery.

Maltzahn has called on the ACT government to make it mandatory for regulated brothels in the ACT to post signs stating sexual slavery is a crime.

This follows the 28 August High Court decision upholding the conviction of Melbourne brothel owner Wei Tang for sexual slavery. Tang, as part of a syndicate, bought four Thai women, who were then told they were on 'contracts', and were required to pay off \$45,000 'debts' by having sex without payment with 900 men.

'The highest court in the land has said that these contracts can be a form of slavery', Maltzahn said. 'It's time the message was taken into brothels, so enslaved women know too.'

'Women who contact anti-slavery group Project Respect have said they didn't know where to go for help. Sometimes our outreach workers are stopped from going into brothels. These signs would get past slave traders barriers and take the law to sex slaves.'

The signs should state that sexual slavery is a serious crime, that contracts have been found to be a form of sexual slavery, and that help is available by contacting the Australian Federal Police (and including appropriate contact numbers). Translations into relevant languages, such as Thai, Chinese, Korean and Russian, should be included.

**Maltzahn is in Canberra to speak about her book, *Trafficked*, on Monday night. Federal Minister for Women, Tanya Plibersek, will also speak.
@ Paperchain bookstore, 34 Franklin St., Manuka, ACT 2603, 5.45 for 6pm.**

She is the founder of Project Respect, the Melbourne organisation that spearheaded the successful 2003 campaign to put trafficking on the national agenda, which led to a new \$20 million package on trafficking which included support for trafficked women, legislative change and the end of the mandatory detention and deportation of trafficked women.

For more information about the High Court case, see media release at www.projectrespect.org.au.

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