



RED UMBRELLA DAY

INTERNATIONAL DAY TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST SEX WORKERS

On Tuesday 17th December 2013 RhED marked International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers by hosting a public gathering in front of the beautiful Inclusion Mural in Talbot Reserve, St Kilda. Sue White (Inner South Community Health General Manager) welcomed and thanked Clem Newton Brown (local MP and member of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Sex Work) and the diverse crowd of people assembled in honour of Red Umbrella Day.

Local street sex workers Clare and Krissy spoke movingly, inspiring five more sex workers in the crowd to take the microphone, proudly reminding us that sex work is real work and insisting the right to work safely.

Speaking about the murder of her friend Tracey Connelly, Clare urged "What happened to Tracey should not have happened, and it's important we raise awareness ... so it doesn't happen to anyone else." Krissy spoke of violence so common "to the point where it becomes normal... We need to make it safe for women to go and report things that happen to us."

Jane Green, spokeswoman for sex worker collective Vixen, spoke about ongoing social stigma and legal barriers that too often discourage sex workers from reporting violent crime committed against them and called for the decriminalisation of street sex work as a necessary step towards improving worker safety.

Our RUD gathering attracted some media coverage in The Leader and Herald Sun.

RhED would like to thank all the individuals and organisations who made this democratic, colourful, well watered, catered and amplified event possible

A Peer Speaks

"Hi Everyone,

My name is Clare and I have been a street sex worker in St Kilda for close on 6 years. Last year I was asked to speak at Red Umbrella Day, the International Day to End Violence against street Sex Workers. It was a privilege to do so and a pleasure to be asked to speak again this year.



Last year I spoke about how I personally had not experienced violence whilst working but had heard many stories of girls who had. This year however, Red Umbrella Day has a greater meaning for me. Tracey Connelly and I were very close friends and I awoke on Monday 22nd July this year to a phone call from Tracey's partner Tony breaking the devastating news that my dear friend had been murdered.

It is days like Red Umbrella Day that Tracey will always be in our thoughts. However this should not only be a sad day. It is a day of recognition of our rights as street sex workers to be safe in what we do.

What happened to Tracey should not have happened and it is important for us to raise awareness in preventing violence against street sex workers so it doesn't happen again to anyone else.

Making it safe for street sex workers will be a long and difficult process but it has to start somewhere and all of us gathering here at Red Umbrella Day is the perfect place to start.

Thank you all for your support in attending today and making a stand in preventing violence against street sex workers. As one person it is hard to make a change, but as a group we can make a difference."

RhED thanks all who supported RUD 2013 in St Kilda. It was a resounding success with a large crowd of people including quite a few proud sex workers who spoke publicly on the day.

