

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

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8 March 2024

Committee Secretary
Housing, Big Build and Manufacturing Committee
Parliament House
George Street
Brisbane Qld 4000

Dear Committee Secretary

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

I write in support of the *Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024* (the Decriminalising Sex Work Bill).

The Decriminalising Sex Work Bill is an essential legislative reform for sex worker health, safety and rights by modernising the sex work laws in Queensland and bringing them into alignment with other jurisdictions. It is a significant improvement on the current regulatory model that has not only failed sex workers but the broader community. The current model has reinforced stigma and discrimination, wasted police resources and has reduced access to justice and ultimately created a two-tiered system where almost 90% of the industry works outside of the legal framework.

The proposed legislative reform is a well-reasoned response and closely aligns with the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce recommendation for the decriminalisation of sex work to improve access to justice and the Queensland Law Reform Commission's review that made detailed recommendations for a decriminalised sex industry in Queensland.

I strongly support the amendments that repeal the criminalisation of sex work and those in Part 3 and Part 7 that prevent local councils from banning sex work outright from their area and enables sex workers to work together.

I support the following amendments to the Decriminalising Sex Work Bill:

- The commencement date should be as soon as possible and no later than 1 July 2024 as any further delay leaves sex workers vulnerable without effective safety strategies and reduced access to justice.
- Removing the word "adult" from clause 6 as it is unnecessary and may in fact serve to disadvantage younger sex workers.
- Recommend a review of the Adult Entertainment laws and the removal of any regulatory role from Police.
- A review of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* in 5 years in consultation with sex worker organisations

- Removing the words “social escort” from the *Child Employment Act* as it has been from other Acts.

Further, I strongly support including the expungement of sex work offences in future legislation to prevent the ongoing impacts on sex workers who have already been failed by the current regulatory model.

Finally, I strongly recommend that Respect Inc is adequately resourced to undertake an awareness program to address sex work stigma and inform sex workers about decriminalisation in line with Queensland Law Reform Commission Recommendation 38.

Yours faithfully

A solid black rectangular box redacting the signature of Nassim Arrage.

Nassim Arrage

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name Nassim Arrage.