

**Submission
No 113**

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: [REDACTED]

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Partially Confidential

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

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. I am a 29 year old mortgage lender and my sister, who is 31, is a sex worker living and working in Sydney.

My sister has been to university, works and volunteers in the community sector, volunteers with a local charity, contributes to bake sales, has a partner, a dog, and a cat. Her hobbies include gardening, making soap and embroidery. I kid you not. She also just happens to be a sex worker.

My sister has been a sex worker for all of my adult life and we have a very close relationship.

I am writing to express my full support for maintaining the current model of sex industry regulation in NSW, which is, broadly speaking, decriminalisation. I recommend *no change* to any of the legislation which affects brothels and sex workers in NSW. Further, I absolutely oppose, in the strongest possible terms, *any form* of licensing of the sex industry, brothels and/or individual registration of sole operator sex workers.

Decriminalisation is recommended as the best practice model for the sex industry by many international human rights organisations. Most recently, on August 11 this year, Amnesty International adopted decriminalisation as their policy for worldwide sex industry legislation reform¹.

¹ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/sex-workers-rights-are-human-rights/>

NSW must be congratulated for introducing decriminalisation of the sex industry in 1995, the first of its kind in the world. We can see from the Amnesty decision 20 years later, that NSW truly is a world-leading, progressive, forward-thinking state that takes the human rights of its citizens and voters seriously.

Decriminalisation means my sister is able to choose when and how she works in the sex industry. It has meant that, on the one occasion (in the 13 years she has been a sex worker) she has needed police assistance, she was able to go to the police without fear of arrest, repercussions or prosecution. The police supported her and took her seriously and the matter was dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

Decriminalisation means my sister has been able to apply for a home loan as a self-employed business woman and have that accepted as a valid and valuable occupation.

Decriminalisation means my sister is able to access free sexual health clinics at times that suit her and in ways that are appropriate to her circumstances. Decriminalisation means she is not treated as a 'vector of disease' but rather, she is recognised as a member of the population that has lower rates of HIV and STIs than the general community².

Statistically speaking, my sister the sex worker is less likely to have an STI than me, the finance worker.

When my sister first told me she had started working in the sex industry, I must admit, I had reservations and concerns. But over time, as I have read more and educated myself, and talked to my sister, I have realised that my concerns were unfounded.

Sex work is not and should never be a moral issue. A person's opinion on the sex industry is a private thing. What matters, is that sex workers are people who have human rights. And those human rights need to be protected.

Decriminalisation is recognised internationally, including by Amnesty International³, as the best way to recognise and protect the human rights of sex workers like my sister.

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http://www.afao.org.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0020/11198/Mandatory_Testing_for_HIV_and_STIs_among_Sex_Workers_-_A_Barrier_to_Prevention.pdf.pdf

³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D6J2psOv7Y>

Licensing of part or all of the sex industry, I believe, is not a viable option for NSW. It is expensive and erodes the human rights of sex workers like my sister, who are just living their lives. Decriminalisation has worked and continues to work. It has supported my sister for the past 13 years and I hope that the NSW government continues to support her for however long she chooses to work in the sex industry.

I want to again commend the NSW whole of government approach of 1995 for introducing decriminalisation. And express my absolute support and gratitude for the government of 2015 for maintaining decriminalisation in NSW as it is.

Sincerely,

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I have used a pseudonym for my submission because unfortunately, stigma and discrimination against sex workers still persists in our society. I have used a pseudonym to avoid any future potential impacts on my own career (as I'm sure you can appreciate finance is a conservative industry), and also to protect the identity of my sister.

For more information about the very real and terrifying ways stigma impacts on the lives of sex workers, see this article by sex industry researcher Laura Agustin:

http://www.salon.com/2013/08/17/the_whore_stigma_how_the_law_perpetuates_our_hatred_and_fear_of_prostitutes_partner/