

MEDIA RELEASE

CMC REPORT INTO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE *PROSTITUTION ACT 1999*

The Prostitution Licensing Authority (PLA) today welcomed the Crime and Misconduct Commission (CMC) report into the effectiveness of the Prostitution Act.

The report has confirmed that the licensed sector of the sex industry continues to have a minimal impact on community amenity, that the Prostitution Act and the PLA has been effective in safeguarding against corruption and organised crime within the licensed sector, that the licensed sector provides the safest working environment for sex workers, and a safe and healthy environment more generally. The CMC also found no evidence of sex trafficking in licensed brothels.

The CMC has concluded that the Prostitution Act effectively regulates the licensed sector and has said that: "This is to the credit of the participants in the legal industry and the bodies responsible for its regulation" (p. v). The PLA is pleased that its long history of effective regulation of the licensed sector has been acknowledged by the CMC.

The consensus appears to be that the size of the illegal sector of the sex industry remains relatively static and that the illegal sector is likely to be larger than the legal sector. The PLA agrees with this assessment. In this respect, the CMC report is a lost opportunity. The PLA had strongly encouraged the CMC to thoroughly re-examine its position that there should continue to be a prohibition on outcalls from licensed brothels and that escort agencies should remain illegal. The PLA submission comprehensively addressed this matter. The Authority is disappointed that the CMC has not seen fit to re-examine this matter. A multi-pronged approach is required to tackle illegal operators. Advertising restrictions and police enforcement action are insufficient to make any significant long-term impact.

The PLA remains convinced that a multi-pronged approach should include the lifting of the prohibition on outcalls from licensed brothels and the legalisation of escort agencies. The current regulatory regime is restrictive and provides insufficient incentive to draw illegal operators into the licensed sector. Absent a relaxation of this regime, the prospects of growth of the licensed sector are limited if not almost non-existent, compromising the worthy objectives of the Prostitution Act, and presenting a risk of policy failure. However, like the CMC, the PLA acknowledges that this is ultimately a policy matter for the consideration of the Government.

The Authority notes the two recommendations made by the CMC in its report, and will consider its response to these recommendations in due course.

Media contact: Nil. Please note that no one from the Prostitution Licensing Authority is available to speak to the media. This media release is the sole source of comment from the Authority.