

message from the chair



The *Prostitution Act 1999* has now been in operation for two years. It commenced on 1 July 2000.

In my remarks which introduced the first Annual Report of the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA), I wrote that the PLA was then on a steep learning curve. That curve has flattened somewhat as the PLA proceeds with the further implementation of the licensing process and becomes more familiar with the complexities of prostitution and the sex industry generally.

This, the PLA's second report, will disclose that in the year under review 13 brothel licences and 22 managers' certificates were granted by the PLA after rigorous and comprehensive inquiry and investigation by the staff of the PLA and the Prostitution Enforcement Task Force (PETF), a limb of the State Crime Operations Command within the Queensland Police Service (QPS).

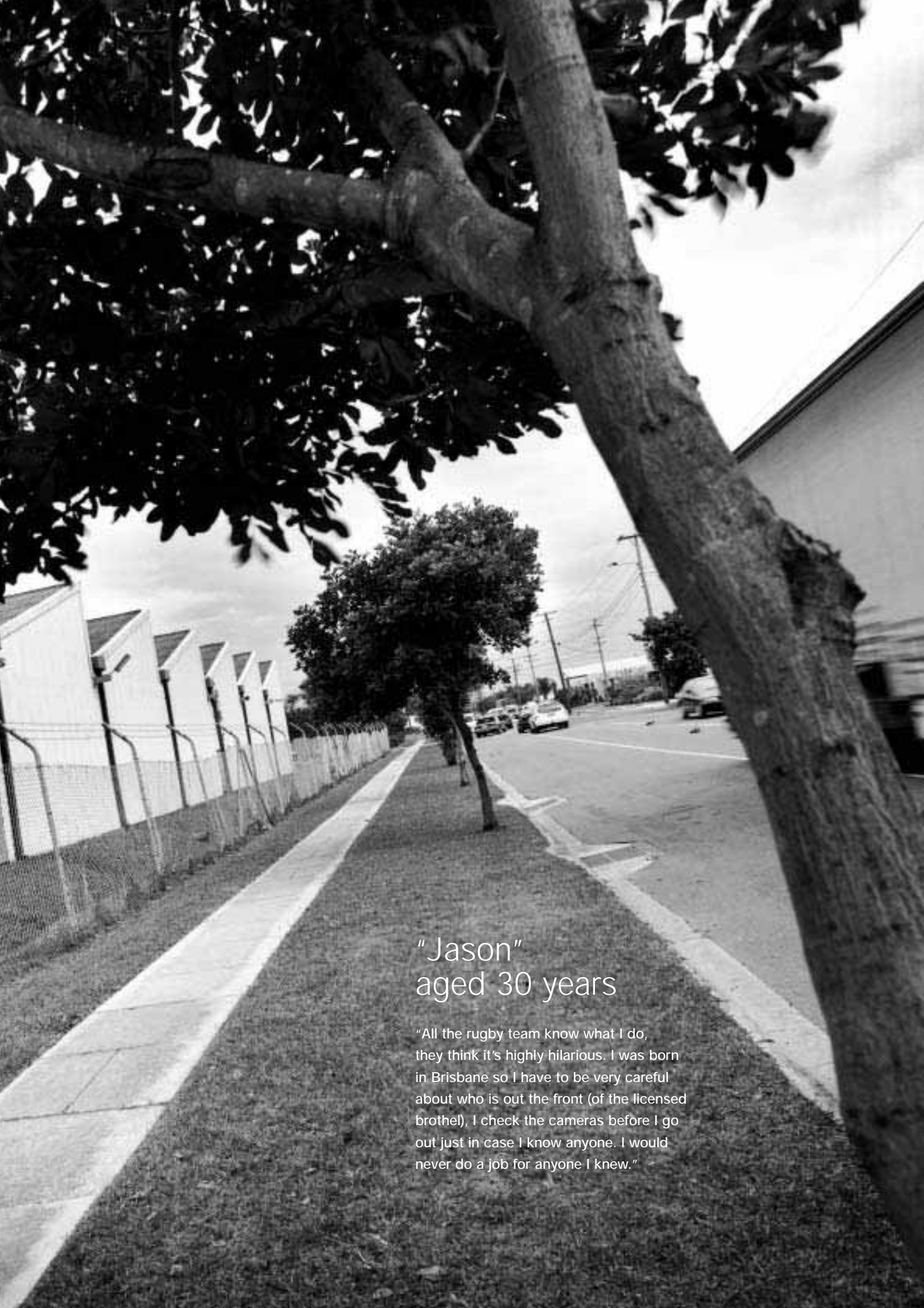
Not only was PETF effective in assisting the PLA in the licensing process, its law enforcement effort in respect of illegal prostitution was noteworthy. It needs to be understood that the policing of the illegal sex industry is time-consuming and difficult, and that detection and prosecution are not always the most effective tools in curbing the incidence of illegal prostitution. The illegal sex industry is large, controlled by relatively few and is extremely mobile. Freestanding illegal brothels are really a thing of the past. The illegal industry now operates through advertisement, telephone contact, a network of accommodation units and outcalls to private residences and hotels. The developing licensed brothel industry has yet to successfully meet the challenge presented by operators acting unlawfully. This report will address the issue in greater detail.

The year under review has seen the beginning of a developing licensed brothel industry which is characterised by quality, well-appointed premises in which practices which enhance sexual health, the safety of sex workers and the avoidance of exploitation are insisted on. The PLA has developed and continues to develop its processes for compliance auditing of licensed brothels and the next year will see its further development.

We are indebted to the several agencies with which we share a mutual interest in and obligation towards the proper implementation of the Prostitution Act. In particular, we record our appreciation of the work of the Commissioner of Police and his officers, those in Queensland Health with expertise in sexual health and Self Health for Queensland Workers in the Sex Industry (SQWISI) with all of whom we enjoy a healthy and professional working relationship.

Finally, I wish to place on record the PLA's indebtedness to the Registrar, Ms Margaret Isaac, and her small but efficient staff who at times have had to labour under trying and stressful conditions. At the same time, I record my personal thanks to my fellow members of the PLA for their friendly and industrious support and professionalism. Without the benefit of their constant and wise counsel, the many challenges which are inherent in the regulation and control of prostitution may have prevailed.

W J Carter QC
Chair



"Jason"
aged 30 years

"All the rugby team know what I do, they think it's highly hilarious. I was born in Brisbane so I have to be very careful about who is out the front (of the licensed brothel), I check the cameras before I go out just in case I know anyone. I would never do a job for anyone I knew."

registrar's report



Out from the shadows in 2001 and into the light of day ... and, my, what days we have had. Days where we have had all four seasons in one, days where the blizzard is so thick one can hardly see in front of one's nose, days where the temperature has reached extraordinary highs and then those that are fine one day, perfect the next. One thing I can say about having lived those days is that I wouldn't be dead for quids.

It is with a sense of professional pride that I look back at what the PLA has achieved to date and the contribution that those achievements make towards safer communities. The PLA remains committed to promoting and improving safety and health in the sex industry and in the wider community and to eliminating corruption and organised crime in the prostitution industry. These are the fundamental principles that continue to motivate and drive the PLA toward success in realising the objectives of the legislation.

Experience to date has served to further demonstrate what was suspected at the outset. While there was a clear idea about the picture that was to be created, the rules were that you had to get there by assembling pieces of a puzzle that at first glance were all the pieces you would ever need but as you got the borders worked out and started to focus on the detail you realised that some of the pieces were from different puzzles. No matter how much you bent and rotated those pieces or manoeuvred other pieces around them, they just would not fit. With only one choice to make, those pieces were set aside as the PLA continued to build the picture with the pieces they could. The challenge then is what to do with those unusable pieces and the negotiations from here on in.

Who has helped with the picture so far? I cannot overstate the support, contribution and efforts of PETF, QPS. While maintaining their independence and objectivity they have allowed themselves to step inside our world and see the view from here. The benefit and value they bring to our probity responsibilities has not gone unnoticed. Queensland Health – while you have (seemingly) effortlessly cemented a reputation with us for best practice sexual health management and continued to fill those gaps that we could never have accomplished on our own, I look forward to securing a new partnership role with you upon establishment of a PLA inspectorate. SQWISI – if there was ever an expectation that we would be quarantined in our education of the sex industry, it was wrong. The saying that you have to read a book from front cover to back to understand the story applies. Thankyou for those important pieces of the puzzle that we would never have found without your help (or in some circumstances – never have recognised or known what to do with!).

I cannot finish the year without mentioning my work colleagues – Anne, Stephen, Jan, Andrew and Candice. These five wonderful people that I work with personify, in particular, two lessons I learnt many years ago – that I and others working together can accomplish far more than, even at my best, I could accomplish alone and while I may have a great sense of worth within myself I need the best thinking of other people to join with my own. Thank you.

Margaret Isaac
Registrar



"Cassie"
aged 53 years

"I started work in the sex industry five years ago at the age of 48 years. Other jobs I have held are shop work, bar work, I worked at a gymnasium, at a health and fitness club and at a mall. Since working in the sex industry I have put some money in the bank and saved, and because my ex and I had a house I have managed to pay him out."