

# pla

## Select prostitution statistics

### Number of licensed brothels

In 2006-07, there were 24 licensed brothel premises operating throughout Queensland. There were nine licensed brothels in the Brisbane City Council area, one in the Redcliffe Shire Council area, five in the Gold Coast City Council area, one in the Logan City Council area, two in the Maroochydore Shire Council area, one in the Mackay City Council area, one in the Gladstone City Council area, two in the Townsville City Council area, and two in the Cairns City Council area. In addition, a brothel licence had been granted for a brothel in Mount Isa.

### Brothel advertising

There were 14,663 advertisements lodged for approval with the Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) in 2006-07. Most of the advertisements complied with advertising requirements, with 93% being approved.

### Inquiries to the PLA

The PLA responded to 3,798 inquiries during 2006-07. This was down from 4,836 in the previous year.

### Outcalls

It is illegal for outcalls (escort services) to be made from licensed brothels, but outcalls are legal when provided by legitimate sole operators (single sex workers). In 2004, the CMC estimated that outcalls constituted some 75% of all prostitution in Queensland. Many escort services operate illegally (that is, by a person who is not a legitimate sole operator).

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### Street-based prostitution

It is an offence to publicly solicit for prostitution. The number of street-based prostitutes is small. In 2004 it was estimated that street-based prostitution accounted for just 2% of all sex workers in Queensland. They were located predominantly in Fortitude Valley, New Farm, Spring Hill, and Kangaroo Point.

A 2004 Brisbane study by Woodward et. al. found that on average street workers commenced sex work five years younger than other sex workers, and were significantly more likely to have left school earlier than those persons working in the legal prostitution industry. They were also significantly more likely to have left home for an adverse reason, such as sexual, physical, or emotional abuse, than other sex workers.

### Characteristics of prostitutes

A study of 247 female prostitutes, *Selling Sex in Queensland 2003*, found that the respondents were aged between 19 and 57 years, with an average age of 32.

In terms of education, about one-quarter of licensed brothel workers and sole operators reported that they had completed a bachelor degree. This compares favourably with the general community. According to an Australian Bureau of Statistics publication, *Education and Work*, May 2007, 21% of Australians aged between 15 and 64 years had attained a bachelor degree or above.

Approximately one-quarter of licensed brothel workers and sole operators were married or in de facto relationships, with most of their partners aware of their involvement in prostitution. Just over half of the women had children.

Unsurprisingly, money was the main motivating factor for involvement in prostitution revealed in the *Selling Sex in Queensland* study, but flexible working hours was also revealed as an important consideration, particularly for licensed brothel workers. 46.5% of brothel workers revealed that they were unable to earn sufficient money in more mainstream employment, compared to 23.3% of sole operators, and 12.1% of street workers.



**Prostitution Licensing Authority**  
Queensland Government

In a busy week, street workers reported seeing 35 clients, licensed brothel workers 29, and sole operators 24. However, in a quiet week street workers reported seeing 9 clients, brothel workers 11, and sole operators 8.

Income from prostitution varied between workers, with street workers earning \$1,814 in the past seven days of the study, sole operators \$1,541, and licensed brothel workers \$1,341.

Research indicates that prostitutes are more likely than the general community to be injecting drug users. In 2004, the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) analysed data which indicated that among people attending the Brisbane Sexual Health Clinic, 20% to 30% of those who identified as prostitutes were injecting drug users, compared to 8% to 13% of those who did not identify as prostitutes. However, in the Woodward research, those persons working in the illegal sex industry were more likely to inject drugs than those working legally. This is also borne out by the *Selling Sex in Queensland* research. 75.8% of street workers revealed that they had become involved in prostitution because they were using drugs and needed money to pay for them, in comparison to just 2% of brothel workers and 8.5% of sole operators.

Contrary to widely held community perceptions, American and Australian research has indicated that prostitutes have a higher standard of sexual health than the general population. Unlike many other countries, Australia has managed to avoid an HIV epidemic amongst prostitutes. Nationally, condom use amongst sex workers at brothels is almost 100%. In Queensland, it is illegal for prostitutes to engage in sexual intercourse or oral sex without the use of a condom.

Between 1997 and 2001, the proportion of sex workers attending the Gold Coast Sexual Health Clinic diagnosed with chlamydia were almost identical to non-sex workers. At the Brisbane Sexual Health Clinic, the rates of chlamydia infection for non-sex workers was more than two and a half times the rate for sex workers.

## Characteristics of the clients of prostitutes

Because of a reluctance of some men to self-report, it is difficult to estimate with any degree of certainty the proportion of men who have sex with prostitutes. However, according to the *Selling Sex in Queensland* report, at least one in every 30 men has sex with a prostitute in any given year and it is possible that the true figure is substantially higher.

Research indicates that the clients of sex workers are on average aged in their late thirties, less likely to be married than those that do not employ the services of prostitutes, and if they are married more likely to describe their marriage as unhappy or unsatisfying. They are also more likely than other men to have injected drugs, drink excessive amounts of alcohol, to smoke cigarettes, and to have been diagnosed with a sexually transmissible illness.

The motivation of clients in visiting a prostitute varied from lack of a regular partner, social awkwardness, a desire to have sex with a variety of women, an outlet for relief when away from home, a desire for sexual practices (possibly more extreme) not otherwise available to them, the avoidance of commitment and complication, and to fulfil non-sexual needs.

The *Selling Sex in Queensland* report received responses from 200 clients of prostitutes. It found that between 10% and 20% of clients visited prostitutes weekly, but that clients most commonly visited a sex worker once every few months.

The most commonly purchased service was vaginal sex, followed by oral sex. Hand relief and massage were also popular.

## Are you interested in further information?

Further information may be obtained from:

- PLA, *Selling Sex in Queensland 2003*; and
- CMC, *Regulating Prostitution: an evaluation of the Prostitution Act 1999* (Qld), December 2004.

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