

08.10.2019  
Hobart

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the NT Sex Industry Bill 2019.

I am a sex worker who has worked in most States and Territories in a variety of settings and I have valuable lived experience to share.

Decriminalisation of the sex industry is the only model that gives sex workers access to justice and work health safety mechanisms. My experience of working in NT is that I felt that had a crime been committed against me, I would not have felt safe to report it to the police. When I was the victim of crime as a sex worker in NSW I was able to report it under the decriminalisation model. The perpetrator would have gone unreported if he'd been in NT, and would be free to continue to commit crimes against women.

My first experience of sex work was in brothels in Victoria, where I received valuable WHS information from my colleagues and from the peer outreach workers who would visit. The safer sex practices and boundary setting that I learned have stayed with me for life and supported me through my private work. If I had begun working in a State where brothels were criminalised I would have had severely reduced access to the information that has supported my health and wellbeing throughout my career.

Another personal observation from working in Victoria is that mandatory testing is not helpful. It resulted in me being over tested for some BBV/STI and unable to get an appointment when I really needed one, in a overcrowded system. I now work in a State that recognises that mandatory testing has no evidence base and is ineffective. Like my colleagues I take my health very seriously and access the sexual health clinics regularly in a system that is better set up to support sex worker health and wellbeing.

**The Prostitution Act 1992 must be repealed and the NT Sex Industry Bill 2019 passed.**

It is essential to our human rights and well being that our advertising isn't restricted and that we as sex workers have access to anti-discrimination protections and WHS mechanisms. The expungement of spent convictions is another vital element of this Bill.

I urge you to listen to the voices of sex workers and respect our human rights by passing the NT Sex Industry Bill 2019.

Kind regards,

Astrid Leigh