

DARWIN HO DOWN



Once again I had the fabulous opportunity to attend the annual Scarlet Alliance Conference. This time the city to host this awesome event was Darwin. I enjoyed catching up with other delegates that I have met at previous forums.

I would like to encourage each sex worker in Victoria to come to the conference which this year will be held in Tasmania, in November. The energy and the commitment of each delegate is truly inspiring.

Each delegate that represents a state gave a detailed report on what issues they have undertaken during the year and what challenges presented to their sex work community. The issue of law reform is the common factor with each state. We will have to step up the campaign, with our goal to have the decriminalisation model Australia-wide.

Other presentations included Scarlet Alliance National Training and Assessment Project which is a project that is tailored for training sex worker peer educators, expanding their skills in advocacy, outreach, activism and sex health education. Migration Pilot Project was presented by Jules (via video link). Jules explained the method and the outcomes of the project. Please refer to the Scarlet Alliance web site for the full report. Sex Workers and The Arts presented by Warren gave a thought provoking talk around how we are able to use art as a voice to share who we are and what we do to the whole community. The always heart felt discussion around law reform and advocacy at the state and nation level indicated how much further we need to go to achieve our dream goal of nationwide uniform decriminalisation legislation.

We also enjoyed various workshops on topics such as Sex Worker Advocacy, Sex Work and Mental Health, Trans Men and the Sex Worker Rights Movement, International Capacity Development.

On one evening *Scarlet Road* was shown, the director's cut. Rachel Wotton, the star of the documentary was available for a Q&A session after the presentation. This is a must-see documentary about sex work and people with disabilities. Our other social event was held at the famous Darwin Race Course Member's Bar where a display of very skilled performers bought lots of laughs, cheers and enthusiastic response from the crowd until the wee hours of the morning.

Each year at the conference, the Annual General Meeting is held and the election for the executive, spokespersons and delegates to AFAO is conducted. This year Kane Matthews was elected as President uncontested.

I would like to thank Elena for all her support and amazing effort while she held the President position. I wish Kane all the best in his new role as the President of Scarlet Alliance.

The forum lasts for three days which are full-on. The information shared is invaluable, contacts are made and cherished. Most of all, the environment of the conference is totally non-judgemental and awesome fun.

I will look forward to seeing you in Tassie later this year.

Cheers, Shirley

