



Nicola Centofanti MLC

Member of the Legislative Council

30th August 2023

New Prostitution Law Reform to achieve equality for women who have no choice

Today, the Hon Nicola Centofanti MLC introduced the *Summary Offences (Prostitution Law Reform) Amendment Bill 2023* into the Legislative Council.

This Private Members Bill was welcomed and applauded by prostitution survivors, WEEP (Women Ending Exploitation by Prostitution), and CATWA (Coalition Against Trafficking in Women Australia).

Dr Centofanti MLC said she was proud to introduce the important Bill into Parliament to support women and forge pathways out of the sex industry.

“This crucial prostitution law reform is about protecting the most vulnerable in our society. For many women who find themselves desperate enough to enter the sex industry and engage in prostitution they do not do so by choice,” she said.

“Our laws should protect women, not criminalise them. Currently the only protection is afforded to the buyer – this Bill seeks to reverse this imbalance.

“At the centre of this important reform is a provision requiring the State Government of the day to support prostitution survivors as they move to leave the sex industry.

“This provision will provide genuine support to these women who need help with accommodation, employment, and access to services like drug and alcohol rehabilitation.

“We must provide a pathway out of prostitution for women who are desperate to change their lives.”

Survivor Ally-Marie Diamond - who founded the advocacy group Wahine Toa Rising - said Bill sends a clear message that women’s bodies are not a product to be bought and sold for men’s sexual pleasure.

She said it changes the historical inequality in prostitution law that men have been allowed to abuse women without penalty.

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“We know that blanket decriminalisation models do not to work, but rather leave women exploited and vulnerable, and they open a door to human trafficking. Not to mention being silent on support and pathways for women who desperately try or want to leave the sex trade”, Ms Diamond said.

“I believe that the way elected representatives choose to legislate the sex trade sends out a powerful message about how seriously we take the issue of sexual exploitation, violence against women and gender equality more generally.

“I am calling on members of the parliament to support this Bill.”

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