

Below is an sample submission from a sex worker to the Banking Code Review 2021. Please write your submission in your own words, referring to your own experience.

2 August, 2021

Dear Mr Callaghan

Independent review of the Banking Code of Practice: views of a sex worker

I welcome the independent review of the Banking Code of Practice and write to suggest ways the Code can ensure business banking is accessible and inclusive for lawfully operating self-employed sex workers and sex industry businesses. Five Australian states and territories have legalised or decriminalised sex work, and yet the ABA's members continue to deny lawfully operating sex workers access to basic banking services.

All types of business banking products can be refused by the ABA's members, including basic transaction banking accounts. Refusal to provide basic banking services is often not based on individually assessed risk, instead blanket denial of service is based on the occupation or industry which the small business belongs to. Chapter 13 of the Code does not refer to small businesses, thereby excluding small businesses from the benefits of the Code's inclusive and accessible banking provisions.

I am a self-employed sex worker and operate lawfully; I comply with all state/territory sex industry regulations/laws. Despite this, I have never attempted to open a business bank account. I don't have faith that ABA's member banks will treat me fairly or with respect. I've heard many stories of sex workers being denied service by the ABA's member banks.

I would like to be able to open a business bank account and operate like any other sole trader. Operating without a basic business debit account is difficult, as I get paid in cash, and reporting income to the ATO and Centrelink is complicated. It's hard for me to apply for rental housing, as I can't include my sex work income on rental application forms. I need more assurances that the ABA's member banks won't turn me away due to my occupation/industry.

Clause 3 of the Scope of this review says the review will consider the extent to which the Code contributes to banking services being inclusive and accessible for small business customers. Given 'Chapter 13 Being Inclusive and Accessible' of the Code fails to even refer to small business, I don't believe the Code is inclusive or accessible to lawfully operating sex workers, who already experience stigma and discrimination in many aspects of their lives.

I would like the term 'small business' to be fully incorporated into the Code, particularly into 'Chapter 13 Being Inclusive and Accessible'. This will help address the banking exclusion which lawfully operating sex workers experience on the part of the ABA's member banks.

Yours sincerely

Full name

Example Only