

Liaison and Assistance

Licensed brothels and sex workers operate across the state and the PLA endeavours to offer a range of options to liaise with and provide assistance to the industry. The PLA's objective is to communicate effectively with the industry, stakeholders and the public.

Overall, the PLA's communication can be clustered into three broad groups:

- members of the public
- the sex industry
- other key stakeholders.

Communicating with members of the public

The PLA office is the primary point of contact for members of the public, licensees, managers, sex workers, the media and any other interested parties requesting information. All calls and emails are responded to and officers of the PLA are committed to providing an effective level of customer service.

The Authority's fact sheet series (along with its client service charter) is integral to its communications strategy. They assist interested parties in understanding the work of the PLA, the requirements for involvement in the sex industry, and promote knowledge of the legal framework for the sex industry in Queensland. These fact sheets have been posted on the PLA's website, were distributed to licensed brothels, sent to national sex worker organisations in Australia and New Zealand, and are available from the PLA's office. The Authority completely revamped its fact sheet series over the course of 2011-12. A review of the fact sheet series commenced this year and will continue in 2014-15.

The PLA website

The PLA website is an important tool by which the Authority makes information available to the sex industry and public on an ongoing basis. The website contains a wealth of information relating to the PLA and the sex industry and is continuously updated. As the website provides one of our primary means of reaching our stakeholders on an ongoing basis, we ensure that many of our publications are available electronically. The website also contains links to other sites that may be of interest to both the industry and the public. On average, there are more than 1,000 visitors to the PLA website each month.

Communicating with the sex industry

During 2013-14, the PLA continued its engagement with the Queensland sex worker organisation, Respect Inc. Staff of the Office of the PLA and Respect Inc discussed topical matters and any issues of concern. The PLA consults with Respect Inc on relevant sex industry matters. In appropriate cases, the PLA refers sex workers to Respect Inc for assistance. The PLA has provided the organisation with fact sheets and brochures and the PLA has some Respect Inc resources at its office. The PLA is committed to ongoing engagement with Respect Inc in 2014-15.

To better meet the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) sex workers, the PLA has produced a number of multilingual (English, Chinese, Korean, and Thai) fact sheets.

In Touch, the Authority's newsletter, was originally developed because, while we had contact and liaison with brothel licensees and approved managers through the compliance unit and through the application process, our communication with sex workers and the wider sex industry generally needed improvement. The publication is distributed to all licensed brothels for the general interest of workers in the industry, in addition to a wide range of other industry stakeholders. This year, *In Touch* has included articles on sexual health, sex industry laws, details of the latest sex industry research, the obligations and responsibilities of licensees and managers, human trafficking, and other issues relevant to the sex industry.

Licensees and approved managers were sent a range of information throughout the year, including in respect of their obligations and responsibilities and the standards expected of them by the PLA.

Prior to the advent of three year licences, the PLA met with licensees every 12 months as they applied for their licences. This was an ideal opportunity for licensees to provide feedback to the PLA and to raise any issues pertinent to their operations. Whilst this is no longer possible, licensees and managers may request to address members of the PLA at their monthly meetings in order to talk about any issues of concern, such as their brothel operations, the licensed industry more generally, or their treatment by the PLA.

Communicating with other key stakeholders

We met, as required, with our key stakeholders and have assisted other agencies to perform their functions with regard to prostitution issues. Table 11 shows the number of meetings we held with those key stakeholders. Meetings are just one way of measuring the Authority's stakeholder engagement. Other more common forms of communication with stakeholders included telephone calls, emails, and letters.

Table 11: Key stakeholders attending meetings with the PLA 2013–14

Group	Number
Licensees and managers, applicants, potential applicants	38
QPS	6
Other government agencies	8
Media	0
Ministerial	1
TOTAL	53

Feedback

We recognise the importance of obtaining feedback to improve the services we provide and use a number of feedback mechanisms, including:

- results of client and key stakeholder satisfaction surveys
- information requests received through the office administration
- information generated through audit and inspection processes
- feedback received through *In Touch* and the PLA website
- annual report feedback.

This information is analysed on an ongoing basis to identify emerging issues and information requirements and incorporated into appropriate communication strategies or business processes.

Inquiries

The PLA receives thousands of inquiries annually about prostitution and related matters, mostly by telephone and email. Inquiries generally come from brothel licensees and managers, individuals interested in making an application, other government agencies and sex workers. Common categories of inquiry relate to the regulation of prostitution advertising, legal or brothel licensing questions, and questions about applications for a licence or certificate. The great majority of inquiries are dealt with by providing information over the telephone or by return email. In some circumstances, individuals were referred to other government and non-government agencies for assistance.