

**Submission
No 64**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Organisation: Northern Sydney Local Health District
Name: Adj. Associate Professor Vicki Taylor
Position: Chief Executive
Date Received: 18/08/2015

Your Ref: LAC15/148

Alister Henskens SC, MP
Chair
Select Committee on the Regulation of Brothels
Parliament of NSW
Macquarie St
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Attention: ROBInquiry@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Henskens

Thank you for your correspondence of 21 July 2015, inviting Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD) to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels in New South Wales.

Clinic 16 is the only publicly funded sexual health clinic in NSLHD. We see priority population clients in line with Australia's *Third National Sexually Transmissible Infections Strategy 2014-2017* for sexual health screening, testing and management. Our role includes providing sexually transmitted infection (STI) outreach to sex workers in our Local Health District.

Clinic 16 employs a full time Health Education Officer (HEO) who provides outreach and clinic based services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) sex workers. The HEO has worked diligently to build up the trust and participation of local brothels and workers in voluntary STI screening. We provide a dedicated Chinese and Korean language clinic for sex workers weekly at Clinic 16. Between 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015, Clinic 16 provided 430 outreach occasions of service (OOS) and 1055 clinic based OOS to sex workers.

Self-regulation and peer-support in brothel based female sex workers in Sydney has been shown to result in excellent condom use at work, and a prevalence of STIs that are at least as low as the general population¹.

We feel that these excellent public health outcomes in the brothels of NSLHD are a product of the self-regulation and health promotion activities that occur in our Local Health District and across Sydney. We believe that increased regulation through mandatory testing and licensing will have a negative impact on our ability to service this population and on the health of sex workers in our LHD.

Research across Australia in Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth has shown that sex work occurs whether it is self-regulated, licensed or illegal, however unlicensed or illegal brothels are harder to service with health promotion interventions². Increased frequency of testing in the context of licensing is not associated with improved public health outcomes³.

Northern Sydney Local Health District is located on the traditional lands of the Eora Nation

All correspondence to be emailed or sent to:
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Thank you for taking the time to consider this submission. Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Dr Rosalind Foster, Clinical Director Sexual Health, Clinic 16, Royal North Shore Community Health Centre or [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Adj. Assoc. Professor Vicki Taylor
Chief Executive

Date: 18.08.2015.

References:

1. The sex industry in New South Wales: A report to the NSW Ministry of Health. 2012 The Kirby Institute, Faculty of Medicine, University of NSW.
2. Harcourt et al. The decriminalisation of prostitution is associated with better coverage of health promotion programs for sex workers. *Aust NZ J Public Health*, 2010;34:482-6.
3. Chow et al. Testing Commercial Sex Workers for Sexually Transmitted Infections in Victoria, Australia: An Evaluation of the Impact of Reducing the Frequency of Testing. 2014. Plos One DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0103081.