

7 August, 2019

Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP  
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice,  
GPO Box 149  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

RE: Joint letter requesting urgent action on sex work laws in Queensland

Dear Attorney-General,

This joint letter is a request for urgent action on the repeal of laws in Queensland that criminalise sex worker safety strategies and have resulted in more than 80% of sex workers and the sex industry operating outside of the legal sector.

Decriminalisation has broad support in Queensland, and we have signed this letter as groups from a twenty-three-strong list of legal, health, disability, human rights and support organisations/services, as well as unions who support the decriminalisation campaign in Queensland.

As you will be aware, the Queensland Labor policy platform 8.4.2 states: Labor supports the removal of sex work from Chapter 22A of the Criminal Code Act 1899 (Qld), from the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000 (Qld) and the repeal of the Prostitution Act 1999 (Qld). Labor will refer the development of an appropriate regulatory framework for a decriminalised sex work industry to the independent Queensland Law Reform Commission within the current term of Parliament.

This change would repeal the laws that criminalise sex worker safety strategies, criminalise the majority of sex industry businesses and which have resulted in charges rising by up to 450%, with most charges being laid against women over 30 years old.

The evidence from both New South Wales and New Zealand, where there are models of decriminalisation, demonstrates that decriminalisation results in the development and implementation of workplace health and safety standards, allows sex workers to organise for better working conditions and access to industrial protections, and eliminates corruption/extortion. In addition, research has found that decriminalisation has resulted in:

- the removal of police from a regulatory role, which has led to sex workers being 70% more likely to report crimes,
- 60% of sex workers feeling more able to refuse to see certain clients,
- 95% of sex workers feeling that they had rights after decriminalisation,
- no increase in the size of the sex industry,
- a lower cost model of regulation with higher levels of compliance.

Contact: Janelle Fawkes, #DecrimQLD, [Respect Inc.](#), M: 0491 228 509 E: [janelle@respectqld.org.au](mailto:janelle@respectqld.org.au)

We support this important change as it would provide significant health, mental health, legal and industrial benefits to sex workers in Queensland and remove significant health care access barriers as well as legal and justice barriers. The lack of progress leaves a workforce of sex workers at risk of fines and charges of up to \$6000 for implementing basic safety strategies.

We encourage you to take the opportunity to meet with us to discuss this matter or the evidence referred to and to attend the 21 August symposium hosted by Mr Peter Russo MP at the Undumbi Room of the Parliament House annexe.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/thirty-years-after-fitzgerald-the-unfinished-business-of-queenslands-sex-work-policy-tickets-65761056089>

Signatories to this joint letter:

- Queensland Positive People
- Queensland AIDS Council Inc.
- Sexual Health Society of Queensland
- Children by Choice, Queensland
- LGBTI Legal Services, Queensland
- Amnesty International, Queensland Women's Rights Network
- Respect Inc, Queensland's sex worker organisation
- Zig Zag Young Women's Resource Centre Inc, Queensland
- Stonewall Medical Centre, Queensland
- Society of Australian Sexologists (QLD)
- Public Health Association of Australia, Queensland branch
- Public Health Association of Australia
- Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)
- Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)
- Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association

CC: Premier, Hon Anastacia Palaszczuk,  
Deputy Premier, Hon Jackie Trad,  
Minister for Police, Hon Mark Ryan,  
Minister for Health, Hon Steven Miles.

Contact: Janelle Fawkes, #DecrimQLD, **Respect Inc.**, M: 0491 228 509 E: [janelle@respectqld.org.au](mailto:janelle@respectqld.org.au)



**LGBTI**  
Legal Service Inc



**Public Health Association**  
AUSTRALIA



Australasian Society for HIV, Viral  
Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM)



Stonewall Medical Clinic

