

- **The majority of prostituted persons come from, or are experiencing, difficult and often coercive personal circumstances.**

Project Respect, a service conducting outreach and offering support to women in the sex industry across Victoria reports that of the 995 women they encountered in 2010/2011:

- 75% are single mothers
- 73% speak of either childhood or adulthood sexual abuse
- 60% are currently or previously in a violent relationship
- 47% financially support a partner
- 33% are homeless
- 35% either disclose excessive gambling or state that it was debt through gambling that forced them into the sex industry.

**Women Matter: Project Respect Annual Report, 2010/2011**

[http://projectrespect.org.au/system/files/PR\\_AnnReport10-11\\_Web.pdf](http://projectrespect.org.au/system/files/PR_AnnReport10-11_Web.pdf)

A large study surveying a population of 854 prostituted persons in nine countries across five continents, in virtually all forms of prostitution found:

- 59% of all respondents affirmed that they, as children, were “hit or beaten by caregiver until injured or bruised”
- 63% reported they were sexually abused as a child
- 75% reported they had been homeless, either currently or in the past
- 47% reported they entered under age 18.

89 percent wanted to escape prostitution but did not have other options for survival. **Farley, Melissa, et al. (2003) Prostitution and Trafficking in Nine Countries: An Update on Violence and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, *Journal of Trauma Practice*. 2(3/4): 33-74.**

<http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/pdf/Prostitutionin9Countries.pdf>

- **Prostitution is inherently violent and incapable of being regulated.**

Of 854 people in prostitution in nine countries (Canada, Colombia, Germany, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, United States, and Zambia), 71% experienced physical assaults in prostitution, and 62% reported rapes in prostitution.

This study also found 68% of the prostituted persons met criteria for posttraumatic stress disorder with symptoms in the same range as for battered women seeking shelter, survivors of rape, and refugees from state-organised torture. Such symptoms were found *regardless of whether prostitution was legalised or criminalised, and regardless of whether it took place indoors, in brothels, on the streets, or in developing as opposed to fully industrialized countries.* **Farley, Melissa, et al. (2003).**

A 2009 Korean study with 46 former indoor-prostituted women and a control group found that prostitution was strongly related to PTSD even when controlling for childhood abuse. **Choi, Hyunjung, et al (2009) Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Disorders of Extreme Stress (DESNOS) symptoms following prostitution and childhood abuse. *Violence against Women*, 15(8), 933–951.**

- **Something can be done to reduce the harm of prostitution.**

In Sweden, the criminalisation of the purchase of sexual services and decriminalisation of the prostituted person has significantly reduced the occurrence of prostitution in Sweden compared to neighbouring countries. **Waltman, Max. "Sweden's prohibition of purchase of sex: The law's reasons, impact, and potential," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 2011, 458-460.**

Waltman cites evidence from the following studies:

- In 1995 the *Swedish 1993 Prostitution Inquiry* estimated that there were 2500–3000 prostituted women in Sweden, among whom 650 were on the streets. Now, in contrast, published literature and other evidence in 2008 suggest there are approximately 300 women in street prostitution, and 300 women and 50 men who advertise on the internet. **Holmström, Charlotta (2008). Prostitution and trafficking for sexual purposes in Sweden: Extent, occurrence, and knowledge production. In Charlotta Holmström & May-Len Skilbrei (Eds.), *Prostitution in the Nordic*, Copenhagen: Nordic Council of Minister.**
- In Denmark where purchase of sex is legal, there were at least 5567 persons visibly in prostitution, among whom 1415 were on the streets. Sweden's prostitution population thus is approximately a tenth of its neighbor Denmark's, even though Denmark only has a population of 5.6 million while Sweden has 9.4 million. **Holmström, Charlotta, & Skilbrei, May-Len (2008). Nordic markets for prostitution in change: An introduction. In *Prostitution in the Nordic*.**
- From 1996 to 2008 the number of men reporting the experience of purchasing sex (before as well as after the law took effect) in the national population samples seems to have dropped from 12.7% to 7.6% **Kuosmanen, Jari (2008). Ten years with the law: On approaches to and experiences of prostitution in Sweden. In *Prostitution in the Nordic*.**