

**Submission
No 56**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

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Partially Confidential

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The Committee Manager
Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels
Parliament House, Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. I write as a concerned member of the general public who has seen sex workers in the Sydney area. This has immensely improved the quality of my life, giving me human and sexual contact which I had more or less resigned myself to going without until my death. I also write as someone who philosophically supports the decriminalisation of any and all activities carried out by consenting adults that harm no-one but themselves. Criminalisation of any such activity, by its nature, drives it underground, provides opportunities for criminal organisations to participate in and control it, encourages police corruption and the corruption of judicial processes, stigmatises individuals who participate in it as criminals, and encourages abuses (such as human trafficking or pimping) of those individuals, by making them reluctant to report abuse or coercion, knowing that they themselves are likely to be liable to penalties. The history of prohibition of things such as alcohol, drugs, and sex work makes it abundantly clear that criminalisation does not eliminate demand, and probably does not even greatly reduce it, and any arguments to the contrary are simply nonsense.

I would like to point out that the world's leading human rights organisation, Amnesty International, following years of careful study and research, recently endorsed a policy calling for the decriminalisation of sex work, despite huge and directed opposition from groups with a variety of objections, including a very high profile campaign by many ill-informed celebrities, and a strong campaign from many well-funded groups that have the objective of "rescuing" sex workers.

"Rescue", in this context, generally meaning some combination of having them arrested, prosecuted, given criminal records and imprisoned, losing their family connections, exposed to the maximum amount of social stigma, then (if they are lucky) trained in some skill that will enable them to pursue employment in the lowest tiers of the workforce. Most of these groups are based in some form of "revealed truth", either religious or philosophical, that is immune to the operation of reason.

On the other hand, the policy of decriminalisation that Amnesty advocates, which New South Wales was a world leader in adopting in 1995, makes sex work into a genuine industry. It allows sex workers to exercise the fullest possible range of human rights, including reporting abuses, assaults, trafficking, etc to police without fear of persecution or prosecution.

I have never seen sex workers at a brothel, but have seen them both at their places of residence and at mine. I cannot see any reason why those forms of sex work need to be regulated any more tightly than other forms of work from home or assistance in the home. The activity causes no more disruption or degradation to the quality of a residential area than any of those other forms of work. The sex workers I have met are all highly professional, devoted to their work, and doing it from choice. Many have done training and workshops to improve their ability to work with people with disabilities. People who see them, whether disabled or not, are normal people who are simply seeking to increase their experience of an important facet of life in a positive, affirming atmosphere. Any changes to the current, world-leading regime of decriminalisation that is presently in place in New South Wales will be a step backward and will reflect negatively on the State's place in the modern world. This particularly includes the idea that any home used by a sex worker should be defined as a brothel; that is as absurd as defining any home used by a dog owner as a kennel, or any home where someone does tax returns as an office building. I hope that your inquiry ultimately reaches this conclusion.

I am writing pseudonymously because I wish my submission to remain anonymous. Although the highly enlightened state of affairs in NSW is slowly removing the stigma from both sex workers and their clients, I have relatives who would be horrified to learn that I have not been meekly accepting my fate as a celibate, but have been enhancing the quality of my life with the help of some wonderful sex workers.

Yours truly,

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