

## **Sex workers gather to denounce new laws**

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ANGRY sex worker representatives from around Australia will join a protest in Perth tomorrow against planned changes to Western Australia's sex industry laws.

Members of the national sex worker body, Scarlet Alliance, have denounced the proposed new sex industry laws as the "worst in Australia".

The draft Prostitution Control Bill 2002 has not yet been released for public comment but would require prostitutes to be licensed, a spokesman for Police Minister Michelle Roberts said today.

Sex workers would be licensed in a bid to protect the health of clients and prevent unlawful entrants to Australia from working, the spokesman said.

"There are no controls, it's rampant out there," he said.

Scarlet Alliance national president Maria McMahon said the proposed laws discriminated against sex workers by making them "the only people in Australia required to carry ID cards".

"The proposed laws will create a cycle of arrest and imprisonment for those unable to enter into the registration system, leaving sex workers open to corruption, abuse and violence," Ms McMahon said.

United Nations Association of Australia (WA) president Nancy Hudson-Rodd said the current Prostitution Act 2000 violated 10 articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These included "their right to movement, fair trial, safety, employment and privacy", Dr Hudson-Rodd said.

The Scarlet Alliance plans to release a submission to the government on the proposed new bill which is expected to be released soon.

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