

# pla

# The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA)

12/07

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The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) is a statutory entity, responsible for the administration of the *Prostitution Act 1999* (the Act) and the regulation of prostitution in Queensland.

The PLA commenced operation on 1 July 2000 and had its inaugural meeting on 6 July of that year.

### **Our mission**

Our mission is to ensure that licensed brothels are regulated in the community interest.

### **Our operating principles**

Our operating principles are to:

- act in the public interest;
- prevent corruption and organised crime in licensed brothels;
- promote and improve safety and health in the sex industry and wider community;
- consult to reach the objectives of the organisation;
- provide a stimulating, satisfying and safe work environment free from discrimination; and
- ensure that all of the PLA's activities are based on the best information and research available to it.

### **The purpose of the Act**

Prostitution is commonly referred to as the 'world's oldest profession'. It is a truism that whilst ever there is a demand for sex, there will always be people willing to service that demand for commercial reward. Consequently, the decision to regulate prostitution is ultimately a pragmatic response to its existence.

The purpose of the legislation is to:

- regulate the practices and operations of licensed brothels;
- ensure that licensed brothels are not located in inappropriate places, such as a residential area or near a school or church;
- limit the incidence of sexually transmitted infections;
- ensure that sex workers are not exploited or coerced into prostitution;
- safeguard the health and safety of sex workers and their clients; and
- combat the involvement of organised crime and the incidence of official corruption in the sex industry.



**Prostitution Licensing Authority**  
Queensland Government

## Our structure

The PLA consists of eight members:

- an independent chairperson who is a respected member of the community;
- the commissioner, or a police officer of at least the rank of superintendent nominated by the commissioner;
- the chairperson, or the assistant commissioner, crime, of the Crime and Misconduct Commission;
- a health practitioner of at least five years experience;
- a lawyer;
- a local government representative; and
- two community representatives.

The Office of the PLA, consisting of the Executive Director and staff, has been established to assist the Authority in the performance of its functions.

## Our functions

The functions of the PLA are set out in s. 101 of the Act.

The primary function of the PLA is to decide on applications for brothel licences and approved manager certificates. Only a person that holds a brothel licence may legally operate a brothel. Likewise, only a person with an approved manager's certificate may manage a licensed brothel. The Act specifies who is ineligible to be granted a licence or certificate (e.g. the holder of a licence or permit under the *Liquor Act 1992*, or a person convicted of a disqualifying offence). It also sets out the criteria to be considered in deciding whether an applicant is a suitable person to be granted a licence or certificate.

Another important function is to monitor the provision of prostitution through licensed brothels. The PLA has a compliance team to fulfil this function. It conducts regular audits of licensed brothels, as well as unannounced inspections if they are warranted in the circumstances.

The PLA receives complaints about prostitution, which can be important in ensuring that licensed brothels are operating in accordance with the Act and their licence conditions. Complaints may be about a range of matters, including the operation of licensed brothels, or a suspected illegal prostitution activity. The PLA does not have any capacity to investigate complaints about suspected illegal activities, and they will be referred to the Queensland Police Service for action.

It is also the function of the PLA to conduct disciplinary inquiries in relation to licensees and approved managers and to discipline them accordingly.

Other functions specified in the Act are to:

- liaise with the police service and other agencies to help them carry out their functions in relation to prostitution;
- collect fees;
- inform relevant government departments and agencies about possible offences that are detected whilst the PLA is carrying out its functions; and
- raise, in prostitutes, judicial officers, police, community workers and the community, awareness of issues about prostitution.

Section 101(j) of the Act charges the PLA with responsibility for advising the Minister for Police about ways of promoting and coordinating programs that:

- promote sexual health care;
- help prostitutes to leave prostitution;
- divert minors and other vulnerable persons from prostitution, especially opportunistic prostitution; or
- raise in prostitutes, judicial officers, police, community workers and the community, awareness of issues about prostitution.

The PLA is also responsible for advising the Minister about the development of codes of practice for licensed brothels.

## Further information

Our website contains further information on the PLA and its functions: [www.pla.qld.gov.au](http://www.pla.qld.gov.au). The Act and *Prostitution Regulation 2000* can also be downloaded from: [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au).

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