

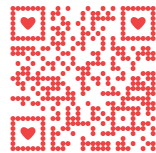
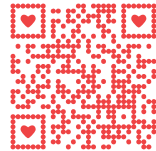
What are Asian migrant sex workers actually asking for?

- **The end of raids on the workplaces** of Asian migrant sex workers and the end of sex worker profiling at the border.
- **Safe and lawful ways to travel to Australia and work** through expanded migration pathways.
- **A national peer-led Asian migrant sex worker project** to provide peer education, support and information on lawful migration pathways, workplace issues, accessing legal support, and expert lived-experience policy advice.
- **Meaningful, regular and genuine communication pathways with authorities** on racial and sex worker profiling at the border, and visa cancellation, detention and deportation of Asian migrant sex workers.

LEARN MORE ABOUT RAIDS AND POLICING

Read our two briefing papers in full

The first paper examines the gap between policy and Asian migrant sex workers' experiences of workplace raids. The second outlines further information and recommended reforms to better protect migrant sex workers' rights and safety.



RIGHTS, NOT RESCUE.

Asian migrant sex workers want **justice now**.



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The policing of Asian migrant sex workers is not new, but it must stop.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Australia's response to trafficking included mass raids on sex industry workplaces, causing national alarm and concern.

In November 2022, the Australian Border Force began Operation Inglenook after media reports wrongly linked migrant sex workers with trafficking. In two years of operation it conducted 180 "field activities" with no evidence that it detected trafficking or exploitation. These activities, which are often raids, undermine the human rights of Asian migrant sex workers. Authorities justify raids as a way to detect trafficking and exploitation, but the reality is they target Asian migrant workers for visa checks, visa cancellations, detention and deportation. International research shows that raids do not reduce exploitation and can harm peer support, safety, health and wellbeing.



AUSTRALIA'S VISA FRAMEWORK LEADS TO VULNERABILITY

Many Asian migrant sex workers face major barriers in accessing Australia's visa system, leading them to rely on third-party agents who can charge high fees, creating financial stress and risk.



RAIDS UNDERMINE DECRIMINALISATION

Raids on migrant workplaces undermine the benefits of sex work decriminalisation, workplace safety and peer education.

The impact of raids on Asian migrant sex workers

Authorities describe raids as "compliance visits" intended to "protect vulnerable migrant workers"; but sex workers and workplace staff describe a different reality. Sex worker peer educators report that these raids create confusion, and some sex workers begin to think sex work is illegal in decriminalised settings. This can lead to behaviour seen before decriminalisation, such as hiding condoms, pretending not to offer sexual services and not allowing peer educators into workplaces.

Asian migrant sex workers describe groups of uniformed and armed officers entering workplaces during work hours, interrupting bookings while sexual services are taking place, and staying for hours while workers are separated and interviewed. Many report feeling unsafe whether they stay or leave, and describe feeling frightened, angry, harassed and stressed.

Australian Border Force raids harm Asian migrant sex workers in many ways. They affect health, wellbeing and access to peer support.



Raids fail to address migrant workplace rights

Raids do not solve exploitation or trafficking. Research shows they rarely lead to trafficking findings or prosecutions. They can also make workers more likely to accept unsafe conditions because they fear exposure or deportation.



Raids foster anti-authority sentiment and mistrust

Raids increase fear of immigration and other authorities. This undermines the benefits of sex work decriminalisation, workplace safety and programs aimed to support migrant workers such as the Workplace Justice Visa pilot.



Raids are traumatising and dehumanising

Raids are traumatic for migrant sex workers, even when there has been no visa breach. People describe officers using militarised tactics, separating workers, not providing interpreters and pressuring them to sign documents they do not understand.



Raids deter help seeking behaviours

One of the most harmful effects of raids is that they push Asian migrant sex workers further underground and into isolation. This disrupts peer support and education, discourages sex workers from carrying condoms and makes it harder to access health services and sexually transmissible infection (STI) testing.