




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

 **Dr ROBINSON** (Oodgeroo—LNP) (4.06 pm): I will make a brief contribution to the Criminal Code (Decriminalising Sex Work) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024. At the outset, let me be clear that I will be opposing the bill. It is a flawed piece of legislation that will not work in Queensland, and MPs will be back someday in this parliament correcting this mistake.

Total decriminalisation without careful and proper regulation has not worked effectively anywhere in the western world. Decriminalisation of sex work in all aspects is a failed model of dealing with prostitution. It leads to higher levels of prostitution and with that comes higher levels of crime, particularly crimes against vulnerable women, including sexual assault and assault; more abuse of women; coercion of women; increased drug and alcohol addiction of women; increased domestic and family violence; an increase in the scale of the sex trafficking industry often run by organised crime; increased contraction and spread of STIs and other diseases; and an increase in unplanned pregnancy and unwanted abortion.

The committee heard research in several submissions about the severe impacts of this industry on women. In the interests of time today I will simply refer interested persons to the detail of those submissions. There is a whole lot of statistical information provided in some very good submissions.

Prostitution is not normal healthy safe work, not for those who are prostituted. For some sex workers real life is *The Handmaid's Tale* and total decriminalisation does not work nor help them. In contrast, as the committee heard through several submissions, many European countries are moving away from the total decriminalisation models that are harmful to women and children and adopting instead the Nordic model. The Nordic model, also known as the equality model, is an approach to sex work that seeks to reduce demand for sex services by criminalising the clients, or users, and third parties, not the women and girls exploited by the industry.

In European countries where the Nordic model has been adopted it has prevented the dramatic growth of the sex industry and reduced the exploitation of women compared to countries that adopted the now discredited decriminalisation model. The international trend is towards the Nordic, or equality, model. Just this week in South Australia the South Australian legislative chamber debated the Nordic model and on that occasion it very narrowly lost, I believe by one vote. Support for the best practice Nordic model is growing, and it is only a matter of time before more effective laws will be passed across Australia. Surely, ultimately common sense will prevail some day when the outcry from abused women is so loud—young girls, our daughters, our mothers—that even stone-deaf Labor will have to listen.