

Rally for the decriminalisation of sex work in South Australia

For immediate release.

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South Australian Sex Industry Network

International Whores Day

Rally for Decriminalisation of sex work in SA!

1pm: Thursday June 2nd 2016

June 2nd is International Whores Day, which celebrates the birth of the sex worker rights movement which originated in Lyons France, forty one years ago in 1975. Sex workers on this day staged a 'church sit in' to protest police brutality and the lack of police attention to crimes against sex workers. Soon community members joined sex workers and challenged the police to distinguish who is and who isn't a sex worker, making it difficult for the police to make arrests.

This year, on June 2nd, as part of International Whores Day celebrations, Adelaide sex workers and their supporters' including other sex industry staff, health professionals, friends, family and clients of sex workers will rally at 1pm on the steps of Parliament House, with a message for the South Australian government demanding the decriminalisation of their occupation.

The laws pertaining to sex work in South Australia are contained in the Summary Offences Amendment Act (1953) and the Criminal Law Consolidation Act (1935). South Australian laws have not moved with the times and are more than 60 years old.

"We are sick of seeing police waste their time and resources to go out catching consenting adults rather than stopping crime that actually harms people and society" – Hon Kelly Vincent MLC

"These laws are not only archaic, they are dangerous, discriminatory and unworkable" said Sharon Jennings, manager of SIN. "Criminalisation of us, our work, our workplaces or our clients does not prevent sex work occurring. What it does achieve is to push our work underground, forcing us to work in unsafe environments where we are more vulnerable as victims of crime because we are seen as easy targets and less likely to complain to the police" added Ms Jennings.

While brothels are still illegal, sex industry employers have no legal responsibility to comply with industrial relations legislation, or to provide a safe working environment for their employees. Criminalisation and criminal records create a barrier for those sex workers who may wish to exit the sex industry. Criminalisation undermines health promotion work of agencies such as SIN, a health promotion project aimed at supporting the current high standards of sexual health amongst sex workers.

So, at **1pm on Thursday 2nd June**, dressed to impress and carrying red umbrellas, the universal symbol of sex worker rights, sex workers and others who support the human rights of sex workers, will celebrate International Whores Day. We will raise awareness and draw attention to the continued struggle of South Australian sex workers who are still fighting against discrimination, criminalisation and victimisation.

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