

SOCIALIST ALLIANCE POLICY

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SEX WORK

Policy amended by the Special Policy Conference, May 2013 and further amended at the 10th National Conference, June 7-9, 2014.

Sex work is still on the criminal code in all states and territories except NSW. Criminalising sex work means significantly lower health and safety standards. Having sex work on the criminal code means increased police harassment for sex workers, particularly marginalised groups such as Aboriginal, street-based sex workers, Asian and migrant sex workers, HIV positive workers, and trans sex workers. Criminalising sex work does not support sex workers who are under financial stress, or those experiencing poverty.

Decriminalisation in NSW combined with other health and sex worker “peer education” community support measures, has resulted in better sexual health outcomes for sex workers and improved access by community outreach and support agencies.

Models that criminalise the clients of sex workers have the equivalent effect of criminalising sex workers. As the industry cannot operate openly when its customers risk arrest, sex workers are forced underground. This means they are more vulnerable to violence, and are restricted in access to health and support services.

Similarly, legalisation of some sections of the industry while leaving others unlicensed and illegal creates a two-tier system that leaves a section of workers vulnerable.

The Socialist Alliance stands for:

- **The full decriminalisation of sex work and the sex industry (not just some of it).**
- **Opposition to proposals that criminalise the clients but not sex workers (along the lines of the "Swedish model")**
- **The provision of peer support services for sex workers**
- **An end to discrimination on the basis of occupation**
- **Full recognition that sex workers have the right to refuse or withdraw consent for any sex act or to provide sexual services to any client.**

The Socialist Alliance supports the work of sex worker organisations in their campaigns for decriminalisation, and for occupational health and safety.