

## Issue 136 – December 2018

## 'Outing' of sex workers

The woman who made the posts was found guilty of breaching the Harmful Digital Communications Act and ordered to complete 150 hours of community work and pay an emotional harm reparation payment of \$500.

### Season's greetings from the PLA

The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) extends its best wishes to all its stakeholders for a peaceful and happy festive season, spent in the company of family and friends, and for a healthy and prosperous 2019.

### Closure of Office of PLA over Christmas & New Year period

The Office of the PLA will be closed from Friday 21 December 2018 to Friday 4 January 2019 (inclusive) over the Christmas and New Year period. The office will reopen on Monday 7 January 2019.

### Sexual health certificates

A sex worker at a licensed brothel has been fined \$1,000 in the Brisbane Magistrates Court, with no conviction recorded, for a fraud offence. She had forged multiple sexual health certificates over a period of time, presenting them to the brothel so that she could work there. PLA compliance officers interrogate a range of records at audits and inspections of brothels, including sexual health certificates. As this matter demonstrates, fraudulent use of sexual health certificates can have serious consequences which may result in a criminal record.

It is common knowledge that because of the stigma associated with the sex industry, sex workers value their privacy. Hence, the use of pseudonyms (working names) and maintaining strict separation between work and private lives. It means that sex workers are very cautious about who they disclose their work to. Some individuals may choose not to reveal their work to even close friends and family.

'Outing' sex workers is a malicious and abusive act because it can have serious consequences for them. For example, they may be judged and ostracised by friends and family and have any other employment jeopardised. The anonymity of the internet may also facilitate the 'outing' of workers.

A recent case in New Zealand illustrates the point. In online posts, a woman revealed the real name, working establishment, and residential address of a sex worker, also attaching photos of the worker. Among other things, she referred to the worker as the "town bicycle" and a "walking disease". The worker's children were unaware of her sex work and since the 'outing' she has been ostracised by her eldest daughters. The sex worker was also working as a registered financial advisor and had kept the two jobs separate.

### Infections to be aware of

The Kirby Institute has published its *HIV, viral hepatitis and sexually transmissible infections in Australia: Annual surveillance report 2018*. There are a range of infections that sex workers, clients and other participants in the sex industry should be aware of.

**Chlamydia** continues to be the most frequently notified sexually transmissible infection (STI) in Australia, with 100,775 notifications in 2017, predominantly in persons aged 15-29 years. Notifications increased by 13% between 2015 and 2017. Women are more likely than men to be diagnosed with chlamydia. It is estimated that there were 255,227 new infections in persons aged 15-29 years in 2017, but only 29% had been diagnosed (meaning that most are undiagnosed and untreated). As for female sex workers, "chlamydia incidence increased by 39% between 2013 and 2017 (from 7.1 to 9.9 per 100 person-years)" (p. 10).

Notification rates of **gonorrhoea** increased by 80% in Australia between 2013 and 2017. Last year, there were 28,364 notifications. 74% of

notifications are in males, with the highest rates in those aged 20-29 years. As for, “female sex workers gonorrhoea incidence increased by 47% between 2013 and 2017 (from 3.6 to 5.3 per 100 person-years)” (p. 11). The report says that the increased incidence of chlamydia and gonorrhoea in female sex workers, “highlights the need for enhanced focus on prevention strategies” (p. 13).

Between 2013 and 2017, the notification rate of **infectious syphilis** has increased in Australia by 135%. There were 4,398 notifications last year, with 85% of those notifications in males. Rates are highest in persons aged 20-29 years. For female sex workers, incidence, “was 0.1 per 100 person-years, and fluctuated between 0.1 and 0.4 per 100 person-years over the past five years (2013-2017)” (p. 12).

According to the report: “Gonorrhoea and infectious syphilis in Australia are diagnosed primarily in gay and bisexual men in urban settings, and in young heterosexual Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote areas, though gonorrhoea and infectious syphilis notification rates among women in urban settings have increased steadily” (p. 13).

The notification rate of **hepatitis C** declined in Australia by 18% between 2008 and 2017. There were 10,537 notifications in 2017, mostly in males. The notification rate of **hepatitis B** declined by 13% between 2013 and 2017 and there were 6,102 notifications in 2017. It is estimated that last year there were 248,536 persons living in Australia with chronic hepatitis B – 21% born in North East Asia, 17% born in

South East Asia, and 11% Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

Between 2013 and 2017, the number of **HIV** notifications in Australia decreased by 7%. The report says that: “With 963 cases in 2017, the number of HIV notifications has dropped below a thousand for the first time in six years” (p. 14). Whilst the main risk of infection continues to be male to male sex, notification rates declined by 11% between 2013 and 2017, falling by 15% between 2016 and 2017. Conversely, HIV notifications for heterosexual sex rose by 10% between 2013 and 2017, with a 14% increase between 2016 and 2017. Last year, 63% of cases were attributed to male to male sex, with male to male sex and injecting drug use responsible for another 5% of cases, and heterosexual sex responsible for 25% of cases.

As for female sex workers, HIV incidence, “remained at or below 0.13 per 100 person-years in the past five years (2013-2017), and was 0.13 per 100 person-years in 2017” (p. 3). The report describes this as, “extremely low – among the lowest in the world – due to highly successful HIV prevention for this priority population; this low incidence must also be sustained” (p. 5).

It is estimated that there were 27,545 people living in Australia with HIV at the end of 2017. Of these, 24,206 are male and overwhelmingly men who have sex with other men. 11% of people living with HIV are undiagnosed. The prevalence of HIV in Australia is 0.10%, which is low in comparison to other developed countries. 87% of those diagnosed were receiving antiretroviral therapy and of those, 95% had suppressed viral load. This is important because it helps to stop the onward transmission of the virus. According to the report: “Studies have shown that regularly taking

combination antiretroviral treatment sustains a suppressed viral load and reduces the likelihood of HIV transmission to effectively zero” (p. 67). This is referred to as treatment as prevention (TasP).

The report can be accessed here:

[www.kirby.unsw.edu.au/report-type/annual-surveillance-report](http://www.kirby.unsw.edu.au/report-type/annual-surveillance-report).

**Strategies to prevent STIs** include consistent use of prophylaxis (including condoms and dams), testing, treatment and partner notification. For information about STIs and safer sex: [www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health/sti](http://www.qld.gov.au/health/staying-healthy/sexual-health/sti).

## 2019 PLA meeting dates

The PLA Board generally meets on the first Monday of each month. Meeting dates for 2019 are: 4 February, 4 March, 1 April, 13 May, 3 June, 1 July, 5 August, 2 September, 14 October, 4 November, and 2 December. *Whilst current at the time of printing, these dates are tentative and subject to change without notice.*

## Vacancies for approved manager positions

**Ding Ding 83:** Rocklea brothel seeking casual approved manager. Immediate start. Call 07 3875 2088.

**Cub 26:** Approved manager required to join our team on a casual basis. Our Logan (Crestmead) brothel is seeking someone experienced, honest and friendly. Please email your application and resume along with references to [26club26@gmail.com](mailto:26club26@gmail.com).

**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 [pladmin@iprimus.com.au](mailto:pladmin@iprimus.com.au).**

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