

COALITION AGAINST TRAFFICKING IN WOMEN AUSTRALIA

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MEDIA RELEASE: Global letter condemns Victorian Government's decriminalisation of the sex industry

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American feminist activist Gloria Steinem with over 200 survivors of sex trafficking, prostitution, and pornography; as well as women's and human rights advocates, and frontline service providers, from around the world have today delivered [a letter to Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews MP](#) condemning the Victorian Government's decision to fully decriminalise the sex industry.

The letter expresses horror at the Government's decision to implement the full decriminalisation of Victoria's sex trade, stating decriminalisation will not succeed where legalisation has failed:

"Prostitution is in fact a system of complex exploitation for the profit of brothel owners and other exploiters enriched by sex buyers. Solving your failures of legalization with a worse form of it—decriminalization—will exponentially increase the stated harms and violations."

The letter challenges the Government's right: "to set apart and aside a class of women, primarily of color and deemed unworthy of equality, for the sex trade."

The letter calls on the Premier to: "address the harmful cultural practice of bestowing men a customary right to purchase sexual acts with human beings who would never, but for myriad forms of coercion and an absence of choice, engage in sexual acts with them."

The letter urges the Victorian Government to stand with survivors – rather than sex industry profiteers – and consider the Nordic/Equality model: "a progressive law that solely decriminalizes people bought and sold in prostitution, provides them with services, including exit strategies, while holding sex buyers and other perpetrators accountable."

The model fosters gender equality by refusing – rather than encouraging – the idea that women are objects to be bought and sold for sex. While no country has followed the failed decriminalisation framework of New Zealand, eight countries have now adopted the Nordic/Equality model.

The letter is supported by hundreds of representatives, including survivors, who represent groups and networks fighting for equality and for the rights of women and girls, children, immigrants, and LGBTQ+ populations.

CATWA is a signatory to this letter, we stand with survivors and feminists and call on the Victorian Government to scrap its rushed and ill-considered decision to implement full decriminalisation and instead consider the Nordic/Equality model – to recognise women's human rights and work towards gender equality.

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