

To whom it may concern,

I write as a community member to express my outrage at the proposed amendments to the anti discrimination laws. Changing the discrimination laws in regards to accommodation is a very serious change with many consequences for people like me and others in the community. The proposed changes are so open to interpretation and would allow accommodation providers to discriminate based on their perceptions on whether a person 'intends' to do sex work from a premise. Firstly, I do not understand why everything changes once money exchanges hands- we are not allowing people to openly discriminate against newlyweds or people on a romantic get away, but if people are having sex [which is consensual and legal] why is it okay to discriminate. As I am sure you are aware, there are already rules and regulations in place to ensure that accommodation providers can ensure that if there are other guests that no one is being disturbed by noisy behaviour. One of the main principles of sex work is providing a service that is discrete and private- sex workers and our clients don't want other people around us to know what is going on either! I have worked in many hotels and private residences and been complimented on being a good neighbour and a fantastic guest who has taken care of her surroundings, I have never had a complaint from another guest or neighbour about my business.

Why in 2012 does the government think it is okay to explicitly deny people accommodation based on a subjective judgement on whether it seems likely the person intends to sell sexual services. If the reason is given that we need to 'protect the right of businesses' why is this right only framed as hotel and accommodation providers as true or legitimate businesses? Sex work is work and is an essential service to the community and as sex workers we should be able to work from hotel rooms or accommodation we rent just like other businesses such as travelling business representatives, lawyers, politicians, hair dressers and masseurs.

I am also concerned this legislation will not just affect sex workers but anyone who is read as a potential sex worker- which will disproportionately affect women. As women living in a patriarchal society where domestic violence and sexual assault are all too common experiences having access to accommodation is a particularly important issue.

It is also problematic in that once I am known as a sex worker it could be that I will be seen as intending to do sex work wherever I go, even if I just wish to sleep indoors or to go on a holiday or visit family friends. How would you feel if your profession was frequently stereotyped and then laws were made that made it possible to openly deny you accommodation based on the fact that you had done work in that industry- not even on the basis of any of your behaviour or on complaints or issues that had arisen from your work?

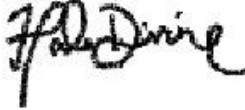
Attempts to ban sex work from happening in certain ways or at all have always failed- churches and governments have been trying to impose their moral agendas for thousands of years but sex work will not just 'stop' or 'go away.'¹ It would be good if the government recognized this and instead chose to support sex workers to continue our work with less stigma and discrimination.

I hope for the sake of all women, all of our communities, our clients and of course all sex workers in Australia the anti discrimination act is left intact and that it is recognized that there are already

¹ Roberts, N. (1993) *Whores in History: Prostitution in Western Society*. Harpercollins

existing rules to deal with disruptive or anti-social behaviour. Making it possible to openly discriminate against sex workers will not give anyone any extra power to manage behaviour that is disrupting other guests etc. as that is already in place- all it will do is make it harder for sex workers and those who have done sex work (or anyone who is read as looking 'like a sex worker') to get the accommodation they need.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Halo Divine". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Halo Divine

[Address withheld due to concerns over this amendment]

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