





chapter one
the sex worker



1.1 introduction

In much of the developing world, entry into sex work is widely understood to be caused by the nexus of extreme social disadvantage among young people, exploitative and often abusive criminals and high demand from local men and foreign tourists. The consequences for sex workers in these countries can be severe, with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) and other sex-related diseases, drug abuse, murder or violent assault being common. Those who survive and either leave or are discarded often face a life of social exclusion and are unable to marry and have children, which for many women in these countries remains the most vital social and economic connection to society.

In western countries, too, researchers seek to understand the social, economic and psychological factors that lead some women (and sometimes men) into prostitution. Although usually less extreme than in poorer countries, a pattern of disadvantage is commonly found among people who become prostitutes. They tend to come from families that have social problems such as drug and alcohol misuse, chronic unemployment and absent parents. As children they tend more often than is usual to be sexually, physically and emotionally abused (Kramer & Berg 2003). Often sex workers are characterised as being uneducated, under-achievers from minority social or ethnic groups who have few options to earn money to support themselves and their children (Kramer & Berg 2003). Many have serious problems with drug addiction. With this combination of low education, little personal empowerment and high need for money, prostitution is viewed as a social problem that often leads to disease.

Another perspective is that sex work, especially for many women in affluent countries, is a reasoned choice. It is possible for sex workers to generate high income from a relatively small number of working days, to have flexibility in working hours (including short breaks and holidays) and to control most or all of their income. Some women may see sex work as one step in a career of many options; thus, they will work as prostitutes to pay for higher education, or to

gain economic independence and property so they can pursue a life goal that is enjoyable but might not otherwise be affordable. Such women are in control of their situation, and this extends to control over clients so that they minimise risks to themselves. In this view, sex work can successfully be separated from negative health and social consequences.

In Queensland, the sex industry includes women and men with a very wide range of backgrounds and personal circumstances. This is self-evident to people who work in the industry, to its clients and to those who regulate and police it. An earlier study of female sex workers in this State by Boyle et al. (1997 a,b) found many to be educated, independent women with apparently few signs of personal or family social disadvantage, while others carry with them many problems, including drug dependence and a history of violence. These sex workers are working illegally and may be exposed to STIs as well as to many types of exploitation and abuse.

Occupational health in the sex industry

Over the past century, numerous economic, political and cultural factors have changed the way in which the workplace is viewed and arranged. When considering guidelines for occupational health and safety in the sex industry, two major types of hazards can be identified: physical and biological.

Physical hazards: Any workplace may have a combination of hazards that are particular to that industrial setting. Many of the occupational health and safety issues faced by sex workers are not unique, with physical hazards being similar to other occupations. For example, sex workers experience high rates of workplace violence (Harcourt et al. 2001, Plumridge & Abel 2001). However, there are many other occupations where workers are exposed to violence (e.g. security industries, emergency services, mental health workers) and policies are developed to minimise this violence. The difference between sex work and other industries arguably lies in the moral perceptions that influence thinking about the sex industry.

In sex work, the type of violence experienced may vary from the extreme (e.g. homicide) to more common and less reported forms, including harassment and aggression. While there is a potential for violence in any workplace, it is more likely in the retail and service industries where service providers come into direct contact with clients. Other factors associated with the risk of violence are the hours of work, with problems being more common outside normal business hours.

Sex work in some contexts, especially street prostitution, exposes people to extreme and frequent risk of violence. Estimated rates of violence against prostitutes vary around the world, but generally they are high. Milman (1980) found that over 65 per cent of sex workers reported being sexually assaulted by a client at some time during their working lives. Miller and Schwartz (1995) reported that 93.8 per cent of prostitutes had experienced some form of physical or sexual violence. In Britain, Ward et al. (1999) reported a mortality rate of 5.93 per 1,000 per year, which is twelve times higher than the expected rate for age-matched women from the general community. Half of the mortality was caused by homicide. A Queensland study by Host (1999) indicated that 38.4 per cent of sex workers from Brisbane had been victims of assault and/or violence from clients during the previous 12 months. Consistently, the rate of violence reported by sex workers is high, warranting an urgent examination of the specific work practices that are associated with increased and decreased rates of violence.

Violence against sex workers has often been related to robbery and aggression from disgruntled clients (Levy & Wegman 2000). Robbery and violence by clients are also a concern for occupations such as taxi drivers, bank clerks and retailers. Other occupations with an increased risk of violence due to their extensive contact with the general community include police officers, hospital staff, bar staff and petrol station attendants. Each of these occupations employs strategies to minimise risks to the individual.

The illegal context in which street-based sex work occurs may increase women's vulnerability and reduce the likelihood of reporting violence to the police. Church et al. (2001) reported that only one-third of sex workers who experienced violence from clients

reported the incident to the police, with street-based sex workers even less likely to report violence to the police. Unreported violence is an important issue as many sex workers are reluctant to pursue legal action against clients for fear of the legal repercussions of working illegally or fear of not being taken seriously within the justice system.


Biological hazards: A serious occupational health concern faced by sex workers is potential exposure to and management of biological hazards. Sex workers may risk being exposed to a number of pathogens including HIV, viral hepatitis and bacterial STIs. Despite these risks, sex workers in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States report a low prevalence of STIs (Dollard et al. 2003, Alexander 1998, Morton et al. 2002, Ward et al. 1999).

Two major preventive approaches are commonly adopted in prostitution: primary and secondary prevention. Primary prevention includes the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) where the hazard cannot be removed from the workplace. The use of PPE is important in many occupations. Many sex workers view the use of condoms and other PPE as an essential part of the job, not only because they protect against STIs but also because they provide a psychologically important barrier between the sex worker and the client (Pyett et al. 1996a). In Queensland legal brothels, the use of PPE is mandatory. Studies in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia report high rates of condom use by sex workers with their clients (Pyett et al. 1996b, Pyett & Warr 1997, Harcourt et al. 2001, Ward et al. 1999).

Although sex workers often report the use of PPE as a necessity, many say that some clients are reluctant to use condoms (Perkins & Lovejoy 1996, Albert et al. 1998). Even within legal brothels where condom use is mandatory for all sexual activity, clients may try to negotiate sexual activity without a condom (Albert et al. 1998). Sex workers often employ several tactics to encourage compliance, including talking clients into using a condom, discussing the risks associated with unprotected sex and discussing legal requirements.

Another effective primary prevention strategy is vaccination. A particular work force may be immunised





against pathogens to which they may be exposed. Vaccination is a legal requirement for many occupations where there is a risk of exposure, such as hospital personnel. Although sex workers are commonly encouraged to be vaccinated against hepatitis B the importance of this is not well documented.

Secondary prevention includes the management of subclinical illness with medical screening. Staff in many occupations are required to submit to regular medical examinations to detect viral or bacterial infections. It is mandatory within legal brothels in Queensland for sex workers to have regular sexual health screening. Those working in legal brothels have frequently been reported to have a low prevalence of STIs (Albert et al. 1998, Morton et al. 2002). However, whether mandatory or not, many private sex workers also report having regular screening as part of good practice, although street-based sex workers report less frequent screening (Boyle et al. 1997b).

Assessing the possible impact of the legalisation policy

The Queensland Prostitution Act was introduced to provide legal mechanisms that could regulate the industry to separate it from criminal control and to provide protection for the health of workers and clients. This was to be done while taking into account the prevailing social norms of the wider Queensland population. One aim of the current research project was to examine whether there is any discernible impact of the policy on broad indicators of health and well-being of women who work in this industry. We have not approached the question with any theory in mind about the causes or consequences of sex work. Our approach has been guided by the principle of ‘rights-based public health’, which specifies that it is a duty of society to provide working conditions that protect the health of workers, regardless of the social context in which they work.

1.2 methodology

Survey development

Preliminary work on the survey included a series of discussions with the PLA, SQWISI, the Queensland Intravenous and Aids Association, Queensland Health sexual health practitioners and individual sex workers. We reviewed prior studies of sex work undertaken in Queensland, particularly by Boyle et al. (1997a). This questionnaire was developed and administered in 1991 and was substantially modified with input from the PLA. The draft questionnaire was piloted with four sex workers and discussed with a focus group comprising female sex workers and project staff.

Analysis of previous studies

This research has two main arms. The first is to document the current work circumstances of sex workers in Queensland. The second is to examine the changes in the sex industry over two points in time. The survey undertaken by Boyle et al. (1997a) was developed when HIV/AIDS was a relatively new and emerging health concern, and it was funded to better understand HIV/AIDS related issues of consequence to the Queensland sex industry.

Elements in the 2003 questionnaire included extracted items from the 1991 survey:

- Demographic background of sex workers
- History of employment both inside and outside of the sex industry
- Sexual health information (past STI)
- Condom use within a work environment and in personal life
- Prevalence of physical assault and rape
- Relationships with police
- Substance use
- Self-reported experiences of childhood sexual abuse
- Experiences of adult sexual abuse.

In the 2003 questionnaire we included some standard measures of health and well-being, including the Short Form 36 (SF-36) questionnaire (see McCallum 1995), standard items related to unwanted childhood sexual experiences (Fleming 1997, Dunne et al. 2003), items related to unwanted physical and sexual experiences

as an adult (Koss & Oros 1982) and standard measures of substance use (alcohol, tobacco, illicit drugs).

Sampling

Sex work has been defined in varying ways in different studies. In Queensland, the legislative definition of prostitution is contained in section 229F of the *Criminal Code Act 1899*:

“A person engages in ‘prostitution’ if the person engages, or offers to engage, in the provision to another person, under an arrangement of a commercial character, of any of the following activities-

- (a) sexual intercourse
- (b) masturbation
- (c) oral sex
- (d) any activity, other than sexual intercourse, masturbation or oral sex, that involves the use of one person by another for his or her sexual satisfaction involving physical contact.”

The above definition, which includes but is not limited to the exchange of sexual services for financial return, was used as the main eligibility criterion for participation in the study. Additional criteria included female gender, an age of 18 years or over and a history of having worked within the Queensland sex industry within the past three months. Young women aged under 18 were not interviewed because of ethical considerations in research with minors, insufficient comparison data on juvenile female sex workers in the 1991 and 1997 sex worker studies, and because the legal age for working in a licensed brothel in Queensland is 18 years.

Male sex workers were not included in the study as the opportunity for recruiting and interviewing a sizeable number within the data collection time frame was limited.

Snowball sampling of a convenient sample of sex workers was used. This is a similar method to that used by Boyle et al. (1997a). It is also one of a few feasible methods to recruit people in covert occupations and who are difficult to reach using conventional random sampling methods. Recruitment relied on the existence

of networks that were suitable for contacting female sex workers. Our strategies included advertising in RESPECT (a magazine for sex workers published by SQWISI), promotional flyers in locations frequented by female sex workers, contacting female sex workers who advertised in local papers and had websites, accessing sex workers at licensed brothels in Queensland (after gaining consent from venue owners), word of mouth and recommendation of one worker by another (see Table 1).

Response rate

Sex workers constitute a highly mobile and often hidden population within the community. Consequently, it is not possible to estimate the representativeness of the sample recruited and interviewed.

Through licensed brothels 101 women were recruited, with two women refusing to participate (one woman did not provide a reason for refusal and the other stated that she did not like doing surveys). Thirty-three street-based sex workers were recruited directly from the street or referred by another worker. The most successful method of recruiting street-based sex workers was word of mouth.

In an effort to recruit private workers, a list of female sex workers advertising in local newspapers in Brisbane and Cairns, in The Courier Mail and on the Australian Escorts website was compiled and every second worker was contacted. In general this approach was very unsuccessful, with only 14 women agreeing to participate from more than 200 contact attempts.

Individuals who initially agreed to participate in the research were contacted on up to four separate occasions to arrange a convenient time to complete the questionnaire. After four contacts without an interview being completed the potential respondent was categorized as a refusal. All reasonable efforts were made to be flexible in arranging a suitable time to conduct the interviews.

Data entry and cleaning

To ensure data integrity, we developed a coding manual that included all steps in making coding decisions, we engaged an experienced data entry firm to perform all range and logic checks and we performed double entry verification on a random sample of ten per cent of the questionnaires (this check indicated there were less than one in 10,000 errors within the data set). Range checking was performed for invalid responses and any non-valid responses were checked and corrected.

Table 2: Location of respondents when interviewed (n=247)

Interview location	%
Brisbane	58
Cairns	9
Townsville	6
Gold Coast	17
Sunshine Coast	8
Other	2
Total	100

Table 1: Recruitment strategies employed to recruit respondents

Recruitment Strategy	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Brothel	0	85.1	3.7
Phone out	3.0	2.0	13.4
Internet	0	0	2.4
Personal contact	9.1	2.0	7.4
Referred by SQWISI	6.1	7.9	46.3
Other agency referral	18.2	0	1.2
Referred by another worker	63.6	2.0	24.4
Advertisement	0	1.0	1.2

$\chi^2_{14}=216.8, p<0.001$

1.3 results

1.3.1 recruitment

A total of 247 participants were interviewed throughout Queensland. This report presents data for 216 of the interviews. Respondents recruited from locations other than the street, legal brothels and in private practice were excluded to simplify comparisons.

Key points relating to recruitment and interviewing of sex workers are:

- Almost two-thirds of street-based workers were recruited and interviewed through the referral of others (63.6%), whilst 85.1 per cent of legal brothel workers were recruited and interviewed at legal brothels and 46.3 per cent of private workers were recruited through SQWISI (Table 1). The majority of respondents (61%) completed the survey instrument in person, 32 per cent self-completed and seven per cent were interviewed over the telephone (Table 1).
- Three-quarters of the participants were recruited and interviewed in South East Queensland (58% in Brisbane and 25% on the Gold and Sunshine Coasts). As the research team was located in Brisbane, and there were ten licensed brothels in South East Queensland during the data collection phase, the number of participants from these areas was not surprising (Table 2).

Some percentages do not add up to 100, due to rounding.

1.3.2 sex worker demographic characteristics

The women were aged between 19 and 57 years (mean=32 years). The street-based workers were on average younger than others, while the private workers were the oldest group. Almost two in five street workers were under 25 years of age (39.4%), almost half the legal brothel workers were aged between 25 and 34 years (48.5%), while 40.2 per cent of private workers were aged between 35 and 44 years (Table 3).

Social backgrounds:

- Street-based workers were more often Australian-born than those in brothels or private settings (Table 4).
- Street-based sex workers tended to have left school at a much earlier age (14.8 years) than other sex workers (over 16 years) (table not shown).
- Many of the women (63.6%) had undertaken further study since leaving school. Again, street-based workers were least likely to have done so. In comparison, legal brothel workers and private workers reported the highest levels of education with approximately one-quarter (24.7% and 25.4% respectively) reporting having completed a bachelor degree (Table 5).
- Many of the street-based sex workers left home at an early age (mean=14 years). On average this was three years earlier than brothel (mean=17 years) or private (mean=17 years) workers ($F_2=16.3$, $p<0.001$). Reasons for leaving differed too. The street workers were much more likely to have been 'kicked out' or escaped from an abusive environment. In comparison, women working in other sectors of the sex industry reported leaving home for what might be interpreted as positive reasons, e.g. related to the transition to adulthood (Table 6).

Current social situation:

- Almost three-quarters (72.7%) of street-based workers reported they were single compared to

almost half (49.5%) of legal brothel workers and over a third (37.8%) of private workers (Table 7).

- About one in four of the brothel and private workers were married or in de facto relationships. Most of the women in relationships said their partner knew about the sex work. Of the 33 street-based sex workers, 11 reported they had partners and only one of these partners did not know about her sex work. Of the 100 brothel workers, 51 had partners of

whom 12 were reported to not know about the sex work. Of the 82 private workers, 38 reported they had a partner and only eight of these partners were unaware of the sex work (Table 8).

- Just over half of the women in the entire sample (53.7%) said they had children. The numbers of children ranged from one to nine. About one in every seven street-based sex workers said they had four or more children, and many of the brothel and private sex workers had at least two children (Table 9).

Table 3: Age of respondents by current sex industry sector

Age group	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
18 -24	39.4	26.7	7.3
25 - 34	33.3	48.5	36.6
35 - 44	27.3	22.8	40.2
45 - 54	0	2.0	12.2
55 +	0	0	3.7

$X^2=36.5, p<0.001$

Table 4: Country of birth by current sex industry sector

Country of birth	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=100) %	Private (n=82) %
Australia	90.9	66.0	72.0
New Zealand	3.0	12.0	3.7
Europe	6.1	13.0	8.5
Asia	0	4.0	13.4
Other countries	0	5.0	2.4

$X^2=19.5, p<0.012$

Table 5: Highest educational qualification by current sex industry sector

Highest educational qualification	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=17) %	Legal brothel (n=77) %	Private (n=63) %
Postgraduate degree or certificate	0	1.4	4.8
Bachelor degree level	11.8	24.7	25.4
Advanced diploma and diploma level	17.6	20.8	23.8
Certificate level	17.6	27.4	20.6
Secondary education	35.4	3.9	3.2
Other education	17.6	20.8	22.2

$X^2_{14}=28.6, p<0.012$

Table 6: Reasons respondents reported leaving home by current sex industry sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=98) %	Private (n=81) %
Just decided it was time	12.1	29.6	25.9
Got a job and moved away	3.0	10.2	3.7
Got married/ de facto relationship	3.0	20.4	17.3
Couldn't stand living at home any more	21.2	17.3	16.0
Emotional, sexual or physical abuse	24.3	8.3	4.9
Was kicked out of home	18.2	1.0	3.7
Moved away to study	18.2	12.2	23.5
Travel	0	1.0	2.5
Other reason	0	0	2.5

$\chi^2_{16}=44.4, p<0.001$

Table 7: Marital status by current sex industry sector

Marital status	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Single	72.7	49.5	37.8
Married or living with a partner	9.1	25.7	23.2
Divorced and living alone	6.1	12.9	25.6
Separated	9.1	7.9	12.2
Other	3.0	4.0	1.2

$\chi^2_{10}=21.8, p=0.016$

Table 8: Partner's knowledge about respondent's sex industry involvement by current sex industry sector

Partner's knowledge	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=100) %	Private (n=82) %
No partner	66.7	49.0	53.7
Partner knows	30.3	39.0	36.6
Partner doesn't know	3.0	12.0	9.7

$\chi^2_4=4.0, p=0.405$

Table 9: Number of children by current sex industry sector

Number of children	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
None	33.3	48.5	48.8
One	18.2	22.9	7.3
Two	27.3	16.8	26.8
Three	6.1	5.9	11.0
Four or more	15.1	5.9	6.1

$\chi^2_8=15.4, p=0.051$

1.3.3 sex industry experience

In this section we examine participants' work experiences. This includes current and past work situations, income derived from sex work, weekly earnings and charges for extra services. It considers reasons for becoming a sex worker and breaks taken from the sex industry. Finally, we examine the awareness by others of the respondent's sex industry involvement, the desire to leave and reasons for staying in the industry.

Prior employment:

- Before entering the sex industry, street-based workers were less likely to report being in paid employment than those in other sex work sectors. This difference is statistically significant with fewer than half (45.5%) of the street-based workers reporting they were in paid employment compared to more than three-quarters of the licensed brothel workers and private workers. Indeed, only 27.2 per cent of street-based workers were employed full-time compared to nearly half of the other women (Table 10).
- At the time of entering the sex industry, almost half of all groups (46.7% of street-based workers, 47.6% of legal brothel workers and 43.5% of private workers) were employed in advanced clerical/service work, intermediate clerical, sales or production work (Table 11).

Entry into the sex industry:

- The mean age of entry into the sex industry was 24 years (range: 13–50). There were statistically significant differences ($F_2=17.3$ $p<0.001$) in the age at which women in different sectors started sex work, with street-based workers entering on average six years earlier than others (mean age=19 years). Respondents who worked in legal brothels and privately started sex work at an average age of 25 years and 27 years respectively (table not shown).
- Almost two-thirds (60.6%) of street-based workers started working on the streets. Private workers more commonly started working privately (33.4%) or in an escort agency (24.7%) (Table 12).

- The most common reason women gave for entering the sex industry was to earn more money (street-based workers: 63.6%, legal brothel workers: 90.0% and private workers 79.3%). Women currently working in licensed brothels were somewhat different from the others in that they emphasised the 'good money and flexible hours' and having 'particular goals in mind'. The need for money to buy illicit drugs was rare among brothel and private workers, but the great majority of street-based workers reported they entered the sex industry to support their illicit drug use (Table 13).

Openness to others about sex work:

- As mentioned earlier, most husbands or long-term partners of female sex workers knew about the nature of their work. In Table 14 we examine the women's beliefs about the extent to which other people are aware of their involvement in the sex industry. The most striking finding is that most of the brothel and private workers said either none or only some of their family, acquaintances and neighbours knew about their involvement. This was less clear for street-based workers, with many people being aware of their occupation.
- In Figure 1 we present details of respondents who have, in the past or currently, worked as sex workers whilst also undertaking other paid employment. Half of all respondents (50.9%) had worked in the industry in the past whilst having another paid job. There were no statistically significant differences between groups ($X^2_2=5.9$, $p=0.050$). Over a quarter (24.8%) of licensed brothel sex workers and 13.6 per cent of private sex workers currently have paid employment outside the sex industry compared with only three per cent of street-based sex workers ($X^2_2=9.4$, $p=0.009$).

Overall, 31.9 per cent of the total sample had ever worked in the adult entertainment industry and there were no statistically significant differences among participants ($X^2_2=2.9$, $p=0.236$). There were also no statistically significant differences between participants simultaneously working in the adult entertainment industry and in the sex industry ($X^2_2=0.7$ $p=0.710$).

Under a third of all participants (29.9%) had worked in the sex industry whilst studying but again there were no statistically significant differences between groups ($\chi^2=3.2$, $p=0.206$). About one in seven (14.9%) of all participants were currently working whilst studying but again there were no differences between groups ($\chi^2=6.8$, $p=0.033$). It is not a new suggestion that a number of women in this industry work or have worked in the sex industry to finance university education.

Leaving and re-entering sex work:

- Over three-quarters of the participants had taken short breaks away from the sex industry. There were no statistically significant differences between groups in the proportion of respondents who took short breaks away. Just under half of these women (44.5%, $n=110$) had previously left the sex industry for more than six months. Reasons for leaving are shown in Table 15. Legal brothel workers were more likely (63.2%) to report they had left the sex industry because they ‘just had enough’ than were street-based workers (30.0%) or private sex workers (30.8%). Street-based workers (25.0%) were more likely than others to have left the industry because of imprisonment. Brothel workers were the most likely to have had a break from the industry because they had obtained their goal, with street-based workers least likely to report this (0%) compared to legal brothel workers (34.2%) or private workers (5.9%). There were also statistically significant differences between sectors in the following reasons for leaving the industry – being ‘sick of clients’ ($p=0.048$) and getting a good straight job ($p=0.030$) – with legal brothel workers more likely to report both of these reasons (Table 15).
- Among the 111 women who had re-entered after a break, the most common reason given by women in each group was ‘financial’. More than half of the street-based workers said they re-entered because they ‘started using and needed the money’, while this was rare among brothel and private workers. There was also a statistically significant difference ($p<0.001$) between respondents re-entering the sex industry due to having a ‘new goal in life’, with legal brothel workers (47.4%) more likely to report

this than street-based workers (10.0%) or private workers (9.6%) (Table 16).

Client numbers and estimated income:

- There were statistically significant differences ($p=0.02$) in the number of clients seen by sex workers in a busy week with street-based sex workers (mean=35, $sd=26$) seeing six more clients on average than legal brothel workers (mean=29, $sd=17$) and 11 more than private sex workers (mean=24, $sd=16$). However, legal brothel workers reported more clients in a quiet week and in the last seven days than did street-based workers or private workers. In a quiet week legal brothel workers (mean=11, $sd=7$) were more likely to see more clients than street-based workers (mean=9, $sd=8$) and private workers (mean=8, $sd=6$). In the week preceding the survey, legal brothel workers were also more likely to see more clients (mean=17, $sd=11$) than street-based workers (mean=14, $sd=11$) and private workers who saw an average of 12 clients ($sd=10$) (Table 17).
- Street-based workers reported that in the last seven days they had earned, on average, an income of \$1,814, while the corresponding income for legal brothel workers was much lower at \$1,341, with private workers midway between the two at \$1,541. One prominent feature in this data is the standard deviation, which indicates the range of income from highest to least. It is clear that for some workers in some weeks their income exceeds \$3,000 (Table 18).
- We also asked these women about other sources of income. This is a complex issue and we could not obtain details. However, the basic trend is for the great majority of private and street-based workers (85%) to say that most or all of their income came from sex work, while just under 70 per cent of the brothel workers said this was the case (Table 19).

Fees for services:

- Street-based respondents reported receiving a median of \$130 (range:\$40–\$150) for a half-hour service and \$206 (range:\$80–\$275) for an hourly service compared to licensed brothel sex workers who received a median of \$79 per half-hour

booking (range:\$60–\$150) and \$130 (range: \$100-\$250) for an hourly booking. The private workers earned midway between these two. The lesser income received by legal brothel workers is due to booking fees charged by the licensed brothel (Table 20).

- The most common ‘extra’ services provided by respondents were kissing or receiving oral sex. These extras were approximately \$50 in addition to the standard service charge. However, there were variations in cost for the different services provided. The cost for a fantasy/fetish service ranged from \$20 to \$400, which may reflect the variation in services being provided. For example, one service provider may charge an additional \$20 to ‘talk dirty’ while another service provider may charge an

additional \$400 for an elaborate fantasy involving dressing up, role plays and additional equipment (Table 21).

- Types of goods and services (excluding cash) respondents received in exchange for sex are reported in Table 22. Street-based workers were substantially more likely to have exchanged sex for drugs compared to other industry workers (63.6%). This was quite rare in other sectors, with only 6.9 per cent of legal brothel workers and 8.5 per cent of private workers reporting a sex-drug exchange. About one in every five or six women in each sector said they had exchanged sex for other goods and services. Unfortunately we do not have details of the nature of these exchanges.

Table 10: Employment before entering the sex industry by current sector

Prior employment status	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Not employed	36.4	5.9	11.0
Home duties	3.0	9.8	6.1
Full-time work	27.2	44.6	47.6
Part-time work	6.1	22.8	22.0
Casual work	12.1	13.9	7.2
Student	15.2	3.0	6.1

$X^2_{10}=34.6, p<0.001$

Table 11: Type of work before entering the sex industry by current sector

Type of employment	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=15) %	Legal brothel (n=84) %	Private (n=62) %
Manager, administrator or professional	6.7	9.5	16.1
Associate professional, tradesperson and related worker	13.3	13.1	16.2
Advanced clerical and service worker, intermediate clerical, sales, production and transport workers	46.7	47.6	43.5
Elementary clerical, sales and service worker, laborers and related workers	33.3	29.8	24.2

$X^2_6=2.6, p<0.854$

Table 12: Sector of the sex industry where respondents started work by current sector

Sector of the sex industry started work	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Massage parlor	0	10.9	13.6
Legal brothel	3.0	55.4	12.3
Illegal brothel	3.0	12.9	12.3
Escort agency	21.2	7.9	24.7
Sole operator	6.1	8.9	33.4
Private in cooperation	0	2.0	3.7
Bar/hotel	6.1	0	0
Street/beat	60.6	1.0	0
Other	0	1.0	0

$\chi^2_{16}=186.7, p<0.001$

Table 13: Reasons provided for starting in the sex industry by current sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
I needed the money	63.6	90.0	79.3	0.002
Couldn't get another job	6.1	14.9	12.3	0.416
I decided I just couldn't earn enough money in a straight job	12.1	46.5	23.3	<0.001
I hated my straight job – it was so boring	0	17.8	12.2	0.029
I was using drugs and I needed the money to pay for them	75.8	2.0	8.5	<0.001
I just sort of drifted into it gradually	12.5	18.8	14.6	0.615
Someone talked me into it	12.1	16.8	3.7	0.018
Good money and flexible hours	30.3	67.3	37.0	<0.001
It was a matter of survival	36.4	21.0	22.0	0.177
Had particular goals in mind	21.2	57.6	25.6	<0.001
Other reasons	9.1	20.8	37.8	0.002

Figure 1: Number of respondents in the sex industry and other activities by current sector

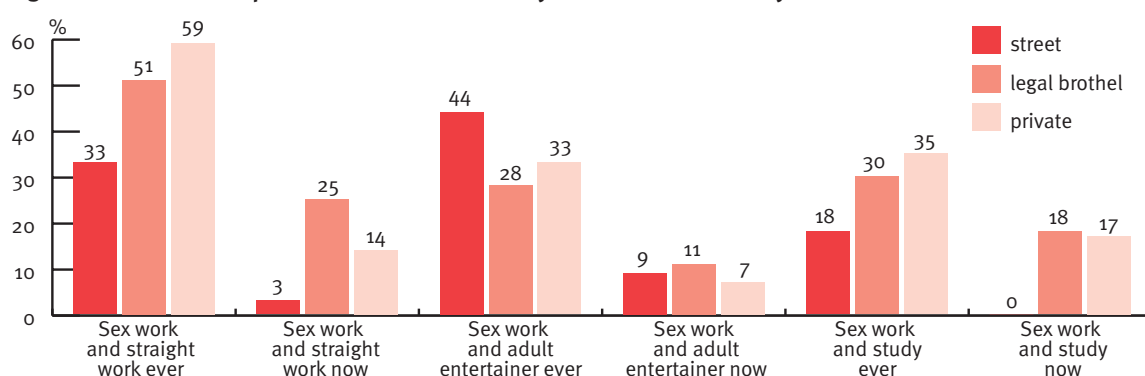


Table 14: Awareness of others about involvement in the sex industry by current sector

Awareness of others	Sex industry sector				χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %		
Family knows about involvement in the sex industry	None	30.3	61.4	40.3	<0.001
	Some	18.2	26.7	32.9	
	Most	12.1	2.0	13.4	
	All	39.4	9.9	13.4	
Close friends know about involvement in the sex industry	None	9.1	32.0	17.1	<0.001
	Some	39.4	53.0	39.0	
	Most	9.1	4.0	20.7	
	All	42.4	11.0	23.2	
Acquaintances know about involvements in the sex industry	None	36.4	80.0	72.0	<0.001
	Some	24.2	14.0	17.1	
	Most	9.1	5.0	2.4	
	All	30.3	1.0	8.5	
Neighbours know about involvement in the sex industry	None	54.5	94.0	69.5	<0.001
	Some	18.2	5.0	14.6	
	Most	6.1	0	3.7	
	All	21.2	1.0	12.2	

Table 15: Reasons given for leaving the sex industry for more than six months by current sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector				χ^2 p value
	Street (n=20) %	Legal brothel (n=38) %	Private (n=52) %		
Partner wanted me out	10.0	18.4	26.9	0.257	
Police forced me out	5.0	5.3	1.9	0.661	
Others in the industry forced me out	0	2.6	0	0.384	
Just had enough	30.0	63.2	30.8	0.004	
Was concerned about HIV/AIDS or other STIs	10.0	5.4	15.4	0.329	
Was sick of clients	20.0	44.7	23.1	0.048	
Got a good straight job	10.0	31.6	11.5	0.030	
Got pregnant	25.0	18.4	13.5	0.497	
Was in jail	25.0	0	3.8	0.001	
Went into detox	15.0	5.3	1.9	0.091	
I obtained my goal	0	34.2	5.9	<0.001	
Other reasons	28.6	31.6	47.2	0.189	

Table 16: Reasons for re-entering the sex industry after leaving for six months or more by current sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=20) %	Legal brothel (n=39) %	Private (n=52) %	
Financial reasons	70.0	94.9	92.3	0.009
No other job	10.5	26.3	19.2	0.365
Just drifted in again	10.0	15.8	15.4	0.815
Started using and needed the money	55.0	2.6	3.8	<0.001
Wanted the independence	15.0	31.6	17.3	0.193
Bored with my straight job	0	13.2	7.7	0.217
Was lonely and wanted the company	5.0	5.3	3.8	0.945
Broke up with partner	25.0	23.7	25.0	0.988
New goal in life	10.0	47.4	9.6	<0.001
Other reason	30.0	24.3	16.7	0.413

Table 17: Number of clients seen by current sex industry sector

Type of work	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) Mean (sd)	Legal brothel (n=101) Mean (sd)	Private (n=82) Mean (sd)	
Clients seen in a busy week	35 (26)	29 (17)	24 (16)	0.020
Clients seen in a quiet week	9 (8)	11 (7)	8 (6)	0.008
Clients seen in the last week	14 (10)	17 (11)	12 (10)	0.024

Table 18: Earnings in the past seven days by current sex industry sector

Sex industry sector	Mean income in the past seven days	Standard deviation
Street (n=31)	\$1,814	\$1,637
Legal brothel (n=93)	\$1,341	\$1,319
Private (n=72)	\$1,541	\$1,484

$F_2=1.3$, $p=0.263$

Table 19: Income derived from sex work by current sex industry sector

Income derived from sex work	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=100) %	Private (n=81) %
Some	3.0	6.0	8.6
About half	12.1	25.0	4.9
Most	39.4	27.0	30.9
All	45.5	42.0	55.6

$\chi^2_6=16.6$, $p=0.013$

Table 20: Cost of half hourly and hourly booking by sex industry sector

Sex industry sector	Average cost of a half hourly booking	Range	Average cost of a hourly booking	Range
Street (n=31)	\$130	40-150	\$206	80-275
Legal brothel (n=101)	\$79	60-150	\$130	100-250
Private (n=79)	\$109	50-150	\$184	100-260

Half hour: $F_2=57.4$, $p<0.001$, Hour: $F_2=57.1$, $p<0.001$

Table 21: Type and cost of extra services provided (all groups combined; numbers in parentheses show the total number of workers who provide this extra service among the 216 respondents)

Type of service	Average cost of extra	Range
Fantasy/fetish (n=21)	\$91	20-400
Other service (n=33)	\$114	20-500
Anal sex (n=26)	\$161	50-500
Receiving oral sex (n=40)	\$51	20-125
Kissing (n=36)	\$47	10-125
Golden showers/Urinating (n=9)	\$47	10-70
Vibrator shows (n=12)	\$48	20-80
Doubles/couples (n=8)	\$78	50-150
Sex between breasts/Spanish (n=2)	\$45	40-50

Table 22: Respondents who have exchanged sex for drugs or other goods and services by current sex industry sector

Sex industry sector	Exchanged sex for drugs	Exchanged sex for other goods and services
Street (n=33)	63.6	18.2
Legal brothel (n=101)	6.9	13.9
Private (n=82)	8.5	20.7

1.3.4 knowledge, attitudes and job satisfaction

This section considers sex workers' knowledge of current legislation relating to prostitution in Queensland and examines the attitudes of respondents towards working in legal brothels compared to working in other sectors of the sex industry. Finally, this section examines respondents' job satisfaction.

Knowledge of key agencies:

Over ninety per cent of respondents (94.0%) had heard of SQWISI. There were statistically significant differences ($X^2_2=10.2$, $p=0.006$) between groups, with street-based sex workers least likely to have heard of SQWISI compared with legal brothel and

private sex workers (81.8%, 96.0% and 96.3% respectively). Some 86.0 per cent of respondents have had contact with SQWISI. Again, street-based sex workers were the least likely to report contact with SQWISI (60.6%) compared with over 90 per cent for women in the other sectors ($X^2_2=21.1$, $p<0.001$) (table not shown).

Over eighty per cent (80.1%) of respondents had heard of the PLA and over a quarter (26.9%) had some degree of personal contact with the PLA. There were statistically significant differences in awareness of the PLA, with 93.1 per cent of legal brothel workers having heard of the agency, compared to just fewer than 80 per cent of private workers and less than half of the street workers.

Respondents working in legal brothels were slightly more likely than private workers to have had contact with the PLA, while such contact was rare among street workers (Table 23).

Knowledge of prostitution laws in Queensland:

- Over half (54.6%) of respondents reported their knowledge of Queensland prostitution laws to be 'good' or 'very good'. Conversely, one in three (34.7%) said their knowledge was fair and 10.6 per cent said it was poor. There were no statistically significant differences in self-rated knowledge between women in the three sectors (table not shown).
- We asked each respondent six questions about their knowledge of the relevant law. Most did have good knowledge of the Queensland sex worker legislation (see Table 24). More than 90 per cent knew that sexual health checks were mandatory in legal brothels and more than 80 per cent knew it was illegal to work from the street. They were somewhat less certain about regulations governing 'out-calls' from legal brothels and the eligibility of people working in the industry to obtain a brothel licence. The issue on which participants showed greatest uncertainty was whether the PLA 'checks up' on private workers, with only 23 per cent responding correctly that this was not a legal requirement.
- In Table 25 we report knowledge of the Queensland law among women in the three sectors. Generally, knowledge of each issue did not differ much, although legal brothel workers were more likely to know that out-calls from brothels were prohibited. Although still a minority, the private workers were somewhat more likely than the others to know the PLA does not check up on private workers as a legal requirement.
- Respondents differed on where they obtained their knowledge of prostitution laws in Queensland. Street-based sex workers were more likely to report they found out about the laws from police, lawyers or through word of mouth than legal brothel or private workers. The difference was statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Indeed word of mouth is

one of the most common means by which information has been transmitted with 69.7 per cent of street workers, 63.0 per cent of legal brothel workers and 43.9 per cent of private workers obtaining information in this way. The other common means of obtaining information about prostitution laws was reported to be through SQWISI, where 36.4 per cent of street-based workers, 67.3 per cent of legal brothel workers and 86.6 per cent of private workers obtained information (Table 26).

Contact with the law and charges relating to prostitution offences:

- In Table 27 we examine the number of respondents who have been charged with prostitution-related offences. Overall the numbers were low and it is clear that street-based sex workers face the greatest risk of being charged by the police, particularly for soliciting.

Workplace choices:

- Two per cent ($n=2$) of participants working in licensed brothels reported they had not worked in a Queensland legal brothel. This suggests a small reporting or recruitment error. Less than one-quarter of private workers (24.4%) and only 3.0 per cent of street-based sex workers had worked in legal brothels (Table 28).
- Private and street-based workers were then asked to provide reasons for **not** working in a legal brothel. Street workers seem most reluctant to give a percentage of earnings away and although this was also a factor for private workers, the greatest number said they simply preferred to work elsewhere, without providing details (Table 29).
- We also asked these women to agree or disagree with statements describing advantages of working in legal brothels. The highest proportion of women in each sector agreed that security and safety from violence was an advantage. Those who worked in brothels perceived many advantages, while the majority of private workers were not convinced that legal brothels offered good atmosphere and working conditions. Very few private or street-based workers believed that legal brothels offered

good pay. It is notable that the street workers otherwise believed that legal brothels offered good working conditions (Table 30).

- All women were asked about their perceptions of sex work outside of legal brothels. The primary perceived advantage was good pay. Conversely, women in all three sectors did not believe that non-brothel work offered security and safety from violence. Private workers saw many advantages and it is interesting that the perceptions of street workers were closer to brothel workers regarding the (lack of) advantages of work outside legal brothels (Table 31).

Job satisfaction:

- In Table 32 we report answers to some basic questions about job satisfaction, separately by current work sector. The participants were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with five statements about their workplace. Each item is considered below:

- Daily work is varied and interesting: The majority of sex workers reported they find their work varied and interesting. About 70 to 80 per cent in each group agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. The highest level of agreement appears to be among the private workers.
- Living up to their expectations: The majority also reported their job had ‘lived up to their

expectations’. Again, about 70 to 80 per cent across the three groups agreed with this statement, with the strongest agreement once again among private workers. This item may be ambiguous, as it is not clear whether the job has ‘lived up’ or ‘lived down’ to expectations. Overall, though, it appears that most workers knew what they were getting into beforehand.

- Work is a major source of satisfaction in life: Very few street-based workers felt that sex work gave them satisfaction, with nearly half in strong disagreement with this statement. In contrast, about half of the brothel workers and private workers agreed their job was a major source of satisfaction in their lives, and few strongly disagreed.
- The future holds good prospects for people in work like mine: About two-thirds of the brothel and private workers agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, while this was true for just over a third of the street workers.
- Doing it over again: Approximately two-thirds of the private workers and those in legal brothels agreed or strongly agreed they would definitely choose sex work if they had to ‘do it over again’. In contrast, over two-thirds of the street workers did not agree.

Table 23: Knowledge of and contact with the PLA by sex industry sector

Knowledge of the PLA	Sex industry sector				χ ² P value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %		
Have heard of the PLA	Yes	42.4	93.1	79.3	0.001
	No	57.6	6.9	20.7	
Have had contact with the PLA	Yes	9.1	32.7	26.8	0.044
	No	90.9	67.3	73.2	

Table 24: Responses to statements about Queensland prostitution laws

Statement	Yes %	Don't know %	No %
Legal brothels can do out-calls	13.0	13.0	74.0
There are only two ways to work legally in Queensland	69.6	21.0	9.4
Private workers can work legally from the street	7.4	8.8	83.8
Sexual health checks are mandatory if you work in a legal brothel	94.4	4.6	1.0
The PLA checks up on private workers	35.2	41.7	23.1
People in the sex industry cannot get a brothel licence	11.6	26.8	61.6

Note: The **bold** font indicates the correct answer.

Table 25: Correct responses by respondents in different sex industry sectors

Statement	Sex industry sector			χ ² p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Legal brothels can do out-calls (Correct answer – no)	51.5	91.1	62.2	<0.001
There are only two ways to work legally in Queensland (Correct answer – yes)	60.6	61.0	84.0	0.007
Private workers can work legally from the street (Correct answer – no)	81.8	83.0	85.6	0.037
Sexual health checks are mandatory if you work in a legal brothel (Correct answer – yes)	90.9	100	89.0	<0.001
The PLA checks up on private workers (Correct answer – no)	15.2	18.8	31.7	0.024
People in the sex industry cannot get a brothel license (Correct answer – no)	78.8	52.5	65.9	0.062

Table 26: Sources of knowledge about Queensland prostitution laws by sex industry sector

Method of obtaining knowledge	Sex industry sector			χ ² p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=100) %	Private (n=82) %	
Word of mouth	69.7	63.0	43.9	0.009
SQWISI	36.4	67.3	86.6	<0.001
Police	51.5	9.9	13.4	<0.001
PLA	3.0	19.8	14.6	0.066
My lawyer	30.3	2.0	9.8	<0.001
Look them up myself	18.2	27.7	25.9	0.550
Unsure	9.1	1.0	0	0.003
Other agency	12.1	20.4	12.3	0.274

Table 27: Percentage of women charged with prostitution-related offences

Charge	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Living off the earnings	9.1	1.0	3.7	0.071
Soliciting for immoral purposes	75.8	1.0	3.7	<0.001
Keeping or managing an illegal brothel	3.0	1.0	4.9	0.281

Table 28: Worked in a legal brothel in Queensland by current sex industry sector

Worked in a legal brothel	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Yes	3.0	98.0	24.4
No	97.0	2.0	75.6

$\chi^2=142.9$, $p<0.001$

Table 29: Reasons given for not working in a legal brothel by current sex industry sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector	
	Street (n=24) %	Private (n=48) %
Prefers to work elsewhere	0	41.7
Prefers not to give percentage away	62.5	29.1
Less anonymity	0	4.1
Less flexibility	4.2	6.3
Competition from other workers	4.2	0
Drug policy	8.3	0
Other reason	20.8	6.3
None in the area	0	12.5

$\chi^2=27.6$, $p<0.001$

Table 30: Agreement with statements about advantages of working in legal brothels by sex industry sector

Statement	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Security and safety from violence	81.8	97.0	81.7	0.006
Good pay	12.1	51.5	7.4	<0.001
Good working conditions	69.7	90.0	40.2	<0.001
Good atmosphere	39.4	88.1	29.3	<0.001
Better clients	39.4	56.4	8.5	<0.001
Working with other sex workers	51.5	92.1	48.1	<0.001

Table 31: Agreement with statements about advantages of working outside legal brothels by sex industry sector

Statement	Sex industry sector			
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=100) %	Private (n=82) %	χ^2 p value
Security and safety from violence	12.1	7.0	13.4	0.046
Good pay	84.8	63.4	89.0	<0.001
Good working conditions	39.4	18.8	70.7	<0.001
Good atmosphere	39.4	16.8	69.5	<0.001
Better clients	18.2	9.9	55.6	<0.001
Working with other sex workers	51.5	5.0	3.7	<0.001

Table 32: Job satisfaction by current type of work

Statement	Extent of agreement	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
		Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
My daily work is always varied and interesting	Strongly agree	18.2	19.8	46.3	<0.001
	Agree	51.5	66.3	32.9	
	Disagree	21.2	11.9	17.1	
	Strongly disagree	9.1	2.0	3.7	
In general, my job has lived up to my expectations	Strongly agree	15.2	20.0	39.0	<0.001
	Agree	54.5	64.0	35.4	
	Disagree	24.2	16.0	25.6	
	Strongly disagree	6.1	0	0	
My work is a major source of satisfaction in my life	Strongly agree	3.0	10.9	19.5	<0.001
	Agree	9.1	35.6	32.9	
	Disagree	42.4	40.6	36.6	
	Strongly disagree	45.5	12.9	11.0	
The future holds good prospects for people in work like mine	Strongly agree	3.1	21.0	24.4	0.003
	Agree	34.4	46.0	40.2	
	Disagree	34.4	23.0	30.5	
	Strongly disagree	28.1	10.0	4.9	
If I had to 'do it over again' I would definitely choose a job like the one I have now	Strongly agree	6.1	29.0	39.0	<0.001
	Agree	30.3	37.0	30.5	
	Disagree	24.2	23.0	22.0	
	Strongly disagree	39.4	11.0	8.5	



1.3.5 sexual services provided, health and related activities

In this section we look at the range of services provided by sex workers and focus on the ways in which they may be exposed to an STI. We then report data on the general health status and the use of drugs by workers in each sector and in comparison to the national population of women.

Sexual services provided:

■ Most sex workers reported they provided vaginal sex and oral sex. The full range of services is described in Table 33. Generally speaking, there are few differences in the acts engaged in by workers in the three sectors, with two exceptions regarding oral sex. Women working in legal brothels were least likely to allow a client to ejaculate in their mouth (34.3%) compared with nearly two-thirds of both the street-based and private workers. The street-based workers were least likely to receive oral sex from clients (Table 33).

Checking clients for STIs:

- Nearly all respondents (93.9%) reported they checked clients for signs of STIs all of the time. However, when separated by sex industry sector, 9.4 per cent of street-based sex workers reported they never checked clients for STIs. It is important to note that it is standard practice within licensed brothels to obtain a second opinion from another service provider or a manager if the worker suspects an infection (table not shown).
- Overall, 73.1 per cent of respondents reported they would refuse to see a client if they suspected an STI. Private sex workers were least likely to refuse to see the client. Some legal brothel respondents (6.9%) reported they would refer the client to another worker but it is not clear whether this might reflect the double-checking policy within legal brothels. Respondents working privately were more likely than women in other sectors to offer an alternative service (43.9%) compared with 18.2 per cent of street-based sex workers and 27.7 per cent of legal brothel workers. Respondents who stated they would provide an alternative service often provided a less risky service, such as massage and hand relief (Table 34).

Clients' requests for sex without a condom:

- Between 50 and 60 per cent of women working in legal brothels or privately reported that clients never or rarely offer extra money for sex without a condom. In contrast, this is a common experience for street-based workers who reported this occurred all or most of the time (Table 35).
- When this does occur, the women commonly reported they would talk the client into using a condom (60.2%). The actions taken were quite similar across the three sectors, although nearly one in eight street-based workers said they would either 'accept the money and do the job' or 'do the service as requested by the client', while this was rarely or never reported by brothel and private workers (Table 36).

STIs:

Self-reported rates of STIs and blood borne infections (BBIs) are shown in Table 37. The data are quite limited as we do not know whether the infections were acquired through sex work or if the self-reports reflect an understanding of the distinctions between different types of STI. Noteworthy trends are that brothel workers report the lowest rates of chlamydia, vaginal gonorrhoea, crabs/public lice and hepatitis C infection (the latter is usually acquired through drug injection). Rates of bacterial vaginosis and vaginal warts were reportedly lowest among street workers.

Physical and mental health:

- In Table 38 we report the mental and physical health summary scores for the SF-36 'Quality of Life' questionnaire. The higher scores represent better self-reported health. This scale does not ask people about specific diseases or symptoms. Rather, each question asks the person to judge the extent to which a health problem impairs physical or emotional functioning. It is commonly used in research to assess 'health-related quality of life' and the scores are known to correlate quite highly with objectively assessed health problems.
- The average physical health score for the sample was 53.1 with no statistically significant differences between groups of sex workers ($F_2=0.1$, $p=0.881$). However, mean mental health summary scores differed significantly between groups, with the

poorest mental health found in street workers. The sex worker sample was compared with age-matched women randomly selected from the general population in the 1995 National Health Survey (ABS 1995). There were no significant differences in physical health but the sex workers had significantly poorer mental health in each age band (Table 39).

Illicit drug use:

- There were statistically significant differences in most categories of drugs used, with street-based sex workers most likely to report having ever used illicit drugs (Table 40). Overall, 80.1 per cent of the total sample had smoked cannabis at some time, including all street-based sex workers. Almost one-third (31.5%) had used cannabis in the past week. These rates are higher than the general population with 29.4 per cent of women reporting having ever used cannabis and 3.7 per cent of women reporting using cannabis in the past week (National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2001).
- Over half of the sample (60.2%) reported having ever used amphetamines with 90.9 per cent of street-based sex workers reporting having used amphetamines. Overall, 17.1 per cent of the sample had used amphetamines in the past week and again street-based sex workers were most likely to report this (69.7% compared to less than eight percent of the other two groups). Again, these rates are higher than those found in the general population with 7.3 per cent of women reporting having used amphetamines ever and 0.5 per cent reporting use in the past week (Table 40).
- Almost one-quarter (24.5%) of the sample report having ever used heroin, with street-based sex workers much more likely to have done so. Indeed a majority of street-based sex workers reported using heroin in the last week. Over half of the sample had used other drugs like cocaine, LSD and ecstasy at some time (53.2%), with respondents from the street most likely to do so (Table 40).
- Street-based workers intravenously administered illicit drugs at rates higher than other respondents, with over half having injected an illicit drug in the preceding week. Conversely, respondents from legal

brothels were least likely to have injected drugs in the past with only 2.0 per cent reporting injecting heroin in the previous week (Table 41).

- The mean age at which women started injecting was 19 (range: 10–35). This age at onset is much lower than for injecting drug users generally (ABS 2001). Consistent with other drug-related issues, there were statistically significant differences in the age of first injecting among women from different sectors of the sex industry. Street-based sex workers started injecting between two and four years earlier than legal brothel workers and private sex workers respectively ($F_2=5.1$, $p=0.009$). Of the women who had injected in the past month, 87.0 per cent stated they had not shared injecting equipment with anyone during that time. Many of the respondents who were currently injecting felt they had a good understanding of BBIs, their transmission and vein care (table not shown).

Alcohol and tobacco:

- Street-based workers were least likely to consume alcohol with 48.5 per cent reporting they never consumed regularly compared with only 11.9 per cent of legal brothel workers, and 9.7 per cent of private workers. Both private and brothel sex workers were more likely to consume alcohol four or more times weekly (13.4% and 11.8% respectively) (Table 42).
- Although street-based sex workers were least likely to report consuming alcohol, those who did were most likely to drink in excess. About one in four (23.5%) reported drinking 10 or more drinks at a time compared with only 5.6 per cent of legal brothel workers and 5.4 per cent of private sex workers. Only 31.5 per cent of sex workers in this sample stated they did not currently smoke cigarettes. This differed among different sectors of the sex industry with only 3.0 per cent of street-based sex workers stating they did not smoke, compared with 32.7 per cent of legal brothel workers and 41.5 per cent of private sex workers ($\chi^2_{10}=38.9$, $p<0.001$) (table not shown).

Table 33: Sexual services provided by current sex industry sector

Sexual services provided	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Vaginal sex	90.9	98.0	91.5	0.098
Oral sex (ejaculation in mouth)	63.6	34.3	61.0	<0.001
Oral sex (no ejaculation in mouth)	93.9	97.0	93.9	0.572
Oral sex from client	36.4	67.3	80.5	<0.001
Anal sex	24.2	17.8	13.4	0.367
Hand relief	97.0	99.0	100.0	0.307
Sex between breasts/Spanish	60.6	66.3	73.2	0.374
Fisting/Insertion of fist	9.1	9.0	13.4	0.599
Golden showers/Urinating	33.3	33.0	52.4	0.019
Couples	57.6	61.4	45.1	0.083
Rimming/Anal licking (receiving)	3.0	15.8	15.9	0.147
Rimming/Anal licking (giving)	6.1	7.0	9.9	0.706
Fingering/Finger insertion (receiving)	42.4	37.0	55.6	0.042
Fingering/Finger insertion (giving)	33.3	33.3	56.1	0.004
Using sex toys	45.5	66.3	75.6	0.008
Trick sex	54.5	35.6	30.9	0.056
Bondage and discipline	51.5	28.0	43.9	0.018
Sadomasochism	21.9	11.9	15.9	0.365
Submission	28.1	12.9	29.7	0.110
Cross dressing	39.4	34.0	52.4	0.041
Lesbian acts	68.8	71.0	41.5	<0.001
Fantasy/fetish	78.8	65.3	63.4	0.266
Massage	87.9	97.0	85.2	0.015
Other services	6.1	8.0	15.9	0.151

Table 34: Action taken when a client is suspected of having an STI by current sex industry sector

Action taken	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Refuse to see the client	81.8	79.2	62.2	0.017
Refer the client to another worker	0	6.9	1.2	0.060
Offer an alternative service	18.2	27.7	43.9	0.011
Do as usual	3.0	0	2.4	0.255
Other action taken	9.1	16.8	13.4	0.520

Table 35: Frequency of extra money offered by clients for sex without a condom by current sex industry sector

Frequency of extra money offered	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=83) %
Never	3.0	32.7	17.1
Rarely	3.0	27.7	32.9
Some of the time	42.4	31.7	31.7
Most of the time	21.3	5.9	7.3
All of the time	30.3	2.0	11.0

$\chi^2=48.4$, $p<0.001$

Table 36: Action taken if client offers extra money for sex without a condom by current sex industry sector

Action taken	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Refuse to see client	48.5	34.7	40.2	0.349
Accept the money and do the job	9.1	1.0	0	0.003
Do the service as requested by client	3.0	1.0	0	0.307
Talk client into using a condom	66.7	59.4	58.5	0.706
Provide an alternative service	3.0	6.9	12.2	0.215
Other	0	1.0	0	0.564

Table 37: Self-reported STI and BBI rates (ever) among sex workers by current sex industry sector

STI/BBI	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=32) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Chlamydia ever	37.5	18.8	22.0	0.087
Thrush ever	60.6	74.3	77.8	0.165
Vaginal gonorrhoea ever	9.1	0	6.1	0.019
Vaginal herpes ever	0	1.0	4.9	0.142
Vaginal warts ever	3.0	10.9	17.1	0.099
Crabs/pub lice ever	18.2	5.0	20.7	0.004
Bacterial vaginosis ever	3.1	14.0	22.2	0.035
Hepatitis C ever	69.7	4.0	8.5	<0.001

Table 38: Self reported physical and mental health of female sex workers by current type of work

Health type	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=31) Mean (sd)	Legal brothel (n=96) Mean (sd)	Private (n=78) Mean (sd)
Physical health summary score	53.7 (1.7)	53.0 (0.8)	52.8 (1.1)
Mental health summary score	32.0 (2.0)	47.0 (1.3)	44.5 (1.7)

Table 39: Comparing the self reported health of female sex workers with age-matched women from the general population

Physical health summary score			
Age group	Age matched women from the general population* Mean (sd)	Sex worker sample (n=203) Mean (sd)	Sex worker sample# (n=172) Mean (sd)
18-24	53.3 (0.3)	53.4 (1.3)	53.0 (0.14)
25-34	53.3 (0.2)	53.9 (0.8)	53.9 (0.9)
35-44	52.0 (0.3)	51.5 (1.3)	51.4 (1.3)
45-54	50.3 (0.3)	52.9 (2.5)	52.9 (2.5)
Mental health summary score			
Age group	Age matched women from the general population* Mean (sd)	Sex worker sample (n=203) Mean (sd)	Sex worker sample# (n=172) Mean (sd)
18-24	50.7 (0.4)	41.4 (2.1)	45.1 (2.4)
25-34	50.9 (0.3)	44.5 (1.5)	46.7 (1.5)
35-44	49.9 (0.3)	45.1 (1.8)	46.3 (1.9)
45-54	50.9 (0.3)	41.8 (4.2)	41.8 (4.2)

*Source: ABS 1995

Sex worker sample examined without street-based sex worker subgroup included.

Table 40: Illicit drug use by current sex industry sector

Lifetime use of illicit drugs	Sex industry sector			
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	χ^2 p value
Cannabis ever	100.0	74.3	79.3	0.006
Cannabis in the past week	48.5	24.8	32.9	0.036
Amphetamines ever	90.9	52.5	57.3	<0.001
Amphetamines in the past week	69.7	7.9	7.3	<0.001
Heroin ever	90.9	11.9	13.4	<0.001
Heroin in the past week	66.7	2.0	0	<0.001
Benzodiazepines ever	75.8	16.8	36.6	<0.001
Benzodiazepines in the past week	42.4	4.0	8.5	<0.001
Other drugs ever	75.8	45.5	53.7	0.010
Other drugs in the past week	21.2	6.9	9.8	0.062

Table 41: Injecting drug use by current sex industry sector

Drugs injected	Sex industry sector			
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	χ^2 p value
Amphetamines ever	84.8	14.9	23.2	<0.001
Amphetamines in the past week	69.7	1.0	3.7	<0.001
Heroin ever	90.9	5.9	12.2	<0.001
Heroin in the past week	66.7	2.0	0	<0.001
Benzodiazepines ever	30.3	2.0	3.7	<0.001
Benzodiazepines in the past week	3.0	0	0	0.062
Other drugs ever	60.6	5.0	13.4	<0.001
Other drugs in the past week	18.2	0	1.2	<0.001

Table 42: Frequency of alcohol consumption by current sex industry sector

Alcohol use	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
Never	48.5	11.9	9.7
Less than once a month	33.3	22.8	30.5
2-4 times a month	15.2	33.7	22.0
2-3 times a week	0	19.8	24.4
4 or more times a week	3.0	11.8	13.4

$\chi^2=39.6, p<0.001$

1.3.6 violence and unwanted sexual experiences

In this section we examine self-reports of abusive sexual experiences both as a child and as an adult. The sex workers were also asked about their relationship with the police and the likelihood of reporting violence and abuse to the police. The section concludes with an assessment of the number of unwanted sexual activities experienced by respondents while working in licensed brothels within Queensland.

Child sexual abuse:

- Respondents experienced childhood sexual abuse at higher rates than the general population. For example, 23.7 per cent of this study's sample reported unwanted oral sex before the age of 16 compared with just 3.3 per cent of women from the Australian population (Dunne et al. 2003). Furthermore, one-quarter (23.3%) of sex workers said they experienced unwanted vaginal sex before the age of 16 compared with only 4.0 per cent in the population-based sample (Dunne et al. 2003). The sexual abuse started early in life, with some being forced to have sex before the age of 12 years (Table 43).
- Street-based sex workers were the most likely to report unwanted childhood sexual activity, with over three-quarters (78.8%) of street workers reporting unwanted non-penetrative sexual activity before the age of 16 compared with 41.0 per cent of legal brothel workers and 40.7 per cent of private sex workers ($\chi^2=16.1, p<0.001$). Street-based sex workers were also more likely to report unwanted penetrative sexual activity (81.8%) before the age

of 16 compared with 29.7 per cent of legal brothel workers and 34.6 per cent of private sex workers ($\chi^2=29.6, p<0.001$). These rates of abuse of girls who later become street-based sex workers are far in excess of the norm for virtually every population in which child sexual abuse has been studied (table not shown).

Sexual abuse during sex work:

- In Table 44 we examine unwanted sexual experiences during sex work. Four questions relating to serious assault were asked. It is clear, on each measure, that the rate of attempted rape or rape is substantially higher among street-based workers. On two of the measures the rate among brothel sex workers was lower than private workers, while rates for the other two questions were equivalent.
- Table 45 shows the proportion of respondents who report having been raped and/or bashed since the age of 16. This may or may not have occurred within the context of sex work. Overall, 42.6 per cent of respondents had been raped and more than half had been bashed. Consistent with previous findings, street-based sex workers were much more likely to have been victims of such violence than women in other sectors, although it is important to note the experiences of rape or bashing during the lifetime are very common across women in all sectors of this industry.
- Of more direct relevance to the main purpose of this research, in Table 46 we examine the number of respondents who reported having been raped and/or bashed by a client.

Raped by a client: Overall, 6.9 per cent of the total sample reported having been raped once and 8.8 per cent reported having been raped more than once by a client. There is a clear difference in the rate of reported rape by a client between street-based sex workers and others, with women working in legal brothels at the time of the survey having the lowest reported risk.

Bashed by a client: Overall, 6.5 per cent of the sample reported having been bashed once by a client and 7.4 per cent reported having been bashed more than once. Respondents from the street were the most likely to report having been bashed (54.5%) compared with two per cent of women recruited from legal brothels and 12.2 per cent of private workers.

Relationship with the police:

■ In Table 47 we examine the perceived quality of the relationship of respondents with police. Overall, 44.2 per cent reported they had no contact with police in the preceding 12 months. Street workers were more likely to report a poor relationship with police (12.5%) than those in other sectors. This is not surprising as street-based sex workers have contact with police when being moved on or when being charged for soliciting. In contrast, about 80 per cent of women working in legal brothels said they either had ‘no relationship’ with police (two-

thirds of all women) or their relationship with police was ‘excellent’ (12.9%). Similarly, most private workers did not perceive any problems in their relationship with police.

■ We asked each woman whether she would report a range of violent crimes against them to the police. Across all three sectors, most participants said they would report assault, rape or robbery by a client, a police officer or by a personal partner. However, the street-based sex workers seemed most reluctant to engage police in crimes committed by a partner (Table 48). If a woman said she would not report such incidents to the police, she was asked to give reasons why. Table 49 shows the responses from this minority of sex workers in each industry sector. Street workers seem most reluctant to report for fear of being charged with an offence, because of personal ramifications with their partner or because they expect not to be taken seriously.

■ The women were also asked about harassment, sexual or physical assault by a police officer in Queensland in the past five years (Table 50). Clearly, street-based sex workers feel more harassed or threatened by police. Workers in legal brothels were the least likely to be assaulted or sexually propositioned by a police officer.

Table 43: Age of first unwanted sexual experience

Unwanted sexual experience	Never %	Aged 0-7 %	Aged 8-11 %	Aged 12-15 %
Masturbate in front of you	74.0	13.0	7.4	5.6
Sexually arouse you	61.4	17.2	10.7	10.7
Touch or fondle your body including breasts or genitals or make you do that to them	55.3	19.5	12.6	12.6
Rub their genitals against your body	65.0	17.3	8.4	9.3
Touch your genitals with their mouth or make you do that to them	76.3	10.7	7.4	5.6
Try to have vaginal sex	69.3	9.8	9.7	11.2
Had vaginal sex	76.7	6.5	6.5	10.3
Try to have anal sex	94.9	1.4	<1.0	3.3

Table 44: Unwanted sexual experiences during sex work by current sex industry sector

Unwanted sexual experience	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Man attempted sexual intercourse when you didn't want him to by using force but intercourse did not occur	39.4	10.9	11.0	<0.001
Sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because you were overwhelmed by continual argument and pressure	30.3	5.0	4.9	<0.001
Sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because someone used their position of authority	24.2	1.0	4.9	<0.001
Sexual intercourse when you didn't want to because someone used force	48.5	4.0	8.5	<0.001

Table 45: Proportion of respondents reporting ever having been raped or bashed by current type of work

Reported rapes/bashings	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Respondents who have been raped ever	78.8	34.7	37.8	<0.001
Respondents who have been bashed ever	90.9	49.5	51.2	<0.001

Table 46: Number of respondents reporting ever having been raped or bashed by a client by current type of work

Raped or bashed by client	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Never raped by a client	39.4	97.0	86.6	<0.001
Raped once by a client	27.3	0	7.3	
Raped more than once by a client	33.3	3.0	6.1	
Never bashed by a client	45.5	98.0	87.8	<0.001
Bashed once by a client	21.2	1.0	7.3	
Bashed more than once by a client	33.3	1.0	4.9	

Table 47: Relationships with the police over the past 12 months by current type of work

Description of relationship	Sex industry sector		
	Street (n=33) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %
No involvement	9.4	67.3	59.8
Excellent	15.6	12.9	17.1
Average	43.8	12.8	14.6
Not so good	3.1	1.0	2.4
Poor	12.5	2.0	3.7
Extremely poor	15.6	4.0	2.4

$\chi^2_{10}=44.9, p<0.001$

Table 48: Number of respondents who stated they would report offences to the police by current sex industry sector

Type of offence that would be reported	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=32) %	Legal brothel (n=101) %	Private (n=82) %	
Assault by a client	45.5	64.3	69.5	0.074
Rape by a client	69.7	78.2	73.2	0.678
Robbery by a client	51.5	68.0	68.3	0.001
Assault by a partner	24.2	70.3	72.8	<0.001
Rape by a partner	39.4	73.3	71.3	<0.001
Assault, rape or harassment by a police officer	63.6	83.0	79.3	0.001

Table 49: Reasons given for not reporting incidents of violence to the police by current sex industry sector

Reasons	Sex industry sector			χ^2 p value
	Street (n=27) %	Legal brothel (n=30) %	Private (n=28) %	
The police would not take it seriously	63.0	33.3	46.4	0.082
The police might charge me with a prostitution offence	48.1	20.0	10.7	0.004
I'd be in more trouble with my partner	55.6	26.7	10.7	0.001
The police want me for something else	11.5	0	3.6	0.121
I don't want to bring myself to police attention	33.3	43.3	39.3	0.740
Other reason	50.0	51.9	64.3	0.512

Table 50: Respondents who reported being harassed, sexually or physically assaulted or sexually propositioned by a Queensland police officer in the past five years by current type of work

Incidence of police harassment	Sex industry sector			χ ² p value
	Street (n=27) %	Legal brothel (n=30) %	Private (n=28) %	
Harassed by a police officer in the past five years	54.5	13.9	13.4	<0.001
Sexually or physically assaulted by a police officer in the past five years	27.3	2.0	3.7	<0.001
Sexually propositioned by a police officer in the past five years	39.4	5.9	12.2	<0.001

1.3.7 what has changed in the past decade? comparing the 2003 sample with the 1991 sex worker sample

A great deal has changed in the Queensland sex industry over the past ten to fifteen years. The legislation and methods of regulation have changed, and the open commercialisation and professionalism appear to be quite different. These mostly reflect the broad policy framework and the public face of the industry. Our understanding of the nature of change would be helped if we could compare the experiences of working women over the passage of time.

We can do this to some extent by comparing results from the 2003 survey with the survey conducted in Queensland in 1991. We have attempted to replicate aspects of the earlier study. We recruited a similar number of sex workers from similar geographic regions and used a similar sampling method to gain access to a broad cross-section of workers. We have used some directly comparable questions, although this exercise is limited by the focus of the 1991 survey on HIV/AIDS issues rather than on broader occupational health and safety and experiences of violence. Nevertheless, there are a number of indicators that can be used to assess the extent of change over time.

How are the 1991 and 2003 samples similar?

- We have comparative data available from 200 sex workers in 1991 and 216 in 2003 (data not shown). Within both samples the majority of respondents

were interviewed in either Brisbane or the Gold Coast (see Table 51).

- The average age of the 1991 sample was 27 years compared to 32 years in 2003. The recent sample included a higher proportion of sex workers who were born overseas. These two differences may reflect in part the normal demographic change that has occurred in Queensland over the past 12 years (Table 52).
- There was also a difference in the age the participants first left home, with the 2003 sample more likely to have left home earlier than the 1991 sample. Twice the number of respondents in the 2003 sample had left home by 14 years of age (Table 53).
- The marital status of the two samples was similar, although more of the 2003 sample said they were divorced or separated (Table 54).
- One significant difference is that a greater proportion of the women in 2003 had children (Table 55), perhaps reflecting the fact they were older than the group in 1991.
- A significant difference between then and now is that a much higher proportion of women in 1991 said they were unemployed when they first entered the sex industry. Two-thirds of the women in 2003 were employed either full or part-time prior to taking up sex work, while the employment rate prior to sex work in the 1991 sample was only 42 per cent (Table 56).



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Reasons for entering or leaving the industry temporarily:

■ The two samples differed in apparent motivations for entry to the industry and for taking a short break. The 2003 sample were less likely than in 1991 to say they ‘couldn’t get a job’, but they were substantially more likely to say they entered because they had a particular goal in mind and were looking for good money and flexible hours. The 2003 sample was more likely to give multiple reasons for entering the industry; thus, they also said they entered ‘purely for survival’ and because they ‘drifted into it’. Reasons given at both time points for taking a temporary break from the industry were quite similar, although more of the women in 2003 did so because they found a good job or had obtained their goal (Tables 57 and 58).

Numbers of clients and income from sex work:

■ The sex workers’ estimates of the number of clients they saw in the preceding week and in their busiest and most quiet weeks are shown in Table 59. Overall, the numbers are very similar and there is no discernible trend, although we could not compare estimates of the cash income per week. However, one interesting trend is that sex workers in 1991 were more likely to say they earned all of their income from sex work (1991: 67%, 2003: 48%).

Extent to which other people are aware of their sex work:

■ There is a trend over time for women to disclose more to their families. In 1991 only 31 per cent of the sex workers said that any of their family knew about their employment, while in 2003 this had increased to 52 per cent. In contrast, however, contemporary sex workers appear more able to keep their employment private from friends and acquaintances. In 1991, 15 per cent said none of their close friends knew, and 47 per cent said none of their acquaintances knew about their job. In 2003 these figures had increased to 23 per cent and 70 per cent respectively (table not shown).

Change in sexual services provided:

■ In Table 60 we examine changes in the services provided between 1991 and 2003. There are no differences in the proportion of ‘routine services’

provided by the two samples, including vaginal sex, oral sex, anal sex, sex between breasts and massage. However, there were significant increases in the numbers of respondents in 2003 providing more exotic services like bondage, cross dressing, submissive work and fisting. This is supported by anecdotal evidence from many sex workers who report being requested to provide additional services not previously requested. It is noteworthy, however, that the only sexual act that is significantly less common in 2003 is oral sex with ejaculation in the mouth.

Change in checking for STIs in clients:

■ In 1991, 12 per cent of female sex workers reported they did not check their clients for infection before commencing a job. This has decreased significantly in the 2003 sample, with only two per cent of the sample not checking clients for an infection before they provide a service. Respondents in both surveys were asked who taught them to check clients for signs of infections. There are differences between 1991 and 2003, with SQWISI assuming an increased teaching role in recent years (3% nominated SQWISI in 1991 compared to 57% in 2003). Within the 2003 sample 18 per cent reported they had read about infections themselves compared with only six per cent in the 1991 sample. There was also an increase in the number of women who had been taught by doctors or nurses to inspect clients for signs of infections (11% in 1991 compared with 20% in 2003) (table not shown).

■ With regard to action taken if a client was suspected of having an infection, there were several changes over time. In 2003 respondents were less likely to refuse to see the client and were more likely to offer an alternative service. These percentages increased from 12 per cent to 32 per cent. Many women reported they would provide an alternative such as a strip show and hand relief or massage and a sex toy show instead (table not shown).

■ Respondents were asked: “If a client offers more money for sex without a condom, what would you usually do?” The most common response in 1991 and 2003 was to talk the client into using a condom. However, there was a substantial increase

over time in the number of sex workers who said they would refuse to see the client (13% in 1991 and 39% in 2003) (table not shown).

- In Table 61 we examine differences in the number of respondents reporting ever having been bashed or raped. When comparing the 1991 and 2003 samples there is a statistically significant increase in the percentages reporting rape. However, when street-based sex workers were removed from the sample the relationship is no longer statistically significant. There was also a statistically significant increase in the number of respondents reporting being bashed ever, both with and without the inclusion of street-based sex workers. However, this may reflect respondents' personal lives as well as their professional lives. Unfortunately we do not have data on the risk of being raped or bashed by a client in 1991 and 2003.
- In Table 62 we examine changes in involvement with the police between the 1991 and 2003 samples. Overall, there was no statistically

significant change in the respondents' contact with the police in the preceding year. Over half of both samples reported no involvement with the police, while almost one-third reported a positive relationship and 11 per cent reported a negative relationship.

- In Table 63 we note the changes in likelihood of reporting incidents to the police. There was a significant increase in the number of respondents who would report rape, assault, and robbery by a client to the police. This may be a result of the changes in legislation allowing many female sex workers to have contact with the police without fear of prosecution. Respondents in 2003 were also more likely to say they would report partner assault to the police but there was no difference in the number of respondents who would report being raped by a partner to the police. There were no statistically significant differences between the reasons given for not reporting offences to the police in 1991 compared with 2003 (Table 64).

Table 51: Location of interviews, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Location of interview	1991 (n=230) %	2003 (n=247) %
Brisbane	51	58
Cairns	14	10
Townsville	9	6
Sunshine Coast	4	9
Gold Coast	22	15
Other	-	2
Total	100	100

Table 52: Country of birth of respondents, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Country of birth	1991 (n=200) %	2003 (n=215) %
Australia	84	72
New Zealand	8	7
Europe (including the United Kingdom)	6	10
Asia	2	7
Other	2	3

$X^2=10.4$, $p=0.030$

Table 53: Age at which respondents left home, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Age group	1991 (n=197) %	2003 (n=213) %
14 years or less	8	16
15 to 17 years	55	51
18 or more	37	33

$X^2_2=6.7, p=0.035$

Table 54: Marital status of respondents, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Marital status	1991 (n=199) %	2003 (n=216) %
Single (never married)	57	49
Married or living with a partner	26	22
Divorced or separated	18	29

$X^2_2=7.7, p=0.021$

Table 55: Number of children reported by respondents, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Number of children	1991 (n=197) %	2003 (n=216) %
None	72	46
One	15	16
Two	9	22
Three or more	5	15

$X^2_3=33.9, p=<0.001$

Table 56: Employment before sex work, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 sex worker samples

Type of employment	1991 (n=200) %	2003 (n=216) %
Not employed	46	13
Full-time employed	34	43
Part-time employed	8	20
Home duties	7	7
Student	4	7
Casual employment	3	11

$X^2_5=63.6, p=<0.001$

Table 57: Reasons for entering the sex industry, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Reasons	1991 (n=200) %	2003 (n=215) %	X^2 p value
I just needed the money	71	82	0.009
I couldn't get another job	20	13	0.030
I had a particular goal in mind	15	40	<0.001
Purely for survival	10	24	<0.001
It was good money and flexible hours	8	50	<0.001
I just sort of drifted into it	5	16	<0.001
Needed the money to pay for drugs	3	16	<0.001

Table 58: Reasons for leaving the sex industry for six months or more, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Reasons	1991 (n=60) %	2003 (n=106) %	χ ² p value
Just had enough	40	42	0.785
Sick of the clients	22	30	0.319
My partner wanted me to	20	21	0.834
Fell pregnant	13	17	0.511
Found a good job	2	18	0.004
I obtained my goal	5	15	0.076
Was concerned about AIDS or other STI	5	11	0.208
Was in jail	3	6	0.395
Police forced me out	5	4	0.717
Other	8	38	0.001

Table 59: Number of clients seen, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Number of clients	1991	2003	1991	2003	1991	2003
	%	%	%	%	%	%
	<i>Last week</i>		<i>Busiest week</i>		<i>Quiet week</i>	
0 - 5	15	26	5	5	57	42
6 - 10	27	29	9	10	26	34
11 - 15	25	16	11	13	11	11
16 - 20	21	11	24	18	7	8
21 - 25	3	7	9	11	0	2
26 - 50	11	10	36	35	0	2
51 - 100	0	1	7	9	-	-

Table 60: Sexual services provided, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Sexual services	1991 (n=179) %	2003 (n=216) %	χ ² p value
Vaginal sex	100	94	0.691
Oral sex (ejaculation in mouth)	79	49	0.004
Oral sex (no ejaculation in mouth)	97	95	0.924
Oral sex from client	68	68	0.953
Anal sex	12	17	0.192
Hand relief	98	99	0.926
Sex between breasts/Spanish	59	68	0.361
Fisting/Insertion of fist	1	10	<0.001
Sex toys	40	67	0.003
Massage	82	91	0.455
Fantasy	45	67	0.019
Lesbian acts	31	59	0.001
Golden showers/Urinating	30	41	0.120
Bondage	24	38	0.034
Cross dressing	20	42	0.001
Submission	4	18	<0.001

Table 61: Respondents reporting having been raped or bashed, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Raped or bashed	1991 (n=199) %	2003 (n=216) %	2003 (n=183)* %	χ ² p value	χ ² p value*
Respondents who have ever been raped	29	43	36	0.050	0.303
Respondents who have ever been bashed	31	57	50	0.001	0.013

* 2003 sample (without street-based sex workers) compared with the 1991 sample.

Table 62: Relationship with the police in the previous 12 months, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Description of relationship	1991 (n=199) %	2003 (n=215) %
No involvement	61	56
Excellent, good or average	28	33
Not so good or poor	11	11

χ²=1.3, p=0.536

Table 63: Likelihood of reporting offences to the police, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Type of offence that would be reported	1991 %	2003 %	1991 %	2003 %	1991 %	2003 %	χ ² p value
	Yes		No		Maybe		
Assault by a client	54	63	31	15	15	22	<0.001
Rape by a client	58	75	30	16	12	9	0.001
Robbery by a client	54	66	32	22	13	12	0.044
Assault by a partner	55	64	30	18	14	18	0.010
Rape by a partner	59	68	26	15	15	17	0.079

Table 64: Reasons given for not reporting offences to the police, comparison between the 1991 and 2003 samples

Reasons	1991 (n=98) %	2003 (n=85) %	χ ² p value
The police would not take it seriously	35	47	0.269
The police might charge me with a prostitution offence	29	26	0.758
I'd be in more trouble with my partner	17	30	0.098
The police want me for something else	1	5	0.138
I don't want to bring myself to police attention	47	39	0.485
Other reason	6	56	<0.001

Note: Multiple responses were permitted.

1.4 discussion and conclusion

Reducing the number of sex workers and the visibility of prostitution through the implementation of legislation has been a common practice in different places and at various times. Despite these efforts there is little evidence that strict legislative controls have been successful in eradicating sex as work. This is not to deny that legislation can and often does change the way in which sex workers operate. Where the legislative context is restrictive the sex industry tends to function covertly with the sometimes unintended consequence of increasing the risks to both the sex worker and the client.

The Fitzgerald Inquiry in Queensland, undertaken at a time when prostitution was largely illegal, identified associations between police corruption and the criminalisation of prostitution. The *Prostitution Laws Amendment Act 1992* ensued, allowing sex workers to work alone from private premises while proscribing two or more sex workers working in groups and soliciting from the street. The aim of such legislation was to eliminate organised prostitution while continuing to allow some form of unregulated prostitution to exist. However, it may be that this legislation may have further isolated sex workers and unintentionally created a less safe work environment.

The most recent legislative change in Queensland was the introduction of the Prostitution Act. This Act controlled the development of licensed boutique brothels throughout Queensland. Licensed brothels can only be located in designated areas and have a maximum of five working rooms in each brothel allowing up to five sex workers at any one time. Alcohol is not permitted on premises, nor is smoking. Each brothel must adhere to regulations set down by the State Government and to conditions set by the PLA. Changes in the legislation emphasise the safety of sex workers and clients, whilst promoting a healthy sex industry. Many sex workers may continue to work outside the new legislative framework. This report examines the impact of the new legislation on the structure and operation of the sex industry in Queensland.

This study was undertaken to examine changes in the sex industry since the introduction of legal brothels in Queensland. This discussion will focus on three main areas of interest:

■ Occupational health and safety

■ Job satisfaction

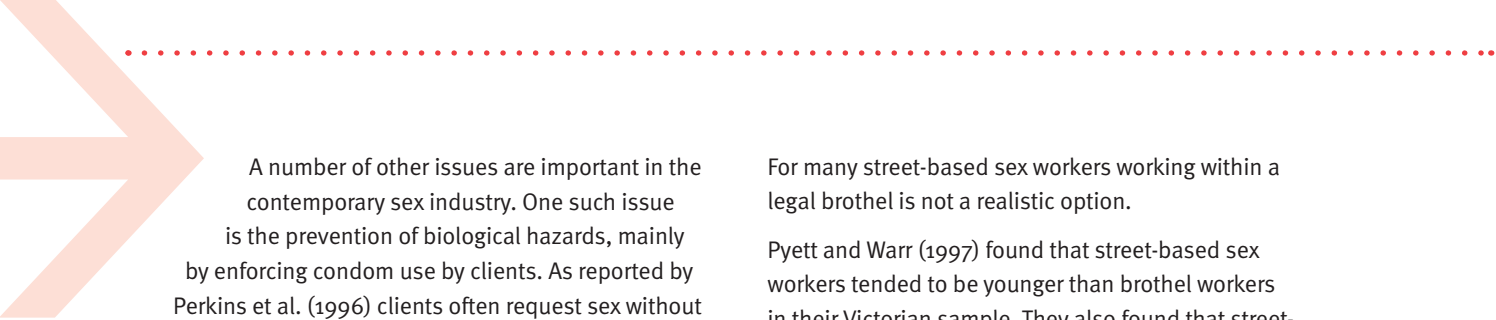
■ Understanding work sector preferences.

Occupational health and safety

Occupational health and safety has received recent attention. Much of this has been driven by economic, political and cultural factors, which have altered the ways in which many work environments operate. Traditional occupational health and safety concerns include physical and biological hazards, the experience of stress at work and the demands imposed by the work itself, and external factors that may influence the way in which workers view themselves as a group. Many occupational hazards and stressors have been identified and strategies have been implemented to minimise the risks to the worker.

There are health issues faced by sex workers that remain of concern to public health workers and policy makers. These include the management of biological hazards including the risk of STIs and enforcing condom use with clients. Other occupational health concerns include the risk of injury related to the work itself, to violence which may be increased due to the solitary nature of much sex work, and associated with the fact that the work is often at night in sometimes isolated settings. There is probably no other occupation which exposes women to such high risks of violence, and yet sex workers often lack the basic entitlements of protection from violence, robbery and other abuse within the work context (Butcher 2003).

Although Perkins et al. (1996) did not find that violence was a major concern in their study, the rates of workplace violence observed in this study and reflected in international literature warrant attention. In this study, 12.5 per cent of respondents reported forced vaginal or anal sex while at work. A further 15.3 per cent of the sample reported attempted sex using force. Consistently, street-based sex workers reported higher rates of violence compared with the legal sectors of the sex industry. The main perceived benefits of working in a legal brothel were related to improved safety and security. This is confirmed by data showing the low rates of violence experienced by this subgroup within a work situation. However, while the Prostitution Act has been effective in protecting legal brothel sex workers from workplace violence, other sectors of the sex industry continue to experience widespread violence.



A number of other issues are important in the contemporary sex industry. One such issue is the prevention of biological hazards, mainly by enforcing condom use by clients. As reported by Perkins et al. (1996) clients often request sex without a condom and frequently use various tactics to pursue their sexual preferences.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that in countries like Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom sex workers view their sexual health as paramount to their ability to work. In the current study some 73 per cent of respondents indicated they would refuse to see a client they suspected of having an infection while some sex workers reported they would provide a safer, alternative service. Few respondents in this sample reported they would be likely to accept extra money for a 'natural' or condom-free service. This is especially so among workers in legal brothels and up to one in eight street workers indicated they would go ahead and satisfy the client.

Another important occupational health and safety issue facing the sex industry is substance use. Of particular concern is the rate of drug use among street-based sex workers, many of whom may have engaged in sex work to pay for drugs. It is unlikely that working within the current legislative framework is suitable for the majority of street-based sex workers, some of whom cited the drug policies in legal brothels as the reason for not working there. Many authors have found links between drug use and inconsistent condom use, decreased ability to negotiate with clients and an increased risk of violence.

Street-based sex workers reported poorer health than other sex workers in the sample. These workers differed from other sectors of the sex industry on a number of variables including their demographic background, the age they started work, drug use and experiences of violence. They left home earlier, started work earlier and were more likely to currently use illicit drugs. Our finding also indicated that street-based sex workers experienced rapes and bashings at the hands of clients at rates more than twice that of other sectors of the sex industry. Attempts to eliminate this sector of the sex industry have failed. Street-based sex work fulfils a niche market within the sex industry. It is unlikely that legislation and law enforcement will remove what is often seen as a social problem, and therefore new strategies need to be employed to manage the health and safety risks faced by this sector of the sex industry.

For many street-based sex workers working within a legal brothel is not a realistic option.

Pyett and Warr (1997) found that street-based sex workers tended to be younger than brothel workers in their Victorian sample. They also found that street-based sex workers started work at a younger age and reported high rates of substance use. Street-based sex workers reported higher levels of drug use compared with legal brothel workers, in which there were only a small number of poly-drug users. It may be the Queensland brothel industry differs from brothel industries found in other states, a difference which may be related to the strict licensing regulations. It is also possible that restricting the sample to persons 18 years of age or older has meant that younger street workers were excluded from participating in the study.

Job satisfaction

Many women within this sample reported they enjoyed aspects of their job. Most women who had entered the sex industry were motivated by income considerations and many respondents did not want to leave the sex industry at the time of interview. Despite many women reporting a good level of previous education, almost half of the sample had been employed in administrative or service positions before entering the sex industry. Certainly, working as a sex worker may provide women with access to an income that may not have been possible in their prior employment.

Respondent's overall job satisfaction was generally high. Street-based sex workers reported the lowest job satisfaction scores. These lower job satisfaction scores may reflect the particular factors associated with being a street worker including higher rates of drug use, criminal prosecution of street-based sex workers and increased levels of negative experiences (e.g. violence) reported by street workers.

Predictors of work sector

The two main predictors of current work sector were found to be the age of the sex worker and current injecting drug use. Although injecting drug use was not synonymous with working in the illegal sector of the industry, women who were currently injecting drugs were more likely to work within an illegal sector. The age of respondents was also a predictor of current work situation, with older women more likely to work privately.

Over half the respondents working in legal brothels had started work in that sector, suggesting that the

introduction of legal brothels may have allowed a significant number of women to enter the sex industry. It is not possible to determine whether these women would have entered the sex industry in any event, though this is unlikely to have been the case for some of the women involved. Certainly, many of the women working in legal brothels had entered the sex industry for reasons similar to women working in other sectors of the sex industry, i.e. financial reasons. The fact that many women viewed a safe work environment, good atmosphere and working conditions as advantages of working in legal brothels further suggests that some women entered the industry because of the development of legal brothels. It is relevant that women working in legal brothels continue to work in that sector despite the lower income they receive when compared to other sex workers.

In 2003 there were significantly more sex workers employed full-time, part-time or on a casual basis before they entered the sex industry compared to the 1991 sex worker sample. It may be that in 2003 entering the sex industry was an occupational choice among many choices rather than a solution to unemployment. This is supported by the significant numbers of women starting work in legal brothels, potentially allowing them to make amounts of money which they may not have otherwise been able to do.

Where to go from here

Street-based sex workers are disadvantaged on a number of different levels. Not only do they report a high rate of substance use but they experience higher levels of client-related violence. The criminal sanctions surrounding soliciting increase the urgency associated with transactions which involve a persistent threat of arrest. Many sex workers work from areas that are less well populated and known. All of these factors create a dangerous work environment.

In Manchester and Liverpool in the United Kingdom attempts to eradicate street-based prostitution included a campaign of naming and shaming ‘kerb crawlers’. Although this was thought to reduce the crime associated with street-based sex work it was possible that this displaced sexual transactions to other areas and resulted in sex workers working from quieter, more dangerous locations. Attempts to control and eradicate street-based prostitution have generally failed. This sector of the industry is associated with a range of health and safety needs – and the current legislative framework does not serve their circumstances.

It is consequently suggested that other more practical approaches need to be employed. Various options have been trialled elsewhere. The Netherlands, parts of Germany and New South Wales have established non-residential zones where street-based sex workers can solicit clients. Largely, this has been successful in restricting street-based sex work to industrial areas and limiting the number of sex workers working from residential areas. The New South Wales legislation also permits the existence of safe houses where street-based sex workers can take clients. It is generally thought that the development of such premises, although potentially problematic, would reduce the health and safety risks associated with street-based sex work. Locating street-based sex workers in a defined geographic area might also permit health-related services to be concentrated in these areas. Services could include drug treatment services as well as protection services.

Other important considerations include the development of police liaison officers to meet with sex workers, organisations and the community, generally improved access to drug treatment programs enabling women who use drugs to change their drug use patterns and the extension of exit and training programs for sex workers seeking employment outside the sex industry.

Conclusion

The current legislation has been effective in improving the health and well being of the sex workers within it. This is reflected in the high job satisfaction reported by many women. However, for those working outside the legislative framework there are a number of disadvantages including increased risk of exposure to STIs and decreased physical safety in the workplace.

There is an urgent need to address the health problems faced by street-based sex workers. While concerns about the public nuisance associated with loitering and soliciting may be real, such concerns do not obviate the need to address the occupational health and safety needs of workers in the sex industry. The development of ‘tolerance zones’ and ‘safe houses’ from which street-based sex workers can work without fear of persecution are among the strategies that have been implemented elsewhere. Additional considerations include the development of police liaison officers, increased access to drug treatment programs and exit and training programs for sex workers wanting to leave the sex industry.

