

## LAW AND SEX WORKER HEALTH (LASH) STUDY 2.0

### SEX WORKER KEY ADVISOR ROLE DESCRIPTION

#### LASH STUDY IN BRIEF

This project aims to investigate the impact of the law on WA sex workers; their health and safety; and the intersections between sex workers, service providers and police. The project will help assess the effectiveness of existing services, look at the impact of existing legislation relating to the sex industry, and to identify challenges sex workers might experience in accessing health services. It is hoped that the information collected through this study will contribute to decisions about the provision of health services to sex workers and to inform any future legislation relating to sex work.

LASH 1.0 was first conducted in 2007 by researchers at the Kirby Institute, University of New South Wales. The initial study took three capital cities, chosen for their different legal climates in relation to sex work: Melbourne, Perth and Sydney; and surveyed a representative sample of female, urban, brothel-based sex workers.

LASH 2.0 expands on the original study in terms of scope as the target group has been widened to include male, transgender, non-English speaking, street based, escort based, private (sole operators), and regional sex workers. Due to the changing climate of sex work and the challenges in accessing those who advertise online, and who work as single-operators or on the streets, little is known about their health and safety, or the extent to which they access available health and education services. Evaluation of the sexual health outcomes and well-being of sex workers in WA is therefore required to determine the effectiveness of existing education and health services provided by the WA Department of Health, identify the impact of existing legislation on health and safety of sex workers, and to identify barriers and enablers to accessing services for different populations of sex workers.

#### STATUS OF POSITION

Sex worker key advisor.

Key advisors will be requested to participate in a discussion which will last approximately 15 minutes. The discussion will be semi-structured and conducted in person, over the telephone or via the internet (e.g. Skype), depending on the location and at the convenience of the advisor.

The information collected in this study will be non-identifiable (anonymous). Any information collected and used during this research will be treated as confidential.

#### PURPOSE

Key advisors from within the sex industry are important for the recruitment of sex workers to be surveyed and also for describing the extent of the sex industry in WA. The study will aim to identify sex workers who work in a range of different settings (e.g. parlours, private workers, escort agencies etc.) who would be willing to act as key advisors and assist with recruitment of sex workers to complete a survey.

## **DISCUSSION INFORMATION**

Information to be obtained from key advisors:

- Location/contact details of parlours in Perth and WA
- Key escort agencies/contact details in Perth and WA
- Size of personal networks of private sex workers in WA
- General information about access to services for sex workers in WA
- Gain some early insight into relationships between the police and parlours, parlour owners, escort agencies and private sex workers.

If you agree, an audio recording of the discussion will be made so the interviewer can concentrate on what the key advisor has to say rather than being distracted by taking notes. After the discussion a full written copy of the recording will be made. Once again this will be anonymous.

## **REMUNERATION**

Sex worker key advisors will be reimbursed \$30 for their participation. If the discussion is completed over the telephone or online a \$30 gift voucher will be provided via email or post at the key advisor's discretion.

## **LOCATION**

The discussion will take place at Curtin University, over the telephone or internet, or at a mutually convenient location agreed upon by interviewer and key advisor.

## **CONTACT**

You can contact the Project Coordinator: Kahlia McCausland on [kahlia.mccausland@curtin.edu.au](mailto:kahlia.mccausland@curtin.edu.au) or 08 9266 7382 / 0466 395 463 to arrange a time to conduct the discussion.

Alternately investigator Julie Bates is a sex worker and advocate who has been involved in a number of research studies involving sex workers and will be available for a week beginning the 8<sup>th</sup> of August. You can contact Julie on her mobile 0425 286 785 to arrange a time.