

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

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

I am appalled that the government would even consider decriminalising sex work. It's as though no one has looked at the negative affects to culture, community and individuals that comes along with such a change, as seen in other nations (in the EU for example).

While I am aware that both males and females can be prostituted, women are much more likely to be used in this trade. This is a huge issue around equality for women's human rights and protections. I am afraid for these prostituted women who will have no recourse when they are abused in these settings.

Additionally, sex work is highly degrading and destroys the dignity of people, women especially. Women need to know they are capable and have opportunities to be employed in productive work, not just work that strips them of their privacy, dignity, and self-esteem.

This leads to drug and alcohol abuse in attempt to numb the pain they experience daily. This makes them further susceptible to abuse and exploitation. The mental health issues and trauma affect the way they function, and it can take years for them to recover and be a helpful part of society after they escape sex work (of they manage to do that). Why on earth would anyone, let alone a woman (I speak to Yvette D'ath) want to subject women to this?

In addition, prostitution and brothels are linked to increased crime such as drugs, weapons, and trafficking. If you decriminalise sex work you are inherently increasing crime, and in family neighbourhoods, since you plan to remove restrictions of locations. Once sex work is normalised, it will result in an increased demand. (You only have to read the statistics around pornography use to recognise that sexual exploitation is extremely high). Where will all these extra prostituted people come from? Increased demand will inevitably lead to human trafficking to fulfill that demand. As we have seen in other nations, both third and first world, kidnapping is a common way to fulfill the need. This puts vulnerable women, men and children at risk.

I have heard firsthand from women who have worked in the sex trade about the abuse they suffer, physically, mentally, and emotionally. There is already an issue around abuse and crime against prostituted women not being taken seriously because of the status that comes with the job. Now you are attempting to further remove oversight of the industry, and therefore any protections that may have existed.

These women are often already extremely vulnerable and need support, not to be taken advantage of. *Many* women in sex work do so only because they have no other options. They need to be supported to get equipped for gainful employment. They need assistance with housing and with their children. They need to know they are protected from exploitation and abuse.

Government should be working in the best interest of the people it governs. Please look to the Nordic Model for a better way to manage sex work in Queensland.

- Put an end to prostituted women and men being prosecuted for selling sex.
- Charge buyers of sex with the offence.
- Empower the police to protect people against this crime against individuals.
- Disempower pimps and brothel owners from exploiting humans for monetary gain.
- Equip vulnerable women and men in this industry with skills to enable gainful and dignified employment.
- Provide a pathway out of prostitution that restores dignity and enhances human flourishing.
- Provide safe places for vulnerable people in the industry to find shelter from abusers, within and outside of the industry.

Please consider how you would like it if your child were to work in the despicable sex industry. How would you like it to know they are violated against their will, raped (for money) multiple times per day, sometimes refused payment or violently assaulted for not complying with the buyers wishes (or simply because the buyer needs a punching bag)? How would you like it if your children or grandchildren were roped into this industry in their most vulnerable and formative years – to be sold repeatedly to perverted men? How would you like any of your family members to be subjected to continual abuse?

I urge you to reconsider this bill in light of the reality of what the sex trade is actually like: it is not a sanitised, considerate or safe industry in any way. Consider what it does to the prostituted people involved, both short- and long-term. Removing the current restrictions around it will bring great harm to men, women and children, and indeed our communities.

With great concern,

Allison Crouche

