



Office of the
Minister for Police and
Minister for Corrective Services

Ref No: C9418-26 & 27

12/05/2020

Mr Aart Brons
Brothel licensee
Northern Belle
aart.brons@outlook.com

1 William Street Brisbane
PO Box 15195 City East
Queensland 4002 Australia
Telephone +61 7 3035 8300
Email police@ministerial.qld.gov.au
ABN 65 959 415 158

Dear Mr Brons

Thank you for your recent emails to the Honourable Mark Ryan MP, Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services, and other members of the Palaszczuk Government, about the regulation of Queensland's sex industry.

I have been asked to respond to you on behalf of the Minister on this occasion.

With the current closure of all brothels in accordance with the Non-essential Business Closure Directions issued by the Chief Health Officer, Dr Jeannette Young, in order to assist in containing the spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus) within the community, I understand that this must be an extremely difficult and uncertain time for you and other brothel licensees, as well as all other businesses impacted by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Your objection to the decriminalisation of the State's sex industry is noted. Please be assured that the Government has made no decision on the matter of decriminalisation. The *Prostitution Act 1999* was enacted about 20 years ago and there have been technological and other advances and a shift in societal attitudes during the period. The Attorney-General and Minister for Justice, the Honourable Yvette D'Ath MP, has announced her intention to refer the development of an appropriate regulatory framework for the sex industry to the Queensland Law Reform Commission (the Commission). The Commission is currently undertaking a number of other reviews. The Attorney-General has said that the referral will occur as part of the future program of work of the Commission and there will be consultation with the Commission about the timing of future work and the terms of reference.

I acknowledge that you are a longstanding brothel licensee in Cairns, with an intense interest in the regulation of the sex industry. It is vitally important that all voices be heard and referral to the Commission will provide this opportunity. All stakeholders, including brothel licensees such as yourself, will have the opportunity to put their views to the Commission once a referral occurs. That will be your opportunity to advocate for the retention of the current licensing framework and any refinements to it. Whatever the regulatory framework for the sex industry, it is important that it be evidence-based, informed by expert advice, and appropriate for Queensland. In the meantime, the Government will continue to monitor the effectiveness of the current regulatory approach to the sex industry.

This is not the first time you have put your landline-only telephone number proposal in respect of prostitution advertising to the Government. I note that on 15 May 2017, correspondence was sent to you by Mr James Sullivan, Chief of Staff to the Attorney-General, in which he stated the Government does not support your proposal and outlining the reasons, including the likely negative impact on lawful sole operator sex workers and altered usage patterns of landline telephones because of advances in telecommunications technology. The position of the Government on your proposal is unchanged. According to the Australian Communications and Media Authority, in its *Mobile-only Australia: Living without a fixed line at home* report of October 2019, 27 percent of Australian adults were mobile-only (with a mobile but no landline) for voice calls at home in 2014 but by June 2019 this had increased to 51 percent of Australian adults.

Regarding your concerns about the impact of unlawful prostitution operators on your brothel business, I encourage you to bring any substantive evidence of individual operators to the attention of the Queensland Police Service. The more and detailed intelligence the police have about these operators and their activities, the greater their capacity to investigate.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the attention of the Minister and other members of the Palaszczuk Government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'E. McIntyre', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ellen McIntyre
Chief of Staff