

From: [REDACTED]
To: [EPSC EPSC](#)
Subject: Sex Industry Bill 2019
Date: Monday, 7 October 2019 12:08:26 PM

Hi,

I am writing to you to express my disappointment in the current proposed Sex Industry Bill 2019. I know many people think the Northern Territory is a bit backwards and behind in forward thinking, and honestly after reading the proposed Sex Industry Bill 2019 I would nearly agree. However there is still time to change and be the forerunners for positive change and forward thinking within the states of Australia.

I believe the intentions behind wanting to change the current laws are good but the proposed bill isn't good enough. What we are failing to see is that currently the Sex Industry conceals the exploitation of vulnerable people and if we do not address this in the Sex Industry Bill then we are as a Government responsible for the irreversible damage associated.

The exploitation of vulnerable people encompasses sex trafficking of children and adults and I hope our Government does not think that this is ok and normal. The proposed bill does not address how these vulnerable people will be protected. Although the intentions of the bill are good, in its current state, it will work to normalise the exploitation of some of the most vulnerable people in our city, and nurture the destructive mindset that prostitution is just another job. I appeal to you and your moral compass, if you have a son or a daughter would you be recommending and supporting, if they could be anything or do anything in the world as a job, would your 1st choice be for them to become a prostitute? If no, why not? To twist it even further, if prostitution is really a job just like being a lawyer, would you go to your son or daughter for services? If no, why not?

I really hope when reading this you answered 'no' to those questions above because the truth is prostitution is not just another job. When we change laws we change culture - for better or worse. If we go ahead with the proposed Sex Industry Bill, future generations are going to look back at our decisions and question why we did so little to protect our vulnerable people.

I come from a science background where our decisions for future improvements are based off evidence, what is shown to work or have an impact and what doesn't. This has left me questioning the Government's decisions when I read the proposed Sex Industry Bill, why are we trying to implement a law which has been implemented in other states and countries and has shown no improvement in protecting our vulnerable people working in the sex industry? In Brisbane (where brothels have been legalised) there are now 4 underground brothels to every 1 that is legal. Crime, abuse, trafficking, money laundering and the drug trade are all tied in to the nature of brothels. The Sex Industry Bill in its current state will only make these operations hide better and vulnerable sex workers will be even more hidden.

So why aren't we discussing a better way and putting laws that have been shown to make a difference in place? Take Sweden for example, their Government has implemented legislation "The Nordic Model" which criminalises the purchase of sex, targeting law enforcement measures at sex buyers rather than at the already vulnerable persons caught in prostitution and trafficking.

This legislation has led to a large drop in demand for sexual services in Sweden and since then has been adopted by other proactive countries like Norway, Iceland, Canada, Ireland, France and Israel have since implemented this successful legislation. Evidence from these countries reveals 'The Nordic Model' as a far superior framework for the sex work industry, with the rights and

welfare of workers prioritised. This model helps to protect and prevent exploitation of vulnerable people by; Decriminalising the selling of sex (so that sex workers have the law on their side), providing full access to support services to help women exit if desired and criminalising the purchase of sex (the purpose if this is not to punish them but to change beliefs and behaviours that sustain sexual exploitation and reduce the demand that drives sex trafficking). Vulnerable people make up the vast majority of sex workers (a whopping 89% of workers say they want to leave prostitution but have no other means for survival).

Laws shape culture. So if we do not improve/change the proposed Sex Industry Bill, with legalisation comes a new wave of cultural normalisation. For many people, what is legal is acceptable. This perspective sees demand rise as more people feel more comfortable to access that which was formerly forbidden or frowned upon. All over the world, the legalisation of the sex industry has followed this pattern. With a rise in demand, where will more workers come from? As the 'gateway to Asia' the Northern Territory is perfectly positioned to become a human trafficking hotspot. The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has already listed Australia in the high destination category (top 21 countries to receive trafficking victims)...let alone the Northern Territory.

In the Netherlands prostitution was legalised in 2000. Since then organised crime has kept control over the legal sector of the industry and according to the national police force 50-90% of the women in licensed prostitution are trafficked, and legalising did not prevent an increase in 'hidden' or 'illegal' prostitution.

In a later European Parliament resolution of (May 2016) it was recognised that 'trafficking in women, girls, men and boys for sexual exploitation has decreased in countries that have criminalised the demand, including both pimping and the buying of sexual services'.

An article from the Centre for Human Dignity – Published in the NT News in 2018:

"When any society reframes prostitution as a straightforward commercial transaction, it only serves to hide the truth about the harm and abuse that occurs when we enshrine men's right to buy women. Having sex is not a human right, but the right to live free from violence and discrimination is. The former UN special reporter on trafficking, Sigma Huda, said, "It is rare that one finds a case in which the path to prostitution and/or a person's experience does not involve, at the very least, an abuse of power and/or an abuse of vulnerability"."

I plead with you to look to the evidence, be proactive and protect our vulnerable people.

Sincerely,
Lara Stoll