



→ MESSAGE
FROM THE
CHAIR

CHAIR'S REPORT //

- This is the third and last annual report of the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) as presently constituted, since by the time the next annual report is required for presentation to the parliament my appointment as chair of the authority and that of the current members will have expired.
- We were appointed to constitute the first membership of the statutory body established by section 101 of the Prostitution Act. Whilst it has good reason to be well satisfied with its performance of the challenging brief entrusted to it by the Prostitution Act and the government, one must also record a significant measure of disappointment at the authority's inability to achieve all of its original expectations.
- The decision by government to regulate and control prostitution in Queensland was made for sound social and community reasons. Most, if not all, state governments now have legislation in place or have introduced legislation into their parliaments.
- The sex industry in Queensland, as in other states, is large, well organised and for the most part commercially profitable. The licensed or legalised industry which is now three years old in Queensland occupies only a miniscule portion of the wider industry. My hope and expectation at the beginning was that the Prostitution Act would be seen by the sex industry in Queensland as a desirable initiative and would entice those operating illegally to apply for a brothel licence and, as our first annual report noted, would come out of the shadows and into the light. But that has not happened. In three years the authority has granted 31 licences¹ and at 30 June 2003 only 12 licensed brothels are operating throughout the state. Our forecasts for the future development of the licensed industry have had to be downgraded and this in turn will also have a significant impact on the capacity of the authority to become self-funding.
- The objectives of the legislation are the sexual health of the community, the safety of and the provision of a safe and appropriate working environment for sex workers. It is also an effective anti-corruption measure. These are desirable community outcomes

¹ This comprises approval for 24 new applications and seven renewal applications.

and underpin any effective legislative scheme for the proper regulation and control of prostitution.

- The challenge therefore is to design the most effective legislative framework to achieve these desired outcomes.
- The Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) has the special statutory obligation under the Prostitution Act to report to the parliament after 30 June 2003 on the 'effectiveness' of the Prostitution Act after its first three years of operation. That report should provide a valuable and independent assessment of the effectiveness of the Act so far.
- The day-to-day experience of the authority and its officers convinces us that the time is ripe for a thorough legislative review of the Prostitution Act to enable it to become a more effective and efficient vehicle for the proper regulation and control of prostitution.
- I must very humbly and graciously express my gratitude to my authority colleagues for their superb commitment to the proper performance of their often difficult and ever-challenging role. It is for me a bonus to know them now as friends. Likewise the small but efficient staff of the authority deserves our special thanks and indeed that of the wider community. They have done themselves great credit in this area of public service.
- Finally it would have been well-nigh impossible to achieve what we have without the support of the Police Commissioner and his officers, especially those attached to the Prostitution Enforcement Task Force (PETF), with whom the authority enjoys a harmonious working relationship. So too with Queensland Health and Self-Health for Queensland Workers in the Sex Industry (SQWISI), which is now under the capable leadership of Ms Cheryl Matthews. They have given us their continued and valuable support. To you all a very sincere thank you.

W J Carter QC
Chair

REGISTRAR'S REPORT //

→ The authority is now three years old. While reflecting on the year in review one of the most significant achievements was the emergence of a small but effective compliance unit which joined the team. However, it is with sadness that I realise the close of the year also brings us closer to the end of duty for some members of the authority.

→ It has been my very great pleasure to have worked for and with the members who make up the authority. While learning comparisons are sometimes hard to quantify in our different experiences in the public sector, there is no doubt in my mind that three years ago the task of building an organisation from the ground up, recruiting suitable staff and communicating a vision and a sense of direction and purpose to those staff, familiarising oneself with an extraordinary industry and forming constructive and solid relationships with stakeholders based on mutual respect has been my great challenge.

→ While I had the determination and tenacity to get it right, there was enormous pressure to get it right first time and to that end my unreserved thanks go to the members of the authority for their professional input and, in particular, Bill Carter, whose tireless support and efforts assisted us in our pursuit of the highest standard of work ethic, commitment to task and quality of outcome. Bill's ability to look inward and outward and quietly direct us on this journey was exceeded only by his forthrightness, passion and unfaltering commitment to achieve and be the best we can be.

→ So, while the membership of the authority may soon change, their contribution to the success of this administration will be remembered and built on with grateful thanks.



W J Carter QC
Chair



Margaret Isaac
Registrar

