

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

**Submission No:** 159  
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### Submitter Comments:

26 February, 2024 Committee Secretary Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee

Parliament House Brisbane Qld 4000 Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 Thank you for the opportunity to submit to this process and I am providing approval for this evidence to be added to your website. I am writing to support the Decriminalisation Bill. My only regret is that so many sex workers have had to work under these conditions for so long. I'm a sex worker who has worked in Queensland for many years. I am now working in Central Queensland but have worked in many areas. This Decriminalisation Bill is very important to me because the laws make my work unnecessarily unsafe. By making it illegal for me to work with another sex worker, making it illegal to give my contact details to another sex worker when I am on a booking, drive another sex worker to an outcall. Even hiring a receptionist to answer my phones and screen my calls is illegal. Being criminalized has also meant that police treat us as criminals instead of taking our reports seriously. I worked in a licensed brothel for three years and my experience was that brothels did not let us report crime to police for fear they would lose their licences. The conditions were dictated by the owner because there were so few licensed brothels and they had control of the market. They take 50% of each booking and tell us we are sub contractors but treat us like we are employees. If we disagree with anything they stop giving us shifts. When I started to work privately I was surprised that the laws were as though they were made to reduce my safety. On top of the problematic laws the police were able to pretend to be clients and often called to make a fake booking. Rather than trying to catch us breaking a serious law they were trying to catch us protecting ourselves. What a waste of police time and energy.

Discretion is very important to clients who visit private sex workers and our privacy is very important to us, that's why our neighbours rarely know we are doing sex work next door. I'm very glad the laws will prevent councils banning us from the local area like they do in regional NSW. The stigma around sex work often leads people in the community to respond to us as though we are not also members of the community. There are many stereotypes in the media and unfortunately that also means politicians sometimes only have those same stereotypes to base decisions on. I am very thankful that politicians in this case seem to understand that we are doing a job and we should be able to do it safely. I hope that will be the focus of your considerations on this Committee. We experience discrimination frequently as sex workers and the new protection in the Bill will help provide a way to address it. Hotels have been allowed to get away with charging sex workers more per room as well as charging extra fees for too long. I have been threatened in the middle of the night in a hotel in Mt Isa that unless I paid an extra \$500 I would have to leave. I had nowhere to go and felt unsafe. I called the police and was told the hotel was not breaking the law. I have had a booking at accommodation cancelled even though I was travelling with my partner to a wedding (not doing sex work) because my name was added to some list that hotels use. I have always used condoms and water based lube with my clients and attend a clinic for tests. The idea that sex workers create a danger to society and must be tracked is out of step with how important our health is to us. We do not need criminal laws to make us use condoms and go for testing. Police are not equipped to regulate these matters and have often misused this power to ask inappropriate questions about what we do in our bookings. I am thrilled to hear that there is the intention to make Workplace Health & Safety guidelines for sex work. It will be a major improvement. If they were in place when I worked in a brothel I would have reported the owner. Instead I was told to tell

the licensing authority and they did not nothing. It is important to have an external regulator that treats all industries the same. In many parts of regional Queensland there are no licensed brothels and sex workers have to work alone (and not use safety precautions) or work in a strip club or massage. I am very disappointed to hear strippers are not part of the Decrim Bill. They must be next. No-one should be left behind as when some sex workers gain rights and others don't there is greater disparity. I feel this same about any person under 18 that might swap sex for rewards or money. I have known now adult LGBTIQ community members who did this in their youth when they have had to leave home to avoid transphobia or homophobia and others getting away from the risk of sexual violence and domestic violence. They should be protected against police misuse of power and targeting and they should be protected from discrimination. My final request is that you remember that we are members of the community with partners, family, friends and who deserve respect. That's really what we are asking for and what this Bill will finally deliver. Please promote that parliament accept this Bill regardless of what political party you represent. Natasha Spanks