

**Submission
No 141**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: [REDACTED]

Date Received: 19/08/2015

Partially Confidential

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to make a submission to the select committee on the regulation of brothels.

I am a 31 year old female sex worker living and working from my home in Sydney. I have been working as a home based sex worker in Sydney since 2005.

I would like to make a raise a few points with the committee, as numbered below.

1. Decriminalisation of brothels and the sex industry is recognised worldwide as the best policy

Decriminalisation is recognised worldwide by UN agencies, the World Bank, Amnesty International and every sex worker led organisation as the best regulatory framework for the sex industry as a whole. This includes brothels and all individual sex workers.

2. Decriminalisation has the best health outcomes

Decriminalisation leads to supportive environments that mean sex worker health organisations and sexual health clinics can easily reach sex working populations. Sex workers in NSW have exceptional access to sexual health information and appropriate testing, as well as access to necessary prophylactics, including condoms. Sex workers here have better sexual health than the general population, as outlined in all of the relevant National Strategies.

3. Licensing of brothels and/or individual sex workers is not appropriate for NSW

- a. I have lived and worked in Victoria under licensing. To work legally, individual sex workers who do not want to work for a brothel or agency are required to register. Registration is for life and beyond; a person cannot remove themselves from the register even upon death. This system is unjust.
- b. Individual sex workers are not able to legally work from a home or hotel in Victoria. This creates significant safety risks. For example, individual sex workers who do still work from home are regularly targeted by people who know those sex workers are less likely to report crimes against them. People regularly pose as police or council officials in an attempt to extort sex. This is an abhorrent but shockingly regular occurrence. Of the sex workers I personally know who have experienced this and other crimes or violence against them in this setting, **not one** has reported it to the police. This is due to a very real fear of being arrested for providing an incall/working from home. This failure to report crimes and a fear of police is a **direct result** of licensing.

4. If I need to, I can seek police assistance without fear. Under licensing I cannot go to police

Decriminalisation of the sex industry in NSW was introduced as a result of police corruption. Police are proven inappropriate regulators of the sex industry. The Wood Royal Commission provides the classic example of this.

5. Brothels in NSW are required to seek development consent

The Development Application process ensures commercial brothels comply with all relevant local planning laws. Further registration or licensing is not needed.

6. Local Councils already have enough power to close non-compliant brothels

The 2007 Amendment introduced expanded powers for councils to close non-compliant brothels. To the best of my knowledge, no brothels have been closed under these orders. Councils claim they do not have enough power to close brothels, but they do. In fact they have more power than at any other time in the history of NSW. Brothels are not a problem. The overwhelming majority of commercial brothels have no amenity or other impacts. It is not appropriate for misinformed residents to pressure councils to close brothels on moral, religious or other grounds.

7. Brothels cause no noticeable amenity or other impacts

- a. I live in an area that has 3 commercial brothels within walking distance from my home, including one across the street. In the 3 years I have lived in my current home, I have not noticed a single problem caused by any of them.
- b. None of my neighbours are aware that I am a sex worker who works from home. I have a very good relationship with my immediate neighbours and a few other residents on my street. One of my direct neighbours is the 'neighbourhood gossip' and she most definitely does not know that I am a sex worker who works from home.
- c. The presence of money does not change the fact that my neighbours are also (presumably) having sex in their homes. Society is not collapsing because people have sex, whether or not money exchanges hands.

Recommendation

I recommend no change at this time to any legislation impacting on brothels and/or individual sex workers in NSW

Sincerely,

██████

I am making this submission using a pseudonym to protect my identity. Sex workers still face daily stigma and discrimination from a misinformed public.