

INQUIRY INTO THE REGULATION OF BROTHELS

Name: Ms Kerry Porth
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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

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To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to make a submission to the Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. As a former sex worker who worked in a criminalized system in Vancouver, Canada I urge you to listen to currently working sex workers in your jurisdiction who are the key stakeholders in evaluating the effectiveness of your current regulatory model.

Decriminalization of all aspects of sex work has been recommended by every sex work organization globally as well as UN AIDS, the World Health Organization, the Global Commission on HIV and the Law, and most recently, Amnesty International as the best practice in protecting the human and labour rights of sex workers and ensuring their health and safety.

Sex work was decriminalized in NSW in 1995 which has resulted in extremely low rates of HIV and other STI, better access to health care for sex workers, greater access to Occupational Health and Safety, and no documented evidence of the involvement of organized crime in commercial sex.

The introduction of a brothel licensing scheme would necessarily involve employing law enforcement as regulators of the system. NSW decriminalized sex work in part due to high levels of police corruption in regards to sex work. It is widely acknowledged that conducting sex work in a fixed indoor location is the best practice for protecting sex workers from violence but a licensed system sets up compliance issues which will force some sex workers to work in riskier environments.

I urge you to recommend that Councils implement the *Sex Services Planning Guidelines (2004)* to effectively implement decriminalization. I further encourage you, in the strongest of possible terms, to make meaningful consultation with sex workers a priority in conducting your Inquiry.

In Canada, sex workers look to NSW as a beacon of hope in their struggle to achieve their rights. I have met several sex workers from NSW and was fortunate enough to attend a conference in Sydney in 2012 where I had an opportunity to visit some brothels and was very impressed with what I saw.

Yours truly,

Kerry Porth