

Issue 156 – October 2020

COVID Safe Industry Plan

The *COVID Safe Industry Plan: Queensland Sex Industry* (Plan) has been revised, with an approval date of 28 September 2020. A grace period of 14 days applies from the Plan approval date to give brothel licensees time to implement all required changes in their brothel premises. The final day of the grace period is 12 October 2020.

The Prostitution Licensing Authority has sent correspondence to all brothel licensees detailing the substantive changes made to the original Plan, which include:

- strengthened requirements around general cleaning and hygiene
- more explicit language around contact tracing, physical distancing, density requirements, and appointment participants
- additional safety requirements covering work, wet, and resting spaces.

The revised Plan is available here:
<https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/government-actions/approved-industry-covid-safe-plans/queensland-sex-industry>

PLA Annual Report

The PLA Annual Report 2019-20 has now been published and is available from:
<http://www.pla.qld.gov.au/reportsPublications/annualReport/default.htm>

Syphilis in Queensland

Syphilis is a curable sexually transmissible infection (STI) caused by the *Treponema pallidum* bacteria.

According to the Communicable Diseases Branch of Queensland Health, *Notifications of Syphilis in Queensland 2019 Report*, syphilis notification rates in Queensland have increased over about the past 20 years. Between 2001 and 2019, annual infectious syphilis notifications increased from 112 cases (3.1 per 100,000 population per year) to 1,129 cases (22.9 per 100,000 population per year). Over the same period, late latent syphilis notifications increased from 154 cases (4.2 per 100,000 population) to 301 cases (6.1 per 100,000 population).

Infectious syphilis is syphilis of less than two years duration. Late latent syphilis is syphilis of more than two years or unknown duration, with absence of clinical signs, and considered as non-infectious.

In 2019, rates of infectious syphilis in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders were 8.6 times higher than for non-Indigenous Queenslanders. Between 2010 and 2019, 31% of infectious syphilis notifications were in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and were almost equally distributed among men and women. By contrast, in non-Indigenous people 93% of infectious syphilis notifications were among males.

Men are more likely to be diagnosed with infectious syphilis than women. Of the 1,129 cases in 2019, 853 cases were in males. Between 2010 and 2019, 80% of cases were in males. However, over the period there was a more rapid increase in notification rates in females (6.5 times increase) than in males (four times increase).

Prostitution Licensing Authority

Between 2010 and 2019, 57% of infectious syphilis cases were in men who have sex with men (MSM). In 2019, of the 153 cases in Indigenous males, 66% reported heterosexual sex as their source of exposure and 26% was in MSM. By contrast, in the same year, of the 687 non-Indigenous male cases, 71% was among MSM and 18% reported heterosexual sex as their exposure. For females diagnosed in 2019, heterosexual sex was most commonly identified as their source of exposure, both for Indigenous women (94%) and non-Indigenous women (77%).

Between 2010 and 2019, there were 1,513 syphilis cases (infectious and late latent) in women of reproductive age (15-44 years) and 336 cases in pregnant women. Between 2001 and 2019, there were 33 congenital syphilis (which occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during pregnancy) cases in Queensland. This can seriously affect the baby.

Syphilis is spread by unprotected vaginal, anal and oral sex and also by skin to skin contact with an infected person during sex.

Queensland Health has a fact sheet about syphilis, including the signs and symptoms, prevention, the possible consequences of undiagnosed and untreated syphilis, and its treatment:
<http://conditions.health.qld.gov.au/HealthCondition/condition/14/188/136/Syphilis>.

Syphilis infections can be prevented by practising safer sex by always using prophylactics and avoiding having sex with a person who has a visible ulcer or sore on their genitals and/or mouth. Syphilis can be diagnosed through testing and is curable with antibiotics.

The report is available here:

https://www.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0040/959809/syphilis-in-queensland-2019.pdf.

New option for reporting sexual assault to the police

The Queensland Police Service (QPS) now has an online reporting form which provides an additional channel for victims of sexual assault to report to police: <https://forms.police.qld.gov.au/launch/SexualAssault>. When they report the incident, they can make an official complaint and ask the police to investigate further.

If the suspect is still on the scene or anyone is seriously injured or in immediate danger please contact Triple Zero (000).

For those who do not want to make a formal complaint, it can still be reported through Alternative Reporting Options (ARO). It does not involve any judicial process but police may use this information to assist in other prosecutions against an offender and to help design strategies to target offenders and reduce repeat offending. Further information about ARO is available here:

<https://www.police.qld.gov.au/units/victims-of-crime/support-for-victims-of-crime/adult-sexual-assault/alternative-reporting>

Consent negated by fraudulent misrepresentation

An offender in the Australian Capital Territory has been sentenced to three years and four months' imprisonment with a 16-month non-parole period after pleading guilty to two counts of engaging in sexual intercourse without consent (*R v Mynott (No 2)* [2020] ACTSC 232). In both cases, the complainants had consented to sexual intercourse but that consent was negated because it had been obtained by a fraudulent misrepresentation by the offender.

In the first instance, NI agreed to come to Canberra from Sydney to provide sexual services on the basis of an offer made by the offender that his return flights would be paid for and he would be paid \$1,500. NI arrived in Canberra and on asking about payment was told by the offender that he would go to an ATM later to withdraw the money, which NI agreed to. They engaged in sexual activity without payment having been made. NI again asked about payment and was told by the offender, "that they would stop at an ATM on the way to the airport" (para. 13). They took a taxi to the airport and on the way the offender left the taxi, ostensibly to get money from an ATM to pay NI, but the offender did not return to the taxi. NI made subsequent unsuccessful attempts to be paid and eventually caught a bus back to Sydney empty handed.

In the second instance, KS agreed to an offer by the offender to come from Victoria to Canberra to provide sexual intercourse in exchange for return flights and payment of \$2,000. KS ended up paying for his own flight, on the basis he would be reimbursed by the offender. KS was not collected at the airport by the offender as agreed but was told by the offender to use an Uber. Subsequently, KS agreed to an offer by the offender for an extra payment of \$500 for a third person to join them. "KS repeatedly emphasised the importance of payment" and told the offender he needed part payment before any sexual activity (para. 24). They ended up having sex without any payment being made. Afterward, the offender left, saying that he would be back in 10 minutes, but he never returned.

In his victim impact statement, NI said he had felt "very upset, betrayed and sad" ... The loss of trust associated with the incident affected NI's ability to engage in escort work and he had to change his line of work" (paras. 32 and 33).

In each case, the complainants were in a vulnerable situation because they had travelled to another city and were reliant on the offender to get home and be paid.

The situation highlights the need for sex workers to:

- beware of predatory behaviour
- be suspicious of offers and arrangements that seem too good to be true
- be vigilant for signs that the client is 'dodgy' and to follow their instincts
- ask the client as much as possible about the arrangements (probing whether they are genuine) and when and how the worker will be paid
- be wary of excuses from clients about payments
- obtain payment before any services are provided, not after.

2020 PLA meeting dates

The PLA Board generally meets on the first Monday of each month. Meeting dates for the remainder of 2020 are: 2 November and 7 December. *Whilst current at the time of printing, these dates are tentative and subject to change without notice.*

Vacancies for approved manager positions

Platinum 175: Seeking full-time/part-time approved manager. Will be responsible for day-to-day management of the brothel including front of house client queries, facilitating bookings, and in-house sales and promotion. A high level of commitment to customer service, excellent work ethic, reliability, and excellent communication skills are essential. We offer competitive pay and work/life balance. Please email resume with cover letter to manager@platinum175.com.au (attention Tania) or call 0400701898.

Montecito: Seeking approved manager for full-time and part-time positions. A high level of commitment to customer service, excellent work ethic, reliability, and excellent communication skills are essential. We offer competitive pay and work/life balance. Please email resume and cover letter to admin@montecito.net.au or call 0418788322.

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

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