



HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP

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NEWS REPORT

Headline	Slave signs ridiculed
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The Australian Adult Entertainment Industry has labelled Yarra Council's decision to make a law forcing brothel owners to put up signs about sexual slavery "a waste of ratepayers' money."

The council unanimously voted to make an Anti-slavery and Sexual Servitude Law last week, after proposing it last September. Under the local law Yarra brothel owners will be fined \$500 if they do not put up signs informing sex workers and clients that sexual slavery is illegal and how those involved in sex slavery can seek help. The council has also called on the director of consumer affairs and the Business Licensing Authority to make the signs a requirement of brothel licenses. The signs must be written in five languages and be placed in a "conspicuous places in reception areas and each room where an act of prostitution takes place".

Australian Adult Entertainment Industry Inc spokesman William Albon said the "proposed law is flawed in logic" because "these are just kids playing in national areas".

"Sticking up signs on the walls of legal brothels will not prevent the trafficking of one single person," he said. "There has been an abuse of ratepayers' money and resources wasted in dreaming up this nonsense proposal. Councillors would be better off coming down from their moral high chairs and ... pursuing the illegal brothel operators in Yarra, the number of which have increased significantly while this mob has pontificated."

But Cr Stephen Jolly said "the day I listen to his advice is the day I lose my soul". "We will be letting women know they don't have to be slaves in Australia," he said.

An owner of a Collingwood brothel, who did not want to be named, said "the whole idea is rubbish because it is not a serious approach to what is a serious problem".

But Project Respect co-ordinator Nina Vallins said she was "thrilled to see that the City of Yarra is ensuring that trafficked persons can find support and "escape". "We know women have been trafficked in the City of Yarra," Ms Vallins said.

Council will put the law up for public consultation in August/September and discuss the exact wording and size of the signs at an October council meeting.

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