

RhED is moving from 10 Inkerman Street, St Kilda and invites sex workers to celebrate the past, present and future by...

- **Helping plan an event to honour the cultural heritage of the site**
- **Attending the event to celebrate 10 Inkerman's past**
- **Sharing stories of 10 Inkerman Street and contribute to the next issue of RED magazine**

The theme for our next issue is 'Celebrating the past, present and future of Victoria's sex industry'.

To be involved please contact RhED for further information:

**sexworker@sexworker.org.au
or Freecall 1800 458 752**

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Sex workers have been documenting our experiences for decades, even centuries.

Knowing where we have come from to knowing where it will go ... as it were

Sex work has been a form of income from time immemorial. A scandalous and desperate means of escaping the filthy clutches of poverty, maybe.

Maybe an opportunity to become financially independent, successful, an opportunity to work for oneself and set your own rules. Whatever the reasons this backstreet, semi legal industry of distant times is here to stay. With placards, signatures and love, it moved into the light and sex workers were united and supported.

In July 1978, a group of feminists led by Bebe Loff, organised a seminar on Prostitution and the Law. From it, a small group of feminists and sex workers formalised and soon after became the Prostitutes Action Group, (P.A.G), later to be named Hetairae. These linked with emerging sex worker's rights groups overseas and interstate to become the Australian Prostitutes Collective – (A.P.C.), under the leadership of Cheryl Overs and Maryann Phillips. It adopted the "No Bad Women: Just BAD Laws" logo of the English Prostitutes Collective and moved into premises at St Kilda.

The group worked at demystifying the nature of sex work, to raise awareness around violence and build resilience among the sex worker community. It wasted no time in meeting with St Kilda Council and residents to discuss "the problem" of Prostitution in the area. The A.P.C. represented the rights of sex workers and discussed ideas around regulations and policing. By 1984, they were engaged in the law reform process, writing submissions urging for full decriminalisation and representing sex workers at the first Planning Ministry working group on Prostitution and the Neave Inquiry.

Unfortunately, only some indoor sex work became legal in Victoria and street work remained illegal.

This, the APC argued, divided the industry into a regulated legal sector and an illegal sector, in which human rights would continue to be violated.

However, street workers now have the right to report violent or unwanted services, have access to health services, outreach services and the community is more aware of their rights. It is only a matter of time before this work is also decriminalised.

In those formative years, the sex workers' voices began to be heard. It would have been a tough slog and those volunteers, activists and supporters worked tirelessly to create and maintain a support group, for one of the most

marginalised groups of its time. The fight was on, for a say in working conditions and basic human rights.

The voice was getting louder, Government took note.

In June 1984, the Predecessor of the RED magazine was published 'Working Girl' magazine. First edition. A community is born.

Somebody cares, people are fighting for the rights of sex workers and others start listening.

In March 1987, A.P.C. receives a grant. \$12,700.00 to help provide delivery of services to 'Women in Prostitution,' the first group in the country to receive funding for sex workers.

From the first days of A.P.C becoming an incorporated association, the network of sex worker associations were to become more united. By 1988 A.P.C. becomes P.C.V.



RhED at 10 Inkerman Street, St Kilda.

The First national sex industry funded conference is organised and held in Melbourne. This conference brought together sex worker groups from around the country and New Zealand. The national network known as the Scarlet Alliance, was created at this conference.

In 2001, all the programmes and services available are practiced under the new name of RhED as part of Inner South Community Health Service (now Starhealth).

In March of the same year, the first issue of RED Magazine is published.

It is with great thanks, to the handful of folk back in '78, who had the heart to believe in what they were doing. They paved the way in Australia, for all sex workers to have rights and access to services and funding to provide those services.

It has been a long and arduous battle for change. And still more is on the horizon.

In 1989 P.C.V. moves to 10 Inkerman Street, St Kilda. It might now be the end of that era. Maybe the impending closure of this site is fraught with some anxiety, it would be safe to say that the pulse of the place lay within us all.

Contribution female sex worker

Pillow Talk

Contribution by a private male worker

Working in Australia vs New Zealand

I've been travelling back and forth between Australia and New Zealand for about a year now. I've also continued travelling around Australia, mainly from Melbourne to Sydney. I've got to see differences in how the laws affect us sex workers and the difference in people's perspectives of what we do.

Back in Melbourne I find the perspective interesting. I consider Melbourne to be a bit more conservative and expected the same with the sex industry. I have been surprised to come across a mostly respectful and open minded attitude from clients here. They tend to be less reserved about what they want and respectful, at least towards me. Yes, I still get the rude and disrespectful ones (my pet hate and an easy way for me not to accept a booking) but generally people in Melbourne are pleasant to deal with.

Sydney is very different to Melbourne from my experience. I can only really comment from the perspective of someone that focuses on providing the boyfriend experience predominantly. I find the Sydney clients to be more direct with higher expectations. Most of my more 'unusual' requests and clients also come from Sydney so I'm never surprised when asked to do something bizarre there. Perth and Brisbane can be a bit like Melbourne with client perspective and attitude, just friendlier. Though my experience there is more limited.

New Zealand is a great place to work. The laws are quite liberal, unlike Melbourne and Brisbane which a very restrictive, and everyone seems to be friendly. Though that could just be the nature of New Zealand people in general, which has been my experience. I feel much safer over there, even though I'm more dependent on myself for security, and I feel I'm respected more.

What's the biggest difference between working within Australia and New Zealand? The level of respect and friendliness in NZ. It's also nice to travel to another country (even if just over the Tasman) and be in a different environment. I've made some good friends in NZ, within and outside of work.

- Male sex worker