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Sex workers protest proposed new laws

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SEX worker representatives fear prostitutes could be forced onto the streets if the West Australian government's proposed changes to sex industry laws come into effect.

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

The Alliance and other sex worker representatives joined forces yesterday to speak to journalists of their concerns about the planned legislation.

The draft Prostitution Control Bill 2002 has not yet been released for public comment but would require individual sex workers to be licensed in a bid to protect the health of clients and prevent foreign prostitutes from working.

However Scarlett Alliance says it discriminates against sex workers, many of whom would prefer to work illegally on the streets rather than register and risk their profession being discovered.

The sex workers' organisations said the sex industry should be decriminalised leaving it subject to other laws governing businesses.