

Press Release

*** media alert for immediate use ***

Sex workers are the experts

NSW Decriminalisation Best, Victorian Licensing Worst

When: 12noon Friday 13th November

Where: The Domain, Sydney CBD

What: Sex Workers Graduation Ceremony

Following the ceremony Sex Work Class of 2009 will parade to the Planning Ministers' office to award Minister Kristina Keneally an honorary degree in "Decriminalisation of Sex Work."

Sex workers, supporters and Government endorse the success of 13 years of decriminalised sex work in NSW.

Decriminalisation has created equitable Occupational Health and Safety standards, the best health outcomes for sex workers and the general public, increased access to human rights and justice, and allows police to work on protection, rather than prosecution, of sex workers.

The sex workers of NSW will present Minister Keneally an Honorary Degree for in Decriminalisation of sex work!

Media statements:

Janelle Fawkes, Scarlet Alliance: "Recent events make it clear that the NSW Government is suffering from corporate memory loss on this issue and is being badly advised. The decriminalised model of sex industry regulation is a highly successful and appropriate model for NSW. However, the failure of local government councilors to do their part in this model has created problems. The NSW Government is today celebrated for continuing to support this model. Councilors wanting to shirk their responsibility to practice equal consideration of development applications are not a good reason to change a model of regulation that has been highly effective in providing strong Occupational Health and Safety outcomes for sex workers."

Saul Isbister, NSW Sex Worker: Decriminalisation of sex work is the best model for sex worker health and safety, sex worker human rights and public health. NSW celebrates a history that recognises sex work as a legitimate work, and sex workers as the experts! We call upon Minister Keneally to endorse the decriminalisation model for sex work."

Dr Lynda Dayan, Sexual Health Physician, Sydney: "Christina Keneally should take heed of the Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon who urges: "We can remove punitive laws, policies, practices, stigma and discrimination that block effective responses to AIDS." Decriminalisation is the best approach to support both the human rights and health of sex workers."

Dr Christine Harcourt, Researcher, Sydney: "Extensive research over more than 20 years in NSW has shown that decriminalisation together with other health and sex worker community support measures have resulted in excellent sexual health outcomes for sex workers and improved access by community outreach and support agencies.

Decriminalisation is the best approach to advance the human rights of sex workers and improve occupational health and safety in the sex industry. International and Australian research has shown that where sex work is regulated by licensing many sex workers are left out of the system, become relatively inaccessible by outreach and health workers because of their 'non-licensed' status and consequently suffer worse health and welfare outcomes than those in the system. By contrast decriminalisation potentially provides a level playing field for all sex workers to improve their conditions.”

Melanie Robinson, Sex Workers Union: "Workplace conditions are best improved by strengthening workers ability to address O H & S issues through industrial processes - not by licensing or by giving brothel owners more power over sex workers. Sex workers have maintained good work conditions in NSW because of decriminalisation, which allows us a range of workplaces to choose from, whether it is brothel work, private work, escort work, street based work or internet sex work."

Media Contacts:

media.nauwu@gmail.com