

## Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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## SUBMISSION FOR PROPOSED DECRIMINALISATION SEX LAWS QLD

To the Committee Secretary of Queensland Parliament,

My name is [REDACTED], I am a former sex worker in the state of Queensland, and I am writing to share my experiences in the industry and to express my concerns regarding the proposed policy changes.

During my 4 years as a sex worker, I had the opportunity to experience different working environments in different states, brothels and as a private self-employed worker, this also gave me the knowledge of various state laws. I began sex working at 19, after making a life changing impulsive decision to become a sex worker, that has now left me with permanent health and mental health conditions. Like many people in the industry, I came from a difficult home life, I was homeless by 15 and confided in men to get me through my adolescence.

On the topic of the physical safety of sex workers, I believe decriminalisation will lead to the further perpetuation of harm towards workers. Queensland has very strict laws in place around pimping and selling women. Sex workers should be entitled to secure working conditions, but not at the risk of trafficking and to the public. It is already up to the private worker, or brothel manager to verify their clients, and ensure their safety, these laws would make virtually no difference regarding their physical safety.

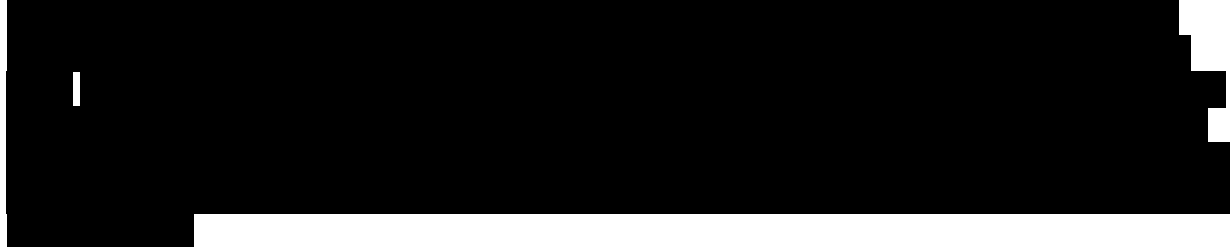
Just last year in 2023 an important documentary covering the trafficking of Asian women in the country through massage parlours was released, and it appears the country has completely swept it under the rug.<sup>i</sup>

Working with other sex workers, I often saw them in questionable relationships, where they were the sole provider for abusive partners. One girl I worked with would cry weekly because she was the one paying the \$1000 rent payment for her boyfriend, and unemployed housemates. This includes myself; [REDACTED], this is very common in the industry.

Drug abusive is also extremely common in brothels and privately, many clients want you to partake in using, brothel managers know and always turn a blind eye, it is common for people to be working for their habits, or someone selling them as a business in the drug trade, which is why I believe this will lead to more women being sold in our state, and an increase in substance abuse and drug crimes. Melbourne casinos and brothels seem to be synonymous with corruption, crime and trafficking, decriminalisation in Queensland could be a stepping stone for this with the upcoming casino opening and the 2032 Olympics.<sup>ii</sup>  
<sup>iii</sup> <sup>iv</sup>

With regards to the health and well-being of sex workers and the public, I also believe decriminalisation is a big step backwards. I do not believe that the sex industry does not have negative effects on the public. Every single day people are unfaithful to their unknowing partners and go home and risk disease for them. Queensland's laws regarding natural services are strict, and good, and to risk reverting to laws like Melbourne where you can have natural services, or work with and STD is straight up foolishness. By the time I left the industry I had visible HPV and my pap smears appeared abnormal for 2 years, leaving me with constant fear which I still live with that I will develop cervical cancer.

Studies regarding sex workers and STDs seem to focus on the most serious and non-curable diseases, invalidating the severity of others. STDs are still transmittable with condoms, and many will appear asymptomatic when infected, so a quick check on someone genitals is futile. Many workers and clients will engage in services when they're asymptomatic, and spread it by their next health check, and the 3-month STD check does not check for HPV.<sup>v</sup>



Organisations like Respect might like to think they're helpful towards workers, and to an extent they are, certainly better than brothel managers and nothing, but most times the damage is already done. Queensland should not take the route Melbourne has taken with regards to condoms, and workers with STDs, these are extremely regressive laws, and damaging to the public, it also opens the door wider for coercion of sex workers who choose to not offer natural services.

When looking at the mental health effects of former sex workers, and the long-term effects it has on their mental health and relationships, the outcomes typically tend to be poor and self-sabotaging. Often sex workers will end up with various forms of mental health disorders, PTSD and a higher prevalence of domestic violence within their intimate relationships, and poorer education and career development. [vi](#) [vii](#)

Regarding taxation I think that is also laughable, decriminalisation will change nothing, very rarely do sex workers pay taxes, and if they do, they aren't paying them correctly, and it should be recognised most workers will avoid paying taxes. This will also invite more opportunity for avoided taxes by third parties hired by sex workers ie. drivers

Overall, I think Queensland needs to be very careful when making decisions regarding sex work in the state. It was often commented by touring and returning workers that Queensland is the best state to work in and that is because of its strict laws, which they should pride themselves on. The current laws and lack of decriminalisation is not what caused me to have a bad experience as a sex worker, it is that the industry itself is inherently anti-woman and dehumanising and that can be extremely difficult to regulate and begs the question should the sex industry be normalised, and recognised as industry that perpetuates human suffering and crime. [viii](#)

I cannot in confidence say that decriminalisation of sex work in Queensland is a positive thing, particularly after working in Melbourne. I really think changing the laws will be feeding a vulnerable group of people to the wolves, to me it saying we'll make this legal because we don't want to deal with policing you anymore, but we still want to make money off you.

Queenslanders should question if they want their state to turn into a dirty, trafficking and crime hub like Melbourne has rapidly become and if they wish for more violence from pimps, drivers and gangs. The commodification of human bodies should not be taken lightly, and we should reflect on why many countries haven't decriminalised it as well, especially as the industry itself is shrouded with drugs, secrecy and crime. [ix](#)

If Australia wishes to have serious progressive laws about prostitution, then I sincerely encourage them to reflect on their policies carefully and investigate alternative solutions such as the Nordic model. Queensland should pride itself on its strict laws that protect workers, and the public by lessening the exposure of harm from the consequences of other people's actions. If people wish to engage in extremely unsafe, misogynistic working environments, and the exploitation of humans they should go to other states or countries.

If you wish to discuss this further with me or have any questions regarding the sex industry in Australia, please feel free to reach out to me [REDACTED] or [REDACTED]

Regards

[REDACTED]

[i](https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/trafficked-women-shunted-like-cattle-around-australia-for-sex-work-20221018-p5bqnd.html)<https://www.theage.com.au/politics/federal/trafficked-women-shunted-like-cattle-around-australia-for-sex-work-20221018-p5bqnd.html>

[ii](https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/crown-linked-to-brothel-investigated-for-human-trafficking/11369904)<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/worldtoday/crown-linked-to-brothel-investigated-for-human-trafficking/11369904>

[iii](https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/brothel-owner-and-alleged-money-lauderer-is-crown-casino-s-business-partner-20190724-p52ahq.html)<https://www.theage.com.au/business/companies/brothel-owner-and-alleged-money-lauderer-is-crown-casino-s-business-partner-20190724-p52ahq.html>

[iv](https://www.afr.com/companies/games-and-wagering/watchdog-bites-crown-s-underbelly-20220302-p5a13v)<https://www.afr.com/companies/games-and-wagering/watchdog-bites-crown-s-underbelly-20220302-p5a13v>

[v](https://asm.org/articles/2022/december/the-dangers-of-undiagnosed-sexually-transmitted-in)<https://asm.org/articles/2022/december/the-dangers-of-undiagnosed-sexually-transmitted-in>

[vi](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346075747_The_Impact_of_Sex_Work_on_Psychological_Wellbeing)[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346075747\\_The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Sex\\_Work\\_on\\_Psychological\\_Wellbeing](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/346075747_The_Impact_of_Sex_Work_on_Psychological_Wellbeing)

[vii](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4627728)<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4627728>

[viii](https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-12/former-sex-workers-claim-harassment-by-pro-prostitution-groups/7924850)<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-10-12/former-sex-workers-claim-harassment-by-pro-prostitution-groups/7924850>

[ix](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/23/living-in-st-kilda-opened-my-eyes-to-the-world-of-prostitution-im-lucky-i-can-leave)<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/sep/23/living-in-st-kilda-opened-my-eyes-to-the-world-of-prostitution-im-lucky-i-can-leave>