

What's legal and what's not?

BROTHELS

In Victoria, there are more than 90 legal brothels. This means that the Business Licensing Authority is satisfied that the owner/manager of these brothels has been checked out by the police ('probity check') and that a current License and 'SWA number' has been issued in accordance with the Sex Work Act 1994.

It is legal to buy sexual services from these brothels. It is perfectly legal for these brothels to sell sexual services, as defined under the Sex Work Act 1994.

ESCORT AGENCIES

Escort agencies can be licensed in the same way as licensed brothels. Escort agencies have a SWA number.

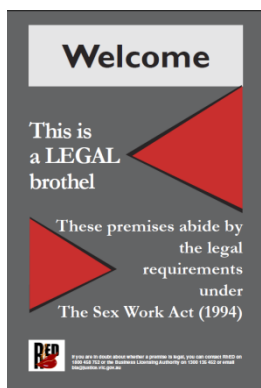
EXEMPT ESCORTS

Individuals working as an exempt escort can apply for an exemption under Section 23 of the Sex Work Act 1994 and operate legally. Exempt escorts register with the Business Licensing Authority and are issued with a 'SWA Number'.

MESSAGE PARLOURS AND RELAXATION CENTRES

Massage parlours and relaxation centres are not illegal. However, if a business provides any sexual service and it has not been through the licensing process with the Business Licensing Authority it has been classified as an ILLEGAL brothel. Hand relief is considered a sexual service. Massage parlours and relaxation centres sometime provide hand relief and this is ILLEGAL. A client can be charged by police if found on premises which is deemed illegal because it is providing sexual services and is not a licensed in accordance with the Sex Work Act 1994. If you care in doubt about when a venue is legal, contact the Business Licensing Authority on (03) 9627 7260.

RhED has produced a poster which shows sex workers and customers that the establishment is legal.



STREETS

Street sex work in Victoria is ILLEGAL. Both street sex workers and their clients face heavy penalties under the Sex Work Act 1994. One penalty unit in 2013-2014 is \$144.36.

Penalties for Street Sex Workers*:

1st offence:

up to \$1443.60 fine or 1 month imprisonment

2nd offence:

up to \$4330.80 fine or 3 months imprisonment

3rd or more offences:

up to \$8661.60 or 6 months imprisonment

Penalties for Clients of Street Sex Workers*:

1st offence:

up to \$1443.60 fine or 1 month imprisonment

2nd offence:

up to \$4330.80 fine or 3 months imprisonment

3rd or more offences:

up to \$8661.60 or 6 months imprisonment

*The penalties are higher near a place of worship, a kindergarten or place where children might be at the time.

REMEMBER

It is a crime to be violent towards a sex worker. It is an offence for anyone to behave in an indecent, offensive, insulting, threatening or abusive manner towards a sex worker in or near a public place - Sex Work Act 1994: penalty up to \$4330.80 or 3 months imprisonment. It's also an offence to physically or sexually assault another person (Crimes Act).

This information is of a general type and should not be taken as a substitute for legal advice.

You can also contact RhED on 1800 458 752 or email sexworker@sexworker.org.au for more information.