

Women's rights and self-respect in the mainstream media - a discussion

[Sociology](#), [Feminism](#)



In the past decade, the focus on women's rights and self-respect has been inundating mainstream media, with the calls for respect for women and the awareness of sex crimes at an all-time high. Young men and women, after completing or concluding their secondary education, are faced with a myriad of possibilities and in some cases a lack of possibilities. This lack of opportunity can cause some young adults or teenagers to commit to the practice of sex work. An increased cost of living can cause young adults to look for alternate avenues of income, one of which can be prostitution, a victimless 'crime' as it stands. Prostitution remains a viable avenue of income for many people in Australia, and has only positive influences on its employees and consumers alike. It is a very reasonable and perfectly reasonable, fair and plausible approach to employment, which keeps choice and integrity intact completely. It is with these factors in mind that I present to the House this bill to legalise the act of sex work for persons aged over 18 in Australia.

Recently, I received a petition in my electoral office from no less than 25,000 constituents in my electorate in support and encouragement of this bill. My aim through the presentation of this bill is to not only serve the interests of people in favour of this act, but also to act in the interests of social progress within our society, and to create a positive, noticeable change in this area. The area of social progress that I refer to is the continuation of youth development in the legalisation of a viable employment and income opportunity, prostitution.

Australian citizens who are without an employment opportunity have should have every right to pursue a career in anything credible that will not negatively influence their own health or the wellbeing of others within the legal boundaries of the law. This is the argument I pose for the legalisation of sex work within Australia, with the fact in mind that sex work is a victimless crime, one without the negative connotations and impacts previously mentioned.

Statistics recently have shown that the average annual income of a sex worker is over \$200, 000. This is a feature of the job that must appeal to many people seeking to offer consensual sex to a customer, one which they only benefit from.

Sex work, despite its illegal status, is undoubtedly going to remain an existing activity and practice within society, and with this in mind it is time to focus on the health and wellbeing of sex workers as equals. The criminalization of prostitution is a reason that many sex workers are unhealthy due to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). If it were to be legalized, then sex workers would be granted access to healthcare and social services, while also being able to practice safe sex more regularly without the pressure of contraception's being used as possible evidence against themselves. The legalization of sex work in full would enable the government to regulate the use of contraceptives and the regular health checks of sex workers, subsequently increasing the overall health of sex workers in Australia.

A victimless crime is defined as a crime under the law, but includes no victims as a result of the activity. Prostitution is the perfect example of a victimless crime, one that is best described as an 'exchange' between two consenting adults, where one adult offers a service in exchange for currency. With this in mind, consider the fact that the government annually spends part of the budget on reducing and controlling prostitution as a crime. If it were indeed to be legalized in full, the need for currency expenditure on the prohibition of sex work would be rendered unnecessary, therefore allowing money to be spent on areas that require more attention.

This brings me to my final advocating point on this topic in terms of our social and ethical right to legalise sex work. Women and men alike have the right to their body, and it is only sensible to assume that when prostitution is legalised, the consensual act of intercourse would only be even more controlled and regulated by the worker themselves. Prostitution is not only about satisfying sexual needs and urges, but also about allowing women and men to be empowered by the use of their bodies as they see fit. If a young woman for example believes that they would like to enter the sex work field, then they should have the right to offer their services in exchange for money, an exchange that would not in any way impact on the young woman negatively.

The need for prostitution to be legalised is furthered by the need to fulfil social cohesion in our society. The aspect of social cohesion that I am referring to is the aspect that outlines that social cohesion is meant to protect our human rights and values. The legalisation of prostitution would

protect people in the sex industry in terms of their human rights, particularly their rights as employees, while also protecting their right to safety. If sex work was legalised, then sex workers would be safe under the definition of the law, and would be protected by law services such as the police when it comes to abuse in their line of work. Social cohesion is critical in terms of social coherence and adherence under the law. The legalisation of sex work would make any people who abuse workers accountable for their actions, and subsequently protect workers from any abuse or breaches of their human rights of which social cohesion aims to protect.

As I mentioned earlier, in the best interests of social progress, one of the two functions of law, the legalisation of prostitution will be crucial in the sense of youth development, and subsequently the results in the regulation of health for citizens in Australia. Giving the choice to men and women to be legal sex workers would provide them with opportunities to better themselves through income and employment alike.

My proposal is that by legalizing prostitution in Australia, it will allow people who seek to work in the sex industry to be healthier, happier, empowered and more independent than before. By implementing the proposed bill and legalizing prostitution, we will enable ourselves to fulfil the function of law known as social progress, and more specifically the concept of youth development. This will fulfil this need for youth development by protecting youth citizens and of course older citizens alike, from health issues and social issues that currently plague sex workers within Australia. By enabling people to legally provide sex services, we enable ourselves to prevent the

spread of disease in the best interests of people in terms of their health, and we also enable young people to acquire an income that will allow them to adequately provide for themselves.

Before I outline the specific provisions of this bill, I would like to conclude by urging my fellow members of the House to see the reasoning and motives behind this bill. It is not about legalising a criminal activity for the sake of nothing, but to instead legalise a crime that is a crime for no real reason. The pointless nature of the criminalisation of prostitution has to be eradicated, and therefore the proposal of this bill is to simply enable people to make their own choices about sex work, and to know they are protected when doing so, instead of having to resort to deceptive and dishonest behaviour.

The provisions of the bill aim to protect the sex worker, to ensure that when legalised, sex workers are properly protected and can work in safe environments. This is because prior to this bill, the main issue with sex work, and perhaps the main reason for this bill being proposed, is the disregard of health for sex workers, and the legalisation of prostitution aims to rectify this fact.

I wish now to speak in more detail regarding the specific Provisions of the bill as outlined on Page 3.

In Provision (i) which states that: Sex workers are subject to compulsory health checks once a month at a doctor nominated by themselves.

I would like to explain that this provision is in place in order to ensure the constant healthy status of sex workers in such a bacterially hostile environment, and to reduce the rate of STDs among all sex workers. At the International AIDS Conference in Australia, it was stated that the decriminalization of prostitution would allow regular health checks for sex workers, which would reduce the transmission of HIV among sex workers by 33-46%.

In Provision (ii) which states that: All sex workers are required to use condoms while committing the act of intercourse with no exceptions.

In relation to Provision (ii), there are several reasons for this requirement to be in place. The increase in STDs and unwanted pregnancies can be eradicated by the use of condoms at all times during intercourse with a sex worker, further protecting the sex worker from any health issues as a direct result of the interaction. The aim of this provision is to not limit the desires of the consumer, but to ensure that sex workers are properly protected at all possible costs, and the aim is to ensure that prostitution is to just be a profession, that will have no ramifications on the personal health or life of the workers.

In Provision (iii) which states that: All sex work providers must apply for and receive a license to operate and comply with and provide employment rights for any workers under their employment, and any breach of this will be deemed as negligence.

This provision has outlined that negligence will be applied when an employer of sex workers directly breaches these requirements. Employment rights include minimum wage, health benefits and protection against unlawful discrimination. By requiring that sex work employers abide by this provision, sex workers are protected by the law in cases of negligence where harm is caused to themselves. A license is also required for business by a sex operator, this is the first step to legally doing sex work as the employer.

I would now like to explain the penalties/consequences for the breach of Provision (iii):

Fellow members of the House, the penalties outlined, you will notice are not light warnings or small punishments, but punishments which are reasonable and strong in their nature, in order to persuade any offenders to not commit more than once.

1. Any sex work employer who breaches Provision (iii) will, for a first offence, be dealt a fine of \$1000. My aim is to ensure that sex workers are not abused or revoked of rights by their employers and can practice their profession in a fair environment and are subject to all of their rights.

2. Any sex work employer who breaches Provision (iii) will, for a second offence, be permanently revoked of their prostitution license and will be prohibited from re-entering the business in any capacity in future. The focus of this punishment is to ensure that anyone who has already committed an offence does not have the chance ever again to commit a third offence. This is because of the heinous nature of committing a crime against an employee

regarding their employment rights and being negligent by definition. It is to prevent any harm, injury or suffering to be caused more than twice in any case.

In conclusion, I ask that all of you, as members of this House, consider the undeniable advantages and critical need for the legalization of sex work, in providing progress and valuable protection for the people of Australia in this profession. I compel you to allow this bill to move smoothly through this chamber through your affirmative votes.