



Phone – 02 9690 0551  
Fax – 02 9690 1013  
P.O. Box 2167,  
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Street – Suite 9,  
245, Chalmers St Redfern  
Email – [info@scarletalliance.org.au](mailto:info@scarletalliance.org.au)  
Web – [www.scarletalliance.org.au](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au)

---

**8 December 2011**

### **Scarlet Alliance Submission – Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia**

Scarlet Alliance, the Australian Sex Workers Association, is the national peak organisation for Australian sex workers. Scarlet Alliance consists of 8 state based organisational members, 4 state and national associate organisational members and over 150 individual members.

Scarlet Alliance's State and Territory based members are primarily funded, peer based organisations which conduct peer education, outreach services, community development, STI and HIV prevention, health promotion, support for sex workers affected by anti-trafficking measures, industrial relations, financial and housing advocacy, legal and police referrals, health and human rights advocacy. Through our members, Scarlet Alliance has engagement with the majority of workers across the entire sex industry with over 20,000 occasions of direct, hands on service delivery each year.

Scarlet Alliance also runs a number of international projects aimed at supporting and developing the capacity of in country peer based sex worker organisations in Timor Leste and Papua New Guinea. We also work closely with Empower, the Thai sex worker organisation on migration issues and we maintain links to other sex worker organisations across South East Asia.

No other organisation has the level of reach or engagement with workers in the sex industry across Australia and the South East Asia region.

### **Sex Industry Conditions**

Sex work in Australia is very diverse, with a range of classifications, forms of employment and workers. Classifications include, street based workers, brothel workers, agency escorts, independent escorts, home based workers, independent "in-house" workers, Fly In Fly Out sex workers who work across the country and internationally, striptease artists, nude and erotic waitresses & waiters, erotic cleaners, phone sex operators, web cam sex workers, BDSM workers, erotic massage. Sex workers are primarily female\* identifying, however there are also male\* identifying sex workers, trans\* identifying sex workers as well as non-gender specific identifying sex workers.

Other than independent sole traders, there are 3 main employment forms for sex workers, all of which are insecure forms of employment. These are independent contractors; recognised and unrecognised casual employees; and a hybrid of contractor and casual employee conditions.

*\*includes cis and trans, each individual chooses how to identify, regardless of birth identity. Gender identification for sex work may be different to non-sex work settings.*

It would be extremely rare for any sex worker to receive employer paid superannuation, casual loading, paid leave of any kind or be in receipt of regular and predictable income. All forms of work are driven by market conditions, largely based on supply and demand for labour.

State based regulation criminalising all or part of the industry does not materially drive sex workers into registered, licensed or otherwise compliant businesses. This leaves sex workers vulnerable and unable to fully access justice, health services, peer education and health promotion services, nor are they able to enforce work health and safety standards or workplace related rights and conditions.

**The following recommendations are proposed by Scarlet Alliance in respect to Australian sex workers to address some of the effects of insecure employment in the sex industry.**

- 1. Increased government funding for peer-based organisations to undertake industrial relations training and provide information to sex workers**
- 2. Sex industry specific legislation creates barriers for access to justice, including civil, criminal and industrial justice. Full decriminalisation in every jurisdiction is needed to begin to improve working conditions for sex workers.**
- 3. Increased funding to enable peer based organizations to work with the Fair Work Ombudsman across jurisdictions.**
- 4. Support and solidarity from labour organisations for sex workers rights and sex worker peer-based organising.**

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kane Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

**Kane Matthews**  
**President, Scarlet Alliance.**