

**Submission
No 143**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name:

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As a researcher into Sex Work policies and an advocate for the rights of sex workers, I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. Sex workers are the key stakeholders in the process of evaluating the regulation of brothels in NSW, and I hope that the Inquiry ensures that their voices are heard.

The decriminalisation of sex work is essential to recognising the human rights of sex workers in Australia. Sex work has been decriminalised in NSW since 1995 and NSW is world-renowned as having a best practice model. The outcomes of decriminalisation in NSW have included:
Extremely low rates of STIs and HIV (recognised by Australia's National Strategies and the Kirby Institute Annual Surveillance Report)

Better access to health promotion (finding of the Law and Sex Worker Health Study, which compared the health impacts of legal frameworks across Victoria, NSW and WA)

No evidence of organised crime (recognised by the Land and Environment Court)

Better access to Occupational Health and Safety (WorkCover and SWOP worked with sex workers to create Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels, which have been translated to Thai, Chinese and Korean) and

Current evidence presented by the Lancet at AIDS 2014 found the decriminalisation of sex work would have the greatest impact on the HIV epidemic, reducing HIV by up to 46% in the next decade and resulting on cost saving thresholds of tens of millions of dollars globally.

Currently the largest barrier to a safe workplace for sex workers in NSW is a combination of the stigma placed on sex workers by popular misconceptions about sex work (including as perpetuated in media surrounding this inquiry) as well as overly strict local government policies which prevent sex workers from being able to work in authorised premises.

Sex work is work, and sex workers should be treated like other workers.

Yours Faithfully,

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