



**HUMAN TRAFFICKING WORKING GROUP**

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**NEWS REPORT**

<b>Headline</b>	Prostitute: it's not always about the sex
<b>Reported in</b>	<i>The Chronicle</i>
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IT'S not all about sex.

Some of working girl Amanda's clients just want a hug.

She'll find out soon enough what Toowoomba men desire when she arrives on Monday for the opening week of the city's first brothel, Deviations.

Her description of herself as a “leggy, busty, size eight, green-eyed blonde” might fit the stereotype of a prostitute.

But the 26-year-old law graduate can not be pigeonholed.

She just asks to be left alone by the anti-brothel brigade who want to “protect” her, believing she is a victim of abuse and circumstance.

Instead, she hopes to arrive unnoticed in a town which was so opposed to her presence that 300 people protested against the building of the establishment in February.

“Nobody wants to create any problems,” Amanda said.

“Business is business and we're doing things the right way through the government.”

Amanda challenges the assumptions associated with her profession.

She is not uneducated.

She is not naive.

And she is not without options.

Instead, she describes herself as a strong-willed business owner who made her career choice in order to gain financial freedom.

“I got myself into trouble financially and my options were to slave for years or to knuckle down (in the industry) and sort it out,” she said.

“Compared to a regular job, I can make in three or four hours what I make in a week.

“I have my own ABN and I always have my degree to fall back on.”

One hour with Amanda costs a client \$250 - she makes \$125 for the 60 minutes.

Any extras are paid in cash.

Amanda was attracted to Deviations by its owner Jim Welch, who she said, had a good name in the sex industry after running a brothel in Mackay.

It is a reputation which has drawn sex workers to Toowoomba from Melbourne, Sydney and across the state.

“As working girls we tend to like to live around a little bit. That means there's lots of variety with different girls coming and going.

“Jim is very understanding of the clients and the girls. Sometimes neither of us is easy to deal with.”

Amanda will stay in offsite living quarters during her two-week stints in Toowoomba, a city which she hopes to eventually make her main base.

“You tend to find country clients are much more respectful. We get some lovely gentlemen. I have worked on the Gold Coast and didn't like it too much.”

She said one in five men she saw were lonely. They may be widowers or divorcees or elderly.

“We service people who want human contact and don't have it, people who are going through terrible periods in their lives. Some of the men are unhappy and don't have anybody to talk to and hold. Sometimes it's not about sex. Some men don't want to go there.”

Her shifts, which span from 12 to 14 hours, vary as much as her clients.

“We're like firemen; we can sleep at work when we don't have clients. We might sleep five to seven hours on a quiet shift.

“If it's full on, it's hard work. Sometimes it's physical work. But I just think it's like exercise.”

As she prepares for her first trip to Toowoomba, Amanda hopes her new workplace in a corner of Harlaxton can settle, unnoticed, into the cityscape.

And she hopes her words encourage a broader understanding of herself and her colleagues. “At the end of the day, we're normal women. We're not harlots.

“We're women with our own minds and our own voices.”

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