

6/11/2012

To the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

I would like to voice my concern over the proposed changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991, regarding accommodation used in connection with work as a sex worker.

To actively discriminate against people based on their occupation is a human rights abuse. It also places people who already experience discrimination at further risk of marginalisation. Sex workers operating their businesses under the amended legislation may feel less able to report crimes against themselves or to access services. They may also be subject to increased threats and coercion by opportunistic people.

As a sex worker who has operated in Queensland for many years, I feel that the targeting of my community stems from a lack of understand of who sex workers are. We are mothers, sisters, sons, the person standing next to you at the checkout or running the lamington drive down at the school fete. My clients have always been very discreet and law abiding, and my business activities have never even been noticed by other people in the vicinity, let alone complained about. This is the most common experience of sex workers. When complaints are made, it is usually due to unwarranted concern based on misconceptions regarding sex workers.

These misconceptions will only get worse if sex workers are exempted from the Anti-Discrimination Act. The message it sends to society is that we don't deserve the same rights as the general population and that it is ok to discriminate against us. This would have dangerous repercussions, affecting not only where we can work, but how we are regarded and treated in all areas of life.

yours sincerely

Lisa Williams

