



Vixen and Scarlet Alliance welcome the passage of the Sex Work Decriminalisation Bill 2021 but commit to continue to advocate for further reforms

The passage of the Victorian Sex Work Decriminalisation Bill 2021 is an historic achievement for sex workers. Sex workers applaud Andrew's Labor Government recognition of sex work as work that should be regulated as any other business, and that sex workers should be afforded the same rights and protections as every other worker in Victoria. For decades, sex workers have been campaigning together for the decriminalisation of our work, workplaces and third parties and the end of Victoria's failed licencing regime. Under licencing and criminalisation, sex workers are forced to make choices based on dangerous and discriminatory laws, rather than our health and safety. Decriminalisation is the globally recognised, evidence affirmed, best practice model of sex industry regulation.

The Bill brings about many important and urgently needed changes that improve workplace health and safety, access to industrial protections, health, justice and safety for sex workers. The Bill repeals the criminalisation of HIV and STI for sex workers and discriminatory mandatory testing and condom use provisions. Criminalisation of sex workers with BBV and STI, mandatory testing and condom use laws violates our human rights and is state-sanctioned workplace discrimination. These discriminatory laws are not evidence-based and are contrary to best practice public health approaches.

Critically, the Bill will repeal the problematic and ineffective Sex Work Act 1992. The Sex Work Act 1992 has long violated sex workers' rights to privacy and confidentiality, to free choice of employment and to just and favourable conditions of work, equal protections and treatment before the law.

We welcome the repeal of the requirement for individual sex worker registration, which had continued to impact negatively on sex workers' lives, and the further commitment by the Victorian Labor government to destroy the current sex work registration records by 10 May 2022.

We want to thank Fiona Patten for her ongoing support for the decriminalisation of sex work and Andy Meddick and his team who have worked together with Vixen and Scarlet Alliance to propose necessary amendments to the Bill, as called for by sex workers in Victoria. In addition to the destruction of the sex work register, the amendments would have brought forth full decriminalisation for all sex workers including street based sex workers, ensured robust anti-discrimination protections by introducing necessary attributes of 'sex work' and 'sex worker', removed arbitrary advertising restrictions that impact on sex workers' safety and addressed the discriminatory provisions against sex workers who use drugs.

Without these amendments, Victoria has not yet achieved [full decriminalisation](#). Throughout this process, sex workers have been loud and clear that we will accept nothing less than the

full decriminalisation of all forms of sex work, for every member of our community.

We support the passing of the Sex Work Decriminalisation Bill 2021 but will keep advocating for the critical reforms to ensure that no sex workers are left behind. We will keep fighting to ensure that this unfinished business is addressed. We cannot fully celebrate decriminalisation of sex work unless it is decriminalisation for all of us.

Vixen and Scarlet Alliance would also like to thank Minister Horne, Minister Leane, Samantha Ratnam, Rod Barton, the Victorian Trades Hall Council, and everyone else who assisted the passage of the Bill. Most of all, we celebrate the ongoing labour of countless sex workers in Victoria and across so-called Australia to achieve this critical first step towards full decriminalisation in Victoria.

We call on our allies and all those who support sex workers' rights for their solidarity as we continue to strive towards the full decriminalisation of all forms of sex work in Victoria and across all states and territories in Australia.

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