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Trafficking in Persons in Australia Awareness Campaign

CONCEPT AND OUTLINE

1. Background

Trafficking in persons in Australia

Trafficking in persons is a phenomenon not well understood and recognised in Australia. Despite greater legislative and law enforcement activity, as well as some acknowledgement of the issue by government agencies, the causes and consequences of this crime are not well known to wider audiences. Reports about the characteristics and extent of trafficking in persons in Australia also vary greatly depending on the source of information.

Government sources suggest that one or two hundred persons have been trafficked to Australia in recent years while advocacy groups argue that this trade involves several thousand people. Due to the clandestine nature of this illicit activity, much of the publicly available information is difficult to validate. Many sources indeed exaggerate or otherwise misrepresent the true levels and patterns of this phenomenon; many statements about trafficking in persons are not supported by systematic research. 'The picture of trafficking remains very unclear with competing claims about the extent and nature of trafficking to Australia,' notes Judy Putt, Director of Research at the Australian Institute of Criminology.¹

International law & best practice

Raising awareness and educating the public about the causes, consequences, and signs of trafficking in persons are important tools to prevent and detect this heinous crime. In particular education and awareness raising play an important role in preventing this phenomenon, recognising instances of trafficking in persons by law enforcement agencies and the wider public, enabling and facilitating the reporting of cases, and in outlining relevant government initiatives, support systems, helplines and the like. Accordingly, awareness and education campaigns feature prominently in domestic anti-trafficking strategies and in international law and best practice guidelines.

Article 3(a) of the *Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children* [hereinafter *Trafficking in Persons Protocol*] defines 'trafficking in persons' as:

the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power

¹ Judy Putt, 'Human trafficking to Australia: a research challenge' (2007) 228 *Trends & Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice* 5.

or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

Significantly, Article 9(1) of the *Trafficking in Persons Protocol* requires Signatories to establish policies, programs, and other measures to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and protect victims from re-victimization. This should also include legislative, educational, social and other measures to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons that leads to trafficking, Article 9(5). Article 9(2) specifically encourages State Parties to instigate mass media campaigns and social and economic initiatives to prevent and combat trafficking in persons.² Paragraph (3) further calls on Signatories to collaborate broadly with non-government organisations and other elements of civil society in creating and conducting awareness and education campaigns.³

To facilitate the implementation of these (and other) measures, the *Model Law against Trafficking in Persons* — developed by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UN.GIFT, the UN Global Initiative to Fight Trafficking — recommends the creation of a national anti-trafficking coordinating body or inter-agency anti-trafficking task force with a mandate to develop a national plan of action consisting, inter alia, of a comprehensive set of measures for the prevention of trafficking in persons.⁴

This campaign is responding to this call for action. Concept, content, and design of the campaign are modelled on international best practice guidelines and are informed by a critical analysis of forty international and Australian awareness campaigns on this issue conducted by the project team in 2010.

Existing campaigns

The difficulties plaguing the measurement of trafficking in persons in the academic and policy fields have also hampered the ability of awareness and education campaigns to present clear and accurate information about this phenomenon. Specifically, the lack of reliable data and comprehensive accounts of the true extent and nature of trafficking in persons in Australia has been a major impediment to awareness raising attempts by a variety of government and non-government entities. Anecdotal evidence, media reports, and statistical estimates without proper evidentiary bases have often constituted the main sources of information on which previous awareness campaigns were built. This has led, in some instances, to misinformation and exaggerations, much to the detriment of the fight against trafficking in persons. In particular, many past Australian campaigns superimpose information from foreign and international sources onto the domestic setting, thus failing to recognise local dimensions and characteristics of the problem.

Moreover, many campaigns are driven by political, religious, or ideological agendas or are motivated by the need to raise funds for certain organisations and their activities. These campaigns are more likely to inflate the true extent of the problem. This may prove particularly problematic from a public awareness point of view, as the size of the 'social problem matters in attracting media coverage, donor funding, and attention from policy makers'.⁵

² See also Article 31(5) *Convention against Transnational Organised Crime*.

³ Article 9(2), (3) *Trafficking in Persons Protocol*.

⁴ UNODC & UN.GIFT, *Model Law against Trafficking in Persons* (2009) 84.

⁵ Ronald Weitzer, 'The Social Construction of Sex Trafficking: Ideology and Institutionalisation of a Moral Crusade' (2007) 35 *Politics & Society* 447, 456.

Existing campaigns also focus almost exclusively on trafficking in persons into the commercial sex industry and do not adequately reflect the full spectrum of the phenomenon as recognised in the *Trafficking in Persons Protocol*.

By contrast, **this campaign** distinguishes itself by referring consistently to verifiable open-source documentation in order to maximise its effectiveness and truthfulness. Based on extensive academic research and consultation with key stakeholders and experts, this campaign develops a set of informed, balanced, and evidence-based awareness and education tools. Furthermore, this campaign is not led by ideology or by a desire to raise funds or revenue. It also explores the full spectrum of trafficking in persons as manifested in documented cases.

2. Purpose/goal

The principal purpose of this campaign is to raise greater awareness and provide more accurate information on the full spectrum of trafficking in persons in Australia. The campaign serves three separate, but equally important, goals:

1. It demystifies the phenomenon of trafficking in persons in Australia. Research has shown that much of the contemporary understanding of the issue is impaired by inaccurate reporting and the consequent creation of stereotypes.⁶ This campaign dismantles common clichés by providing accurate information on the issue. Every element of the campaign is based on actual, documented cases of trafficking in persons in Australia.
2. As a consequence of the more accurate depiction of the issue, this campaign has the ability to correct public perceptions and change commonly held views towards trafficking in persons, breaking some of the taboos and stigma associated with the issue. This campaign explores the full spectrum of trafficking in persons into Australia including, inter alia, labour trafficking and exploitation, sex trafficking, trafficking in children through bogus adoptions schemes. et cetera.
3. This campaign aims to change consumer behaviour by better informing the public of the demand aspect that drives trafficking in persons. Reducing the demand for trafficking in persons — and thus taking away its profitable aspects — has the potential to minimise, if not eliminate, the problem in a more durable fashion.

The need for a further campaign?

Previous campaigns have been hampered by the relative paucity of accurate information regarding trafficking in persons in Australia. They have also been affected by agenda-driven messages, marketing techniques, or ideological or religious bias. This, in turn, explains the need for an informed, unbiased awareness and education initiative. Moreover, this campaign is not tied to any fund-raising activities, and consequently is not hampered by any desire to inflate the problem.

⁶ Erica Kotnik et al, 'Human Trafficking in Australia: The Challenge of Responding to Suspicious Activities' (2007) 42 *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 370, 376.

3. Message

This campaign is based on the premise that trafficking in persons is a crime that is demand driven. Like other forms of organised crime, trafficking in persons involves the delivery and offer of an illicit service that responds to a demand in a given consumer population. As other research has shown, perpetrators engage in trafficking in persons with profit as their primary goal.⁷ This campaign aims to convey the message that consumer decisions are the principal factor determining the extent of trafficking in persons in Australia.

Accordingly, the title and theme chosen for this campaign is 'Be Careful What You Pay For'.

The use of the second person ('you') in the campaign title directly addresses the target audience and thus personalises the messages conveyed in this campaign. Rather than addressing a more vague aggregate audience, the language used specifically targets individual viewers/readers in order to draw their attention more effectively.

The suggestion created by the slogan that the consumer should be 'careful' is also engaging in a more conscientious regard. Audience members are immediately confronted by the suggestion that their decisions might contribute to the problem, and are thus more likely to be interested in discovering ways to avoid it.

The campaign title is supported by three supplementary messages: 'See the hidden costs', 'Always read the fine print', and 'Not everyone gets a bargain'. These messages alert to the harms, downsides, and implications of trafficking in persons, using language and vocabulary that reflects the demand aspects of this phenomenon and that highlights the consumer focus of this campaign.

4. Content

The content of this campaign revolves around the commodification of human beings and emphasises the fact that trafficking in persons is demand driven (thus involving a consumer population and the sale of goods and services).

To that end, the campaign depicts persons as products, using images of every day household items to reflect or insinuate cases of trafficking in persons and the exploitation of human beings for sexual purposes, forced labour, domestic servitude, illegal adoptions, et cetera.⁸

The individual 'products' displayed in the campaign are based on real (and reported) cases from Australia. Each product relates directly and is referenced to the facts of a case, thus avoiding unverifiable statements. The core elements of the campaign are based on true stories that are documented in open source material including official case reports, government documents, academic literature, and media articles.

⁷ Jini. Robya et al, 'U.S. Response to Human Trafficking: Is it enough?' (2008) 6(4) *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* 508, 510; Susan Tiefenbrun 'Sex Sells but Drugs Don't Talk: Trafficking of Women Sex Workers and an Economic Solution' (2001) 24 *Thomas Jefferson Law Review* 161, 161; Thanh-Dam Truong, 'Human Trafficking and Organized Crime' (Working Paper No 339, The Institute of Social Studies, 2001) 2.

⁸ This concept of commodification of persons is in part inspired by an awareness campaign running in Luxembourg in the year 2000. This campaign — which took a strong anti prostitution stance — depicted women as pieces of meat, on sale in supermarkets. This campaign was only aimed at local audiences and did not tackle the wider issues relating to trafficking in persons.

5. Media & Method

The message of this campaign will be distributed through a variety of media.

Posters and postcards used in the campaign will display one of the products as the central object, together with the 'Be careful what you pay for' slogan. This image is accompanied at the bottom of the poster (and the reverse page of the postcard) with a summary of the case to which the product refers. Design of the material will focus on a minimalist, eye catching approach.

A short film has been created in both a 10 minute original cut, as well as a 1 minute condensed version. The short film will convey the story of a supermarket or shopping centre, as consumers choose the products explained earlier: Two lead characters purchase the products described above. Each product is prominently displayed before being placed in a shopping trolley. After selecting a range of these products, the lead characters move to the check-out to complete her/his purchases at which point the background and story of each product will be revealed in spectacular fashion.

The posters and the short film are strongly intertwined in both message and content, featuring the same products, slogan and real-world examples.

Audience

The campaign is aimed at general audiences (aged 15 years and over) in Australia with no prior special knowledge relating to the topic of trafficking in persons. In accordance with the consumer-centred approach of this campaign, this audience has been identified as having a particularly prominent influence on the level and occurrence of trafficking. Unlike other campaigns that focus largely on reducing the supply of persons to be trafficked, this campaign will focus on demand reduction. It focuses on efforts to change the consumer behaviour that creates the market for trafficked persons. In a negative sense, this campaign is not specifically aimed at audiences with expert knowledge, victims of trafficking in persons, law enforcement personnel or at others occupying official functions.

Recent research has shown that the Australian public has a comparatively poor understanding of the characteristics of trafficking in persons and that many perceptions of the issue are based on myths and anecdotes rather than fact. There is also evidence that a large portion of the public is unaware of the proper reporting mechanisms to use if they encounter trafficking in persons.⁹ In addition, studies have shown that the public's perception of trafficking in persons is largely restricted to portrayals of a particular archetypal of victim. Surveys have also shown that some members of the public remain suspicious as to the immigration motives of victims.¹⁰ These attitudes towards trafficking in persons are symptomatic of the prevalence of depictions of the issue in the media — and in many awareness campaigns — that rely on myth and stereotype. This campaign, in contrast, addresses the level of this misinformation directly by referring to real-life cases.

Dissemination & Communication

The media used in this campaign — including posters, postcards and film — will be disseminated in several ways.

⁹ The Body Shop and Child Wise, *Community Attitudes on Sex Trafficking of Children and Young People* (2010) 14.

¹⁰ Erica Kotnik et al, 'Human Trafficking in Australia: The Challenge of Responding to Suspicious Activities' (2007) 42 *Australian Journal of Social Issues* 370, 376.

The film, posters, and postcard will be presented at a launch event held at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, Qld. Invitations will be extended to key Australian stakeholders, representatives from government agencies, relevant NGOs, policy makers, and international organisations. Material from other awareness campaigns will be displayed alongside to contrast various approaches to the topic. It is anticipated that this display will form the basis of an exhibition on human trafficking awareness campaigns for a period of 3-4 weeks at The University of Queensland.

Campaign film and print materials, along with general information on the topic of trafficking in persons in Australia, will also be presented to key Australian and international agencies connected to the issue of trafficking in persons. Avenues to present to selected audiences such as law societies, high school, university students, adult business associations, policy makers, will be explored.

The campaign material will also be disseminated through YouTube and a range of social networking sites, including Facebook. Print and film materials will be available for viewing and download on the Human Trafficking Working Group website (www.law.uq.edu.au/humantrafficking), along with further background for those interested in obtaining more information on the topic

Posters and postcards will be distributed to a variety of public locations including coffeeshops, pubs, bars, music venues, et cetera.

The interest of public broadcasters to include a feature on the topic of trafficking in persons will be gauged, as well as the possibility of screening the short film in cinema advertising.

6. Outcomes & Assessment

Monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the campaign throughout its duration is acknowledged as an important part of the overall campaign strategy. To that end, UNODC also includes 'monitoring and evaluation' as part of its *Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons*' 'Campaign Checklist.'

The assessment of this campaign is complicated by the fact that the campaign outcomes are not immediately tied to the apprehension of victims, nor any rates of investigations, prosecutions, convictions, or any other quantifiable aspect of trafficking in persons. Assessing the effectiveness of any awareness campaign presents difficulties due to the need to divert prohibitively high resources away from the campaign itself.

For these reasons, the assessment methods for this campaign will gauge effectiveness through a variety of means, such as measurement of website hits, quantity of disseminated material, and audience attendance.

10. Project Team

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Dr Andreas Schloenhardt is Associate Professor at The University of Queensland TC Beirne School of Law in Brisbane and a consultant to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). His principal areas of research include criminal law, organised crime, narco-trafficking, terrorism, international criminal law, and immigration and refugee law. Dr Schloenhardt has written extensively on the topics of migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons in Australia and the Asia Pacific region. His recent work focuses on trafficking in persons, organised crime legislation, wildlife and forest crime, and the illicit market for amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS). His work is frequently cited by other scholars, in government publications, and judicial decisions, including the High Court of Australia. Andreas is a frequent commentator on national television, radio, and in newspapers.

Mr Xavier Goffinet, Project Assistant

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Xavier Goffinet is a research assistant at The University of Queensland TC Beirne School of Law and, since 2010, a member of UQ's Human Trafficking Working Group. In this capacity he has reviewed over forty Australian and international human trafficking awareness campaigns and has worked closely with a great range of experts and stakeholders in the field.

Mr Courtney Campbell, Film Producer

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Courtney Campbell is an independent film producer and president of Changing Directions Films LLC which he founded in Portland, Oregon. Before moving into film making, he received his M.A. in International Policy Studies from the Monterey Institute of International Studies and has worked worldwide on human rights and development issues. He is currently producing a documentary on human trafficking and the 2010 World Cup in South Africa

Mr David R Jones, Cinematography; Sound Editor

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David Robert Jones started his filmmaking career in Chicago, and now lives in Los Angeles and has been the cinematographer for movies, commercials, television, and music videos. His feature work includes the comedy "Lower Learning" which was directed by Mark Lafferty, and stars Jason Biggs and Eva Longoria. More recently he shot a dramatic feature called "Answers To Nothing"—directed by Matt Leutwyler and stars Dane Cook and Elizabeth Mitchell. He has been working with some great commercial directors including Craig

Gillespie, and Tony McNeal on spots for Honda, Nike, Gatorade, and others. His television work includes the ABC pilot for "This Might Hurt" which was directed by DGA award winner Jason Winer. David has won awards for his cinematography on the films "Tender As Hellfire" and "Pop Foul."

Changing Directions Films LLC

www.changingdirectionsfilms.com

Changing Directions Films is an independent production company specializing in documentary film. Founded in Portland, OR by Courtney Campbell, Changing Directions Films has put together an ensemble of dedicated people looking to create films of substance. Our goal is to create an international community based on the exchange of ideas, using our films to help promote social responsibility and be a catalyst for change. Even after the cameras stop rolling, we will be involved in the communities we document, partnering with local organizations in an attempt to create a lasting impact. We will continually learn from our film experience and hope to pass these lessons on to audiences around the world.