

Issue 26 – June 2008

Illegal workers – your obligations

Officers from the PLA recently met with the Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC) in relation to the issue of foreign nationals working illegally in Australia. Whilst not singling out licensed brothels in Queensland, DIAC told the PLA that it locates a large number of illegal workers in the sex industry.

Under the *Migration Act 1958* it is a criminal offence for a person to knowingly or recklessly allow an illegal worker to work or refer an illegal worker for work with another business. An illegal worker is a foreign national working in Australia without a visa, or who is in Australia lawfully but working in breach of their visa conditions.

The offences apply to anyone who allows illegal workers to work or refers illegal workers for work. This includes some people who rent or lease rooms to sex workers.

People convicted of these offences could face fines of up to \$13,200 or two years' imprisonment per illegal worker hired. Companies face fines of up to \$66,000 per illegal worker. They may also come under the scrutiny of the Australian Taxation Office and Centrelink. There are higher penalties where an illegal worker has been subjected to sexual servitude.

It is quick and easy to check the work entitlements of a prospective employee who is not an Australian citizen, thereby avoiding a potential breach of the law. If you have internet access, you can check a foreign

national's work entitlements through DIAC's Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) website service. This is a free service, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, enabling you to determine whether someone has an entitlement to work within a matter of seconds. You must first register to use VEVO, by going to www.immi.gov.au/vevo.

If you don't have access to the internet, you can use DIAC's toll-free Visa Entitlement Verification Faxback Service to check work entitlements. Phone 1800 040 070 to find out more about this service or log on to www.immi.gov.au/vevo and download the faxback form.

Further information about the laws, VEVO and the faxback service can be obtained by phoning the Employers' Immigration Hotline on 1800 040 070, during 8.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday, or by going to www.immi.gov.au/employer-obligations.

Sources of assistance for sex workers

The PLA regularly receives phone calls from sex workers regarding matters that are not directly related to prostitution, or to the work of the authority. In those cases, the PLA will refer them to another organisation for assistance and advice. This edition, we have decided to include the details of a range of organisations which we hope will provide a ready reference of sources of assistance for the sex industry.

dvconnect: domestic and family violence service Queensland – a state-wide domestic and family violence telephone service.

Web: www.dvconnect.org

Women's Line – 1800 811 811 (24 hrs)

Men's Line – 1800 600 636 (9am to midnight)

Relationships Australia – provides relationship support services to individuals, couples and families throughout the state.

Web: www.relationships.com.au

Tel: 1300 364 277

Lifeline – a telephone counselling service about any issue troubling you.

Web: www.lifeline.org.au

Tel: 13 11 14 (24 hrs)

Family Planning Queensland – provides sexual and reproductive health services.

Web: www.fpq.com.au

Tel: 07 3250 0240 (general enquiries)

Queensland Association for Healthy Communities – promotes the health of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Queenslanders.

Web: www.qahc.org.au

Tel: 07 3017 1777 (Bris) 1800 177 434 (rest of state)

Gay and Lesbian Welfare Association – provides peer-based telephone counselling, referral and information service to all people dealing with sexuality and gender issues.

Web: www.glwa.org.au

Tel: 07 3017 1717 (Bris) 1800 184 527 (rest of state)
(calls are taken between 7.00-10.00pm)

State-wide Sexual Assault Help Line – for help and advice if you have been sexually assaulted.
Tel: 1800 010 120 (24 hrs)

Alcohol and Drug Information Service – a source of assistance if you or someone you know has problems with alcohol or drugs.
Tel: 07 3837 5989 (Bris) 1800 177 833 (rest of state)

13 HEALTH – a Queensland Health phone line to provide qualified advice on health concerns.
Tel: 13 43 25 84 (24 hrs)

Women's Health Queensland Wide – a health promotion, information and education service for women.
Web: www.womhealth.org.au
Health Information Line: 07 3839 9988 (Bris) 1800 017 676 (rest of state)

Queensland Health HIV/AIDS, Hepatitis C and Sexual Health Information – a website with a range of information on sexually transmitted illnesses and safe sex.
Web: www.health.qld.gov.au/sexhealth

Queensland Health Sexual Health Clinics – to obtain sexual health advice, examinations, and management.
Web: www.health.qld.gov.au/sexhealth/help/default.asp

WISI Info (Workers in the Sex Industry Information) – provides telephone and email information and referral to sex workers throughout the state.
Web: www.sqwisi.org.au
Tel: 07 3250 0251
Email: wisiinfo@optusnet.com.au

Hepatitis Council of Queensland – for information, support and free counselling in relation to viral hepatitis.
Web: www.hepqld.asn.au
Tel: 1800 648 491

Gambling Help-Line – a counselling and referral service for problem gamblers.
Tel: 1800 222 050 (24 hrs)

Legal Aid Queensland – provides a free legal information service.
Web: www.legalaid.qld.gov.au
Tel: 1300 65 11 88

Anti-Discrimination Commission Queensland – receives complaints in relation to unfair treatment based on a range of matters, including lawful sexual activity, gender identity and sexuality.
Web: www.adcq.qld.gov.au
Tel: 1300 130 670

Queensland Ombudsman – investigates complaints about the actions and decisions of Queensland public agencies.
Web: www.ombudsman.qld.gov.au
Tel: 07 3005 7000 (Bris) 1800 068 908 (rest of state)

Queensland Workplace Rights Ombudsman – provides information and advice to workers and employers about their workplace rights and obligations.
Web: www.workplacerights.qld.gov.au
Tel: 1300 737 841

Wageline – an awards and wages information service provided by the Qld Department of Employment and Industrial Relations.
Web: www.wageline.qld.gov.au
Tel: 1300 369 945

BSIL Southern Edge Exit and Retraining Program – a free and confidential training and support program funded by Queensland Health for people in the sex industry. If you would like to explore alternative employment, training or education options, BSIL can help.
Web: www.southernedge.com.au
Tel: 07 3343 6222

Prostitution Enforcement Taskforce (PETF) – PETF is part of the Queensland Police Service. It is responsible for policing organised prostitution throughout the state and combating illegal prostitution and illegal brothels. If you have any information in relation to suspected illegal prostitution activities, you should contact PETF.
Tel: 07 3426 1888

Do you have any suggestions for future *In Touch* articles?

The PLA is always keen to receive suggestions about articles for future editions of *In Touch*. If there is something that you would particularly like to see covered please let us know by emailing your suggestion to plaadmin@iprimus.com.au.

2008 PLA meeting dates

The PLA Board meets on the first Monday of each month. Meeting dates for the remainder of 2008 are: 7 July, 4 August, 1 September, 6 October, 3 November, and 1 December. *Whilst current at the time of printing, these dates are tentative and subject to change without notice.*

Vacancies for Approved Manager Positions

AABS 180: 180 Abbotsford Rd, Bowen Hills. A position exists for a part-time/full-time approved manager. Come join a great team. Please contact 3852 2057 for details.

Cleo's on Nile: 12 Nile St, Woolloongabba. Seeking approved manager. The friendliest and most beautiful bordello in Brisbane. Flexible hours with great conditions. Contact Sharren or Lyn on 3393 1678 or admin@cleosonnile.com.

Please note that approved manager advertisements may be submitted at any time for inclusion in the next edition of the newsletter. They should be emailed to plaadmin@iprimus.com.au