

1pm – 3pm, Friday 20th July 2007, 30 Helen Street, Newstead

Scarlet Alliance, The Australian Sex Workers Association
in conjunction SSPAN (Queensland Scarlet Alliance member)
presents,

Sex Worker Peer Education: The Australian Experience Epidemiology, Funding, Community Control, & the Future of Sex Work Services in Queensland



In the wake of the HIV epidemic of the mid-1980s, sex workers in Australia were voluntarily responding on the ground by sharing information about how to protect oneself from HIV; how to use condoms; how to negotiate condom use with clients and ways to share this information with each other - their peers.

Australia's response to HIV/AIDS is based on a bipartisan approach to involving affected communities (msm, sex workers and drug users) and has proven extremely effective. Sex Worker Community based sex worker organisations were funded to develop and implement comprehensive HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The results are unprecedented. Sex workers whilst having sex with multiple partners don't have high rates of HIV. An additional outcome of these services were the effective combining of HIV/AIDS prevention and STI prevention messages resulting in studies demonstrating sex workers have lower rates of STI's than the general community.

The outcome of funded sex worker organisations is that 20 years into the epidemic the sex worker communities are still engaged with safer sex practices and are still

implementing condom use in their workplaces. As trends of services provided, regulations and working practices have changed so too have the strategies sex workers use to ensure their own safety and that of their clients.

A strong culture of condom use amongst sex workers, a high level of sharing information on how to work safely between sex workers, and a strong connection with the broader sex work community enables an effective community based sex worker organisation to inform Government policy and ensure the continuation of these extremely strong public health outcomes.

Scarlet Alliance & SSPAN are convening a community forum and consultations with sex workers for the purpose of paving the way for improved sex worker services & representation in Queensland.

With the demise of SQWISI in recent years, Queensland has been without a funded sex worker service and without representatives in community forums. The funding and policy in relation to future sex worker peer education in Queensland will be decided in the months to come. This forum aims to bring together the evidence, epidemiology, policy frameworks and funding issues that will determine whether Queensland will have a funded sex worker voice in the future.

This forum is for sex workers, health and welfare workers who provide services to sex workers, alcohol and drug service workers in Brisbane, community advocates, students, researchers and policy makers.

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**Australian
Sex Workers
Association**

<http://www.scarletalliance.org.au>