

**MEDIA RELEASE: PROTESTS AND VIGILS 19 JULY FRIDAY 3PM - ACROSS AUSTRALIA**



**VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS  
MUST STOP!**

**Laws that make sex workers  
vulnerable to violence must be  
repealed!**

**Australian sex workers and supporters join the International Day of Protest against violence and murder of sex workers and the laws that allow it to happen**



**International Day  
of Protest against  
the violent Abuse  
and Murder of  
Sex Workers**



**Friday - July 19th - 3pm @ Swedish + Turkish Embassies**

**Recent murders and violent attacks on sex workers spark an unprecedented wave of spontaneous international action calling for an end to discrimination and criminalisation of sex workers..**

Scarlet Alliance, Australian sex workers Association, our members, and allies in Australia join the international protests in memoriam of sex workers Jasmine in Sweden and Dora in Turkey murdered within 1 day of each other, last week.

The protests that will take place outside the Swedish and Turkish embassies and other prominent locations in every state of Australia and across hundreds of cities worldwide, will **draw attention to the systems of criminalisation and discrimination that allowed violent murders to happen and enabled the lack of action by Police.**

**Sweden** - Rose Alliance, a Swedish sex workers organisation released this statement in relation to the murder of Jasmine "Our board member, fierce activist and friend Petite Jasmine got brutally murdered yesterday (11 July 2013). Several years ago she lost custody of her children as she was considered to be an unfit parent due to being a sex worker. The children were placed with their father regardless of him being abusive towards Jasmine. Yesterday the father of her children killed her. She always said "Even if I can't get my kids back I will make sure this never happens to any other sex worker".

**We will continue her fight. Justice for Jasmine.**

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Sweden, with its reputation for being a leader in gender and social equality is also known for passing the 1999 law that criminalises the clients and many aspects of sex workers work and support structures. In considering all sex workers as victims and all clients as abusers, the Swedish state denied women who sell sexual services any kind of agency. This paternalistic approach, aggressively promoted to other countries including Australia as “protecting women” actually leads to an attitude that infantilises women and discredits women's choices and experiences, and ultimately leads to many human rights violations. Women caught selling sex have their children taken away from them, are kicked out of their homes and see their experiences denied.

Ari Reid, a sex worker in Australia, a mother and representative of Scarlet Alliance who is coordinating the Australian events said ***“Jasmines story broke my heart and as a mother and a sex worker, it also scared me. The promotion of the ‘Swedish model’ of sex work regulation, which allowed this to happen must stop!”***

**Turkey** - The story of Dora, a trans woman sex worker in Turkey who was murdered on July 9th shares similar aspects of stigma and discrimination, which would ultimately lead to her murder. Though sex work is not fully criminalised in Turkey, it is only legal in state-run brothels which exclude many workers such as trans\* sex workers. Their laws continue to give the police power to criminalise individual sex workers which they use in discriminatory ways, especially against trans\* women. Criminalisation and policing powers over sex workers means that sex workers must prioritise police evasion over looking after our own OH&S at work. This pushes many sex workers into more risky environments where they are more open to violence, as Dora’s murder tragically demonstrates.

A statement released by the Red Umbrella Sexual Health and Human Rights Association in Turkey reads ***“Violence against trans sex workers in different forms has been a common and widespread reality in Turkey. The overall reported incidents of trans sex workers murders has been 31 between 2008 – 2012 in Turkey”*** However, many believe the 31 reported murders of trans women in Turkey in the last five years is likely to be far lower than the real number.

***“It is time for wider society and law makers to listen to sex workers and stop ignoring our deaths and the violence committed against us. We are calling for an end to discrimination and stigma and for governments to stop criminalising us, our work places and our clients. We are calling for decriminalisation of sex work and to be treated with respect,”*** said Ryan Cole, a sex worker and current Secretary of Scarlet Alliance

In response to these murders and continual violence, and in memory of Jasmine and Dora, sex workers and allies across the world have mobilised to create a huge – and still growing – spontaneous international day of action and memorial. In London, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Brighton, Berlin, Macedonia, Madrid, Rome, Vancouver, Warsaw, Helsinki, Sweden and across Australia, sex workers will gather outside the embassies and consulates of the Swedish and Turkish governments, or in parks or public places to protest and mourn for Jasmine, Dora, and so many others. Enough sex workers have suffered or died because of stigma and criminalisation. We demand change!

More information can be found here: <http://jasmineanddora.wordpress.com/>

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Australian events are being held at 3pm in every state and territory and are listed below:

**Adelaide:** Steps of Parliament House, North Terrace, Adelaide

*"I want people in South Australia to understand that criminalisation and discrimination kills sex workers. For health and safety support the decriminalisation of sex work now!" Ari Reid, South Australian sex worker and Scarlet Alliance representative.*

**Canberra:** Outside Swedish Embassy, 5 Turrana Street, Yarralumla, Canberra

**Melbourne:** Outside Swedish Consulate, 21 St Georges Rd, Toorak

*"The lenient sentencing that Adrian Bayley received in Victoria for his crimes against sex workers is symptomatic of how entrenched whorephobia is in policy but also implementation of the justice system. This creates barriers to good justice outcomes and allows Police and courts to take violence against sex workers less seriously". Christian Vega, Vixen Collective, Victoria's peer only sex worker organisation*

**Sydney:** Outside Consulate General of Sweden Building, 287 Military Road, Cremorne

*"The criminalisation of sex workers, our clients or our workplaces harms sex workers. As we stand in solidarity with sex workers around the world we are reminded of the effectiveness of decriminalisation in NSW. The gap here is anti-discrimination protection that sends a powerful message to the community and courts that discrimination will not be tolerated." Janelle Fawkes, Chief Executive Officer, Scarlet Alliance.*

**Hobart:** Parliament Lawns, Hobart

*"The Swedish model is often misrepresented as protecting women. Jasmine's case demonstrates how the law is actively disadvantaging sex workers. Tasmanian groups who assert the value of the Swedish Model place less value on sex workers lives." Jade Barker, Tasmanian Sex Worker Project, Scarlet Alliance*

**Perth:** Front of State Parliament House, Perth

*"The law is the kind of law that Nick Goiran wants to bring into WA. WA sex workers overwhelming reject this and call for decriminalisation for our health and safety." Rebecca Davies, WA sex worker*

**Brisbane:** Swedish Consulate, 111 Eagle Street, Brisbane

**Darwin:** Vigil for sex workers and allies, SWOP NT, NTAHC

*"SWOP NT is saddened by these events and will continue to fight for justice. In the memory of Jasmine and Dora. A decade after murders in NT it demonstrates laws that objectify and oppress sex workers endanger us and make us second class citizens." Krystal, local sex worker, SWOP officer.*

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