



**Australian
Sex Workers
Association**



Northern Territory Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP NT)
Sex Worker Reference Group (SWRG)

In NT, sex workers, our family and associates finally receive protection for discrimination against us, our work and our identity.

Today, 22nd November 2022, sex workers in Northern Territory and throughout Australia celebrate the passing of the Anti-Discrimination Amendment Bill 2022 in NT Parliament. This places NT as the first place in the world to provide explicit anti-discrimination protections for 'sex work' and 'sex worker', and includes our families and associates and current and past sex work. Explicitly naming these attributes recognises the unique stigma that we experience as sex workers, and that we and our work are often treated differently than other types of work, even when our work is decriminalised.

Other important reforms include protections for people with HIV and for people with hepatitis.

"Sex workers wish to thank the Northern Territory Labor Government for their continual work in ensuring that comprehensive consultation has been conducted throughout a very long and careful process to achieve the best possible amendments to protect Territorians, and ultimately fully modernise The Northern Territory Anti-Discrimination Act 1992," says SWOP NT Sex Worker Reference Group member and Scarlet Alliance Vice President, Sienna Charles.

Importantly, the NT Government has consulted with the most marginalised groups through their representative organisations to ensure coverage is provided through inclusive and appropriate attributes. Like other marginalised communities, sex workers require accessible anti-discrimination protections that recognises the pervasive and unique effect that sex work stigma has on our lives, health, safety, and standing in the community.

Sex Worker Reference Group Member Willow Beth states, *"Sex workers experience widespread and pervasive stigma and discrimination in every facet of our lives, with devastating impacts on our safety, access to housing, financial stability, mental health and wellbeing; with limited avenues for redress. Crucially, today's reforms provide an opportunity for sex workers to seek redress when experiencing discrimination and sends a message to the community that discrimination against sex workers and our work is unacceptable."*

By protecting sex workers and our work within the NT Anti-Discrimination Act 2022, the Labor government has ensured realisation of the Objects of the Sex Industry Act 2019 in recognising sex work as a legitimate form of work that needs to be regulated through standard business, Work Health & Safety, and other industrial protections to safeguard sex worker's safety and rights.

Scarlet Alliance Australian Sex Workers Association, the Sex Worker Outreach Program (SWOP NT) and the Sex Worker Reference Group (SWRG) provided comprehensive evidence and case studies that demonstrated systemic discrimination against sex workers and our work, throughout the Northern Territory Government's extensive consultation processes.

"We would like to thank the NT Labor Government, and in particular, through the duration of our advocacy to the Ministers who have held the position of the Attorney General; Chief Minister Honourable Natasha Fyles, Honourable Selina Uibo, and to the current Attorney General Honourable

Chansey Paech for listening to us and hearing our issues and concerns throughout the process of achieving protections for sex workers who work in the NT,” says SWOP NT Coordinator, Leanne Melling.

CEO of Scarlet Alliance, Jules Kim states, “This is a momentous day for all sex workers and sets a positive example that sex workers are valued members of the community, deserving of rights and protections against vilification and discrimination and mechanisms for redress. These critical reforms will continue to demonstrate the importance of best practice partnerships between sex workers and government and will hopefully inspire similar campaigns for robust anti discrimination protections for sex workers and our work and for the full decriminalisation of sex work in other states and territories throughout Australia.”

For Comment:

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