



BaptistCare

On Notice Questions

Question One

Mr ALEX GREENWICH: I appreciate you may not have a position on this, but do you think that anti-discrimination protections for sex workers would be beneficial to help mitigate some of that stigma and discrimination people face, particularly when seeking employment?

RESPONSE

BaptistCare seeks to eliminate bullying, harassment and discrimination from the workplace and ensure that workers are not subjected to treatment that is hostile and unprofessional, and is supportive of any legislation that ensures this. It is also important to note, that for many of our clients, other factors in addition to being involved in the sex industry have stopped employment opportunities, such as homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, lack of educational opportunities and domestic violence. Until these larger issues are addressed, anti-discrimination protections for sex workers are unlikely to have any real effect on changing circumstances for our clients.

Question Two

Ms JO HAYLEN: Is there anything in your experience that would assist with relations to the police or indeed removing some of those perceptions or biases?

RESPONSE

It is important to recognise that minimising the divide between police and women involved with street based sex work involves a continual process of building trust and rapport. There is no one option or quick fix; a number of initiatives are needed. Establishing a sex worker liaison officer has been a positive thing in the Kings Cross LAC. However many of our clients would also benefit from more friendly interactions with police; simple hellos and daily interactions are beneficial (especially for clients who are also homeless in the area). Because the client group of women involved with street based sex work already face a high degree of stigma, isolation and vulnerability, it is vital that continual sensitivity training is implemented, particularly for new recruits and new police to the area.