

## Rally for the decriminalisation of sex work in South Australia

For immediate release.

### SIN

Telephone: (08) 8351 7626

Web: [www.sin.org.au](http://www.sin.org.au)

Contact: Sharon Jennings, SA SIN Manager, [manager@sin.org.au](mailto:manager@sin.org.au);  
(08) 8351 7626; 0415 316 780



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## International Sex Workers Day

### Rally for Decriminalisation of sex work in SA!

### 4 pm: Friday June 1<sup>st</sup> 2018

June 2<sup>nd</sup> is International Sex Workers Day, which celebrates the birth of the sex worker rights movement, which originated in Lyon France, forty three years ago in 1975. On this day, sex workers staged a church 'sit in' to protest police brutality and the lack of police attention to crimes against sex workers. Soon community members joined sex workers and challenged the police to distinguish who is and who isn't a sex worker, making it difficult for the police to make arrests.

This year, on June 1st, as part of International Sex Workers Day celebrations, Adelaide sex workers and their supporters, including other sex industry staff, health professionals, friends, family and clients of sex workers, will rally at 4 pm on the steps of Parliament House, with a message for the South Australian government, demanding the decriminalisation of sex work in South Australia.

The laws pertaining to sex work in South Australia are contained in the Summary Offences Amendment Act (1953) and the Criminal Law Consolidation Act (1935). "South Australian laws have not moved with the times and are putting sex workers at considerable risk of harm" said Sharon Jennings, manager of SIN.

"These laws are not only archaic, they are dangerous, discriminatory and unworkable. Criminalisation of us, our work, our workplaces or our clients does not prevent sex work occurring. What it does achieve however, is to push our work underground, forcing us to work in unsafe environments where we are more vulnerable as victims of crime because we are seen as easy targets and less likely to complain to the police" added Ms Jennings.

CEO of Scarlet Alliance the National Sex Worker Organisation, Jules Kim agrees, adding, "The evidence is clear. The decriminalisation of sex workers, our workplaces and our clients, ensures the best outcome not only for sex workers but also for government and the wider community."

While sex work establishments are still illegal, sex industry employers have no legal responsibility to comply with industrial relations legislation, or to provide a safe working environment for their employees. Criminalisation and criminal records create a barrier for those sex workers who may wish to exit the sex industry. Criminalisation undermines health promotion work of agencies such as SIN, a health promotion project aimed at supporting the current high standards of sexual health amongst sex workers.

This time last year, sex workers were applauding the South Australian Select Committee of the Legislative Council's decision to recommend the passing of the Statutes Amendment (Decriminalisation of Sex Work) Bill 2015 without amendment. We were hopeful of our rights finally being recognised, and yet here we are again, 12 months on with no changes to our laws, and sex workers voices still going unheard.

So, at **4 pm on Friday 1st June**, dressed to impress and carrying red umbrellas, the universal symbol of sex worker rights, sex workers and others who support the human rights of sex workers, will celebrate International Sex Workers Day. We will raise awareness and draw attention to the continued struggle of South Australian sex workers who are still fighting against discrimination, criminalisation and victimisation.

**For further comment:** Sharon Jennings, SIN Manager: [manager@sin.org.au](mailto:manager@sin.org.au); (08) 8351 7626; 0415 316 780