

# ABOUT THE PROSTITUTION LICENSING AUTHORITY (PLA)

The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) is a Queensland Government statutory authority, responsible for the administration of the *Prostitution Act 1999* (the Act) and the regulation of the licensed brothel sector of the sex industry 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 and prostitution advertising are regulated in accordance with legislative requirements and 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
- ensure that all of the PLA's activities are based on the best information and research available to it.

## The objectives 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. Many centuries of human behaviour have demonstrated the impossibility of stamping out prostitution, even if that was considered desirable. In this context, the decision to regulate prostitution is a pragmatic one, with the principle of harm minimisation at its core.

The Act is underpinned by a set of five principles to:

- ensure quality of life for local communities
- safeguard against corruption and organised crime
- address social factors which contribute to involvement in the sex industry
- ensure a healthy society
- promote safety.

## Our structure

The PLA consists of eight members:

- a chairperson who is an independent 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 who has been admitted for at least five years and has knowledge of or experience in administrative law, company law or criminal law
- a local government representative
- two community representatives.

## Our functions

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.

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

The primary function of the PLA is to decide on applications for brothel licences and approved manager's 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 unit to fulfil this function. It conducts regular audits and unannounced inspections of each licensed brothel in the state.

The PLA receives complaints about prostitution, which can be important in ensuring that licensed brothels are operating in accordance with the Act, *Prostitution Regulation 2000* and conditions of licence. Complaints may be about a range of matters, including the operation of licensed brothels, prostitution advertising, or a suspected illegal prostitution activity. The PLA does not have the capacity to investigate complaints about suspected illegal activities, and they will be referred to the Queensland Police Service for investigation and action.

### 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 be downloaded from: [www.legislation.qld.gov.au](http://www.legislation.qld.gov.au).

### PLA contact details

Street address:  
Level 3, 5 Gardner Close  
MILTON QLD 4064

Postal address:  
GPO Box 3196  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Telephone: 07 3858 9500 \* Facsimile: 07 3876 3641

E-mail: [plaadmin@iprimus.com.au](mailto:plaadmin@iprimus.com.au) \* Website: [www.pla.qld.gov.au](http://www.pla.qld.gov.au)

It is also a 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
- raise, in sex workers, judicial officers, police, community workers and the community, awareness of issues about prostitution.

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

- promote sexual health care
- help sex workers to leave prostitution
- divert minors and other vulnerable persons from prostitution, especially opportunistic prostitution
- raise in sex workers, 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.

---

**Disclaimer:** Whilst the PLA has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of this information at the time of printing, it does not warrant its accuracy and accepts no liability for reliance on the information.