



HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP

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NEWS REPORT

Headline	Sex worker calls for more police resources
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A local sex worker has called for greater police resources to enforce Queensland's prostitution laws in the wake of an opposition demand for a Royal Commission into corruption and illegal brothels.

Jennifer, who works in both the Warwick and Toowoomba areas, spoke to the Daily News yesterday about her concerns at the damage being done to the legal prostitution industry by sole operators and illegal "sex rings" flouting the law. She claims such rings have been routinely operating in Warwick for at least the past four years since she entered the industry in 2005 and believes they may involve women from overseas – as well as interstate – forming part of human trafficking operations.

Jennifer's comments follow a statement released by LNP Member for Buderim Steve Dickson late last week calling for a Royal Commission and claiming the State's sex industry laws introduced in 1999 are a failure. Mr Dickson is expected to release details of illegal activities in Brisbane and on the Sunshine Coast this week, with Jennifer agreeing with his assessment that illegal sex rings continued to operate in Queensland "without any of the overheads or fees required" and were "squeezing out the legal, tax-paying businesses".

"We don't need a Royal Commission, but we do need more resourcing of the (police) Prostitution Enforcement Task Force (PETF)," Jennifer said.

"The laws are fantastic, but there are simply not enough officers to enforce them and, most importantly, to clean up the sole operators. Currently there are only about 20 officers based in Brisbane and they are the only ones authorised to investigate and prosecute illegal sex worker activity for the whole of Queensland. What we really need is a branch (of PETF) operating out of each police region – overall the industry at the moment is as seedy as it has ever been."

Jennifer said she believed sex workers visiting Warwick as recently as last month may have been openly breaching the rules on sole operators.

"A lot of these girls are coming up from NSW and from Toowoomba, including Asian girls," she said.

"In many cases they will not have health certificates as required by law and will offer sex without a condom which is also a requirement. Some of them have even been using my name as they have seen my advertisements – I have heard there have been up to three 'Jennifers' working in town at the same time. I started in this industry legitimately, thinking I would be able to ignore the illegal operators but you can't, they inflict themselves on you. They use standover tactics and there are a lot of drugs involved – I have been pressured myself to get involved in that type of activity."

Jennifer also claimed there was a "large black market" involved in the trading of bogus health certificates among illegal sex workers.

A number of local motel owners spoke to the Daily News in June – after sex worker "Hayley" claimed she could not secure a room from which to operate – telling us they refused to allow sole sex workers to hire their rooms. By law, sole operators must be registered as such and while they can legally use motels there can be only one worker on the entire premises at any time and any bodyguard must be registered under legislation regulating the security industry.

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