



**Australian
Sex Workers
Association**



Strategic Plan

2010-2013



Incorporating a Five Year Vision 2010-2015

post: P.O. Box 261, DARLINGHURST NSW 1300
street: Level 3, 154 Albion Street, Surry Hills, Sydney
email: info@scarletalliance.org.au

phone: 02 9326 9455
fax: 02 9326 9870
web: www.scarletalliance.org.au

Contents

Introduction	1
About Scarlet Alliance.....	2
Five Year Vision 2010-2015	5
Visions, Goals and Strategies.....	7
Appendix	i
Organisational Structure and Membership.....	iii
Guiding Principles	vi
History	xiv
Achievements 2005-2009	xvi

Introduction

This is Scarlet Alliance's Strategic Plan for 2010-2013. The document provides the strategic framework and direction to Scarlet Alliance's work for the next four years. The appendix provides further detailed information about Scarlet Alliance; the organisational structure, the guiding principles from which we work, the history, and our achievements from 2005 to 2009.

The Strategic Plan is the result of extensive input from Scarlet Alliance membership, staff, volunteers and executive committee members.

The Strategic Plan describes our visions and provides prioritised long and short term goals, and strategies under each vision.

About Scarlet Alliance

In 2009, Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association, celebrated its twentieth birthday. Although many things have changed, many others have remained the same and we are still strongly committed to our original purpose of being a best practice peak national body representing sex workers and sex worker organisations and projects.

Our Mission Statement:

Through its objectives, policies and programs, Scarlet Alliance aims to achieve equality, social, legal, political, cultural, health and economic justice for past and present workers in the sex industry, that allows sex workers to be self-determining agents, building their own alliances and choosing where and how they work.

Our Objectives:

The objectives for which Scarlet Alliance is established are:

- (a) To promote the civil and human rights of past and present sex workers and to work toward ending all forms of discrimination against them;
- (b) To lobby for legal and administrative frameworks which do not discriminate against sex workers;
- (c) To challenge any government at any time when and where it implements legislation, regulations, rules, policies or law enforcement practices which are discriminatory and/or repressive to the rights and autonomy of sex workers;
- (d) To actively promote the right of all sex workers to work in whatever area of their chosen occupation, including street, brothel, escort, private and opportunistic work;
- (e) To actively work towards guaranteeing the right of all sex workers to optimum occupational health and safety provisions. This will promote conditions where safe sex and general health knowledge can be converted to safe work practices. Furthermore, challenge any legislation, policy or process which does not so promote the rights of the worker;
- (f) To strive to eradicate sex worker stereotypes and stigmatisation in the popular consciousness and to communicate the diversity of ideas, opinions and aspirations of past and present sex workers;
- (g) To liaise with international sex worker rights groups in the development of regional and international networks, programs and objectives;
- (h) To support sex workers and sex worker organisations to become more politically active;
- (i) To enhance the capacity of sex workers to participate in advancing their rights and build networks and organisations;

- (j) To gather and disseminate sex industry related information to members;
- (k) To play an active role in Australia's response to HIV;
- (l) To provide training and education on issues relating to the Australian sex industry and the migration of sex workers into Australia; and
- (m) To present up to date information on sex work issues at national and international forums.

These objects are undertaken in order to advance sex worker rights.

Scarlet Alliance and its member sex worker organisations, projects and groups incorporate methods of working guided by the principles from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion¹ as well as the GIPA (greater involvement of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS) Principle² (please refer to Appendix – Guiding Principles).

Our current membership includes individual sex workers, sex worker organisations, projects and groups, and associate member organisations who do not meet the full membership criteria but are involved without voting rights (please refer to Appendix – Organisational Structure and Membership). This ensures Scarlet Alliance is able to represent the issues affecting members and sex workers of all genders and sexualities, Australia wide. The membership provides a wide spectrum of health promotion services, including advocacy to sex workers, and has a corporate experience in the community based response spanning over three decades. Member organisations' work is carried out through active partnerships with key policy, research and service providers such as sexual health services, legal bodies, and alcohol and other drugs services, Police and welfare services. Access and equity training is provided to these key service providers in order to meet the needs of sex workers. Individual members contribute to most of the Australian activities on a voluntary basis.

Scarlet Alliance is a member of Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW)³, Network of Sex Work Projects (NSWP)⁴, the Australian Federations of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)⁵, and the HIV Consortium for Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific⁶, a collaboration of nine Australian HIV organisations formed to foster strategic partnerships and linkages between Australia and the Asia and Pacific regions

¹ The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, 21 November 1986. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

² Greater Involvement of People Living with of Affected by HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/JC1299-PolicyBrief-GIPA_en.pdf

³ Asia Pacific Network for Sex Workers. Retrieved from <http://apnswdollhouse.wordpress.com/>

⁴ Network of Sex Worker Projects. Retrieved from <http://www.nswp.org>

⁵ Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. Retrieved from <http://www.afao.org.au>

⁶ HIV Consortium for Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved from <http://www.hivconsortium.org.au/>

implementing the Regional HIV Capacity Building Program funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and is a signatory to the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)⁷ Code of Conduct. Our international work involves capacity and partnership building with sex worker organisations and sex worker leaders within the Asia Pacific region

As a member of AFAO, Scarlet Alliance plays a role in governance, holding a position on the board of directors. Scarlet Alliance works closely with other national peak organisations: the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA)⁸, the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)⁹, the Anwernekenhe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Alliance (ANA)¹⁰.

-
- ⁷ Australian Council for International Development. Retrieved from <http://www.acfid.asn.au/>
- ⁸ National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from <http://www.napwa.org.au>
- ⁹ Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League. Retrieved from <http://www.aivl.org.au>
- ¹⁰ Anwernekenhe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Alliance. Retrieved from <http://ana.org.au/>

Five Year Vision 2010-2015

This Strategic Plan captures Scarlet Alliance as an organisation effectively continuing to work toward strengthening its role as an autonomous, vibrant, viable, representative, best practice, peak national sex worker organisation whose activities as a leader and expert on Australian sex worker policy and programming actively seeks to challenge stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers, and which is resourced through a variety of sources.

Scarlet Alliance will continue to ensure an authentic representation of, and a high level of democratic and inclusive engagement and participation from, diverse sex worker communities, and in particular continue to improve accessibility for migrant sex workers, Indigenous sex workers, HIV positive sex workers, street based sex workers and socially isolated sex workers. We will continue to challenge the stigma and discrimination that affects our community. We see Scarlet Alliance as a place of engagement and involvement, a safe space that is accessible by all sex workers.

We will continue to support the capacity development of our membership with a high level of engagement. Our vision includes adopting practices which will ensure organisational health and sustainability through succession planning, reducing the likelihood of burnout and ensuring individuals currently involved are respected for their work (whether paid or unpaid), and that the many sex workers who have supported Scarlet Alliance through the years are recognised and their work, passion and dedication is honoured.

Although Scarlet Alliance has not been supported financially for an Australian national secretariat, and much of the core work of a national peak sex worker organisation remains unfunded, we have achieved an extremely high level of quality work. This has been achieved through the dedication, passion and voluntary participation by many individual sex workers and those involved with our member organisations. This high level of volunteer work will continue to be honoured.

Scarlet Alliance will ensure our independence and autonomy exploring other income generating activities and procurement of assets. We will also continue to explore and identify recurrent funding opportunities. Scarlet Alliance will assist member organisations to be supported to move towards independence and autonomy.

Scarlet Alliance will act as a best practice sex worker organisation as defined by its diverse membership and strive to show by example the elements which contribute to best practice outcomes for achieving our mission. Scarlet Alliance will support its membership to identify what is a best practice sex worker organisation, projects, network and group and to implement strategies and develop capacity to meet this objective.

Scarlet Alliance and its member sex worker groups will continue to effectively implement methods of working guided by principles from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion¹¹. The success of the response to HIV by sex worker communities in Australia is unprecedented and Scarlet Alliance undertakes the responsibility to ensure these outcomes are not undermined by the socio-legal context that affects sex workers, nor the complacency on behalf of policy makers, funders or those who fail to recognise the importance of Scarlet Alliance's Guiding Principles which have contributed to these outcomes.

As our organisation grows so too must our profile and our opportunity to raise the profile of those issues impacting on sex worker communities in Australia. As experts on national sex worker issues, we will strive toward our rightful inclusion in national strategic decision making forums including the Ministerial Advisory Committee for Blood Borne Viruses and Sexually Transmissible Infections (MACBBVS) and for the recognition which our communities deserve for successfully preventing HIV infection within sex work.

Scarlet Alliance will continue to engage in influential key partnerships and demand sex worker input in policy and programming. Our key partnerships within the HIV sector, health, sexual health, legal, education, research, employment, training, human and industrial rights areas will continue to be further fostered and will ensure mutual benefits.

Scarlet Alliance will continue to build on its strong international links with sex worker groups and organisations that provide services to sex workers with a particular focus on the Asia Pacific region.

Scarlet Alliance and its members are leaders in the provision of best practice advocacy and services for sex workers that address the stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers. Scarlet Alliance will continue to recognise the importance of sex worker cultural events, and the contribution this expression makes to understandings of sex work and sex workers.

Scarlet Alliance will continue to use best practice monitoring and evaluation processes to strengthen its processes and capacity.

¹¹ The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, 21 November 1986. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

Visions, Goals and Strategies

Longer Term Goals 2010-2015	Shorter Term Goals 2010-2013	Strategies
1 Scarlet Alliance supports its membership		
1.1 Scarlet Alliance increases the capacity of individual sex workers to participate in the sex worker rights movement.	Individual membership promoted.	Explore the development of a Membership officer position. Increase sex worker involvement in Scarlet Alliance and our membership.
	Leadership roles encouraged.	Continue to trial the Doubles positions. Use/promote spokesperson roles effectively. Community Development and training to do advocacy.
	Constitution improved to increase the involvement of individual sex worker members.	Evaluate the success of individual membership. Take action on the findings of the evaluation.
1.2 Scarlet Alliance benchmarks best practice for sex work workplaces.	Best practice sex worker cooperatively owned workplace models investigated.	Explore laws, conditions, local council regulations, industrial and human rights provisions in consultation with the membership and other relevant groups.
	Best practice sex industry business operation promoted.	Promote the Guide to Best Practice Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry and explore different types of best practice sex industry business operation models for sex workers.

Longer Term Goals 2010-2015	Shorter Term Goals 2010-2013	Strategies
2 Scarlet Alliance is an autonomous, viable, representative, peak national sex worker organisation.		
2.1 Scarlet Alliance authentically represents diverse sex worker communities through a high level of participation and interaction.	<p>Consultation processes in order to ensure authentic representation is improved.</p> <p>Scarlet Alliance and our membership become more aware of the diversity of the sex worker community – discouraging exclusivity.</p> <p>Level of participation of diverse sex worker communities is increased and diversity is recognised both within sex worker communities/organisations and among policy makers.</p>	<p>Consult with membership on issues affecting members and sex workers.</p> <p>Facilitate and provide a range of options for exchange and distribution of information to and between members.</p> <p>Form a “Diversity’ working party to explore these issues across Scarlet Alliance and our membership.</p> <p>Ensure Scarlet Alliance and our membership are aware and responsive of access and equity issues.</p> <p>Identify and target under-represented communities of sex workers in the sex worker rights movement to determine ways to increase involvement.</p> <p>Community development support for under-represented sex workers.</p> <p>Use interactive technologies to increase participation.</p>
2.2 Scarlet Alliance processes are democratic and accountable.	Accessibility of our AGM to the membership maintained and improved.	<p>Develop an action plan from each National Forum.</p> <p>Create complaint process and ways for members to have input into activities of the organisation.</p>
2.3 Scarlet Alliance engages in succession planning.	<p>Achievements and events are documented and archived.</p> <p>Systems for mentoring and succession planning built in.</p> <p>Trial of Doubles positions continued.</p>	<p>Maintain Scarlet Alliance intellectual property.</p> <p>Mentor and train sex workers involved with Scarlet Alliance activities/activism.</p> <p>Supporting Doubles positions.</p>

2.4 Scarlet Alliance and its member organisations are independent and autonomous

Core funding obtained.

Explore and identify recurrent funding opportunities e.g. Community Sector Support Scheme and foster relationships with funding bodies.

Deductible gift recipient status endorsed.

Finalise status as a deductible gift recipient charity with Australian Tax Office.
Promote tax deductible donations.

Other income generating activities and procurement of assets explored.

Access financial advice to explore other income generating activities and procurement of assets.

Capacity to continuously function as an independent and autonomous organisation strengthened.

Develop Scarlet Alliance infrastructure and Executive capacity.

Member organisations supported to move towards independence and autonomy.

Provide support and organisational capacity development opportunities to member organisation to move towards independence and autonomy.

2.5 Scarlet Alliance maximises our control over our physical and virtual spaces.

Property and assets purchased.

Research options for investment by Scarlet Alliance.

Longer Term Goals 2010-2015

Shorter Term Goals 2010-2013

Strategies

3 Scarlet Alliance is seen as a leader and expert on sex worker policy and programming and actively seeks to challenge stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 3.1 Scarlet Alliance is recognised as the peak body for sex workers and sex worker organisations/projects, experts on national sex worker issues. | Profile of representation of Scarlet Alliance as the experts on national sex worker and sex worker organisation issues be increased. | Develop marketing strategies/activities.
Develop media and partnership relationships.
Presence at key forums and conferences. |
| 3.2 Scarlet Alliance engages in influential key partnerships, and demands sex worker input in policy and programming. | Level of influence with key partnerships increased and importance of sex worker involvement on sex worker issues be raised. | Gain representation on decision making bodies.
Develop strategic partnerships and train other services in best practice working with sex workers. |
| 3.3 Scarlet Alliance and its members are leaders in the provision of best practice advocacy and services for sex workers that address the stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers. | Provision of best practice advocacy and services for sex workers to address the stigma and discrimination faced by sex workers is strengthened by Scarlet Alliance and member organisations. | Scarlet Alliance and members advocate in line with the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion and the principles outlined in the National HIV Strategy e.g. peer education, harm reduction.
Support decriminalisation and positive legislative change.
Support Occupational Health And Safety and Industrial Rights for sex workers. |
| 3.4 Scarlet Alliance recognises the diversity of sex workers in Australia. | Influence policy makers to make decisions based on an understanding and respect for the diversity of our sex worker community. | Ensure the diversity of sex workers is represented in our public profile; including attendance at conferences and other events, the work of our elected representatives, and the media of the organisation. |
| 3.5 Scarlet Alliance actively participates at the international level. | Increased participation and recognition in existing international networks. | Represent Scarlet Alliance in international forums and meetings of international networks. |

Recognise existing sex worker peer organisations in Asia and the Pacific, and contribute to the capacity of emerging sex worker organisations.

Facilitate a two way exchange through capacity development, strategic partnerships and sharing of resources with sex worker organisations and leaders within Asia and the Pacific region.

Longer Term Goals 2010-2015

Shorter Term Goals 2010-2013

Strategies

4 Scarlet Alliance uses best practice monitoring and evaluation to strengthen processes and capacity.

4.1 Scarlet Alliance monitors and evaluates its process to meet goals and objectives.

Monitoring and Evaluation systems maintained and improved.

Outcome of evaluation effectively incorporated into the planning of future Scarlet Alliance work.

Implement ongoing processes for membership input.
Implement ongoing processes for sex worker input.

Ensure current work incorporates monitoring and evaluation processes and uses evaluation of past work when planning for future work.



Appendix

Organisational Structure and Membership

Guiding Principles

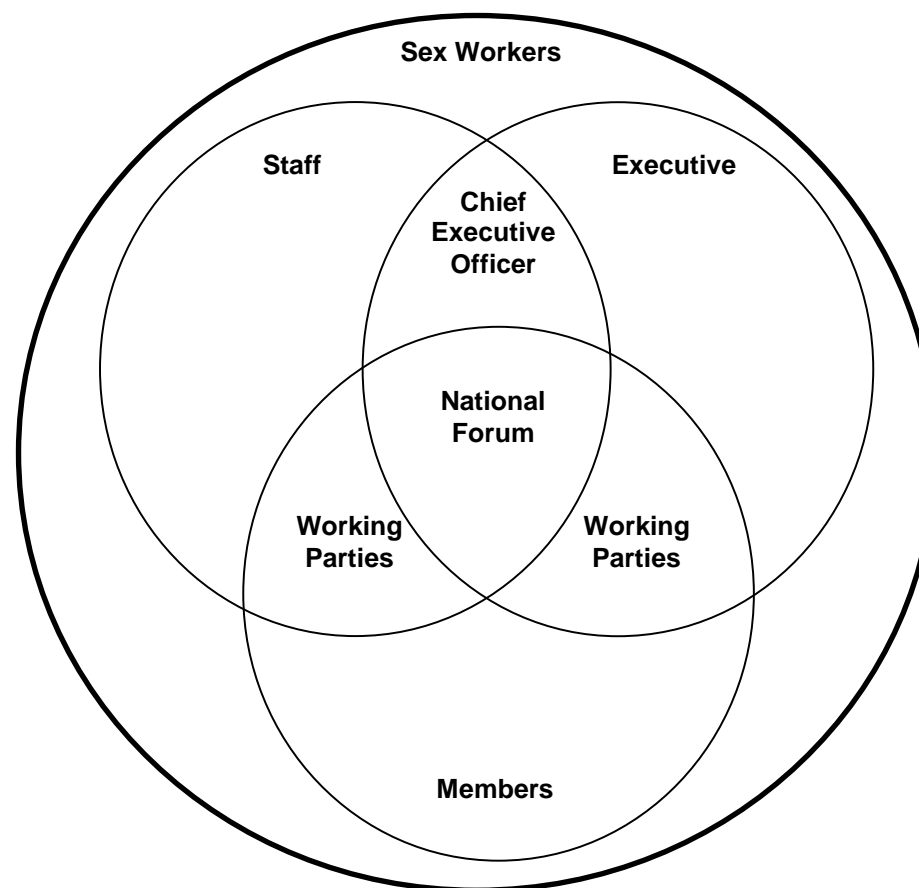
History

Achievements 2005-2009

Organisational Structure and Membership

Scarlet Alliance operates as an independent Association incorporated in the Australian Capital Territory under the Associations Incorporation Act 1991. Scarlet Alliance office bearers are elected at the Annual National Forum, held in alternating states and territories allowing greater access by the membership and local sex workers throughout Australia. Scarlet Alliance's membership is made up of funded sex workers projects, but also smaller, unfunded groups or networks of sex workers, as well as individual members, sex workers, past and present. Associate members are sex worker groups that do not meet the membership criteria but are involved without voting rights. Member organisations are not only geographically based, and include specific purpose focused sex worker groups and organisations. To become an organisational or associate member of Scarlet Alliance sex worker groups must complete an application form¹². A subcommittee of the Scarlet Alliance Executive then conducts an interview with the applicant determining whether the group meets the requirements of the Scarlet Alliance Membership Audit Tool¹³. Applicants are asked to complete the self assessment section of the audit tool and provide supporting documentation.

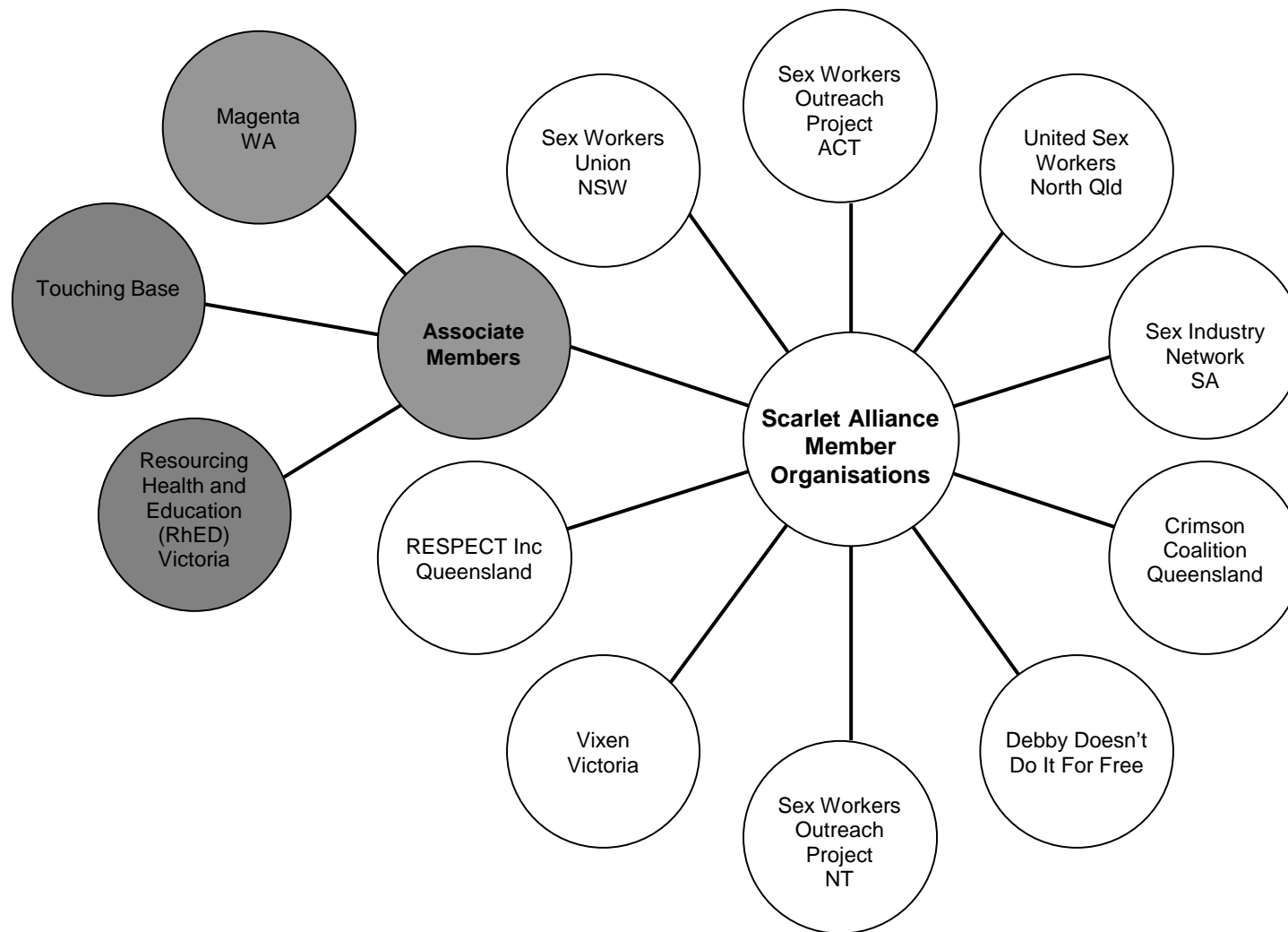
In 2007 the Constitution was changed to accept individual sex workers to become members of Scarlet Alliance. To become an individual member of Scarlet Alliance, individuals must complete an application form and be nominated by two current individual members¹⁴.



¹² Scarlet Alliance Application Form Organisational Member 2004. Retrieved from www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/append04

¹³ Scarlet Alliance Membership Audit Tool 2004. Retrieved from www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/append04

¹⁴ Scarlet Alliance Application Form Individual Member 2007. Retrieved from http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/membership_form07/



Guiding Principles

Scarlet Alliance aims to achieve sex worker rights¹⁵ and incorporates health promotion methods of working guided by principles from the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion¹⁶ as well as the GIPA (greater involvement of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS) Principle¹⁷. To achieve this, the organisation incorporates various key strategies that we recognise as best practice, as our health promotion tools.

Sex Worker Rights

Sex workers need rights to achieve equality, social, legal, political, cultural, health and economic justice and to become self-determining agents, building their own alliances and choosing where and how they work.

Critical to the Sex Worker Rights Movement in Australia is the acceptance of **sex work as a legitimate work choice**. The sex that happens as part of sex work occurs in the context of work, most often within a work place or temporary work space, whether it be a private home, hotel room, brothel, massage parlour, safe house, car, street or other setting. Sex workers understand and consider the sex that happens as part of their job to be work and this must be understood and acknowledged. Considering this context, the workplace or space impacts directly on the occupational health and safety of the sex worker involved. For this reason, industrial issues (including: ability to negotiate fair working conditions; access to clean and safe work space; access to condoms, lubricants and other prophylactics; lighting and disposal options in the work environment), legal status (if sex work is legal or decriminalised, whether the sex worker can openly describe and negotiate the services provided, or if it is illegal, whether the sex worker must disguise the services provided, speak in jargon, focus on avoiding detection rather than their own safety) and levels of discrimination and stigmatisation (whether a sex worker feels empowered to report crime and has the same right to protection under law etc), all impact heavily on the experiences of the individual sex worker. For these reasons HIV and STI prevention work can not be separated out from the environment in which a sex worker has sex. The sex worker rights movement in Australia acknowledges sex workers' choice and therefore works within a holistic framework.

At Scarlet Alliance we believe sex worker rights incorporate the following:

A. Human rights,

¹⁵ Sex worker rights is the umbrella term that refers to a group of rights denied to most sex workers and that the sex worker rights movement is collectively working to address inequity.

¹⁶ The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion, First International Conference on Health Promotion, Ottawa, 21 November 1986. Retrieved from <http://www.who.int/healthpromotion/conferences/previous/ottawa/en/>

¹⁷ Greater Involvement of People Living with of Affected by HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2007/JC1299-PolicyBrief-GIPA_en.pdf

- B. Industrial rights,
- C. Civil rights.

A. Human Rights

Sex workers in Australia are denied protection under Human Rights legislation (except in ACT and QLD) and many state laws actively discriminate. ***The Right to “work (and) free choice of employment” is stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights***, and the ongoing criminalisation, pathologisation and police control of sex workers in Australia infringes upon that right.

B. Industrial Rights

Scarlet Alliance recognises that sex work as a legitimate work choice. For workers in all industries, attention to occupational health and safety (OH&S) issues are about the protection of one’s health and future income. For sex workers, OH&S considerations are no different. Although there are many OH&S issues confronting workers in the sex industry, STIs are an issue of key importance to sex workers. As a result, Australian sex workers and the sex industry have been successful in self regulating in relation to STIs. Studies also indicate Australian sex workers contract lower rates of STIs than the general community despite some serious disincentives to maintain high standards of sexual health and safe commercial sexual practices.

However, there are many examples of how ***Australian laws and policies impede sex workers’ industrial rights, and impinge upon the optimisation and maintenance of high standards of occupational health and safety***. In particular, criminalisation of sex work and inappropriate government regulations and policy on the compulsory sexual health testing of sex workers threatens to undermine sex worker’s exemplary sexual health records. Sex workers have historically avoided compulsory medical treatment in environments of over-regulation and strict controls because of fears of a breach of their confidentiality and further stigmatisation. Furthermore, the use by police of safe sex materials as evidence of involvement in sex work undermines hard fought and established safe commercial sex practices in the sex industry.

Scarlet Alliance supports the best practice implementation of OH&S as initially outlined in the (now outdated) Scarlet Alliance document A Guide to Best Practice Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry¹⁸. Scarlet Alliance supports the OH&S regulation of all commercial sex premises such as brothels, parlours and escort agencies. Sex workers must have access to appropriately equipped workplaces, personal protection equipment (PPE) such as condoms, lubricant and other safe sex materials, relevant training and resource materials and be empowered and supported to ensure autonomous decisions about the use of prophylactics and other safe sex initiatives.

¹⁸ Scarlet Alliance. (2000). A Guide to Best Practice Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry. Retrieved from <http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/bestpractise>

C. Civil Rights

As stated before, criminalisation of sex work prevents sex workers from accessing health services and block effective public health responses. ***Sex work needs to be decriminalised for sex workers, or civil rights, to be able to achieve full access to human and industrial rights.*** The Australian Government's vision of a socially inclusive society is one in which all Australians feel valued and have the opportunity to participate fully in the life of our society¹⁹. Sex work needs to be decriminalised before the Australian governments social inclusion strategy can be full implemented.

The United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki Moon in the Joint Action for Results, UNAIDS Outcome Framework, 2009²⁰ stated that nation states "can remove punitive laws, policies, practices, stigma and discrimination that block effective responses to AIDS: By collaborating with civil society and all stakeholders to uphold non-discrimination in all efforts, countering social judgment and the fear that feeds stigma, delivering on the broader human rights agenda, including in the areas of sex work, travel restrictions, homophobia and criminalization of HIV transmission, ensuring access to justice and use of the law by promoting property and inheritance rights, protecting access to and the retention of employment and protecting marginalized groups and reinforcing the work of UN Plus."

Health Promotion

The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognises that by enabling people to increase control over their health and its determinants, their health improves. It is ***a holistic approach in addressing health issues, promoting the understanding that the right to health and well-being is only achievable by ensuring that other rights, such as human, industrial and civil rights, are met.*** As such, health promotion simply cannot just be about HIV education. For sex workers' health to be addressed, sex workers need to achieve equality, social, legal, political, cultural and economic justice. This can only be achieved by recognising that sex worker rights are human, industrial and civil rights. These rights-based frameworks allow for effective public health responses to sex worker needs.

The charter defines Health Promotion Action as embracing the following:

- Building a healthy public policy
 - This involves placing health on the agenda of policy-makers at all levels and sectors. Policies must incorporate different approaches, including legislation, fiscal measures, taxation and organisational change. It must also identify barriers to the adoption of policies in non health sectors and strategies to deal with these barriers.
- Creating supportive environments
 - This refers to the need for Health to be incorporated in other goals of societies, communities, nations and the world. Health must not be considered in isolation, but rather as part of interrelated activities of societies.

¹⁹ Australian Government. (2010). Social Inclusion. Retrieved from <http://www.socialinclusion.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

²⁰ UNAIDS. (2009) Joint Action for Results, UNAIDS Outcome Framework, 2009. Retrieved from http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2009/jc1713_joint_action_en.pdf

- Strengthening community action
 - This involves a focus on empowering communities, encouraging their ownership in the process and increasing their control over their own endeavours and destinies. It provides an emphasis on developing systems and support mechanism to encourage the sex work communities participation and involvement in the direction of health issues, including access to information, learning opportunities or health, and funding support.
- Developing personal skills
 - Health promotion involves presenting opportunities for developing the person skills of individuals in order to increase their options and control over their own health. By developing the skills and abilities of community members they will be empowered to make informed choices, encouraging healthy behaviours.
- Reorient health services
 - There is a need to shift the role of the health sector from one which focus on providing clinical and curative services to one which increasingly embraces health promotion. Reorientation demands a stronger holistic approach with emphasis on health research, professional education, training and in the case of sex workers there must be a strong focus on inclusion of sex workers in decision making roles and forums. A holistic approach will emphasise the importance of dealing with the whole individual and not just their health needs.

Key Strategies

Health promotion tools used by the sex worker rights movement have led to a successful sex worker community based response to HIV and STIs in Australia, because the tools are grounded in a holistic rights based framework, incorporating advocacy and education on broader sex worker issues and, not just HIV and STI education.

We use the following best practice key strategies as our health promotion tools:

- A. community engagement,
- B. community development and capacity building,
- C. peer education,
- D. harm reduction, and
- E. partnership building.

A. Community Engagement

Sex worker groups play an important role in enacting a key element of the Australian HIV response. ***The engagement and centrality of “affected communities”²¹ (sex workers) in the development of its own response and strategies is a proven effective method of HIV education and prevention.*** Community engagement is not sustainable if a sex worker organisation is only supported by Government to approach HIV and STI prevention by focusing on these issues in isolation to the workplace, the environment, and the social factors affecting a sex workers engagement with, and ability to negotiate safe sex practices.

Scarlet Alliance believes that community engagement only works if other successful strategies such as community development and capacity development are also incorporated.

B. Community Development and Capacity Building

Community development and capacity building has successfully strengthened our communities’ ability to sustain our response to HIV (many years into the Australian epidemic).

Sex worker communities are marginalised and experience high levels of social exclusion. The high level of discrimination and stigmatisation experienced by sex workers is one example of this marginalisation. Community development seeks to empower individuals and groups of people or communities to enable them to identify the skills that they already have, as well as equipping them with the skills they need to advocate on their own behalf, as well as increase their access to resources, it promotes social inclusion. ***Community development by sex worker communities has helped create sustainable traditions and institutions*** which maintain a responsive and flexible sex worker community that is able to absorb technological change, legislative change, trends and effectively support the individuals within the community to successfully negotiate safer sex practices and self regulate their own sexual health.

Community development and capacity building strategies underpinning our work have assisted in strengthening peer networks and offering opportunities to build strong and healthy partnerships, assisting our aim to address systemic discrimination and oppression of sex workers. As our communities are strengthened so is our ability to inform policy and participate in Government consultation processes. This will continue to assist with building bridges with the broader community, increasing awareness of the issues impacting on our work and lives as well as lowering currently high levels affecting change over high levels of stigmatisation.

Our work in this area assists the development of our communities and our commitment to continue this development is shown through our processes, inclusive practices and adoption of consensus decision making processes.

²¹ Australian Government. (2005). National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2005-2008: Revitalising Australia's Response. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-hiv_hepc-hiv-index.htm

Sex worker organisations have importantly, facilitated opportunities for sex workers to:

- share skills and strategies related to implementing and negotiating safe sex, addressing elements impacting upon safe work places and spaces (new worker training and information)
- develop links and supportive peer networks,
- facilitating an opportunity for sex workers working together to address stigma and discrimination (parades, magazines, performances, visual arts exhibitions)
- engage with HIV and STI messages over sustained periods by contextualising messages to a sex workers work and within broader topics relevant to sex workers (Bondage and Discipline workshops, tax and legal info sessions, language and skills development training, multimedia and art workshops).

All of which have been critical to supporting successful public health outcomes.

Sex worker communities throughout the world, and markedly in the South East Asian Region, including Australia, have developed a practice with a particular focus on our own sex work communities' culture and how the broader general community understands us. Our communities work in this area has included: short film, photography, plays, scripts, performance, public demonstration, visual art exhibitions, sound and radio, multimedia works, workshops, skill sharing forums, shared work-shopping of sex work concepts into performance, graphic development, posters, cultural mapping exercises, websites, blogs, fanzines, magazines, novels and documentaries.

Community based development means that sex workers become both skilled peer educators as well as being able to educate their clients (see C. Peer Education for more information). Sex workers within Australia educate others by example within their workplace, thus educating the wider community who access their services. This is a key element to Australia's successful response to HIV: sex workers have adopted high levels of condom usage as well as developing specific skills to negotiate safe sex practices with clients from the general community – who are largely uneducated in regards to HIV and STIs. The Australian experience of community development has demonstrated that education does create safe sex practices. Sex workers are highly educated in safe sex practices, through accessing services provided by local sex worker community organisations. They have the opportunity to take ownership of their profession whether that is long term or transient, ensuring maximum holistic health benefits. The benefits to the wider community include improved public health outcomes and sexual and reproductive health outcomes.

Scarlet Alliance strongly advocates the investment in sex worker community development and capacity building.

C. Peer education

The success of sex worker organisations and projects in Australia can be attributed to the employment of current and or past sex workers as peer educators. Current and or past sex workers are given specific training to develop skills in delivering services and successfully support to sex worker communities as peer educators. Furthermore, peer educators are trained to provide advocacy and advice, acting promptly and appropriately to an individual's needs. Sex work peer educators have long demonstrated their expertise as educators, to other sex workers and clients of the sex industry. With in-depth and first hand experience of the sex industry, peer educators formalise that information, providing highly knowledgeable health education, support, referrals and equipment to other sex workers. Peer education has proven effective as a strategy utilised by sex worker organisations to engage their community and to create an opportunity for skills development and sharing. Peer education is under-mined when the strategy is isolated from sex worker rights frameworks or from an organisation other than a sex worker community organisation. This is because the practices and knowledge necessary to support peer educators are not in place and managerial decisions and processes have been proven to work in opposition to the holistic approaches outlined here as the best practice for development of effective sex worker community responses to HIV.

Peer education is an approach which assumes that the best people to educate a constituency are members of that constituency; sex workers are the best people to educate, support and represent sex workers. Scarlet Alliance will show leadership by actively including representation of current and former sex workers in the staffing and management of the organisation and promoting same within its membership, as well as in decision making processes regarding services to the sex industry. The success of this model involves encouraging, supporting, and training sex industry workers to be peer-educators. As knowledgeable as health professionals, welfare workers, or legislators may be, the true experts on sex work are sex workers.

Scarlet Alliance practises affirmative action in all of its staffing, volunteer and leadership positions.

D. Harm reduction

Scarlet Alliance believes sex work can be, and is for many, an occupation which does no harm to the persons involved. ***Harm reduction, in relation to sex work, refers to policies, programs and practices that aim to reduce any possible harms associated with a sex worker's work practices and environmental conditions.*** A defining feature of harm reduction in relation to sex work is the focus on the prevention of harms rather than the abolition of sex work. Scarlet Alliance also advocates harm reduction in relation to drug use and supports principles which advocate for safe using strategies which are markedly more effective than abstinence programs. Scarlet Alliance and sex worker organisations and projects in Australia advocate for and utilise the principles of harm reduction to provide services in a non-judgmental and supportive manner.

E. Partnership Building

Australia has very low rates of HIV amongst sex workers, due to the response by sex workers in partnership with Scarlet Alliance members, community based sex worker organisations, other agencies and government. Scarlet Alliance directly liaises with sex worker communities in order to inform its policies and programs, demonstrating a high level of understanding in regards to community development in the fight against the transmission of HIV. This **successful partnership building approach to community development has removed significant barriers, enabling sex worker communities to mobilise as community-based organisations, working in partnership with government to achieve public health outcomes.** The Australian government working with sex worker communities in this way has allowed for successful community participation in developing, designing and informing HIV service delivery, policy and program development.

Scarlet Alliance is a member of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO)²². Scarlet Alliance maintains strong links with the other three national peak organisations, the National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS (NAPWA)²³, the Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League (AIVL)²⁴ and the Anwernekenhe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Alliance (ANA)²⁵. Scarlet Alliance is also a member of the HIV Consortium for Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific²⁶, a collaboration of nine Australian HIV organisations formed to foster strategic partnerships and linkages between Australia and the Asia and Pacific regions implementing the Regional HIV Capacity Building Program funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). Scarlet Alliance also has informal partnerships with different sex worker groups all over the world and is a member of the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW)²⁷ and the International Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP).²⁸

Scarlet Alliance believes that strong partnerships between different sectors create a stronger more effective response to addressing issues faced by the sex worker community. It promotes greater involvement of affected communities, ensuring that the policies and programmes for sex workers are informed by sex workers.

22 Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations. Retrieved from <http://www.afao.org.au>

23 National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS. Retrieved from <http://www.napwa.org.au>

24 Australian Injecting and Illicit Drug Users League. Retrieved from <http://www.aivl.org.au>

25 Anwernekenhe National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander HIV/AIDS Alliance. Retrieved from <http://ana.org.au>

26 HIV Consortium for Partnerships in Asia and the Pacific. Retrieved from <http://www.hivconsortium.org.au>

27 Asia Pacific Network for Sex Workers. Retrieved from <http://apnswdollhouse.wordpress.com>

28 Network of Sex Worker Projects. Retrieved from <http://www.nswp.org>

History

At the National Forum in 2009 Scarlet Alliance celebrated twenty years of history. Scarlet Alliance, the National Forum for Sex Worker Organisations Inc (later renamed to Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association in January 2005), was formed in Adelaide in 1989 following the first national sex industry conference held in Melbourne in 1988 titled “Sex industry and the AIDS debate”, funded by the National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACAIDS). Scarlet Alliance was formed when state based groups and individuals recognised the need for national representation of sex worker organisations and sex workers. Australia’s early response to HIV recognised the role of the “affected communities”²⁹ and their representative community based organisations. Sex workers along with injecting drug users and gay men had responded quickly to the knowledge of HIV in the 1980s.

The roots of Scarlet Alliance lie in volunteer passion, energy and contributed time. The organisation began as strictly volunteer, a commitment by sex workers to support the sex worker community in the midst of the emergence of HIV in the 1980s. That spirit of community development and peer support remained the core of Scarlet Alliance as it grew, and is still the heart of the organisation today. Much of the activity of Scarlet Alliance continues to be volunteer run and powered, and the projects focussed on are still determined by the varying needs and issues facing the Australian sex worker community.

Despite the lack of funding, Scarlet Alliance has achieved an incredible amount of work over the twenty years of its existence. Scarlet Alliance has held a National Forum every year in various parts of Australia, including in Kuala Lumpur to back on to the International Congress on AIDS in Asia Pacific (ICAAP) Conference in 1999. We have consistently made submissions to various national strategies and discussion papers, including the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and the National Indigenous Sexual Health Strategy. We engaged in lobbying discussions with various government departments, including Health and Family Services, Attorney General’s Department, Office for the Status of Women, Department of Immigration as well as the media. We have produced various lobbying and educative resources such as A Guide to Best Practice Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry³⁰, Model Principles for Sex Industry Law Reform³¹, including a clear media and lobbying kit for sex worker activist is in the appendix and a resource for sex workers clients. We have presented at many national conferences and hosted skill shares, peer education and training meetings with fellow sex workers.

²⁹ Australian Government. (2005). National HIV/AIDS Strategy 2005-2008: Revitalising Australia’s Response. Retrieved from http://www.health.gov.au/internet/wcms/publishing.nsf/Content/health-pubhlth-strateg-hiv_hepc-hiv-index.htm

³⁰ Scarlet Alliance. (2000). A Guide to Best Practice Occupational Health and Safety in the Australian Sex Industry. Retrieved from <http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/bestpractise>

³¹ Scarlet Alliance and AFAO. (2000). Model Principles for Sex Industry Law Reform. Retrieved from <http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/model-principles>

In 1997 Scarlet Alliance acquired computer equipment and set up a web site linked to member organisations. Scarlet Alliance also purchased fax/modems for members, who were getting connected to the internet at the time. On an ongoing basis Scarlet Alliance had been communicating through mail, faxes and occasional newsletters (the cost of which have been mainly borne by one of the co-convenors). In fact the major reason for connecting Scarlet Alliance and members to the internet was in order to communicate more quickly, cheaply and efficiently and in order to save money so as to place less monetary stress on the co-convenor. The website and Scarlet e-List is an integral part of Scarlet Alliance's communication strategy.

In 2000 Scarlet Alliance was resourced to develop the Scarlet Alliance National Training Project (SANTP), the only nationally accredited assessment project for sex worker peer educators in the world, the model of which is still used today.

Internationally, Scarlet Alliance's elected representatives have, whenever possible, attended and contributed towards international conferences and meetings, such as the International AIDS Conference, International Congress on AIDS in Asia Pacific (ICAAP) Conference, International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) Conference and the International Conference on Prostitution/Sex Worker Rights including the development of the International Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP) in 1992. However it was not until 1995 when Scarlet Alliance participated in the International Women's Conference in Beijing which saw the beginning of the major international work now carried out by elected Scarlet Alliance representatives and staff. Scarlet Alliance pushed very strongly through the Australian Office for the Status of Women for sex workers to be allowed to enter China for the International Women's Conference in Beijing. Through Australia's advocacy at organising meetings, the Chinese Government allowed sex workers to come to the conference, and Scarlet Alliance had a huge contingent there. Since then we have continued to increase our international presence. Scarlet Alliance is a founding member of the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW) and International Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP). Scarlet Alliance has continued to participate in meetings held by APNSW and NSWP and represent APNSW and NSWP at international conferences. We have also contributed extensively on international e-lists such as APNSW, NSWP, International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW), SWOP-USA, and others.

In 2004, Scarlet Alliance produced its first official organisational Strategic Plan. When the last strategic plan was written, the organisation had only one paid part time staff based at a desk provided through the support of NAPWA who housed the position at their office. The organisation received less than \$30,000 in funding which was managed by another organisation.

In mid 2005 Scarlet Alliance opened a national office in Sydney after receiving its first substantial funding grant. Since then the organisation has grown significantly.

Achievements 2005-2009

National Presence

In the last five years Scarlet Alliance membership has grown considerably from six member organisations and no individual members in November 2004, to twelve organisational members and over 150 individual members in November 2009. Attendance numbers at the Scarlet Alliance National Forum has steadily increased every year.

A high number of Government bodies now consult with Scarlet Alliance and its member organisations, including being represented on the Commonwealth Attorney General's roundtable on trafficking. However we are still seeking sex worker representation on the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Blood Borne Viruses (MACBBVS).

The Scarlet Alliance President was also nominated to attend the Rudd Government's Australia 2020 Summit in 2008 under the "Australia's future security and prosperity in a rapidly changing region and world" stream, raising sex worker and migration issues.

We have also increased our media profile with the publication of an opinion piece by the President in the Sydney Morning Herald on sex worker and migration issues³², a dedicated LOTL issue around sex work³³ as well as various mentions in The Australian, The Daily Telegraph, and various local newspapers such as Kalgoorlie Miner, Central and Sydney City News³⁴.

Scarlet Alliance made numerous submissions and contributions to policy documents, key documents including the National Human Rights Consultation in 2009 and the Guidelines for NGO's working with people who may have been trafficked. We have presented at more conferences and organised more public meetings, symposiums, sex workers only events and trainings, as well as advocacy than ever before.

Scarlet Alliance and its member organisations have a Memorandum of Understanding with three state based AIDS Councils and AFAO. Scarlet Alliance has representation on the AFAO Board. Scarlet Alliance is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct.

³² Jeffreys, E. (2008, April 4). Truth and Visas will set Asian sex workers free. Retrieved from <http://www.smh.com.au/news/opinion/truth-and-visas-will-set-asian-sex-workers-free/2008/04/03/1206851098330.html>

³³ LOTL . (2009). Sex Worker Rights are Lesbian Rights. Issue 233, Vol. 20. No. 5.

³⁴ Scarlet Alliance Selected Media and News Retrieved from <http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/nm/>

The representation of Scarlet Alliance and its aims and objectives at various levels of policy design and decision making as well as in the media has increased the impact, influence and profile of Scarlet Alliance as the authentic representative of Australian sex workers nationally.

International Presence

Since Scarlet Alliance's participation in the International Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995, we have continued to increase our international presence. Scarlet Alliance is a member of the Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers (APNSW) and Global Network of Sex Worker Projects (NSWP). Scarlet Alliance contributed to the initial meetings to set up the APNSW and has participated in meetings held by APNSW (Phnom Penh, Cambodia 2007 and Bangkok, Thailand 2009) and contributed extensively on international e-lists e.g. APNSW, NSWP, International Union of Sex Workers (IUSW), SWOP-USA, and others.

Scarlet Alliance has attended several international conferences in the last four years, including the International AIDS Conference, International Congress on AIDS in Asia Pacific (ICAAP) Conference and International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA) Conference. The International Spokesperson presented in a plenary session at the International AIDS Conference in Mexico 2008. The International Spokesperson has also participated in the Program Committee for the IHRA Conference and presented at the IHRA Conference in Barcelona, Spain in 2008 and Warsaw, Poland in 2007. The International Project Officer will be presenting at a Major Session at the IHRA Conference in Liverpool United Kingdom, 2010. Scarlet Alliance has supported sex workers from Australia, Fiji, Timor L'este, PNG and Indonesia to attend and present at the ICAAP Conference in Bali, Indonesia 2009.

Scarlet Alliance has also received funding to engage in capacity and partnership building with sex worker organisations and sex worker leaders within the Asia Pacific region.

Online Presence

The Scarlet Alliance website has extensive content documenting the activities of the organisation. The Scarlet Alliance e-list use has increased considerably since the introduction of individual membership.

As well as the various other e-lists that Scarlet Alliance members participate in, Scarlet Alliance has a YouTube channel, a Facebook group/fan page and a Twitter account with an ever growing number of subscribers/fans/members/followers. There is currently discussion around the development of an Australian Sex Worker Wiki to streamline the content that is currently available on the Scarlet Alliance website.

Scarlet Alliance also has other plans to expand through other social media and Web 2.0 platforms (please see Funding Successes, Communications Project for further information).

Working Parties

Scarlet Alliance volunteer Working Parties are convened to address specific areas and ensure individual sex workers and staff and volunteers from our member organisations can actively participate in policy development and work on key areas of relevance and passion.

Leadership

The Scarlet Alliance Executive Committee is the foundation to the success and achievements of the organisation. The Executive operates as a democratic elective with a commitment to achieving maximum accountability and transparency at all times. Executive members fulfil a strong governance role for the organisation and continue to participate in much of the unfunded hands-on work of Scarlet Alliance. The Executive communicates extensively via e-list, participates in regular teleconferences and meets face-to-face once or twice a year. The Scarlet Alliance Executive provides a supportive environment to learn about governance and decision making in the context of the sex worker rights movement.

Increased funding and diversification of the activities of Scarlet Alliance has necessitated the need for an expansion of the Executive Committee as well as undertake extensive governance training. In 2009, the Executive Board increased its numbers to include another General Member (we now have two General Members with a name change from Ordinary Member) and the role of four doubles which were introduced for succession planning.

The spokespersons positions provide further expertise in the areas of male sex work, international issues and in 2008, the trans^{*35} spokesperson was introduced.

Processes

Scarlet Alliance's ethical grounding is visible in how we work and we have continued to ensure that our principles are reflected in the processes. We achieve this by acknowledging the need to evaluate progress, by encompassing the need to change, by engaging with difficult and problematic issues and by working steadily towards clearly defining itself as a best practice sex worker organisation, through the development of policy and procedures that address our current and emerging practices. Systems and processes aim to incorporate transparency and accountability on all levels adhering to Scarlet Alliances commitment to democratic decision making, sex worker representation and inclusion policy.

³⁵ Trans* is an umbrella term, a catchall to represent the variety of transfolk underneath it.

Individuals and small groups of sex workers volunteering to work on their local issues make up the membership of Scarlet Alliance, and individual membership by sex workers adds to the diversity of people participating as volunteers. These groups interact with each other, with the general community, with policy makers and governments, with the media, with academics and researchers, all for the end purpose of ensuring that sex worker needs and concerns are being heard and recognised by all we interact with. Currently, there are members from every state and territory.

Funding Successes

As stated previously, in 2005 when the last strategic plan was finalised, Scarlet Alliance had one desk in someone else's office, only one paid part time staff and less than \$30,000 in funding which was managed by another organisation. At November 2009, Scarlet Alliance had thirteen staff with eight desks in Sydney, an office in Tasmania, at least one home based staff member and supporting offices in three other countries. We have built a relationship with at least eight funders with an annual budget of almost \$800,000. We have submitted a great number of funding applications with a high level of success and as such diversified our funding and work. Nevertheless, the greatest percentage of our Australian activities are done by individuals and small groups of sex workers, volunteering to work on their local issues.

Evaluation

Scarlet Alliance has monitoring and evaluation processes built into and budgeted for in every funded project plan and also engages with independent evaluators to assess the implementation and progress of the projects.

Extensive evaluation of the work conducted by Scarlet Alliance is also conducted at each National Forum by the membership in attendance.

Scarlet Alliance is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and is a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct. The code requires members to meet high standards of corporate governance, public accountability and financial management.