



Lloyd, Brian

From: Committees
Sent: Thursday, 24 February 2011 4:29 PM
To: Lloyd, Brian
Subject: RE: Inquiry into the operation of the Prostitution Act 1992

	A.C.T. LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OFFICE
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From: Simon Ow [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 24 February 2011 4:16 PM
To: Committees
Subject: Inquiry into the operation of the Prostitution Act 1992

Dear Standing Committee on Justice and Community Safety,

I am writing to express my concern with the sex industry in Canberra in relation to the inquiry into the operation of the Prostitution Act 1992.

There is a problem with legalising prostitution. Legalised brothels foster an environment where human trafficking can exist, as it increases demand for purchasing sex, which studies show feeds the illegal industry.

There needs to be research done to discover what actual impact the industry has on the girls including rates of physical abuse, mental health problems, links to child abuse, drug addictions, criminal links, post-effects, health risks of clients, relationship impacts, socio-economic and geographical origins, as well as the impact on men and families.

The need for exit support programs for prostitutes seeking to leave the industry as the average number of times a girl will try to leave the industry before actually getting out is seven, with many displaying signs not dissimilar to post-traumatic stress symptoms displayed by soldiers returning from battle.

Outside of Canberra it is clear that legal prostitution is failing in its stated aim of protecting girls and cutting down illegal activity. In Queensland, the State Government has a similar system which licenses and regulates the sex trade, but after ten years they have only managed to regulate 10% of it whilst 90% remains illegal (<http://www.law.uq.edu.au/documents/humantraff/reports-presentations/UQ-HTWG-Ten-Years-of-Prostitution-Regulation-in-Qld-Sep-2009.pdf>).

As long as there is a demand for prostituted women, the trade will continue to grow beyond the boundaries of the legal sector. Even the US Department of State says that human trafficking for sexual purposes is driven by the demand for prostituted women (http://www.uncjin.org/Documents/Conventions/dcatoc/final_documents_2/convention_20traff_eng.pdf). As long as there is a legal industry that feeds demand for prostitution, the illegal sector will continue to grow.

In Canberra, since prostitution has been legalised, there appears to be an increase in the illegal sex industry despite the fact that this is the very thing the legislation was supposed to stop. Prostitution as it stands does not provide for the equality and safety of women in Canberra, thereby lacking the protection of human rights promised in other ACT legislation.

The government should seriously consider the "Swedish model" of prostitution which has demonstrated great success in Sweden, especially when compared to neighbouring countries. It views women in prostitution primarily as victims, and seeks to prosecute the purchaser of sex - that is the one who creates demand - rather than the supplier.

The 'Swedish model' seems to offer a much better method of controlling prostitution. By recognising prostitution as sexual exploitation and making it an offence to buy sex, Sweden has reduced the number of women involved in prostitution (http://www.makeastand.org.au/campaign/index.php?campaign_id=40#_edn1). The number of women trafficked into Sweden is estimated to be between 400-600, compared to nearly 17,000 in neighbouring Finland. This seems therefore to be a much better approach, which really does help women and provide clarity to the police.

Yours sincerely,
 Simon Ow

25/02/2011