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Queensland Adult Business Association calls for additional sex work research before decriminalisation

The Queensland Adult Business Association (QABA) has called on the Queensland Government to exercise caution when decriminalising sex work to ensure the ongoing safety, security and choice for all sex workers and their clients.

Decriminalisation welcomed

QABA welcomes the Queensland Law Reform Commission's (QLRC) broad recommendation to decriminalise sex work – but not all of the 47 individual recommendations provided in the report released in April 2023.

The association has asked the Queensland Government to undertake additional industry research before enacting the framework recommended by the QLRC Report.

“We fully support the change to treat sex work as work rather than as a crime, but remain concerned by the research underpinning the review,” said QABA spokesperson and licensee of Onyx in Townsville, Emma Bennett.

“The Report states that the 20 regulated venues in Queensland make up approximately 10% of the industry. Our research surveyed almost 100 sex workers, but industry estimates are that 800-1000 new sex workers work via Queensland's 20 regulated venues each year. In a high risk industry, it's important we have the complete industry picture.”



Independent industry insights needed

QABA has called for independent insights from an additional survey to complement the research provided by both QABA and Respect Inc to the QLRC.

“There’s a lot we can agree on in regard to prioritising safety of sex workers, but to ensure everyone has a say we stand in support of commissioning an evidence-based, accurate picture of the entire Queensland sex work industry,” said Emma Bennett.

“Given the QLRC recommends all changes for decriminalisation happen at once, we need to get it right. If we approach an industry snapshot through the lens of potential decriminalisation, we may also encourage engagement from all sex workers,” she said.

QABA warns on losing the best of the regulated model

QABA supports a range of recommendations from the QLRC Report.

However, QABA have seen how the current regulated system has enabled safe sex in a safe and secure environment for sex workers.

QABA spokesperson, Emma Bennett, said the current regulated system was established to ensure safety for both sex workers and their clients, and it is with this in mind that QABA is drafting their responses to the individual recommendations released in April 2023.

“We support decriminalisation, but in a high-risk industry, we welcome more research and discussion to determine if regulating sex worker businesses like any other business is the best protection for sex workers, clients and the community,” she said.

“If we know better, we can all do better in ensuring the health, safety and rights of sex workers.”



Ongoing consultation

The QLRC recommendations are subject to ongoing consideration by the Queensland Government. QABA looks forward to ongoing engagement with the Queensland Government and other key industry stakeholders through further consultation periods and public hearings.

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Contact for comment

Emma Bennett Licensee Onyxx 0404 227 131

BACKGROUND

About the Queensland Adult Business Association (QABA)

The Queensland Adult Business Association is made up of representatives from across 20 regulated venues.

QABA mission statement: To advocate for the viable development of the Queensland legal brothel system. For the safety and security of workers, clients and the community at large.

QABA's 2021 research report, *Listening to sex workers: Queensland industry research report*, collected data and information from ~100 sex workers based in Queensland brothels.