

SEX WORKER OUTCRY OVER COURT NOT GUILTY DECISION

Sydney sex workers make one minute's noise outside Downing Centre Courts to protest recent "not guilty" verdict in assault case on the 7th International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers, Dec 17 2009.[i]

DATE: Thursday, 17 December 2009

TIME: 11am

PLACE: Downing Centre (court), 143-147 Liverpool Street, Sydney

SPOKESPERSON:Janelle Fawkes, CEO, Scarlet Alliance Sex Workers Association 0411 985 135

There is outcry today from Australian sex workers after the accused attacker walked free from a recent New South Wales case. The accused admitted to using a "lock-down manoeuvre" to pin the woman, a sex worker, down to the bed when she said she wanted to stop. The evidence included the accused admitting to placing a hand over her mouth to silence her when she refused to give his money back when the booking time was up.[ii]

"On December 17, International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers[iii], sex workers are calling for justice outside the NSW courts. The outrage is a result of this case and the systemic inequity experienced by sex workers at the hands of police and the courts throughout Australia." said Janelle Fawkes, CEO.

The International Day To End Violence Against Sex Workers is inspiring many events including in Sydney, Northern Territory, Melbourne,[iv] and the world.

"There are systemic discrimination problems in Australia, said Janelle Fawkes, CEO, Scarlet Alliance. "There is no incentive for sex workers to report crime, particularly in states and territories where sex work is criminalised, as complaints to police are not being followed up or taken seriously. When sex workers do report crimes the cases are not treated fairly by the courts and rarely result in a guilty charge."

Nina Funnell of the NSW Rape Crisis Centre said today: "there is still a pervasive cultural belief that- because of their profession- it is acceptable to afford sex workers less human rights than everyone else. This is absolutely disgraceful and to fix this problem we need fair treatment in the courts for all sex workers as well as massive attitudinal change"

"Whilst sex work is not inherently dangerous, policies and laws in place in Australia put sex workers in dangerous environments.[v] This combined with the unacceptably high levels of stigma and discrimination against sex workers results in systemic social exclusion and a lack of access to justice." said Janelle Fawkes, Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association.

For media comment call:

Janelle Fawkes, Scarlet Alliance Sex Workers Assoc, 0411 985 135

Nina Funnell, NSW Rape Crisis Centre, 0438 479 831

[i]<http://www.anniesprinkle.org/html/writings/dtevasw.html>

[ii]<http://www.smh.com.au/world/sailor-says-he-put-sex-worker-in-lock-down-20091119-int7.html>

[iii]http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Day_to_End_Violence_Against_Sex_Workers

[iv]<http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/events>

[v]Queensland laws prevent private sex workers from working in pairs. Western Australian street based sex work criminal laws have resulted in sex workers changing work practices to avoid police detection. Rather than the historic practice of talking through the car window to assess the client and negotiate price and agreed service sex workers now jump straight into any vehicle that stops (to avoid police detection) and then must negotiate in a moving vehicle.

http://www.nothing-about-us-withoutus.com/NAUWU_Events/International_Day_to_End_Violence_Against_Sex_Workers_2009

<http://www.sexworkeurope.org/icrse/index.php/en/campaigns-mainmenu-190/dec17/dec17-actions-currentyear/slovakia-17dec-sw-as-role-models>

<http://www.swopusa.org/dec17/>