

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: [REDACTED]

Date Received: 11/08/2015

Partially Confidential

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To whom it may concern,

As a sex worker, I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels.

I'm a 30 year old woman with a history of mental illness and drug addiction. I've currently been clean and sober for over 5 years. I have worked as an independent escort from my place of residence in Newtown for the past 2 years.

Working in this way gives me a stable income, as well as enough time to invest in my recovery; I am able to attend AA meetings, pay for therapy, yoga classes, and have the freedom to schedule my work around self care, spending time outside, exercising.

I am fairly certain that if I were not able to work in this way that I would be unable to make a living wage and become dependent on assistance from welfare. My health would be greatly impacted.

As an employee I was routinely unreliable. As a small business owner I am able to better manage my schedule, contribute to society, pay my taxes and live independently. I implore you not to take away my right to autonomy over my working conditions.

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 and

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

Yours Faithfully,

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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 , cited in Nothing About Us Without Us, 'North Sydney Council Prohibits Home Occupation (Sex Services) in All Zones under the New Draft LEP', accessed at <http://nothing-about-us-without-us.com/tag/urban-realists> on 30 October 2014.

4 NSW Government and Workcover, 'Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels', accessed at http://workcover.nsw.gov.au/formspublications/publications/Documents/brothels_health_safety_guidelines_English_0120.pdf on 30 October 2014.

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