



## Vixen Collective, Victoria's peer only sex worker organisation Media Release - Thursday 2nd June 2016

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### New 'Sex Work Regulations 2016' Fail Sex Workers on Health and Safety Grounds

Vixen Collective, Victoria's peer only sex worker organisation, consistently calls for the full decriminalisation of sex work in Victoria as a vital and urgent step that government must take for the health and safety of Victorian sex workers!

Late on June 1<sup>st</sup> the Victorian Government notified us that the 'Sex Work Regulations 2016' have come into operation.

Throughout the consultation process on the Sex Work Regulations, Vixen Collective has highlighted sex workers concerns about the licensing system in Victoria, including:

- Under licensing sex workers face difficulty accessing assistance from police
- Mandatory STI testing for sex workers is contrary to current medical research
- Registration of sex workers violates our human and civil rights
- There is a lack of workplace options for sex workers under the licensing system
- Licensing perpetuates stigma and discrimination against sex workers

Licensing affects the most marginalised among sex worker community most – LGBTIQ+ sex workers, street based sex workers, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sex workers, and others are disproportionately affected by the failures of the licensing system.

*"What I want most is to have the same rights as other workers" - Vivienne (sex worker)*

The full decriminalisation of sex work is recognised as the worlds' best practice model for sex industry regulation - by the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Australia's National HIV Strategy, multiple medical studies, and sex workers' representative organisations across Australia and the world.

It is critical that the voices of sex workers be heard, in order that rights of sex workers be recognised, and the safety of sex workers be given protection by law.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2015 sex worker organisations and allied organisations from around Australia joined together with Vixen Collective in stating:

*"We recognise full decriminalisation of sex work is the only acceptable model of regulation for sex workers' human rights, labour rights, health and safety."*

This statement was presented to the NSW Brothel Inquiry as part of our submission supporting the continuation of the full decriminalisation of sex work in NSW – a decision we are pleased to note was made in May of this year.

The Andrews Labour Government is falling behind in sex work policy by failing to recognise full decriminalisation of sex work as the best practice model for sex worker's human rights, labour rights, health and safety!

Amnesty International in the release of their policy 'On State Obligations to Respect, Protect and Fulfil the Human Rights of Sex Workers' last week noted:

*".. governments should ensure the meaningful participation and consultation of sex workers, including, in particular current sex workers .."*

The Andrews Labour Government is failing to listen to sex workers!

Just as when making policy for any marginalised population, it is critical to ensure the voices of sex workers are heard and that sex workers are consulted by government on all matters relating to our lives and work.

Vixen Collective protests strongly the failure to listen to sex workers, and to address sex workers concerns, that the 'Sex Work Regulations 2016' represents.

We call on the Andrews Labour Government to do better for Victorian sex workers.

To do better for Victorian sex workers it is necessary to listen to Victorian sex workers.

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