

**UNITED SEX WORKERS QUEENSLAND**

# Info kit

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*International Whores Day Event 2007*

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*Scarlet Alliance mascot artwork created by Laura B 2008 in Tassie*

*'U.S. N.Q. inc.'*  
*'United Sex-workers, North Qld.*  
*Incorporated.'*

PO Box 2410  
Townsville 4810  
Ph. 0747 244 853

Inc No. IA 36279  
ABN. 30 486 337 023

20<sup>th</sup> May 2009

Dear Interested Sex Worker

We would like to formally invite you to our North Queensland Regional Planning Day. This day will provide an opportunity for sex workers (past and present) to provide their views on how *United Sex Workers* will provide the Information, Education and Support Services that sex workers need and want.

Over the last two years, two main groups of active and political Sex Workers, Crimson Coalition and United Sex Workers, North Queensland have been allied in their goal of establishing a new Sex Workers Organisation to fill the gap left by the closure of SQWISI (Self health for Queensland Workers In the Sex Industry) in early 2007.

Before we ratify all the Policies and Procedures and lodge the Constitution with the Office of Fair Trading, we want to create an opportunity for more sex workers to have their say about how this organisation will function and how we can ensure it continues to be run **by** and **for** sex workers all over Queensland regardless of gender, age, location, industry sector, cultural background or linguistic abilities.

So if you want your say, you have three options;

- Attend the NQ Planning Day in Townsville on the 1<sup>st</sup> June, give your RSVP to Jackie on 4724 4853 and she will organise your flights and if necessary accommodation. Funds are limited so get in early.
- Let us know in writing by completing the feed back Sheet
- Ring your feed back through the phone by ringing Jackie on 4724 4853 (someone will ring you back if necessary)

We are planning to have the doors open by the end of the year, so if you have an opinion about how this service should be run, VOICE IT NOW! If you want to have more involvement in the future or just stay in touch, become a member so we can keep you in the loop.

Yours truly,

The Management Committee  
United Sex Workers, North Queensland

## **NORTH QUEENSLAND REGIONAL PLANNING DAY AGENDA**

*10.30am Start*

Introduction by Facilitator, Rigmor Berg (co-author of the SWAN Report) including:

- An outline of the day ahead
- General house keeping
- Group rules
- Introductions including roles of key members from USNQ, Crimson Coalition, Scarlet Alliance and BB Professional Services

Progress up date by United Sex Workers, North Qld including:

- What has happened since SQWISI closed (Jackie)
- Queensland Health's commitment to a Community Development Capacity Building Approach (Jenny)
- The alliance between USNQ and CC (Elly and Candi)

How can sex workers be actively involved in this new organisation:

- What happens in other states (Janelle, SA)
- Overview of the structure and funding for Queensland, (Jenny)
- What can people do to be involved (Elly)

Membership and why it is important for sex workers to be members (Jenny)

- Membership types and rights of the different types
- Draft constitution and how this will be a state wide service with North Qld representation on the Management Committee of the state wide service

*Lunch break – 12pm till 12.45pm*

Policies and Procedures, key areas of interest

- Jobs: Staffing levels and skills that we are going to value (Jenny)
- The structure of the organisation (Jenny)
- Volunteering, what volunteers can do (Jackie)

Services that Queensland Health will fund (Rigmor)

- Conceptual Diagram: overview of services we will offer and how they will help all sex workers and especially those most at risk
- Local needs and Priorities
- Strategic and Operational Plans

*Afternoon tea break – 2.15 – 2.40pm*

Where to from here (Rigmor)

- What will be happening at the state wide planning day
- Election of delegates and first year Management Committee members

- What are the next steps and timeframes to get the doors open
- How can people continue to be involved and contribute in the future
- Do we want to try and get the Exiting Program?
- Continuation of incomplete discussions
- Five minutes quiet time for written evaluation on the day

*Finish at 4pm for people to start heading to the airport*

Members that have time before flights are welcome to continue to discuss and areas of interest until they are due to go to the airport for their flights. This will be informal and we will have light refreshments available throughout the day.



## FORM A

### **United Sex Workers, Queensland Mission Statement**

To provide a broad range of professional peer education and support programs to Queensland Sex Workers regardless of gender, age, location, industry sector, cultural background or linguistic abilities and to provide a formal medium to communicate sex worker issues and concerns so as to improve the rights and respond to the workplace health and safety needs of our peers.

#### Objectives

1. To provide a range of education and support services within an affirmative action approach with all direct service provision provided by peers and to operate within a context of accountability, equity and transparency.
2. To provide health promotion programs to sex workers at a high risk of violence and sexually transmissible infections within their workplaces due to literacy, language barriers and/or socio economic circumstances that impact on their ability to access this information without our direct assistance and support.
3. To provide information and/or resources that will support sex workers and make them aware of their occupational health, safety, emotional wellbeing, legal and taxation rights and responsibilities in a non judgemental and non-invasive environment.
4. To operate within an affirmative action approach within all levels of the organisation, including management, staff and volunteers and to foster a culture of inclusiveness and mutual respect within the diverse community of sex workers.
5. To provide a legitimate voice for Queensland sex workers to advocate for legal and other social policies to be designed to support sex workers' basic, human, civil and workplace rights and access to remedies without discrimination.
6. To provide various programs and initiatives that aim to reduce discrimination and stigma against sex workers, past and present.
7. To lobby government to provide sex workers with legal avenues to work within any area of the Queensland sex work trade/industry as they choose (e.g., escort, in-house, agency, private/sole operator, co-operatives and/or street) without fear of arrest or prosecution for criminal offences directly related to sex work business activities.
8. To support and liaise with national, state and regional sex worker rights groups in the development of networks, programs and objectives.

## **Overview of Queensland Sex Workers' Groups Activities**

### **How have we gotten to where we are now?**

Crimson Coalition (previously SSPAN) was established in Brisbane in 2004 to provide 'sex workers voices' for law reform activities. SQWISI appeared to be moving away from a peer focus in South Queensland and Crimson Coalition members were eager for sex workers to present their views themselves to government.

United Sex Workers, North Queensland was established in 2007 as a direct result of the closure of the North Queensland SQWISI offices in March of that year. Our members are directed by the needs of our peers for workplace health and safety training and peer support.

Together, we contributed to the Sex Workers Assessment of Needs (SWAN) Review conducted by BB Professional Services who were contracted by Queensland Health to talk to sex workers and identify our needs for health services.

United Sex Workers North Queensland have since become incorporated and are now working with the Crimson Coalition to establish a state wide organisation to be called United Sex Workers. Queensland Health have committed to a Community Development Capacity Building Approach. As a part of this, Queensland Health have provided establishment funding to:

- United Sex Workers North Queensland and the Crimson Coalition to put in place all the necessary processes, policies and procedures, operational plans and have all the necessary tax requirements met, banking established and appropriately insured so that we (as United Sex Workers Queensland) can enter into a funding agreement to provide the health services.
- Scarlet Alliance are participating in the process and assisting with mentoring and training of the Management Committee, Policies and Procedures.
- Rigmor Berg is facilitating the process and the Planning Days. Rigmor is also designing the Strategic Plan and the Evaluation Strategies, etc.

Both United Sex Workers North Queensland and the Crimson Coalition are involved in a Queensland Health Working Group which is made up of a number of other health organisations who work directly with sex workers. For our groups, this is about working out how to make United Sex Workers (the new state wide service) effective within both the Sex Work Trade/Industry and the Health/Community Sector.

We have been designing and drafting everything from Positions Descriptions to Dispute Resolution Policies. Now we need more input from the people affected by our decisions, sex workers in Queensland and people who may become involved in the running of this service, sex workers in Queensland.

We are aiming for an inclusive decision making process and we are eager to hear sex workers' opinions as we are not the only hookers in the land. So if you are a sex worker or are going to be directly involved with sex workers, tell us now to have your say.

If you are one of our peers (a current or past sex worker) and you want to be involved in the future of United Sex Workers Queensland, become a member so we know who you are and we will try our hardest to keep you in the loop and give you as much involvement as you want, regardless of where in Queensland you live, whether you have computer access or English is your first language. We especially want to encourage male, transgender, Chinese and Thai sex workers to be involved in United Sex Workers, as well as all you other 'working girls' or 'working ladies' out there, old and young.



## **FORM B**

### **United Sex Workers Membership Types**

**Ordinary member** – must be a current or past sex worker; can attend meetings and vote; can sit on management committee

**Associate member** – non-peer supporters; cannot attend meetings except by special invitation; cannot vote; cannot sit on management committee



**Credentialed associate members** – non-peers who undergo a credentialing process to give them the powers of ordinary members; specific rules around number of ordinary members who must nominate them, and what limited powers they would have are yet to be decided.

### **Why have three membership types?**

We believe that is important for United Sex Workers to be an organisation that is run by and for sex workers. The people involved in designing this organisation will not be around forever so we want to ensure that a culture is put in place to minimise the risk of it being taken over by outsiders later.

When people join an incorporated association they join as a member, if they are an ordinary member they can vote and be nominated and voted onto the Management Committee which oversees the operations of the service. The Management Committee members are unpaid but have the responsibilities to the Office of Fair Trading, Australian Taxation Office, Funding Bodies, the Award and other legislation.

We also have a draft Volunteer Policy and currently it says that when someone wants to volunteer with United Sex Workers, their membership status will be important. We are proposing that Ordinary members are able to volunteer in any area of the organisation but Associate members would only be able to do 'behind the scenes' work so they would have no direct contact with sex workers accessing the service.

The Credentialed Associate member type creates an opportunity for people who are not sex workers, past or present, but could provide some really useful input either on the Management Committee or as a Volunteer. Like a solicitor or an accountant who is not a sex worker but wants to help with resources or free advice to sex workers.

We are hoping this will create an opportunity for them to do this but the organisation can make sure that they are not discriminatory and are 'sex worker friendly'.

We will be discussing this at the Planning Days so if you want to share an opinion, you can either save it for then or fill in the attached Feedback Sheet and let us know. If you want to know more about what this decision means, contact Jackie or Candi and they will organise for someone to talk it through with you.

It is important to us that as many sex workers are in favour of this and that your opinions are informed.



*Sex workers at Mardi Gras 2008*

## FORM C

### **Management Committee Members**

**Positions:** Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary and up to five Committee Members

**Regions:** At least one has to be from each of the following regions

- Far North Queensland (Cairns and surrounds)
- North Queensland (Townsville and surrounds)
- Gold Coast
- Brisbane

(2) Priority groups: At least one has to identify with the following priority groups:

- Male / transgender
- CALD – culturally and linguistically diverse (especially Chinese and Thai) who have been identified as ‘priority populations’, especially male, transgender and Chinese/Thai sex workers

These will be included in the constitution by identifying post codes. Because we are hoping to have offices in these areas, we believe the member will be able to use the office computers to hook into the Management Committee meetings which will happen once a month.

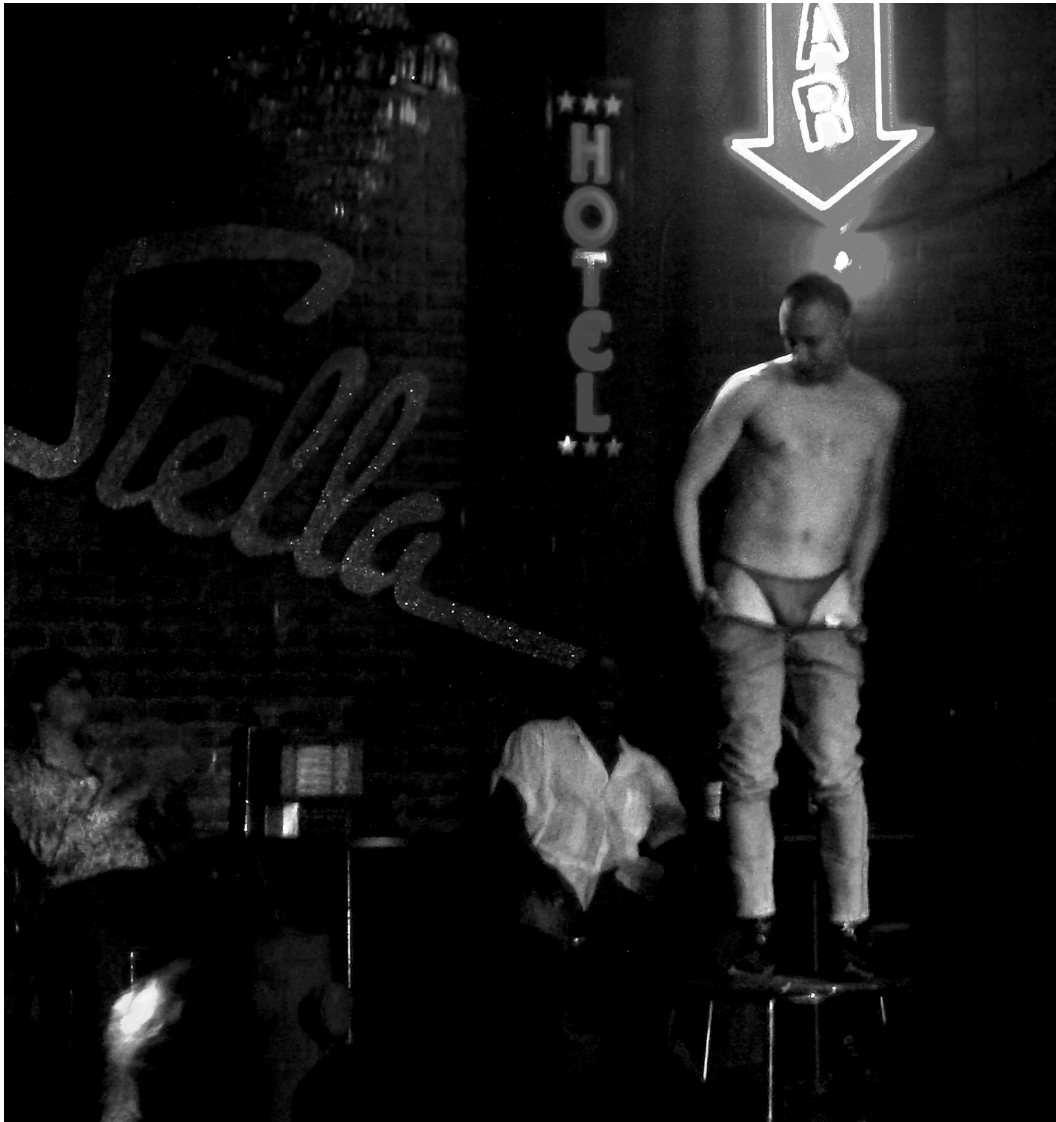
This will not limit the locations that Committee Members can be from. We would ideally like to have Committee Members from Mt Isa, Sunshine Coast, etc also but we do not want to set it up as ‘have to have’ part of the constitution. The constitution is difficult to change once it has been approved by the Office of Fair Trading.

The Management Committee will probably link up via video conferencing or phone conferencing each month. They will have position descriptions which outline their roles and responsibilities. They will have the legal responsibilities of making sure this organisation is meeting its obligations. Each Committee Member will commit to somewhere between 2 to 10 hours per week, depending on their position.

Each year we will produce an outline of who is nominating and their experience, interests and other relevant information and send it to all the members of the organisation before the Annual General Meeting. That way the members will be able to make an informed decision about who they are voting for even if they can’t attend the meeting.

The Annual General Meetings will be held in different locations every year and we will promote these through the website, magazine and local papers. These usually happen between August and November each year. Everyone is able to attend but only ordinary members (sex workers) will be able to vote.

If you have an interest in voting for the people that you think are best, become a member. If you are interested in nominating for the Management Committee, become a member and attend one of the regional planning days and express your interest.



*Stella, sex worker organisation in Montreal, Canada, celebrates their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary in style, 2005*

## FORM E

### Service Issues

There are a couple of services that United Sex Workers could provide but have been debated. We need some feedback on whether we should provide these services.

#### (1) Exit and Retraining

Queensland Health currently funds BSI Learning to do 'exit and retraining' for sex workers looking for help to leave the industry. This help includes things like resume writing and short course training (e.g. computer, English language skills etc.). Some sex workers do not like the idea of 'exit and retraining' programs because by providing that funding the government is saying that they do not condone our occupation.

#### **Q. Should United Sex Workers try to get the funding to do 'exit and retraining'?**

#### (2) Brothel manager and brothel owner training

The Prostitution Licensing Authority currently requires all people applying for a brothel license or a brothel manager's license to do a short sexual health workshop. SQWISI used to do this training and there is still a 'sexual health workshop for managers' on the old SQWISI website (now used by WISI Info). If United Sex Workers did this training we could do it on a fee-per-workshop basis. However some sex workers believe that there would create a conflict of interest for United Sex Workers to offer services to industry operators and we should only provide services to sex workers.

#### **Q. Should United Sex Workers do brothel manager training workshops?**



*'No To Pope' rally 2008*

# **QUEENSLAND SEX WORKERS: ASSESSMENT OF NEEDS**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM FINAL REPORT**

prepared by  
Rigmor Berg and Julie Bates  
May 2008

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Many stakeholders were consulted for this needs assessment, including:

- a wide range of sex workers, including brothel workers, sole operators, street-based workers and escort workers, female, male, transgender and Asian workers, mainly in Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville and Cairns
- brothel owners and managers
- government stakeholders including all HAHCSH Co-ordinators and sexual healthservices, Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA), Prostitution Enforcement Task Force (PETF)
- various non-government organisations including Queensland Association for Healthy Communities (QAHC), Queensland Injectors Health Network (QuIHN), Family Planning Queensland (FPQ), Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ), Hepatitis C Council (HCC), Australian Community Services Employers Association (ACSEA), Southern Edge Training (SET), Spiritus, DrugArm, Queensland Adult Business Association (QABa)
- national, state/territory and a few international sex worker services/organisations:  
Scarlet Alliance (national), United Sexworkers of North Queensland (USNQ), Crimson Coalition (Brisbane), SWOP (NSW), Magenta/SWOPWA (WA), RhED (Victoria), SWOPACT (ACT), Crimson Coalition (formerly SSPAN ) (Qld), SWOPNT (NT), SIN (SA), CASH project (Tasmania), NZ Prostitutes Collective.
- epidemiological and social research reports and conference papers, Queensland Health and Federal Health strategy documents and various relevant websites.

Informants to this needs assessment provided diverse perspectives, but there was nevertheless a high degree of consensus about priority issues and target groups, the core services that are needed and the forms they should take. The following points emerged:

- The new sex worker service should be decentralised, rather than concentrated in Brisbane, with substantial agencies on the Gold Coast and in North Queensland.
- The central element of the service must be peer-based and provide education and counselling by current or former sex workers.
- There should be a regular dual access link between sexual health clinical services and the new sex worker service.

- The central purpose of the service is to provide HAHCSH health promotion education, training, counselling and other support, especially to those new to doing sex work in Queensland and to others less likely to be well-informed.
- To attract and engage with sex workers in an effective and ongoing way, the service must provide what sex workers want, not just what others think they need.
- To meet the needs of sex workers in diverse circumstances, there must be a range of interactive modes available, including face to face in the service premises, at sexual health services and in the workplace, telephone, e-mail, interactive website and a regular print vehicle.
- All sectors of the industry must be addressed with active outreach, suitable information resources and convenient modes of contact. Sectors include:
  - licensed brothels
  - sole operators
  - street-based sex workers
  - escort agencies and illegal brothels.
  - special needs groups within the industry must be addressed with appropriate
    - staff, specific resources and appropriate modes of contact. Special needs
      - groups include:
        - CALD (mainly Asian) sex workers
        - male sex workers
        - transgender sex workers
        - ATSI sex workers.

While delivery of preventive health and safety education/training and peer support are central, sex workers have other needs and there must also be scope for liaison and collaboration with other agencies, advocacy and facilitation of mainstream service development, sex worker community development and policy development including steps towards law reform to promote health and safety, remove discrimination and promote equality and dignity for sex workers in the general community.

It is recommended that sex worker service agencies be set up in two locations:

- a North Queensland agency based in Townsville, preferably with a small satellite office in Cairns perhaps sharing premises with a compatible agency, and providing some outreach to Mt Isa, Mackay, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Rockhampton in keeping with need.
- a South Queensland agency based in Brisbane, preferably with a small satellite office on the Gold Coast perhaps sharing premises with a compatible agency, and providing some outreach to the Sunshine Coast and other southern centres in keeping with need.

While it will not be possible to address all needs well with the current level of funding, these agencies should endeavour to provide:

- sex worker only drop in at regular, convenient times, with one to one peer education/ counselling in a private space by appointment or in response to acute need
- cheap bulk sex work supplies, including condoms, lubricant, gloves, dams, sponges, vibrators, costumes and other equipment on sale at convenient hours, plus discreet needle exchange
- small safe sex packs free of charge to street-based sex workers on outreach and to others in genuine need or as promotional gifts
- interactive training and discussion workshops conducted on the premises and in brothels as needed
- outreach peer education/counselling through sexual health services, both locally and elsewhere in keeping with need (sexual health services will need to provide a private room for this purpose and actively promote this service)
- outreach to all licensed brothels and also to any illegal brothels
- outreach to sole operators and escort workers advertising in press and internet, accessed by phone, SMS and/or e-mail
- outreach to special needs groups, particularly Asian sex workers, but also male and transgender sex workers, who advertise in press and on the internet, to be accessed by phone, SMS and/or e-mail
- local Ugly Mugs updates for distribution by e-mail or SMS to sole operators and brothels as well as in hard copy on the premises and in the street
- liaison and co-operation with local agencies in the HAHCSH field, police, local government, Centrelink, welfare agencies
- sex worker sensitivity training for mainstream services and financial institutions.

Each agency will need to employ

- a service Co-ordinator, responsible for staff recruitment, supervision and administration, policy and liaison with local service agencies and police
- female Peer Educator/Counsellors and Outreach Workers to facilitate drop in and provide one-to-one peer education/counselling and occasional group education/training, regular outreach to brothels, to sexual health services, to sole operators and where relevant, the street, needle exchange and sale/distribution of safe sex supplies
- female CALD Peer Educator/Counsellors and Outreach Workers (preferably with Mandarin and/or Thai language skills) to provide outreach to Asian sex workers.

It is desirable that there be male, transgender and possibly ATSI outreach staff as well, but female and female CALD are the highest initial priorities. Provision of English for sex work classes may provide a useful drawcard to facilitate contact with short stay Asian sex workers.

It is preferable that all staff have some direct sex work experience. They may be current sex workers, but past experience of sex work would suffice. All Peer Educator/Counsellors and Outreach workers should be provided with induction training in cash management, record keeping, HAHCSH education for sex workers



skills and counselling skills. CALD Peer Educator/Counsellors should receive training in teaching English as a second language.

All Peer Educator/Counsellors and Outreach workers should receive clinical supervision by a qualified clinician external to the service as well as administrative supervision by the service Co-ordinator.

When sex workers present with need for professional services beyond the skills set available amongst service staff, referral should be provided to sex worker friendly service providers, with access assistance and support if needed. These service needs are likely to include:

- sexual health care and screening for certificates
- primary health care, drug treatment services, mental health services, including government and private practitioners
- emergency and supported accommodation services, food, clothing and other basic needs agencies
- retraining/upskilling options and support not available within the service
- legal advice, town planning advice, taxation advice and accountancy
- immigration and visa advice.

Agencies should also devote some time to:

- policy and strategy development
- advocacy, including development of recommendations for law reform to protect the health and safety of sex workers
- information resources, including website maintenance
- service record keeping and other data collection for self-monitoring, service development and planning purposes, as well as external evaluation.

It is recommended that Queensland Health recognise the importance of funding services for sex workers, not only because they are needed by sex workers, but also because they serve the whole community through the STIs prevention education role that well supported sex workers can play in relation to their clients and the referral service they provide in directing sex work clients with signs of STIs to sexual health services for testing and treatment.

It is recommended that the Queensland Government takes a whole of government approach to addressing the needs of sex workers, because the key issues and service needs extend beyond sexual health.

It is recommended that exchange of sex for favours and other opportunistic sex work by people who do not identify as sex workers be addressed separately from sex worker services, as part of broader campaigns and services that target vulnerable population groups where these issues may arise, such as homeless/unemployed/vulnerable youth, remote Indigenous communities and new migrant communities.

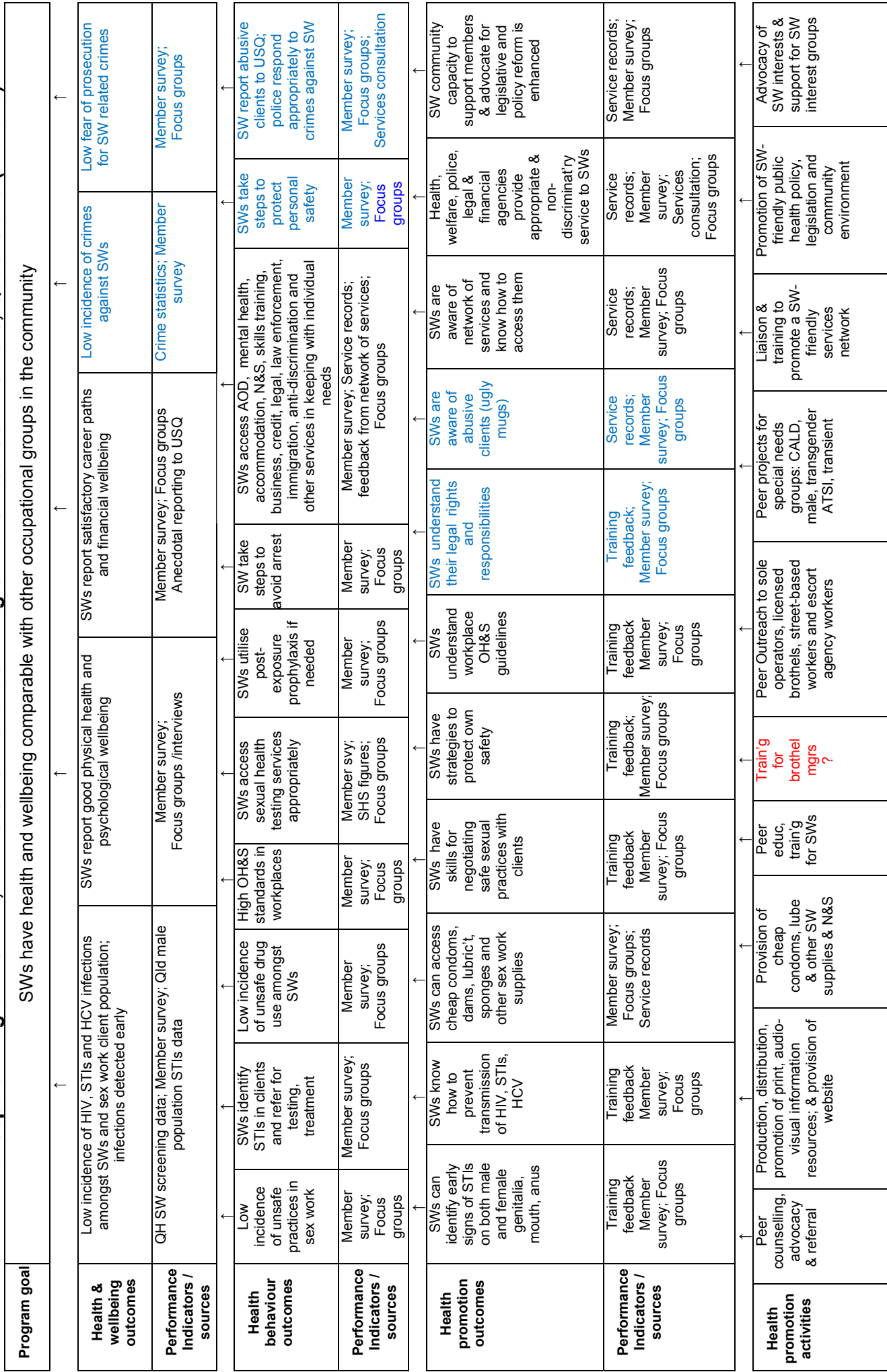
The new agencies will require oversight by a Reference Group or Board with governance responsibility. This body should be chaired by a past/current sex worker and the majority of members should be past/current sex workers, providing appropriate sectoral, geographic and special needs representation. Some positions may be filled by people with areas of expertise other than sex work that would be useful to the service.

The service should be independently reviewed after 18 months, to see how well staffing and services in place match needs in each location. Adjustments should then be made, in keeping with the findings, including restructure and resizing if necessary. After three years establishment time, there should be an independent evaluation against an agreed set of objectives / outcomes to inform strategic planning and funding for the next three year period



*Mardi Gras 2002, courtesy of Doethe Jansen*

### Form D - Conceptual Diagram for HIV, HCV & STIs Prevention Program of United Sex Workers, Queensland (Draft #3)



## FEEDBACK FORM

Are you a current or past sex worker?

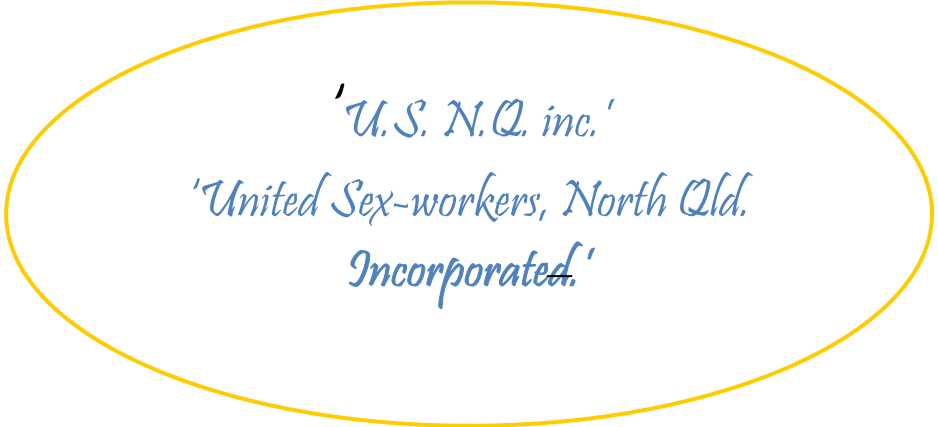
- Yes
- No, other feedback forms are available for other stake holders.

After reading the information about who we are and what we are planning, do you agree with;

	Yes	No	Why, or additional comments
Form A Membership types, ordinary, associate and credentialed associate			
Form B Management committee members locations and positions			
Form C Mission Statement and Objectives			
Form D Conceptual Diagram, services being offered are on the bottom line			
Form E – Service issues (a) Should we go for the funding to do 'exit and retraining' program?			
Form E – Service issues (b) Should we provide training to Brothel Managers at a price to be paid by the Operators?			

*Continued overleaf*





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Ph. 0747 244 853

Inc No. IA 36279  
ABN. 30 486 337 023

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

2008/2009

NAME: [Working/Given] \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Please tick if you would like Newsletters sent to you at the above address

MEMBERSHIP FEES: \$5 individual

Office Use: Date Processed: \_\_\_\_\_ Receipt number: \_\_\_\_\_

**Without members you have NO organisation! WITHOUT an organisation—YOU HAVE NO VOICE!**