Message from the Chair

It has been another busy and successful year for the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) which has worked diligently in the furtherance of its legislative functions.

Although there was a contraction of the licensed brothel sector in 2010–11, the PLA continues to preside over a small but important sector of Queensland’s sex industry. From its inception, the PLA has emphasised its commitment to the independence and autonomy of sex workers in licensed brothels. This continued during the year, with the PLA deciding on an additional licence condition requiring the display of multilingual signs regarding sex worker rights at brothels.

The Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) published its report into the effectiveness of the Prostitution Act 1999 at the end of June 2011. It was gratifying that the CMC recognised the successful track record of the Authority in regulating the licensed brothel sector. The CMC concluded that the Prostitution Act effectively regulates licensed brothels and that the objectives of the Act are generally being met. It found that brothels provide the safest working environment for sex workers and a safe and healthy environment more generally. The PLA was particularly pleased with this finding because the creation of a safe and healthy environment at brothels is a priority.

The findings of the CMC demonstrate that the PLA is well placed to ensure the maintenance of a high-quality, effective and efficient brothel licensing regime that serves the public interest into the future.

I place on record the PLA’s appreciation of the support given to it by the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services, the Hon Neil Roberts MP, and his staff. I also recognise and value the assistance of various government agencies that have so professionally supported and enhanced the work of the PLA.

I extend my thanks to my fellow members of the PLA who have a great wealth of knowledge and experience and who are invaluable in assisting me as Chair. I would especially like to acknowledge the contribution of Mr Lance Pollard and Ms Ann Bennison, whose terms of appointment expired in 2011. Mr Pollard is a very experienced solicitor who had served on the PLA since its inception and was the last remaining original member. Ms Bennison brought to our deliberations robust commonsense and an extensive knowledge of local government.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge that to a large degree the achievements of the Authority are a result of the significant administrative and leadership abilities of the Executive Director of the Office of the PLA, Ms Margaret Isaac, who has led the agency so ably for more than a decade. My appreciation also goes to the office staff for their ongoing dedication and committed professionalism.

Manus Boyce QC
Chair