

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name:

[REDACTED]

Date Received:

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Partially Confidential

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 current sex worker in Sydney, and am writing to you in regards to the current Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. As a sex worker, any changes in the present system will impact me directly, and so I find myself writing to you to stress the importance of maintaining decriminalisation in NSW. Any failings in the system of decriminalisation are not inherent flaws in decriminalisation itself, or a reflection of the morality/immorality of sex work; rather they are the failings of individual councils which – in a desire to appease archaic notions of 'good' society – have placed barriers in the way of sex workers which have hindered decriminalisation working effectively e.g. with a misplaced sense of needing to control 'vice' and pandering to what they think the public wants, some councils have not allowed sex workers to work from their own homes. Besides the state having no place in people's homes (someone can have sex with as many people as they want, when money is involved it should be no different) this is in direct contradiction to the decriminalisation policy which was implemented in 1995 as it regulates the industry in a way that other professions are not.

The strict licensing measures for brothels are classist in that only certain standards of business can meet them, which creates a divide; and often more low key establishments run more by the workers themselves are then exposed to being labelled 'illegal' and shut down – whereas really their only fault is not living up to the stringent and arbitrary rules that attempt to gentrify and make 'respectable' sex work establishments (once again something that only seems to be applied to businesses in the sex industry – I see no evidence of fast food places having to cater to what is respectable or veering away from the tacky for fear it will offend the voting masses).

Decriminalisation has proven to be the best method for preserving the human rights of sex workers and making sure they are not further marginalised and endangered. Amnesty International voted on the eleventh of August this year in support of decriminalisation; if my opinion is not of value than perhaps theirs as a reputable human rights organisation has some weight. They have done extensive research into the topic, and so I recommend that to you. Any other system leaves sex workers exposed to the whim and brutality of police; we all know the corruption that has historically existed in the police industry, and the culture of violence in the police force that has led to great injustices against civilians.

One only needs to turn to America to see how much the police force can misuse its power – we can also look back into our own commission into police corruption in the 1990s which showed just how far spread the miscarriage of justice extended. In America trans women of colour are arrested for carrying condoms, as this is seen as a sign of intent to sell sex, subject to ridicule & rape in police cells. In Ireland a sex

worker is raped by the policeman who arrests her, because he can and she can't complain because what she is doing is illegal. In South Australia a sex worker is choked by a client, and fears to report it because her work is criminalised. In America policemen laugh as street workers scatter and flee down the street, it is a game they play to watch them run. In Sweden, and other countries operating under the Nordic model, sex workers are forced on to the streets and to work by themselves for landlords will not have them for fear of being charged with pimping (living off the earnings of a sex worker) and if get work together they may all be charged with that too. In America the dependent children of sex workers are charged with pimping. In Canada under the new laws that mimic the Nordic model sex workers can no longer screen clients because of the legality of the work, and the clients they do get are jumpier and less reputable. In America gay male sex workers who attempt to find out about HIV prevention are given bizarre moralistic lectures by doctors instead of information. They also have sex without condoms because carrying condoms can be used against them as proof of their work, which contributes to the spread of disease. In various states in Australia women are manipulated and exploited by bad management and have no one to turn to to report because their job is not decriminalised. All of these things have been recorded. All of these things have happened, and continue to happen.

I work in NSW because it is the state I am safest in, because gaps in legalisation do not leave room for me to be squished and destroyed by dodgy management or police like in the instances I have just described. NSW is ahead of the world, along with New Zealand, in having a system that does not make more difficult the lives of those who already have it hard, under the guise of 'protecting'. We have better access to OH&S, more recourse to legal action, more ability to be STD tested, more freedom to live on our earnings, under decriminalisation. The Prostitution Licensing Authority Queensland has recognised that the Swedish model has 'driven the sex industry underground' leaving sex workers at 'greater risk of violence'. I, and Amnesty International, would argue that this is the case with any system that is not decriminalisation.

You should not be thinking how can we better regulate brothels but how can we better implement decriminalisation and reduce stigma.

I thank you for taking the time to read this;

Yours sincerely and passionately

[REDACTED]
Current Sydney brothel worker
[REDACTED]