

**Submission
No 19**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: Ms Xena Wrestles

Date Received: 14/08/2015

From: Xena Merc [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 14 August 2015 11:41 AM
To: ROBINquiry
Subject: I support the continued decriminalisation of the Sex Industry

Hello

I have attached a letter with regard to the enquiry into the legislation regarding brothels. I support the continued decriminalisation of the Sex Industry in NSW and an Evidence-Based Approach that Reflects Best Practice.

Evidence-based sex industry planning:

- Enables the rights of sex workers such as myself to safely engage in their work in a range of scales and types of sex industry premises and;
- Enables the rights of people with disability, including the right to gain access, in a safe and dignified manner befitting the individual's level of ability, to the range of various scales and types of sex industry premises that occur within any given Local Government Area of NSW, without experiencing discrimination or systemic barriers.

Regards
Xena

Xena Wrestles

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

14 August 2015

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

To whom it may concern,

As a sex worker, 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.

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 been:

- Extremely low rates of STIs and HIV (recognised by Australia's National Strategies and the Kirby Institute Annual Surveillance Report);¹
- 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);²
- No evidence of organised crime (recognised by the Land and Environment Court);³
- 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);⁴
- 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.⁵

I choose to work in a state where sex work is decriminalised because it means that if a client forces himself on me in ways that we have not agreed to then it is a crime I can report. This ultimately makes my workplace safer as clients are accountable for their actions.

Yours Faithfully,

Xena

(I am using my working name to protect my privacy)

1 Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, Sixth National HIV Strategy 2010-2013, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2010, 16. Kirby Institute, HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexually Transmissible Infections in Australia Annual Surveillance Report, University of New South Wales, 2011, p8, Figure 46, Figure 34.

2 Christine Harcourt, J O'Connor, S Egger, C Fairly, H Wand, M Chen, L Marshall, J Kaldor, B Donovan, (2010), 'The Decriminalisation of Prostitution is Associated with Better Coverage of Health Promotion Programs for Sex Workers', Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health, 34:5 at 482.

3 Martyn v Hornsby Council, on 10 August 2015, accessed at

<http://www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au/leciudgments/2004nswlec.nsf/00000000000000000000000000000000/45b396e658d9f27eca256f420004a76a?openDocument>

4 NSW Government and Workcover, 'Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels', accessed at

http://www.workcover.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0014/15134/brothels_health_safety_guidelines_English_0120.pdf on 10 August 2015

5 The Lancet. HIV and Sex Work, <http://www.thelancet.com/series/HIV-and-sex-workers> July 2014, accessed on 30 October 2014.