

**Submission
No 172**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Organisation: South Western Sydney Local Health District
Name: Ms Amanda Larkin
Position: Chief Executive
Date Received: 27/08/2015

The Hon Alister Henskens SC MP
Chair
Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr Henskens

I write to provide a response regarding the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels.

The following comments are made in relation to terms of reference of the Inquiry including section (d) Options for reform including a scheme of registration or licensing system for authorised brothels; and section (f) Options to maintain a high level of public health outcomes.

(d) Options for reform including a scheme of registration or licensing system for authorised brothels

In 2012, the University of NSW's Kirby Institute for Infection and Immunity in Society produced "The Sex Industry in New South Wales" report for NSW Ministry of Health (see attachment). The report recommended that the NSW Government's legislative reforms of 1979 and 1995 be endorsed (see recommendation 1).

The 1979 and 1995 reforms decriminalised adult sex work and have enhanced the surveillance, health promotion and safety of the NSW sex industry. International authorities regard the current NSW sex industry regulatory framework as best practice.

In considering options for reform, licensing of sex work should not be regarded as a viable legislative response (see recommendation 2 of "The Sex Industry in New South Wales" report). Licensing systems are expensive and difficult to administer and generate an unlicensed underclass which avoids surveillance systems and public health services, as evidenced by licensing systems in Queensland and Victoria.

South Western Sydney Local Health District (SWSLHD) provides outreach and clinical services to brothels to reinforce safe sex practices and maintain the low rates of sexually transmissible infections achieved by the NSW sex industry. Brothel licensing systems have been proven to impede outreach activities by driving unlicensed brothels underground. If a licensing system were to be introduced in NSW such outreach work would be seriously compromised.

SWSLHD supports the current decriminalised NSW sex industry regulatory framework as best practice for maintaining the health and wellbeing of sex workers in our Health District and does not support the introduction of a licensing system.

South Western Sydney Local Health District acknowledges the traditional owners of the land.

General Correspondence

Email: swslhd.esu@sswahs.nsw.gov.au

Website: www.swslhd.nsw.gov.au

South Western Sydney Local Health District

ABN 46 738 965 845

Liverpool Hospital Eastern Campus
Locked Bag 7279 Liverpool BC 1871
Tel 612 9828 6000 Fax 612 9828 6001

(f) Options to maintain a high level of public health outcomes:

The current framework which does not rely on a sex industry licensing system is the most effective approach for maintaining public health outcomes.

SWSLHD supports recommendation two of "The Sex Industry in New South Wales" report which states that licensing of sex workers and brothels is a threat to public health.

Should you require any further information, please contact my office on [REDACTED]

Regards

[REDACTED]

Amanda Larkin
Chief Executive

Date: 15/8/15