

[REDACTED]

From: Moira Deeming
Sent: Tuesday, 19 October 2021 3:53 PM
To: [REDACTED]

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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My pleasure, I'll have it back to you tonight!

Cr Moira Deeming

Watts Ward Councillor | **Melton City Council**

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, 19 October 2021 3:52 PM
To: Moira Deeming <MoiraD@melton.vic.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Letter to be revised

Hi Cr Deeming

I was hoping you could assist in this matter.

Can you please review this draft letter that was provided to me in relation to the discussions that Councillors, CEO and GM's had last night?

I feel that some elements have been missed altogether to capture our genuine concerns about the Sex Decriminalisation Bill 2021.

Thank you much appreciated.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A draft for your consideration.

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: Sex Work Decriminalisation Bill 2021

Further to previous correspondence on the above Bill, I appreciate your request for Council comment on its concerns.

Council's primary concern is the lack of consultation with the Local Government industry, and the communities we represent coupled with extremely restrictive timelines. **While Council did make submission to the Department of Justice and Community Safety's discussion paper on this subject,** we were unable to consult with our community on the proposal. It is Council's view that the broader community is largely unaware of the Bill, and the potential implications it has for urban communities

The decriminalising of sex work as proposed raises significant concerns that a number of the

proposed changes could potentially compromise the community if the regulatory framework is inadequate. Council is not convinced that extending sex work into residential and commercial areas will actually deliver on the objective of enhanced safety for sex workers, as the disbursement of activity will lead to more “remote” or “isolated” workers. Furthermore, it is noted that management of community dissatisfaction from matters such as compliance are proposed to be largely loaded onto Councils to manage, which is another unacceptable example of cost shifting from the State.

Council is particularly concerned about the conduct of sex work:

- In commercial areas, particularly shopping centres which are typically frequented by families and children. In particular, there appears to be no distinction made between massage parlours and brothels in a regulatory sense. **How will explicit advertising and “street walking touting for business” be controlled.**
- From road reserves and public land where there is uncertainty about appropriate separation distances from sensitive uses, and which agency would ensure compliance with any separation requirements. We note that currently buffer distances are established through a detailed site and neighbourhood analysis carried out in the preparation of a planning application. This is a complex process as not all land uses such as a place of worship is obvious. The current proposal puts an ambiguous and unrealistic expectation on both workers and compliance officers to establish appropriate buffers.
- Within the residential zones, particularly under the current home business provision of the planning scheme. Council submits that sex work is simply not compatible with residential areas and should not be categorised as a home business. If it is to be permitted it should be implemented through a land use specific particular provision which includes measures to be met which minimise detriment to surrounding residents, and maximise the safety and security of the people working in and living in the particular premises.

Council also has a real concern that were sex workers to operate from a dwelling, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to control whether minors or children were also on the premises, and who would be responsible for monitoring this and taking appropriate compliance action. Similarly there is a real lack of clarity around how many workers could operate from a home based business.

Council fundamentally believes that the current regulatory framework for sex work is adequate within the City of Melton.

Council has one permitted brothel within the municipality which has generally operated in accordance with its permit. Sex work does not appear to be prevalent within the area however given the social vulnerabilities

of some sectors of our community this Bill could facilitate a greater uptake. We therefore suggest that before the Bill is enacted, it be trialled within a municipality where sex work is more prevalent. This would enable an understanding of impacts and if necessary, the further development of an appropriate policy framework and compliance structure.

Council looks forward to your response to this important issue for the community.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Regards,

