

**Submission  
No 67**

## INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: [REDACTED]  
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*Partially Confidential*



10 August 2015

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

To whom it may concern,

I am a sex worker and wish to make a submission to the Inquiry into the regulation of brothels. As a sex worker, who has worked in various New South Wales brothels for the last seven years I am a key stakeholder in the evaluation of the regulation of brothels in NSW.

I chose to live and work in New South Wales because of decriminalisation and the health benefits and rights it provides me as a sex worker. I have worked in several other states, territories and countries and, in my experience; decriminalisation is the best model, in practice, globally. Any other model of regulation, such as a licensing, mandatory registration or criminalisation, including of clients, would be a major landslide backwards and detrimental to my health, safety and human rights, as well as to the well-being of my community, colleagues, friends and family. Only decriminalisation holds the well-being of sex workers at its core. The very consideration of models other than decriminalisation is absurd, a monumental waste of government resources and an incredible disservice to sex workers. The government is meant to be working towards the benefit of its citizens, not constantly requiring them to defend their occupation against unjust over regulation. New South Wales, along with New Zealand, are global leaders in supporting sex workers health, safety and rights. Why change that? Why, time and time again, question proven success?

As I sex worker I believe what must change is advertising being criminalised and the extortionate rates sex workers and sex service premises are discriminately charged to advertise their services. No other businesses are treated this way without any legal recourse or rights. I would also like to see anti-discrimination legislation coupled with full decriminalisation in New South Wales. There is anti-discrimination legislation in place for sex, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, ethnicity, but not for occupation. There is no doubt that sex workers are discriminated against because of their occupation. Sex workers do not need more regulation. We need our rights acknowledged and protected. To end discrimination and stigma we need our business to be treated like any other.

There are twenty years of evidence of the success of decriminalisation in New South Wales. Decriminalisation has brought with it incredible positive public health outcomes, some of the lowest rates of STIs and HIV in the world, better access to occupational health and safety as well as better

access to justice. In the priority areas for action of the Australian Government's *Seventh National HIV Strategy* it states that "In relation to sex workers, it is important to ensure that legislation, police practices, and models of regulatory oversight support health promotion so that sex workers can implement safer sex practices and the industry can provide a more supporting environment for HIV prevention and health promotion." It also recognises that, "Sex workers experience barriers to health service access, including stigma and discrimination. They face a range of issues including criminalisation, licensing, registration and mandatory HIV testing in some jurisdictions." Models of regulation other than decriminalisation, such as licensing, registration, or criminalisation of clients reinforce stigma and discrimination. They result in increased violence against sex workers. They are clear violations of human rights.

As a sex worker, I urge the committee protect my health, safety and human rights, to support decriminalisation. I urge the committee to keep New South Wales a world leader in best practice evidence based approach to sex work, to keep decriminalisation. I urge the committee to reject the systemic discrimination that is the costly and ineffective over regulation of sex workers and sex service premises. I urge the committee to take a stand against stigma and discrimination of sex workers and sex industry businesses and recommend anti discrimination legislation be coupled with decriminalisation. I urge the committee to require that local councils treat sex work and sex service premises the same as any other industry and business, not treat them as an aberration. I urge the committee to recommend that the decriminalisation of sex work as the best practice model of regulation not need further inquiries. The already limited time and resources needed to defend decriminalisation detracts from sex worker organisations ability to provide support and services directly to sex workers. I urge the committee to prioritise the voices and needs of sex workers.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully yours,

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(I prefer to identify by my working name to protect my privacy and safety.)