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**Media release: 26 March 2013**

## Support group for women in the sex industry takes top national award

A group providing support to women in the sex industry, including women trafficked to Australia, has won the Social Impact Award at the inaugural 2013 HESTA Community Sector Awards.

Project Respect — based in Collingwood, Victoria — stood out from hundreds of nominations, for its pioneering work assisting vulnerable women working in brothels and other parts of the sex industry.

The Social Impact Award recognises an individual, organisation or network that has made an outstanding contribution to social justice in Australia, through policy development, advocacy, leadership or representation.

Since 1998, Project Respect has conducted outreach visits to brothels in Victoria, offering direct support to women in the sex industry and assisting approximately 20 trafficked women every year.

Project Respect Executive Director, Kelly Hinton, said the organisation included staff, volunteers and Committee of Management members who had been in the sex industry and understood the issues facing many of these women.

“We provide women in the sex industry with counselling and information about services including domestic violence, sexual assault, housing, drug and alcohol issues, gambling problems and child custody,” she said.

“We also established the first Australian shelter for survivors of trafficking into the sex industry, which has helped numerous women get their lives back on track.”

The judges commended Project Respect for making a significant contribution to improving the lives of women in the sex industry and women trafficked to Australia for prostitution.

HESTA CEO, Anne-Marie Corboy, congratulated the winners of each category.

“The judges had a difficult decision to make, with hundreds of excellent nominations and 15 outstanding finalists. The winners are a credit to the sector and their communities. We’re proud to honour these exceptional individuals and organisations,” Ms Corboy said.

Project Respect received a \$10,000 development grant — courtesy of long-term HESTA awards sponsor, ME Bank.

The winners of the HESTA Community Sector Awards were announced at an awards dinner in Adelaide on 25 March, during the Australian Council of Social Service National Conference.

The Organisation Award winner also received a \$10,000 development grant, with the joint winners of the Unsung Hero Award each receiving a \$5,000 ME Bank *EveryDay* Transaction Account — courtesy of ME Bank.

HESTA is the leading super fund for health and community services, with more than 750,000 members and \$21 billion in assets. More people in health and community services choose HESTA for their super.

To learn more about the awards visit [hestaawards.com.au](https://hestaawards.com.au)

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