



COALITION AGAINST
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MEDIA RELEASE: Sex trade harms exposed in survivor-led trans-Tasman campaign

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Sex trade survivors are teaming up with feminists this month to combat myths about prostitution. The trans-Tasman project, launching on Wednesday, is part of the [United Nations '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence'](#).

The [Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia](#) and [Wahine Toa Rising](#) have collaborated to produce [Busting 16 Myths about the Sex Trade](#), a new booklet that counters the most common misconceptions about the sex trade in Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand.

From November 25 to December 10, the two groups will release a debunked myth each day on their social media, using the hashtag [#SexTradeMyths](#).

Sex trade survivor and Wahine Toa Rising spokeswoman, Ally Marie Diamond says the aim of the booklet is to debunk arguments that support exploitation in the sex trade. "This booklet will light up those dark corners of the sex trade that have remained hidden for way too long", Ms Diamond says.

CATWA spokeswoman Tegan Larin says there is a lot of misinformation about the sex trade in Australia and New Zealand, and that some of the worst harm to women and children is hidden. "It's easy to focus on the popular idea of the empowered 'sex worker'", says Ms Larin, "but women with solely positive experiences make up a minority of people in the sex trade. Far more experience violence and exploitation. The sex trade is based on the outdated idea that women exist to serve men."

The inequalities faced by women and girls in the sex trade is often overlooked too, says Ms Larin. "Women from Asian backgrounds, women with poor English language skills, and working-class women are overrepresented in the Australian sex trade. Our ideas in this country about "choosing" to be in the sex trade are rudimentary. Women are exploited in the sex trade when they lack realistic alternatives. Is this really a genuine choice?"

[16 Days of Activism](#) is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was started by activists at the inaugural Women's Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continues to be coordinated each year by the Centre for Women's Global Leadership. It is used as an organising strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

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About Coalition Against Trafficking in Women (CATWA)

The Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia (CATWA) is the Australian branch of CATW International, a Non-Governmental Organization having Category II consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council. CATWA was formed in Melbourne in 1994 and is a secular and feminist organisation. We work locally and internationally to end all forms of sexual exploitation of women, especially the violence of prostitution, trafficking and pornography.

About Wahine Toa Rising (WTR)

In 2020, Wahine Toa Rising came together because they saw an urgent need for the voices of wahine (women) and tamariki (children) to be heard in Aotearoa New Zealand. 'Wahine Toa' means Warrior Women, and 'Rising' symbolises the heart-led, survivor-led focus of women lifting each other, while still being autonomous. Wahine Toa Rising is survivor-led and supports wahine toa and tamariki who have and are being exploited in the sex trade in Aotearoa New Zealand.