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**Title:** SAFE SEX POLICE - PUBLIC HEALTH RESPONSES TO SEX WORK

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Sexual health and workplace safety are intrinsically linked for sex workers – both are negatively impacted by recent public health policy. Sex workers in Australia have consistently good sexual health. Funded peer education organisations, provision of prophylactics, free and anonymous testing services, uptake of condom use by individual sex workers, self regulation of sexual health and implementation of safer sex practices into the workplace by sex workers are all contributing factors. Yet, recent policy includes: the introduction of Police into sex worker workplaces - the safe sex police, covertly soliciting unprotected sexual practices; pseudo mandatory testing; and the criminalisation of specific sexual behaviours. A divide clearly exists between risks perceived to be prevented by policy in Australia and current sex work practice. This inconsistency centres on lack of acknowledgement of key aspects of sex in a sex work setting. The sex that happens as part of sex work occurs in the context of work. Most often within a work place or temporary work space, whether it be a private home, a hotel room, brothel, massage parlour, safe house, car, street or other setting. Sex workers understand and consider the sex that happens as part of their job to be work. The workplace or space impacts directly on occupational health and safety of female, male or transgender sex workers. Policy initiatives fail to address issues of: access to clean and safe work space; lighting and disposal options in the work environment; access to condoms, lubricants and other prophylactics; legal status (whether sex work is legal and the sex worker can openly describe and negotiate in regard to the services provided, or if it is illegal and the sex worker must disguise the services provided, speak in jargon, focus on avoiding detection rather than their own safety, health etc.) and instead increase stigma.