




Speech By  
**Hon. Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL**

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Record of Proceedings, 2 May 2024

**CRIMINAL CODE (DECRIMINALISING SEX WORK) AND OTHER LEGISLATION  
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for State Development and Infrastructure, Minister for Industrial Relations and Minister for Racing) (4.25 pm): I rise to proudly support the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill before the House. These changes have been drafted following a review by the Queensland Law Reform Commission requested by this government in August 2021. As the industrial relations minister, I am particularly supportive of decriminalising sex work because that will give sex workers access to the same legal rights and protections as all workers in this state. It will give sex workers access to Workplace Health and Safety Queensland to raise issues about their workplace like any other worker.

The bill will give sex workers the right to speak up about poor working conditions and to say ‘no’ to unsafe work. These changes treat these workers like any other worker, not as workers undertaking work that is a crime. This bill aims to regulate sex work under the same general laws and in the same way as other work guided by the principles of safety, health and fairness, and I believe that women, in particular—and, of course, men as well—who work in this industry deserve those rights like anybody else.

Sex workers will have the right to be consulted about safety issues and to have health and safety representatives in their workplace. That is a giant leap forward. They will no longer have to choose between working legally or working safely. The new laws will allow workers in this industry to work together for safety without fear of criminal charges and to be able to report crimes against them to police without fear of charges or surveillance. They have felt that fear for far too long.

Under the current model, there are two legal forms of sex work—licensed brothels and sex work performed by a private sex worker working alone. All other forms of sex work are illegal and this bill addresses these issues. DecrimQld advocate Janelle Fawkes, a member in my own electorate of McConnel, has worked tirelessly—and I have met with many workers in this industry—and says that, when people are marginalised and vilified, their ability to report crime or to report workplace issues such as health and safety is very much reduced. This bill overturns that.

This bill means that sex workers can now use basic safety strategies that have previously been illegal such as working together. Sex workers are part of our community and deserve a safe workplace like everybody else. They deserve access to legal protections and for their industry to be treated in the manner in which any other industry is treated rather than as a criminal activity. I commend the bill to the House.