



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP**

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**NEWS REPORT**

<b>Headline</b>	<b>Prostitution laws fail to rein in illegal sex trade</b>
<b>Reported in</b>	The Courier Mail
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Illegal brothels and sex worker rings are running rampant outside Queensland's prostitution regulatory regime which has been in force for 10 years. According to new research by the University of Queensland's Human Trafficking Working Group, 90 per cent of the state's prostitution industry is [not] being effectively regulated by the 1999 Prostitution Act.

Joint author of the research paper, Dr Andreas Schloenhardt, said yesterday that the decade-old law had produced a "highly and well controlled" system monitoring Queensland's 25 legal brothels. But the working group's study had found most prostitution functioned outside that system in the form of sole operators or pooled escort services that were illegal.

Dr Schloenhardt, who will be presenting his "Happy Birthday Brothels" paper at a public lecture at UQ on September 21, said few sex workers would operate alone. "Most of them work through agencies where you have a person taking the calls and directing workers to jobs," he said.

Other areas of concern were street prostitution, sex services obtained through strip and exotic dancing clubs and the trafficking of women.

On the Sunshine Coast, State Member for Buderim Steve Dickson said people traffickers were doing a roaring trade in the region. Mr Dickson was speaking in support of local brothel owners who have gone public over the growth of illegal sex rings using imported labour. While the brothels paid \$30,000 a year in licensing fees, illegal operators' overheads were limited to the \$2000-\$3000 fines if they were prosecuted.

"This whole thing is like a bag of prawns left under the seat of a car – if something isn't done to address it, it will end up stinking the whole place out," he said.

In what would be a Queensland first, a strip club serving booze could be situated right next door to a brothel. Legal Maroochydore brothel Scarlet Harem's owner Paris Satine has asked council to approve an "adult bar" 10 metres from her bordello. She would not run the bar, but if approved, men would be able to drink there, enjoy the shows, and walk 20 paces to the Scarlet Harem, which has been running in the industrial suburb of Kunda Park since 2003.

Queensland law stipulates brothels cannot serve booze, and brothel owners cannot hold a liquor licence. However there is no law against running a brothel next to a strip club.

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