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# **safety AT WORK**

## **Health and Workplace Safety in the NSW Sex Industry**

**OHS in Nevada brothels**

**Victorian Brothel  
Owners' Perspective**

**DECRIMINALISATION:  
the key to health and safety  
in New Zealand sex industry**

**sex on the stock exchange**

**international news**

**lecture on sexual exploitation**



**EDITORIAL**

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# from the editor



Many of you will find this sex industry edition to be odd. As far as we know there is no other OHS magazine that has devoted an edition to this industry. In fact as you will read from the Letter to the Editor and Donna Murphy's article, some would argue that prostitution cannot or should not be considered as an industry. To provide some context, I wanted to tell you briefly about my dealings with the industry.

Five years ago I received a phone call from Mistress Donna asking for a first aid needs assessment of her dungeon. I was unfamiliar with the needs of a dungeon so I visited Donna and provided advice. Never before have I had to answer questions on the discrete bandaging of nicks on the buttocks, or whether burn cream should be applied to scorchmarks on nipples and scrotum. We also discussed the problem of infection control as blood may permeate the side of the leather paddles.

I returned to my employer and suggested that if they were looking for new and niche markets for first aid equipment and training then the brothel industry would fit. To their credit, they approved a mail out to the brothels.

I kept a watch on the industry for some years and when I set up my own business I decided that the market was just as relevant for my services. I proposed to my university lecturer that a research project on the sex industry was appropriate. He coughed and spluttered as the rest of the class (all men) began jokes on manual handling, occupational overuse and friction burns. I admit that part of the reason for the proposal was that other classmates were sticking their heads in cooling towers and having to undertake a substantial literature search. OHS and brothels has no literature so I was working in a new area.

I applied a traditional OHS and risk perspective to avoid the gender politics that dominates the research into the sex industry. Gender politics was an area in which I was not an expert and did not have the time to devote to becoming so. But I needed to be aware of such issues and found several very useful articles that cautioned me on some no-go areas, or that illustrated some values that I needed to refine or remove before helping this industry.

Since that time I have written several articles on the industry in the straight OHS press. With States gradually legalising or licensing the industry, I was interviewed by several radio stations on this new angle of approach.

I have assessed many brothels for safety. I have found poor understanding of OHS issues in almost all of the premises. This is of no surprise because no government OHS authority had had any dealings with the industry since 1992. In Victoria, there are no OHS guidelines, only safe sex guidelines and requirements from the business licensing authority and Health Department. Probably the Vice Squad is the most active government department in this industry. The industry support groups have done their best but as the majority of funding is generated from the HIV/AIDS health area, OHS needs are a poor cousin.

In a few months time I will be presenting a conference paper on the industry to OHS educators. I suspect this will be the first such paper outside of the health and AIDS area.

This edition of Safety At Work presents articles and information on the sex industry. Not all of it deals with OHS. I have included several articles from the gender political perspective as you cannot deal with the industry without a little bit of an understanding of the dominant research. You will find unique perspectives on workplace hazards that could exist equally in your industry. You will begin to consider the problems of dealing with sexually transmitted infections as occupational illnesses. You will consider the issue of long working hours not at a computer screen in a call centre but dealing intimately with strangers who may be intoxicated. You will also consider workplace violence behind closed doors in darkened rooms rather than in workplaces that have pop-up screens, closed circuit television and supervision. You will also ask yourself whether you would claim workers compensation if even your family were unaware of your occupation.

I hope that you enjoy this edition as much as I have in producing it.

**Kevin Jones**  
Editor

# to the editor

Prostitution is not a job the way secretarial work is a job. There is no core of human dignity, no personal or social building up. It is essentially sexual exploitation - of the poor, the battered, the mentally vulnerable. It only looks like a job, or work, because money changes hands (and changes hands again — because most of it goes to the owners, the pimps). Unless money is your sole criterion for work — which goes against a generation of feminist thinking on unremunerated labour — and would include drug pushing, organ and baby trafficking, fencing of stolen property, assassinating, enslaving, etc — then you need to take a closer look at what labour or work really is. You need to consider if work or labour can mean the damage inherent in the destruction of self and the denial of basic human rights.

As for the dangers prostituted women face, I suggest you look for the work of Melissa Farley, who has studied internationally the psychological damage prostitution causes — as well as the real needs and wants of women in conditions of prostitution. I have forwarded your request to the CATW e-group so you can get more responses although I expect it's just going to make a lot of our members angry.

I also suggest you look at one of the foundational documents of the International Labour Organization called the "Philadelphia Declaration". There it says that labour is not a commodity. Think about what that really means. Look at the

work of Carol Pateman, "The Sexual Contract" for her analysis of why "sex work" (a sex industry term, by the way) is not "work". Think about what it means that Australia's sex industry has been legalized — does make prostitution right or does it just mean that the sex industry is powerful? You should look also to work by Sheila Jeffreys who lives in Australia and is a critic of the sex industry. Read a book by Maria Flook about her sister's time in prostitution: "My Sister Life" and ask yourself whose interests are served when advocates of the sex industry lay down their trump card - "She chose it" - the modern equivalent of the Victorian "You've made your bed — now lie in it".

You will need to reframe your conceptualisation of prostitution. And remember, when you interview women in prostitution, esp.. highly organized prostitution as it has become with legalization in Australia — the women's owners are never far away. Like the battered women that they are they will often tell you that they "love" the work. Speaking truth to

power is an enormous risk — why would they take that risk for you? Possibly there are some survivors' groups around you could talk to — they at least have fled to the frontier of safety. One such group is SAGE in San Francisco. Another is Breaking Free in St. Paul, Minnesota. If you'd like I'll ask Sheila Jeffreys to tell me if there are any in Australia (this is cutting edge feminism).

Cecilia Blewer  
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*[Ed. Cecilia wrote this in response to my request for articles and assistance in this edition. I am grateful for the time she put into this letter as it provides worthy questions about our perspective and assumptions on this industry (as many Governments recognise it). I have read many articles by Sheila Jeffreys and Melissa Farley and recommend them highly for more information on this issue.]*



Photograph circa 1900 women prostitutes sitting parlor house San Francisco California (Made available by Andrew Sorfleet)

# health and workplace safety in the NSW sex industry

October 1997



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**T**raditionally, the sex industry has demonstrated low levels of compliance with occupational health and safety (OHS) standards. Research has indicated that this is due to limited knowledge and information on OHS issues. The *Health and workplace safety in the sex industry* project aims to increase the capacity of the sex industry in NSW to formulate and implement workplace health and safety systems. The project is being funded through the WorkCover NSW Grants Scheme and is being conducted by the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) based in Sydney.

In NSW, the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983

(OHS) and the Workers Compensation and Injury Management Act 1998 extend to businesses where there is an employer and employee relationship. The definition of a 'workplace' in the sex industry include brothels, massage parlours, escort agencies and some private situations (Mooney & Kelly, 1993:16). Brothels are sex on premises venues that fall into two categories - a 'commercial' brothel situated in commercial or industrial zoning or a 'home business' operating from a residence (Robertson, 1998; South Sydney Council, 1999). Brothel workers generally provide full sexual intercourse or a specialised service such as Bondage & Discipline.

## Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels in NSW

In 1997, WorkCover and the New South Wales Department of Health released a joint publication 'Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels in NSW'. The Guidelines were developed in response to the changes which resulted from the introduction of the Disorderly Houses Amendment Act 1995 (Heslop, 1999). As a result of this act, brothels may now operate legally within certain parameters. The voluntary guidelines provide brothel proprietors with best practice standards for maintaining a safe and healthy premises for workers, other employees, clients and visitors (WorkCover NSW & NSW Department of Health, 1997:3).

Continued on Page 5

**A Complementary Initiative : National OHS Guidelines**

In November 1999, the National OHS Sex Industry Guidelines were released to assist in the implementation of health and safety to the Australian sex industry. These were prepared by the Scarlet Alliance and the Australian Federation of Aids Organisations (AFAO) OHS Working Group and representatives from Australian sex worker organisations.

Other Australian jurisdictions to develop occupational health and safety standards for the sex industry are the *Victorian Health standards for the management of registered brothels and related premises (1992)* and the *Australian Capital Territory (ACT) WorkCover OHS Code of Practice for the Sex Industry (1998)*.

**Needs Assessment**

The first stage of the project involved the conduct of a OHS needs assessment of sex industry workers, owners and managers. The needs assessment aimed to identify attitudes and gaps in knowledge on health and workplace safety and to measure the effectiveness of the WorkCover NSW and NSW Department of Health 1997 joint publication *Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels in NSW*.

The needs assessment found that sex industry owners and managers consider their workers to be 'sub-contractors' rather than 'employees'. Additionally, sex workers identified disinterest from managers and owners as the most common obstacle to implementing health and safety in the workplace. Underlying this is the identification in the sex industry of a 'one hazard

approach' that equates OHS with safe sex practices and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections.

**Information Resources**

The project addressed these gaps through the development of a companion video and guidebook called *Getting on Top of Health and Safety*, a training kit and an update of the *Health and Safety Guidelines for Brothels in NSW*. Where possible, resources have been translated into Chinese, Thai and Korean.

**Training Sessions**

The project also involved training sessions for sex industry workers, owners, managers and service providers. The sessions were held between October, 1999 and March, 2000 in Sydney, Penrith, Parramatta, Central Coast, Wollongong, Newcastle, Albury, Wagga Wagga, Tweed Heads, Lismore and Dubbo. At most sessions, a local WorkCover inspector was invited to speak about OHS in their region.

**Media**

A media release was issued through Workcover NSW to create industry awareness of the training sessions. The release generated inquiries from newspapers and radio including four regional and three Sydney based radio stations, six regional and two Sydney based newspapers and one regional television station. The largest audience coverage was an article published in the Sun Herald titled 'Sex workers' free training'. The article opened with "A government authority is coaching prostitutes and brothel

owners on how to do their jobs" (Sun Herald, 7.11.99) and provided information about the guidelines and the training sessions. Traditionally, the media has generated negative images of the sex industry and it was pleasing to receive a more balanced coverage. Additionally, the media generated several inquiries from sex workers and managers on training and information resources.



**Training Evaluation**

An evaluation has revealed positive responses to the training, particularly the video and talks by WorkCover inspectors. Since the training, some brothel owner managers have implemented impressive changes including taking out workers compensation policies, conducting hazard prevention and training staff in health and safety procedures. A couple have requested the training kit from SWOP so they can conduct induction training and two brothel managers have approached WorkCover to come to their premises to provide training or assist in hazard prevention. Also, service providers have found the training valuable for extending the range of topics that they talk to

sex workers about or assisting sex workers in lodging WorkCover complaints against irresponsible brothels. While this is commendable, the training did not attract large numbers of sex workers. This could be due to fear of intimidation by management, not receiving the invitations or disinterest in attending on their own time. To redress this, the project experimented with less formal training styles including training in a brothel or worker's home.

### OHS Education meets Legislation

Despite the voluntary nature of the *Health and safety guidelines for brothels*, the information they contain are mandatory standards under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1983. To date, elements of the guidelines are complied with if they are incorporated into a Council's sex industry policy. Local government (Councils) require brothels to apply for development consent as with any other legal business. If



brothels do not have the consent, or have incorrect consent, councils can have the business closed down (South Sydney Council, 1999:15).

To date, compliance with the guidelines is higher when the industry and stakeholders work

collaboratively to implement them. In this respect, the city of Newcastle is providing an exemplar. The Newcastle Council released a detailed brothel policy that contained part of the Health and safety guidelines for brothels. They have also been active in encouraging local brothels to apply for development applications and there are seven DA approved brothels in Newcastle City. Additionally, the managers of these brothels have formed a collective to apply pressure on the council to close non-approved brothels and limit street workers. The Health Department (Public Health Unit), Newcastle Sexual Health Clinic, Aids council of NSW and SWOP are very active in promoting health and education to sex workers and have convened a Sex Industry Education Committee. Additionally, SWOP does outreach on a weekly basis and workers have acquired reasonably high levels of knowledge about their rights and responsibilities. To date, WorkCover Newcastle and WorkCover Toronto have responded to complaints and issued improvement notices to eight brothels. At least one brothel has implemented OHS training and systems including client education as a result of a WorkCover visit.

Contrary to this are regions where WorkCover have had little or no contact with the sex industry, the Council has a minimalist brothel policy and the health service is fragmented. This is reflected in low levels of health and safety in the sex industry and irresponsible management practices. In other regions, there is conflicting information from WorkCover inspectors. For example, one rural WorkCover

office visited the town's two brothels. During the 'blitz' the brothel managers provided evidence to the inspectors that they were contractors that 'rented out rooms' to the workers. On this basis, WorkCover told them that they did not have to take out workers' compensation. This example illustrates the need to also educate WorkCover inspectors about the sex industry as most brothel based workers are 'deemed workers' under Workers' Compensation Act.

### Conclusion

The information resources and training donprogram are helping to reposition the 'one hazard' discourse to one that equates OHS with the rights and responsibilities afforded to workers of other industries. Ultimately, there should be an expectation from clients that any brothel they patronise will have basic health and safety standards. This requires co-operation and enforcement from all key players including health professionals, WorkCover, local government, sex worker organisations, sex industry owners and managers, clients and workers themselves. The project has developed an innovative OHS model for the sex industry which is believed to be a world first. If implemented by all key players it will ensure that sex industry workers are afforded the rights of workers in other industries.

Photos in this article are screen shots from an OHS training video for NSW Brothels. Copies are \$10 (Australian) and are available from SWOP.

**[Editor Note: A full report on Michelle's findings will be published by NSW Workcover in 2001.]**

# decriminalisation: the key to health and safety in New Zealand sex industry

Last month in New Zealand, the first reading of a private members' bill to decriminalise prostitution received wide support from both sides of the political spectrum. Issues of occupational health and safety have been central to the discussions surrounding the passage of this Bill, with supporters such as the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective (NZPC) arguing that the present criminalisation of prostitution is a key factor inhibiting action to reduce the health and safety risks sex workers face in this 'hidden' industry.

Although prostitution is not against the law in New Zealand, the current Summary Offences Act 1981 makes many activities surrounding prostitution illegal, such as soliciting, living off the earnings of prostitution, and keeping a brothel. The Prostitution Reform Bill 2000, launched by Labour Party MP Tim Barnett, claims that existing laws criminalise, and offer no legal protection for sex workers. There is a 'climate of fear' that dissuades workers from seeking safety information and carrying out safe practices. The bill aims to 'remove the legal impediments to the creation of an environment which will protect occupational health and safety of sex workers and their clients, thereby enhancing public health.'<sup>1</sup>

The bill prioritises safety as a central issue for the sex industry

and attempts to move away from the 'one hazard' approach identified in research by Alexander<sup>2</sup> and by WorkCover NSW,<sup>3</sup> where health and safety in the sex industry is equated only with safer sex practices. While the transmission of sexual diseases such as herpes, hepatitis, chlamydia and HIV are important safety concerns for sex workers and their clients, physical, verbal, sexual and emotional violence are also significant safety issues.<sup>2</sup> Libby Plumridge and Gillian Abel report that in their research on female sex workers in Christchurch, 59% of the sample of 303 women suffered from verbal abuse while working, 36% experienced threats of physical violence, 26% suffered actual physical assault, and 12.5% had been raped.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, workers in the sex industry are vulnerable to a range of health and safety hazards evident in other New Zealand industries. Sex workers are liable to suffer repetitive stress injuries, respiratory infections, emotional stress (often related to managing social stigma) and alcohol and drug dependence.<sup>2</sup> The risks differ depending upon the work site (parlour or street) and whether the worker is female, male or transgender.

Sex workers are unlikely to obtain health and safety information from their place of work. Fellow workers and the

NZPC are the main sources of educational health and safety material and equipment.<sup>4</sup> One of the central functions of NZPC, which was formed by a group of sex workers in 1987, has been to provide health and safety information and equipment for sex workers around New Zealand. The organisation provides one-on-one advice about sexual health and avoiding workplace violence; their own newsletters and magazines (some specifically aimed at male and transgender sex workers, who make up the minority of the industry's workers); free health checks; free condoms, lubricant, dental dams etc; and liaison with Police. NZPC also publishes an 'Ugly Mugs' list of violent clients to avoid.

Sex workers with health and safety concerns, including those who have suffered physical or psychological harm, do not usually turn to Police, Doctors, social workers or government departments such as the OSH Service. Plumridge and Able's study showed that 60% of non-street workers reported 'adverse events' to their workplace managers, but most female sex workers turn to fellow workers, friends and family for support.<sup>4</sup> One spokesperson for a provincial branch of OSH regarded sex work as an invisible occupation, and commented that so long as people are unwilling to reveal whether they are sex

*Continued on Page 8*

workers or managers within the industry, OSH is unable to do anything about safety in the sex industry. 5

Justin Brownley from OSH Wellington said that OSH recognises the biological hazards and violence at work as two of the main safety issues within the sex industry. While OSH produces general guidelines on both of these, it has no specific guidelines for the sex industry, although OSH has a worker who liaises with NZPC. According to Brownley, “the hazards are very well known, and by and large, within the industry, they are fairly well managed...In terms of the information, advice and support that OSH provides there’s not a lot of difference whether prostitution is decriminalised or not.” 6

The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, however believe that decriminalisation will make a significant difference to safety in the sex industry. At a meeting with Occupational Health and Safety nurses, Catherine Healy, National Coordinator of NZPC, said “the laws against prostitution have provided quite a major impediment...it is really critical to get them changed in respect of the sector’s occupational health and safety”. 7 Healy, who actively lobbies for safety guidelines for the sex industry, claims that sex workers are often unwilling to take safer sex educational material or equipment, as even condoms can be used as circumstantial evidence against prostitutes in court. Plumridge and Abel’s research supports the claim that the risks of sex work are compounded by the fear of conviction, which discourages openness about a workers’ occupation. 4

P.U.M.P. (Pride and Unity for Male Prostitutes) Coordinator at NZPC, Calum Bennachie, believes that many of the health and safety issues faced within the sex industry are similar to those in other industries. The risks associated with working in unfamiliar sites, are similar for any person who is involved in ‘cold calling’ on clients. In brothels, agencies, and parlours, the building and equipment should be subject to the same safety requirements as other public entertainment venues. Bennachie says that the risks specific to the sex industry are largely due to the fact that both managers and sex workers constantly fear arrest. This

makes it difficult to promote and maintain safety standards, or to file complaints. 8 “If the prostitution law reform does filter through,” Bennachie claims, “various venues will be open to more scrutiny with regards to occupational safety and health... and street workers, who currently are unable to work in parlours because they have prostitution or drug convictions, will be able to go back into the parlours and work from there.” 8

In summary, for workers in the New Zealand sex industry and their representatives, the NZPC, occupational health and safety within the sex industry is a real issue and can only be dealt with

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properly once prostitution is decriminalised.

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Comprehensive information service about the sex trade and human rights

# men create the demand; women are the supply

## - lecture on sexual exploitation

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### **Control and Abuse of Women and Girls' Sexuality**

The control and abuse of women and girls' sexuality creates and maintains women's oppression all over the world. Men hold the important decision making positions in all social, political and religious institutions that organize and control society. Through this institutional power, men construct culture, pass laws, and enact policies that serve their interests and give themselves the power to control women and children in public and private spheres. Men's definition and control of female sexuality constructs and regulates women and girls' sexual activity. Voluntary, as well as involuntary, violations of society's man-made rules mark women as tainted and immoral, and bring dishonor to the family.

### **Repression and Exploitation—Complementary Forms of Control and Abuse**

Repression and exploitation are different, but complementary,

forms of control and abuse of female sexuality. Women and girls' sexuality is repressed by strict control on sexual activity through such customs as placing a premium on girls' virginity, basing family honor on the sexual control of daughters and wives, exacting severe punishment for adultery, preventing equal access to divorce, and segregating girls and women from boys and men. Patriarchal religions, which mold most of the cultures of the world, subordinate women and girls to men. Fundamentalist movements, whether Christian, Jewish, Hindu or Islamic, advocate the repression of women and girls' sexuality. Women and girls' interaction with men and boys is closely monitored and restricted and their bodies and hair covered in a way deemed to be modest. For example, under the influence of Islamic fundamentalism, women are required to wear full body coverings, such as chadors and burqas.

Punishment for sexual misconduct can be severe, as in Iran, where women can be legally stoned to death.

The other form of control and abuse of women's sexuality is exploitation, in which women and girls are used for men's sexual gratification or profit. Women and children are sexually exploited when they are subjected to incest, rape, sexual harassment, battering, bride trafficking, pornography, and prostitution.

In private, all forms of sexual exploitation exist all over the world. The public sexual exploitation of women and children is more varied; in some places it is actively suppressed, while elsewhere it is legalized or regulated.

The repression and exploitation of women and girls' sexuality often occur simultaneously. For example, in Iran under fundamentalist rule, women's activities in the public are segregated from men and

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full body coverings are required. At the same time, fundamentalists worsened sexual exploitation by lowering the age of marriage for girls from 18 to 9, and renewing the practice of temporary marriage, in which a man can marry a woman for as short a period as one hour, allowing a state sanctioned form of prostitution.

Men often use the repression and exploitation of women and girls to represent their political victories and power. For example, with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, victory over Western influence is measured by the level of repression imposed on women, as happened in Iran and Afghanistan. In other cases, victories over state control and censorship are celebrated by availability of pornography, as happened in the Soviet Union during perestroika, or the United Arab Emirates when the Internet is used to access pornography.

### **Prostitution and Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation**

Prostitution is not the world's oldest profession, as is commonly said, although it is probably one of the world's oldest forms of men's violence against women and girls. It seems old because men's sexual exploitation of women and children is ancient and defended as a part of men's natures that they have to have sex, even if it is purchased, forced or with a child. Prostitution is not natural or inevitable; it is abuse and exploitation of women and girls that results from structural inequality between women and men on a world scale. Prostitution commodifies women and girls and markets their bodies for whatever acts men have sexual-

ized and want to buy. Rarely are adult men treated this way.

The majority of girls enter prostitution before they have reached the age of consent. Each year for the past decade, the average age of girls in prostitution has declined, especially in Asia and Africa where men have created a demand for young girls, assuming they are free of HIV. Girls are sold into prostitution by relatives. Pimps recruit them after they run away from home. They enter prostitution after enduring incest, abuse and rape by acquaintances, which accommodates them to violence and exploitation until eventually they think this is their role in life.

Poverty, desperation to support family members, and drug addictions compel women into prostitution. When the social infrastructure collapses as a result of war, famine, and economic crisis women turn to prostitution as a last resort.

No matter how women and girls get into prostitution, it is difficult to get out. Pimps and brothel owners use violence, threats, and addictions to drugs and alcohol to control the woman, sometimes keeping them in slavery-like conditions. Often women can leave prostitution only after they are used-up, become ill, and no longer make money for the pimps. Women in prostitution are further burdened with a stigmatized identity that is impossible to escape, unless their pasts are kept a secret.

There is no dignity in prostitution. Many of the acts of prostitution, including those that are photographed in the making of pornography, are intended to degrade, humiliate and express domination over women. They are acts of misogyny, not respect

or affection, and have nothing to do with love or intimacy. Women don't emerge from sexual exploitation into positions of power, respect or admiration. They remain powerless as individuals and an underclass as a group.

Most laws aimed at suppressing prostitution are based on the sexually repressive doctrines of patriarchal religions that view prostitution as immoral activity, with women being the most immoral participants. In this view, men give in to the temptation offered by immoral women. Men have traditionally condemned prostitution in public, while ensuring its continuation in private. Where prostitution is illegal, it is usually the women who are punished; pimps, traffickers, and men who buy women in prostitution are seldom punished. Being bought, sold and enslaved in prostitution is a condition for which women and children can be arrested, imprisoned, deported, and sometimes executed.

Trafficking is the practice that delivers women and children into sexual exploitation. The number of women trafficked for this purpose is unknown, although conservative estimates put the number in the millions. Women do not voluntarily put themselves in situations where they are exploited, beaten, raped and enslaved. Women do not traffic themselves. Criminals who recruit, buy and sell women and girls are the crucial intermediaries for delivering women into prostitution. Traffickers supply the necessary elements for travel, such as money, documents, and connections in other countries. Traffickers are paid a sum of money for each woman and girl they deliver to a brothel or pimp. They use force, coercion,

seduction, deception, and any other techniques that are effective in controlling the women and girls they are trading.

Criminals traffic women and girls within borders, from rural areas to cities, and from town to town on circuits to provide new faces and bodies to men who want variety. They traffic them to large sex industry centers for men's nightlife entertainment, to migrant labor camps for men's hometown comfort, and to immigrant communities to provide sex for men who want women from their own nationality. They traffic them to rural areas for farmers who want wives, and to the US, Australia and Western Europe for men who want non-feminist wives.

### **Global Sexual Exploitation—Supply and Demand Markets**

Prostitution and trafficking in women and children are global phenomena. They occur all over the world and the activities are carried out transnationally. There is a global culture of sexual exploitation in which women's bodies are used to market consumer products and where women and girls themselves are products to be consumed. Currently, the global sex industry is estimated to make US\$52 billion dollars a year. To keep the sex industry in business, women are trafficked to, from and through every region in the world. The value of this global trade in women as commodities for sex industries is estimated to be between seven and twelve billion dollars annually.

The global sexual exploitation of women and girls is a supply and demand market. Men create the demand and women are the supply.[1] Cities and countries

where men's demand for women in prostitution is legalized or tolerated are the receiving sites, while countries and areas where traffickers easily recruit women are the sending regions.

Sending countries or regions are characterized by poverty, unemployment, war, and political and economic instability. These conditions facilitate the activity of traffickers who target regions where recruiting victims is easy. In sending countries, such as Vietnam, the rise of consumerism has led families to accept loans for material goods from traffickers in exchange for the use of their daughters. In many parts of Asia, daughters are culturally bound to repay their families for their upbringing, and a daughter in the sex industry is sometimes the main financial support for families in impoverished areas. Women and girls become vulnerable to traffickers as a result of family pressure, poverty, family violence, and community conflicts. Traffickers procure women and girls when their families say, "Go," or when women say to themselves, "Anything is better than this."

In receiving countries or sites where men's demand for women and girls in prostitution exceeds the supply in the local area, women and girls must be recruited and imported. Sex industries use up women, physically and emotionally, necessitating fresh supplies of women, which keeps the trafficking of women so profitable.

Criminals and organized crime groups have always been the organizers and moneymakers of the sex industry. In the United States, they were the founders and controllers of the pornography industry for

decades. Sex industries contribute to secondary illegal activity, such as money laundering, which is needed to convert illegal cash into useable funds. The criminal networks that traffic women are fully transnational. Some are composed of a few loosely connected individuals, while others are highly organized crime syndicates, such as the Mafia, the Yakuza, Triads and "Russian" crime groups.

The Internet has become a site for the global sexual exploitation of women and children. In the past five years, sex industries have been the leaders in opening up the Internet for business. The Internet is almost without regulation because its international reach has made local and national laws and standards either obsolete or unenforceable. In addition, governments, such as the United States, decided on a "hands-off" policy to allow the sex industry almost unfettered operation on the Internet. With new types of technology, pornographers have introduced new ways to exploit and abuse women. With the techniques of videoconferencing, live sex shows are broadcast in which men dictate the performances of the women.

In 1999, the revenue from pornography and live sex shows on the Internet was US\$1 billion dollars and comprised 69 percent of the Internet content sales. Pornographers in the United States garnered a majority of the money. By the year 2003, these sales are predicted to triple and generate half the revenue of online content sales.

Intense competition on the Internet has led pornographers to attract buyers with more extreme images, such as bond-

age, torture, bestiality and child pornography, leading to increased violence against women and children as more degrading and violent images, videos and live performances are made and marketed. Last year, an American in Phnom Penh, Cambodia set up a live video chat site to broadcast the pay-per-view rape and torture of women.

### **The Harm of Sexual Exploitation – From the Individual to the State**

Global sexual exploitation is a human rights crisis for women and girls. It is also a crisis for democracy and the security of nations. The harm of sexual exploitation extends from the individual to the state.

The rape-like sex acts of prostitution cause harm to women and girls' bodies and minds. Women contract sexually transmitted and other infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis. They suffer from post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety. Under these conditions women make the best choices they can. Rarely do these choices approach true consent. With few options, women comply in hope that eventually they will earn enough money to buy their way out of debt bondage or find a way to escape. When escape is not possible, they use drugs and alcohol to numb themselves from the emotional distress and assaults to their dignity and bodily integrity. Most women and girls emerge from prostitution ill, traumatized, and as poor as when they entered. For increasing numbers of women and girls, prostitution is a death sentence when they contract HIV. In some regions, more than fifty percent of

prostituted women have HIV/AIDS.

The sex industry targets and consumes young women, usually under age 25. When a state permits prostitution or trafficking to flourish a certain portion of each generation of young women will be lost. Some might argue that prostitution is the work of women, a way of making a living unique to their gender, but in fact, prostitution is the position the dominant class puts the subordinate class into, in order to use them as they desire. Prostitution creates an underclass of women whose purpose is to sexually serve men. It is a degraded status, everywhere. No form of sexual exploitation leads to the liberation or empowerment of women, or enhances the rights or status of women.

Prostitution and trafficking are extreme forms of gender discrimination and exist as a result of the powerlessness of women as a class. Sexual exploitation is more than an act; it is a systematic way to abuse and control women that socializes and coerces women and girls until they comply, take ownership of their own subordinate status, and say, "I choose this."

Prostitution and trafficking restrict women's freedom and citizenship rights. If women are treated as commodities, they are consigned to second-class citizenship. No state can be a true democracy, if half of its citizens can potentially be treated as commodities.

In addition to harming the individual and creating an underclass of women, trafficking and prostitution operate through criminal activity and corruption

that threaten the stability and security of nations. Due to relatively low risk and high profits, the trade in women is increasingly replacing the trade in drugs and arms as the preferred activity of transnational criminal networks. When officials are bribed or collaborate, they use their authority to protect criminals and profit from the sexual exploitation of women. As the influence of criminal networks on law enforcement and governments deepens, the corruption goes beyond occasionally ignoring illegal activity to providing protection by blocking legislation that would hinder the activities of the traffickers and pimps. As corruption and collaboration increase, the line between the state and the criminal networks starts to blur. This merging of criminal networks and government has occurred in many of the former Soviet republics, which are the major suppliers of women to the brothels of Europe. Reports from the Netherlands, Germany and Australia, indicate that legalized prostitution does not solve these problems, but leads to increased prostitution, trafficking and organized crime.

### **Resistance to Sexual Exploitation**

If women and girls are to live in this world with dignity and equality, their bodies and emotions must belong to them alone. They cannot be commodities to be bought and sold. The sexual exploitation of women is justified or condemned by so many different perspectives and ideologies it is difficult to get people to see and understand the harm to women, individually and as a class.

## lecture on sexual exploitation | Continued from Page 13

There is a double battle to be fought against the abuse and control of women and girls' sexuality. The first is against the repression of women and girls' sexuality; the second is against the exploitation of women and girls' sexuality. In the case of prostitution, the challenge is to end the discrimination for being in prostitution, while at the same time, ending the oppression of being used in prostitution. To do this we need to decriminalize prostitution for women, so the state is no longer punishing women for being exploited and abused. We need services that assist victims who are suffering from trauma, poor health, and physical injuries. States need to provide assistance to women and girls in the form of shelters, hotlines and advocates.

At the same time, we have to oppose the legalization and regulation of prostitution and

trafficking, which allow women to be exploited and abused under state determined conditions, and the decriminalization of pimping, trafficking and buying women in prostitution. We must focus more attention on the legitimacy of the demand by men to sexually exploit women and girls. We have to hold the criminals and perpetrators accountable for the harm they do.

In addition to ending the harm to women and girls, successful opposition to sexual exploitation offers countries of the world a breakthrough for global justice and democracy. Successful prosecutions of individuals and criminal networks that traffic and pimp women will eliminate a significant portion of transnational organized crime and corruption that are destabilizing governments all over the world.

[1] This dynamic is the case for heterosexual prostitution. Exceptions are gay prostitution, men's sexual abuse of boys, the occasional sexual abuse of children by women and the almost non-existent prostitution of men by women.

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# occupational health and safety concerns in the legal Nevada brothels

By Magdalene Meretrix

**P**rostitution is illegal everywhere in the United States of America except in the government-licensed brothels in the state of Nevada. There are over thirty licensed brothels throughout the state, ranging from tiny two worker establishments like the Shady Lady to the giants like Madam Kitty's, The Chicken Ranch and Sage Brush with thirty or more bedrooms filled with workers. Since the Nevada government legalized prostitution on Christmas Day, 1970, business has been booming – the Nevada brothels collectively gross an estimated 13 million U.S. dollars per year from the visits of roughly 350,000 customers.

A second law was passed in 1971 that proscribed the licensing of brothels in counties with populations in excess of 400,000 in order to keep prostitution away from the tourist towns of Reno and Las Vegas. There are four levels of prostitution laws: federal, state, county and municipal. Due to the variety of laws as well as the individual brothel owners and management, it is important to remember that conditions vary,

sometimes dramatically, from establishment to establishment.

## Health Considerations

One of the most obvious occupational health concerns for prostitutes is sexually transmitted disease. The state of Nevada believes that it has solved that problem by passing laws requiring regular blood tests and pap smears and mandating the use of condoms for all sexual contact. The fact that no cases of HIV seroconversion have occurred in the legal brothels is often presented as evidence of the efficacy of the mandatory testing and condom laws.

While the low STD rate is definitely laudable, it is questionable whether the current practices are as beneficial as a program of education would be. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control's most recent HIV/AIDS Surveillance Report cites no proven cases of HIV transmission from prostitutes (legal and illegal combined) to clients. The U.S. Department of Health estimates that all prostitution (legal and illegal combined) is responsible for only 3% to 5% of STD



*Sheri's Ranch in Southern Nevada*

transmission (compared to teenagers who are responsible for 30% to 35% of STD transmission).

With such low transmission rates, mandatory condom usage coupled with a mandatory education program for legal prostitutes should be more than sufficient as well as being less expensive and intrusive than weekly STD tests. If the burden of testing were reduced to a monthly level rather than a weekly level it would reduce the financial burden of the workers by over \$1000/year while still providing an added incentive for workers to protect their health. It is readily apparent that Nevada prostitutes are in greater need of quality safer sex education, which puts control of the worker's health in her own hands, than weekly testing which allows her to be a passive bystander in regards to her own health.

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During my time working in the Nevada brothels, I encountered otherwise intelligent women who maintained dangerous safe sex beliefs. Some women believed that two condoms used simultaneously were safer than one condom. Some women were confused about the difference between lubrications, believing that KY Jelly (a single-insertion medical lubricant) was a sufficient lubrication or exhibiting no knowledge of what “water-based” means or why it is important to use a water-based lubricant. Many women believed that they could not get an STD from receiving unprotected oral sex. Mandatory testing will not protect a worker if a condom breaks due to improper usage whereas proper education can prevent that breakage altogether.



**Chicken Ranch in Southern Nevada**

### **Workplace Security**

Another important safety issue in the Nevada brothels is worker security. What safeguards are available to protect the worker from violence? In Lyon County, brothels are required to surround their property with a fence no shorter than six feet tall, equipped with a buzzer and a locking device that can be opened remotely from within the brothel. Because this is not a state law, most brothels outside of Lyon County are not fenced. (Lyon County currently contains four of the Nevada brothels.) While

these fences do deter the average troublemaker, I witnessed three events while I worked in Nevada that proved that fences and door buzzers are only as effective as the security personnel.

On two occasions, a man climbed over the security fence. In one case the man was spotted and thwarted but in the other case, the man was able to gain entry through a rear door that had been carelessly left unlocked. On the third occasion, a man who had already gained entry through normal channels physically assaulted a worker in her room and walked calmly out the front door, gestured that he needed the gate opened and walked out when another customer pushed the security button for him.

This last, most troubling, incident clearly indicates the need for appropriate staff security training. That particular brothel did not have a designated security guard (though other brothels have employed security staff) because the owner believed that visible security guards would spoil the “party atmosphere” of the brothel. In addition to an authorized security guard, the non-security staff needs to be trained in basic skills. In the case of the in-brothel assault, the perpetrator could have easily been detained if a staff member had noticed that he returned to the parlor from the private room area without a worker. Brothel staff should be constantly vigilant about customers attempting to enter or leave the private area without a worker.

Some brothels have room intercoms that link to a central office. Many workers and customers complain about these intercom systems, saying that

they feel inhibited at the thought of an office worker listening to them having sex. The workers who dislike the intercoms should re-think their position because, intrusive though they may seem, the intercoms can save their lives, especially in combination with the “panic button.” A panic button is a button found either on the face of the intercom or sometimes on the bed frame. When a worker pushes the panic button, a light and alarm go off in the central office. Turning on the intercom while alerting staff can inform security personnel of what sort of situation they’re entering.

It is crucial that these panic buttons, their connected lights and alarms and the intercoms, if present, be kept in good repair. At one brothel, we workers discovered that the lights and alarms connected to the panic buttons were broken. Discussions with management led to the repair of the system, but there’s no telling how long the brothel workers went without security measures before one worker noticed the breakdown. The panic button system can make the difference between life and death for a worker.

Both workers and staff can be trained to prevent a potentially dangerous situation before it starts. Training programs, underwritten by the government or by brothel owners, are sorely needed. Workers need to be trained in conflict management – how to recognize a dangerous or excessively intoxicated client, how to attempt to effectively talk their way out of a situation and how to physically defend themselves against an opponent, especially a larger opponent.

Staff need to be trained in self-defense measures as well as to



turn away dangerous or intoxicated clients before they reach the workers. At a brothel where I worked, the staff allowed me to take a customer to my room even though they knew that he had tried to choke other workers. Not surprisingly, the customer tried to choke me and had to be subdued with a combination of self-defense measures and the panic button in my room. This is unacceptable. Staff should be instructed to remember abusive clients and refuse them entry.

While it seems obvious to take measures to assist the staff and workers to protect themselves against drunk and dangerous clients, it's easy to overlook the security problems related to infighting. The competition and workplace stress of brothel work often combine to create an explosive atmosphere. The rambling halls and doors with no locks provide an environment well suited to ambush. Excessive drug and alcohol use among the workers can exacerbate antagonistic behavior. Protecting the workers from one another is perhaps the most complex tasks of brothel management and often the least considered task as well.

There are no easy answers to infighting, but a few steps

management can take are to watch the workers for signs of prolonged intoxication and take measures to provide a drug-free workplace in a manner that infringes on the worker's free-time outside the brothel as little as possible. Dealing with the aftermath of infighting is equally important. When I was attacked by a co-worker, I was offered the option of pressing charges against my colleague from the inside of a jail cell or dropping charges and going to the emergency room for medical treatment. I was told that this is the standard policy in Lyon County: if two brothel workers have a fight, either both go to jail or both go free no matter the circumstances of the conflict. This is an unacceptable and inhumane way to treat workers. The choice between pressing charges and receiving medical attention is not a real choice.

### **Workplace Stress**

Many avoidable factors contribute to unnecessary and excessive workplace stress in Nevada brothels. One prime contributor is the long hours workers are required to serve. In some brothels, workers are "on the clock" all the time – that is, so long as there are potential

customers in the parlor, all workers are required to be in the parlor entertaining them and attempting to entice them to partake of services in the private area. Other brothels allow their workers to work shifts but most of these aren't much better as the required shift is twelve hours long and fourteen hours on weekends. This creates a 64 to 88 hour workweek that quickly becomes intolerable.

Because brothel management reports the workers as independent contractors, brothel workers have no worker's compensation benefits if they become injured on the job. Brothel workers have no job security, no unemployment benefits and no retirement benefits. But it's questionable as to whether the workers are actually employees or independent contractors. This is an important distinction to make, as the workers currently receive none of the benefits of independent contractor status and none of the benefits of employee status, thus getting the worst of two worlds.

Because there is no government agency charged with overseeing the treatment of the brothel workers, some brothels maintain abusive working conditions. Many women report virtual imprisonment in the brothels. The management will not let the workers leave the brothel without a staff escort unless they are leaving their job altogether. These "lock down" conditions extend to bars on the windows and no telephone privileges over the weekend. Some of the more remotely located brothels grossly overcharge the workers for basic necessities and at least one



***Madam Kitty's Fantasy Ranch in Northern Nevada***

## OHS in Nevada brothels | Continued from Page 17

confiscates workers' condoms when they arrive and then sells them back to the worker.

As if these working conditions weren't bad enough, it is illegal for the workers to have a romantic relationship on their own time, outside the brothel. Nevada state law (NRS 201.360) declares that:

*"A person who [...] lives with or accepts any earnings of a common prostitute, or entices or solicits a person to go to a house of prostitution to engage in sexual conduct with a common prostitute; [...] shall be punished: [...] where no physical force or immediate threat of physical force is used, for a category D felony"*

While it can be argued that this law is rarely enforced, the fact that it exists is, at minimum an insult and at maximum, a source of ongoing fear. Officially setting prostitutes aside as a different kind of citizen with restrictions other citizens are not subject to leads to a feeling of resentment and insecurity that increases overall workplace stress.

As can be seen from this brief overview of workplace health and safety issues, improvements are needed and these changes must come from all levels – from the workers themselves through brothel staff and management all the way up to state government. The Nevada brothels are worth saving and improving, however. Despite their flaws, they offer the only legal option for U.S. women who choose to become prostitutes. The biggest improvement overall, though, would be one that increased the workers options, allowing them to work in collectives or independently as well as in the brothels. So long as the brothels

have no legal competition, there is no regulatory or grievance committee and the control of the workplace environment is largely out of the worker's hands, opportunities for abuse will abound.

*For regular updates on Magdalene Meretrix's writing, recording and appearances plus exclusive short erotic fiction and reviews of books, products and web sites sign on to the bi-monthly newsletter:*

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### about the author



**Magdalene Meretrix** is a Renaissance Woman (if that woman happens to be a Renaissance courtesan, that is.) She is a musician, textile artist, web designer and writer as well as being a 17-years-and-counting veteran of the sex industry. She grew up in the American South and now lives in the foothills where the Sawtooth Mountains kiss the Rockies. Magdalene has a dashing dastardly lover, a mutant deformed cat and a silly grey rat. When she's not having sex, she spends far too much time in front of a computer.

# the Victorian brothel owners' perspective

by Peter Richardson  
President  
Victorian Brothel Association

**A**lthough the Members of the Victorian Brothel Owners' Association are legal, this is not a position of comfort. Brothel owners were encouraged to believe legality would bring respectability, business certainty, prosperity and growth. We responded to the call and tried our best to bring our business into line, but those efforts have now proven unwarranted, as shall be demonstrated in this paper. The legal industry has become a

scapegoat; we are subjected to the indignity of having the blame for all shortcomings heaped at our doorstep.

The *Planning (Brothels) Act 1984* that proclaimed zoned brothels legal was a fine Act in theory but was fatally flawed in its execution. Through its failure to have all the sections of the Act proclaimed, the Victorian Labor Government was unable to deliver a finished product. Brothel owners now have higher cost pressures and

even more competition from a burgeoning illegal industry that has none of the restrictions which are imposed on legal businesses. The partly proclaimed Act has succeeded in disappointing everyone as it only covers 25 per cent of the sex industry in Melbourne. Local government councils resent the power of the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. Labor politicians resent Liberals for opposing parts of the Act.

The police are now presumed to have less reason to intrude upon brothel premises at will, resulting in a great reduction in manpower in the Vice Squad. Consequently, they do not have the resources to crack down on the unregistered places that still operate. The estimate of the total annual turnover of the entire sex industry in Victoria is \$150-200 million minimum. We would suggest any industry with that sort of turnover in ordinary circumstances would definitely have some serious consideration from the government (for example, TABs, liquor outlets, and so on).

Delegations and deputations from Singapore, Queensland, Adelaide and New South Wales have inspected the Victorian model of the sex industry. They go away shaking their heads and turn their backs on the 'Victorian experience'. The delegations are

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## Victorian brothel owners' perspective | Continued from Page 19

being shown some of our worst examples. We ask that these delegations be introduced to the Victorian Brothel Association and taken on a tour of the range of standards that now exist.

Legal brothels have come under enormous financial pressure — all sixty-four of them — as of 29 April 1991. Taxation, health regulations, Workcare, payroll tax, insurance and a myriad of other charges have conspired to make legal brothels marginal economic units.

Legalisation introduced trading hour restrictions, room controls and a cap on the number of employees that could be on the premises at any one time. This has created a situation where there are sixty-four permits, an estimated 6000 sex workers in Melbourne and only 2000 sex workers are required in legal brothels. The remaining 4000 sex workers are now seeking employment within the illegal sex industry where there are no health restrictions, age restrictions or working permit restrictions. Illegal brothels, massage parlours and hand relief joints have been allowed to trade with impunity. They have no advertising restrictions like the legal brothels and, consequently, can blatantly entice members of society into the industry. Times of recession are times when desperate measures are resorted to.

Therefore, a well-worded advertisement in the daily newspaper attracts the unsuspecting 16 to 18-year-old worker to the sex industry. Carrying only a fraction of the overheads, opening on demand, asking their staff no questions about age, filling in no taxation forms —

these low cost, cheaply set-up alternatives are a serious threat to legal brothels and are the reason why the law was introduced initially. It seems the law enforcement agencies have allowed them to flourish.

When various governments introduced socially revolutionary legislation in the past, the law enforcement agencies were moved to enforce compliance. TAB legislation saw most SP bookies forced out of business. Liquor licensing



breaches are treated very seriously. But in the realm of the sex industry, enforcement is a joke. The Melbourne Vice Squad is rarely staffed by more than three or four officers. There are token visits, but all too often complaints about the 'illegal' traders end up in the 'too hard' basket. Police claim obtaining evidence is too difficult and time consuming — this could have been no more difficult than removing the above mentioned SP bookies with their 'v phones' and other anti-surveillance devices.

There appears to be no effective policing of the Act in

Victoria, and there is little or no pressure on the police to change, other than that pressure which comes from legal owners.

Periodic bursts of activity may frighten but they will never quell the enthusiasm of the undercapitalised entrepreneur who wants to get his own massage business up and running.

It is unfortunate that the Prostitutes' Collective of Victoria (PCV) has a woeful reputation with brothel owners. We feel that they could be a valuable

force in educating the industry, but as yet we are not working closely together at all. There are still too many groups, such as the police, who by necessity dwell on the fringe of the industry and lack any real understanding of how a brothel operates. They are however, influential in shaping opinions. Preconceived notions are reinforced.

The legal brothels, via their association — Victorian Brothel Association (VBA) — should be consulted by all parties with an interest in law reform or changes to working conditions, so that more effective regulation can result. The Victorian Brothel

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Association would simply ensure inspection of as wide a range of premises as possible was undertaken, thus allowing any visitor the freedom to make up their own mind.

Advertising is the only method for launching a new business. While those operating legally in the sex industry are prevented from advertising for staff to work in a brothel and are restricted in the content or size of an advertisement, the illegal sex industry knows no such constraints. Legal sex industry advertisements are still not acceptable to the daily press which has no qualms in accepting quite explicit material for 0055 and phone-sex services.

Advertising, if it is to be restricted, should be restricted to all practitioners including escort agencies, strip agencies and massage shopfronts.

There are some positives. We have an industry magazine called *The Shopper*. We have an Association, in spite of the law telling us we are not allowed to associate. Insurance premiums are coming down. The industry reputation for torching every brothel in sight has been proven to be a furphy, with only one claim made in six years. Corruption is not rampant. Police relations are improving and the Victorian Brothel Association has tackled the vexed question of taxation head on and achieved some accord with the Australian Taxation Office.

But problems do exist and we are not ignoring them. We would like to see a review of the present position before we go ahead and proclaim the balance of the Act or before we make any other changes. Not only will we then achieve commercial success but

we will also be a significant contributor to important social change in the 20th century.

The Victorian Brothel Association does not want the rest of the Act proclaimed until it has been reassessed by a committee which has representatives from all aspects of the industry — both positive and negative. A simple example of how the industry could be controlled is by introducing a registration system which would work in this manner — as we have sixty-four permits, any person wishing to work in these legal places could do so without having to register. Any person wishing to work for themselves must register, thus stopping the mushroom effect we are seeing all around Victoria as we speak. This would also help the government departments relevant to our industry — such as the Health, Planning and Tax Departments — to monitor the industry more successfully.

The VBA believes that any business wishing to operate outside the proclaimed Act must register with a government body before they can advertise. In other words, before they can open for business. This simple procedure would not be a high cost to society, yet would encourage the control of the present large grey area by allowing a monitoring system to have full control of all prostitution in Victoria.

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*[Editors Note: The following conference paper was presented in 1991 and is therefore quite old, but has been included here as an indication of the brothel manager's perspective on the industry.]*

*It should be noted that the Brothel Owners' Association no longer operates, however, Peter remains influential in the Victorian Brothel Industry.]*

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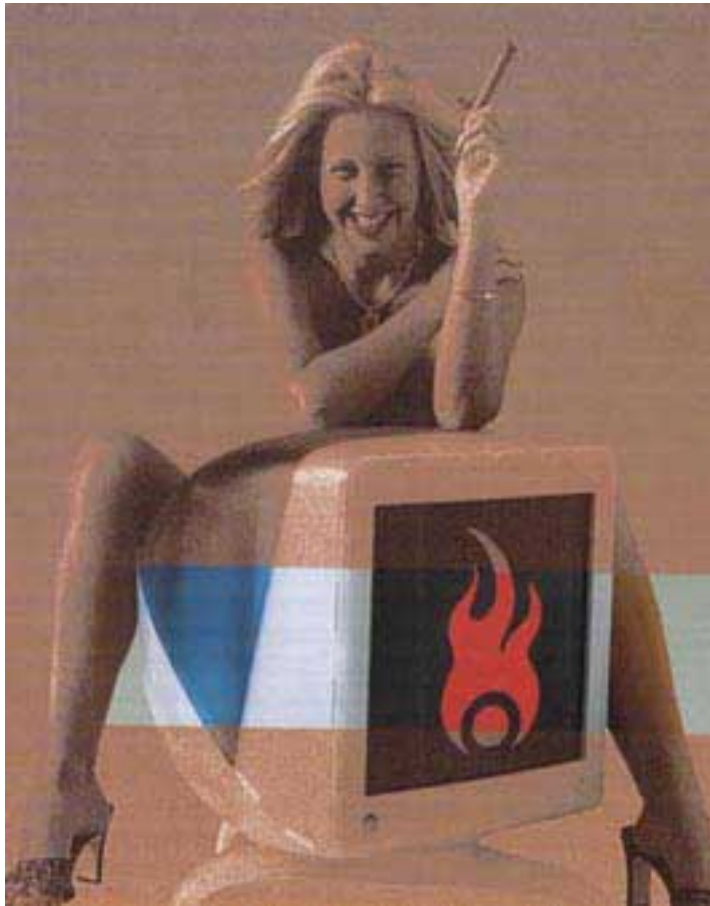
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# sex on the stock exchange

**S**ince the end of the Second World War, the sex industry has been transformed from a minor fringe subculture into a major component of Western popular culture. Sociologists claim that the sexual content of American culture has changed more in the last two decades than in the previous two centuries. Australians are following suit, displaying an increasing tolerance towards non-violent sexual material and a willingness to embrace and incorporate sexual content into their everyday lives. (22% of Australians regularly buy erotic videos – Roy Morgan, April, 1999)

As the consumption of sexually explicit materials increases, the number of traditionally non-sex industry businesses entering the scene also increases; video companies, cable companies, retail companies, entertainment

companies and the list goes on. Driven by new technology, the latest newcomers to enter the amorphous entity we call the 'sex industry' are the Internet entrepreneurs. In April 2000 more than half a million adult sites were visited by 18 million Americans, let alone the rest of the world.

In May, 2000, Sharon Austen Limited made headlines as the first genuine listing of an adult erotica company on the Australian Stock Exchange. The Company initially raised \$7.5million including \$5million raised at Public Offer which was fully subscribed and closed prior to the closing date. The Company has since completed further listings in Germany on the Munich and Berlin regional stock exchanges, as well as the Frankfurt Bourse. Europe's most renowned erotica merchant, Beate Uhse, AG (founded by

German businesswoman Beate Uhse at the end of WWII) remains the major shareholder in the Company, holding 29.4% of issued capital.

Sharon Austen intends to develop its website, [www.sharonausten.com](http://www.sharonausten.com), as a premier global website offering a multimedia forum for adult entertainment and online shopping that is cutting edge, stimulating and informative. According to Eros Foundation's figures, erotic products and entertainment are the largest growth area of the adult market.

The Company's founder and CEO, Sharon Austen-Dunne, has had considerable managerial experience in the Australian sex industry. Her mentor was the late Zara Walker-Powell, Australia's most famous madam and owner of former Sydney bordello – the renowned – Zazzie's. Walker-

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## **sex on the stock exchange** | *Continued from Page 22*

Powell was a strong advocate of sex workers' rights, especially in the areas of health and safety issues.

Austen-Dunne has taken her mentor's non-exploitative agenda a step further with her vision for Sharon Austen Limited. Austen-Dunne is representative of a new wave of women managers in the sex industry whose aim is to provide a non-exploitative environment of sexual expression especially for women consumers. Traditionally, men have controlled the industry and have been the largest consumers of pornography. However, reform within the sex industry has been driven by women.

Enforceable codes of practice along with health and safety regulations have been introduced in the sex industry in the majority of Australian states. In this area we are unique in the world.

Women represent 95% of employees in the sex industry and they now represent 25% of the industry's management – a higher percentage than any other industry. Austen-Dunne and her female contemporaries promoting a new generation of erotic entertainment, such as the founders of [www.cakenyc.com](http://www.cakenyc.com)., believe that women can redefine the face of pornography and hope to lead the way in the removal of its social stigma. The predominantly women management team at Sharon Austen Limited have chosen to market a form of pornography that they argue is entertaining and acceptable to a large proportion of adults. Claiming that it is erroneous to regard all pornography in the rigid context of dominating men and exploited, submissive women, Austen-

Dunne emphasises that "Women are not only sexual subjects – they're sexual agents and sexual actors. Women are just as capable as men of experiencing sexual pleasure and more and more women are using pornography to achieve that end. Sexual pleasure is life-affirming and empowering."

The Company has forged a strong working relationship with the Eros Foundation, Australia's foremost sex industry lobby group and secured the services of former Eros Foundation President, Fiona Patten, as Chief Operations Officer. Patten is a member of the ACT Government Sex Industry Advisory Group and ACCSEX Committee which works to promote healthy sex lives for people with disabilities. "I am excited to be part of this new generation of the sex industry, where an erotic company can be publicly listed on the stock exchange and does not need to be relegated to a seedy back alley," says Patten. "Women are moving to the forefront of the sex industry and taking control. That is very powerful."

Sharon Austen Limited supports a sex industry that is upfront, controlled and legal. The Internet has become the latest popular forum for the exploration of sexuality and Sharon Austen Limited is determined to utilise that environment in a safe and non-exploitative manner.

**Anne Austen,**

Editor,  
Sharon Austen Limited

**Fiona Patten,**

Chief Operations Officer,  
Sharon Austen Limited.

# international news

Provided by Sheila Pantry, OBE



## International Labour Office

### The Fight against the worst forms of child labour continues: ask the ILO

After years of work by concerned people in many countries, the International Labour Office at the International Labour Conference which adopted, in June 1999, a new Convention on the worst forms of child labour continues to promote and highlight the problems.

Around the world today, some **250 million children aged 5-14 years old** are working in developing countries alone. About half work in hazardous conditions. Many do work that is dangerous to their health, morals and well being. Something has to be done.

By ratifying the Convention, a country makes a moral statement and a legal commitment to free these children from abhorrent work and restore their rights to education and to healthy developing years.

And they will take a major step toward breaking the cycle of illiteracy and poverty that traps millions of families and their children throughout the world.

Workers' and employers' organisations, as well as non-governmental organisations will be involved in the fight against the worst forms of child labour, which includes work underground, under water, at dangerous heights or small spaces, with dangerous machines or tools, heavy loads, high noise, temperatures or vibration.

**So at the start of the New Year help these children so that they can learn to read and write, learn a trade, and have the freedom go out and play and be child!**

For more details, including a poster contact:

The International Labour Office

Fax: +41 22 799 6439

web: [www.ilo.org/childlabour](http://www.ilo.org/childlabour)

E-mail: [childlabour@ilo.org](mailto:childlabour@ilo.org)

### FRAA for everyone.....

**Fire Related Abbreviations and Acronyms (FRAA)** has just been published by the UK Fire Information Group contains 38 pages of text ranging from AAC to Zr with others in between such FRED, HAMTIE, RIFA to TTCN.

If you spend time and effort looking for fire and fire related abbreviations and acronyms then this publication will certainly help you.

To obtain a copy of this useful list, priced at £6.95 sterling plus postage contact:

Judy Rebbeck, Information Services Manager, LPC Centre for Risk Sciences

BRE Ltd, Garston, Watford, Hertfordshire WD2 7JR, UK

Tel: +44 (0)1923 664 938

Fax: +44(0)1923 664 994

Price £6.95 plus postage

### Forensic Science Information at your Fingertips

FORS is a bibliographic database featuring abstracts of scientific papers, conference proceedings, books, technical reports and government publications. The full literature database contains more than 50,000 records that are not available publicly anywhere else in the world!

The Forensic Science Service (FSS) now brings you immediate access to this wealth of information via the FORS Bibliographic Database CD ROM, which uses the powerful SilverPlatter software. The database routinely scans a core list of about 250 journals published worldwide, together with a series of abstracting and bibliographic services. Over 1900 different sources are included. Since September 1996 all records added to the database have included an abstract.

The FORS database is multidisciplinary and covers literature relevant to the examination of evidential materials, analytical methods and the presentation and interpretation of findings. The database coverage includes drugs and toxicology, forensic biology, forensic chemistry, forensic medicine and pathology, documents and firearms examination, arson investigation, image processing, fingerprints, safety, quality and management aspects of running a forensic science service. In addition, the database covers techniques and problems that are encountered in many analytical laboratories, especially in the areas of



toxicology and body fluid identification.

FORS is the world's only database that is dedicated entirely to forensic science related topics and is an invaluable information tool for forensic scientists and other professionals involved in crime investigation, education and medical and legal occupations.

For further details contact:  
The Forensic Science Service,  
Marketing Department, 3rd Floor,  
Norfolk House, Smallbrook  
Queensway, Birmingham B5  
4BR, United Kingdom  
Tel: +44(0)121 607 6972  
Fax: +44(0)121 643 6129  
web:www.forensic.gov.uk

## Poland

### Catalogue of Posters from the Central Institute for Labour Protection

The Central Institute for Labour Protection (CIOP) has produced a very attractive catalogue of posters which are available from CIOP. The posters cover a number of subjects from noise, chemicals, computers, ergonomics, stress, risk etc. Each poster is available from CIOP and are priced items.

**Contact for the catalogue:**  
**Barbara Szczepanowska,**  
**CIOP, Centre Institute for**  
**Labour Protection,**  
**ul. Czerniakowska 16 00-701**  
**Warsaw Poland**  
**Tel: +48 22 623 3683**  
**Fax: +48 22 623 3695**  
**Email:baszc@ciop.waw.pl**

## China

### Coal Mine Explosion in Jilin Traps 31 Miners

A gas explosion in a coalmine in Liaoyuan, Northeast China's Jilin Province, trapped 31 miners underground on 5 Nov. 2000.

Local authorities & relevant departments rushed to the site to search for the men, according to a local official who declined to give his name. The provincial government of Jilin has also sent officials to inspect and direct the rescue work.

By 3pm of 7 Nov, two of the 33 miners working underground at the time of the explosion had been rescued, leaving 31 still stranded underground. An investigation into the cause of the accident is under way. Mine officials refused to comment.

A series of similar accidents have marred the reputation of China's coal mining industry recently. Last week, a fire in a small coalmine killed at least 10 people in Fengcheng, a county in East China's Jiangxi Province.

A gas explosion in a coalmine in Liupanshui, Southwest China's Guizhou, killed 159 in September. There were at least four coalmine explosions in July in Southwest China's Sichuan Province, Yunnan Province and Chongqing Municipality.

In Southwest China's Sichuan Province alone, gas explosion in small coalmines have killed at least 21 miners this year. The province has ordered all of its small coalmines to close until they could be inspected for safety.

Governments at various levels have been alerted on safety conditions in coalmines as accidents have been on the rise.

## ASBESTOS NEWS.....

## South Africa

### Jubilation at asbestos ruling

Jubilation greeted the ruling by the British House of Lords which granted more than 3,000 Southern African asbestos sufferers the right to sue Cape Plc in British Courts.

More details in *Workers Life, Vol.6 No.4 2000* published by NOSA, 508 Proes Street.

Arcadia 0083 or  
Box 26434 Arcadia,  
Pretoria 0007, South Africa.

Tel: + 12 303 9767

Fax: + 12 303 9857

E-mail: [worklife@nosa.co.za](mailto:worklife@nosa.co.za)

## Australia

Some months ago Australia's National Occupational Health and Safety Commission was contemplating a ban on asbestos. In the event, they did not opt for a ban but recommended a five-year phase-out period. It looks like their decision will prove irrelevant as on 24 November 2000 the Maritime Union of Australia imposed an immediate prohibition on its members handling asbestos in all Australian ports. Without the cooperation of the wharfies, it is hard to see how asbestos can be economically imported to Australia.

## New Zealand

Coincidentally also on November 24 2000, a newspaper article in New Zealand was headlined: Asbestos epidemic will kill 12,000. The article reports findings in New Zealand by two Auckland Medical School researchers which were published in the New Zealand Medical Journal on November 24. Professor T Kjolletrom and Dr P Smart predict that there will be 4000 mesothelioma deaths and 8,000 deaths from asbestos-related lung cancer in the next fifteen years; most will be building workers. They also highlighted the on-going risks from asbestos products incorporated within the country's infrastructure.

## Brazil

The City Council of Osasco, Brazil has become one of the first in Brazil to vote to ban asbestos within their city. Recently the Global Asbestos Congress was held in September, 2000 in Osasco.

### Over 100 years ago.....

All this is happening in 2000 and yet over 100 years in 1898 and 1899 two British Lady Inspectors declared in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector about "the evil effects of asbestos dust....in dusty trades the worker may continue for a long time apparently unaffected, before the symptoms of the evil become marked" .

### Keeping up-to-date....

See also web site: British Asbestos Newsletter [www.lkaz.demon.co.uk](http://www.lkaz.demon.co.uk) which contains latest information and full text of the Newsletter

## Diary of World-wide Events

Some important dates for your Diary.... even if you cannot attend you can always ask for information and papers from the speakers.

### February 7 - 9 2001

#### Occupational Health and Safety Education - Meeting Community Demands

RMIT University, Melbourne Australia

Organised by The Association of Occupational Health and Safety Educators

The conference aims to support the working relationships between OHS educators, researchers, practitioners, legislators and their community they serve. The theme aims to stimulate discussions on OHS education and research as it interacts with the expectations and demands of our communities, particularly in work environments.

Contact: Colin Findlay  
OHS Group  
RMIT Dept of Applied Chemistry  
PO Box 71  
Bundoora 3083 Australia

### May 1-3 2001

#### Safety in Action 2001

Melbourne Exhibition Centre  
Organised by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)

Contact  
Safety in Action Conference 2001  
C/O Australian Exhibitions & Conferences P/L  
PO Box 82  
Flinders Lane  
Melbourne 8009 Australia  
Tel: +61 (0)3 9654 7773  
email: [safety@aec.net.au](mailto:safety@aec.net.au)  
web: [www.aec.net.au](http://www.aec.net.au)

### 14 - 17 May 2001

#### A+A Congress and Exhibition

Dusseldorf, Germany. One of Europe's largest Health and Safety Conferences and Exhibitions.

For details of the conference:

**Contact:**  
BASI,  
Fax: + 49 2241 231 611  
E-mail: [basi@hvbv.de](mailto:basi@hvbv.de)  
For details to exhibit contact:  
Messe Dusseldorf  
Fax: +49 211 4560 668

### 2 - 7 June 2001

#### Embracing Change - The Premier Conference for occupational and environmental health and safety professionals globally

New Orleans, USA  
Organised by the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA)

**Contact:**  
American Industrial Hygiene Association,  
2700 Prosperity Ave., Suite 250,  
Fairfax, VA 22031, USA  
Tel: +1 703 849 8888  
Fax: +703 207 3561  
E-mail: [jmyers@aiha.org](mailto:jmyers@aiha.org)  
Web: [www.aiha.org/confmain.html](http://www.aiha.org/confmain.html)

### 6 - 8 June 2001

#### Future Safe 2001: Workplace Safety Trade Show

Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre,  
Brisbane, Australia  
Hosted by the National Safety Council of Australia (NSCA)

**Contact:**  
Clare Rugg,  
NSCA,  
P O Box 810,  
Mascot, NSW 1460, Australia  
Tel: + 61 2 9666 4899  
E-mail: [clare.rugg@nsca.aust.com](mailto:clare.rugg@nsca.aust.com)

**24-29 September 2001**

**APOSHO-17**

Grand Hotel, Taipei, Taiwan  
Organised by the Chinese Taipei Industrial Safety and Health Association

**Contact:**

APOSHO 17 Organizing Secretariat, Round Table PCO, No.3, Sec.2, Ting-Chow Road, Taipei (100), Taiwan  
Tel: + 886 2 2758 2602 Ext.122  
Fax: +886 2 2729 8638  
E-mail: rtpco3@rtpco.com.tw  
Web: www.aposho.org/notice/aposho-17.htm

**15-17 October 2001**

**Work in the Global Village: an International High-Level Conference on Work Life in the 21st Century**

Helsinki, Finland

Organised by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health in close collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (SafeWork) and the World Health Organisation, under the auspices of the Finnish Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Social Affairs and Health.

**Contact:**

Taina Paakkonen,  
Work in the Global Village,  
Finnish Institute of Occupational Health,  
Topeliuksenkatu 41aA,  
FIN-00250 Helsinki  
Tel: +358 94747 2910  
Fax: +358 9213 804  
E-mail:  
taina.paakkonen@occuphealth.fi  
Web: www.occuphealth.fi/e/project/globalwork

**17 - 19 October 2001**

**National Convention of Industrial Safety and Health 2001**

Tokyo, Japan  
Organised by the Japan Industrial Safety and Health Association (JISHA)  
Contact: JISHA,  
E-mail: koho@jisha.or.jp  
Web: www.jisha.or.jp

**2- 6 November 2001**

**World Occupational Exposure Values: International Cooperation on Scientific and Technical Issues**

Hotel le Plaza, Brussels, Belgium  
Organised by the International Occupational Hygiene Association (IOHA) and the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH)  
Contact: ACGIH Worldwide,  
1330 Kemper Meadow Drive,  
Cincinnati,  
Ohio 45240, USA  
Tel: +1 513 742 2020  
Fax: +1 513 742 3355  
E-mail: meetings@acgih.org  
Web: www.woev.org or  
Web: www.acgih.org

**2002**

**26-31 May 2002**

**Innovation and Prevention: XVIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work**

Vienna, Austria  
Organised by Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt (AUVA) (Austrian Workers' Compensation Board), Hauptverband der Österreichischen Sozialversicherungsträger (Federation of Austrian Social Security Institutions), the International Social Security

Association (ISSA), the International Labour Office (ILO).  
Contact: Allgemeine Unfallversicherungsanstalt (AUVA Kongressburo, Adalbert Stifter Strasse 65, A-1200 Vienna, Austria  
Tel: +43 1 33 111 537  
Fax: +43 1 33 111 469  
E-mail: safety2002@auva.sozvers.at  
Web: www.safety2002.at

## Interesting Web sites

### Korea

<http://www.kosha.or.kr/english/english.htm>

#### Information Sources - Korea Occupational Safety and Health Agency (KOSHA)

Site lists activities, Newsletter, OSH Act and other regulations. KOSHA is also the International Labour Office Health and Safety National Centre. Site is also available in English language in addition to Korean language.

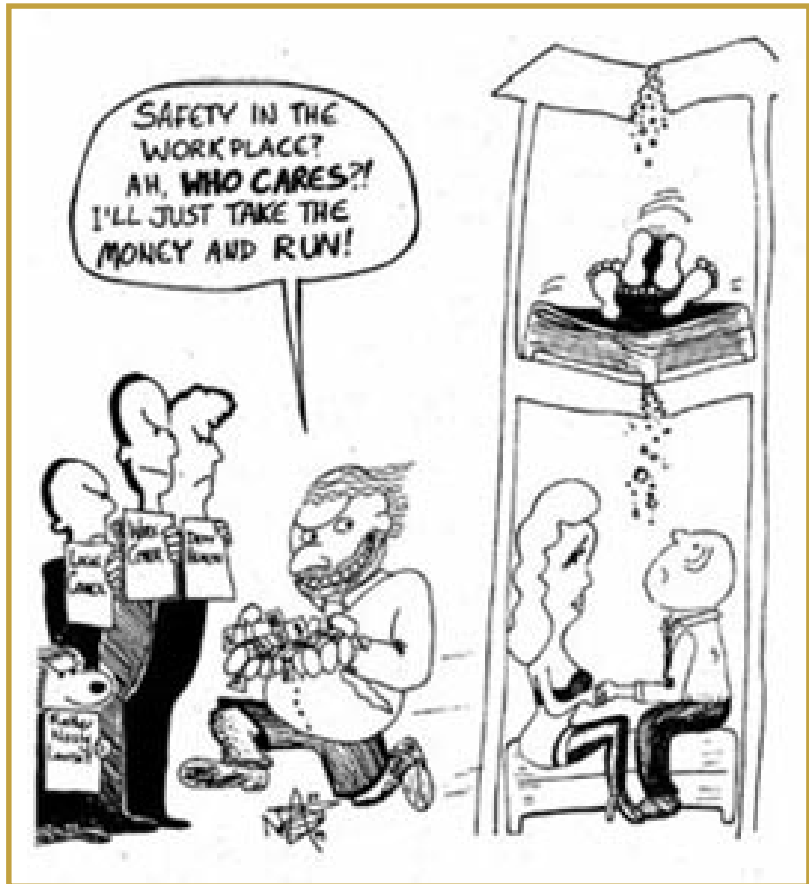
### United Kingdom

#### <http://www.asthma.org.uk> Asthma - National Asthma Campaign

Everything you wanted to know about asthma, including information on children's asthma. Booklets, magazines and other useful resources, news, details of National Asthma Campaign-funded research, events, campaigning and more.

<http://www.BREbookshop.com>  
Built environment information from testing to sustainability. Online service from BRE, the UK's leading centre for construction and fire expertise, providing research, consultancy and information services to customers worldwide. Identifies the publications from leading publishers such as The Stationery Office.

<http://www.isma.org.uk>  
**International Stress Management Association (ISMA) UK**  
Gives general information about stress and related topics. Details of services provided by ISMA members plus some articles about stress. There is a list of links to other major worldwide organisations providing advice and guidance.



## notice

**First Issue of  
safety AT WORK  
for 2001  
Volume 2 Issue 8  
due out  
February 6, 2001**

## USA

<http://www.helmets.org>  
**Bicycle Helmet Safety Institute USA**

Gives information and advice about the wearing of helmets for cyclists of all ages, including different types and strengths of helmets which should be worn.

<http://www.firstgov.gov>  
**US Government web portal USA**

This excellent, innovative one stop portal gives access to millions of pages of US Government information from local, state and federal government agency web sites. All the Government information available on the Internet will be

added as agencies continue to post new information on their web sites. In particular there is a major link to **SafeUSA** which envisions a nation in which people are safe wherever they are: Safe at Home, School, in the Community, on the Move and at Work. It also lists the New Federal Safety Hotline - toll-free 1 888 252 7751 for answers to any safety question. A live person will answer questions or refer to someone who can.

There is also a World Factbook linking from a main heading The US in the World giving extensive details about countries around the world.

## SPECIAL OFFER

The latest edition of FIRE WORLDWIDE - the World's premier collection of validated and authoritative fire information now contains over 205,000 records in four complementary databases from over 100 countries... all on one CD-ROM.

All the Database producers are willing to help information seekers obtain articles or documents quoted in the databases. Keeping up-to-date and accessing fire, wildland fire and fire-related topics, has never been so easy!

Quoted by a leading fire prevention organisation as "the World's best collection of validated and authoritative fire information" FIRE WORLDWIDE continues to expand the wide range of references to worldwide publications from Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, to the USA to mention a few countries - with an emphasis on all aspects of fire management principles, practices and research. An extensive collection of historical records of interest to researchers can also be found in the CD.

FIRE WORLDWIDE contains references on every subject from airport fire safety, to the use of abandoned buildings for fire training, facemasks, forest fires, sprinklers and the politics of fire prevention.

Articles from well known fire and fire-related journals from worldwide publishers such as Journal of Fire Sciences, Fire Safety Engineering, Fire Safety Journal, Fire Surveyor, and reports and papers from organisations such as the US Gaithersburg based National Institute of Standards and Technology are indexed into the five databases in FIRE WORLDWIDE. The databases are from internationally respected organisations, the UK Fire Service College, BRE Ltd, LPC Centre for Fire Risk Sciences, the Forensic Science Service and the US based Fire Research Institute which specialises in knowledge of Wildland Fires who have collaborated with Sheila Pantry Associates Ltd to produce the CD.

International users of Fire Worldwide include

- Fire brigades
- Training organisations
- Fire information centres

- Loss adjusters
- Fire specialist organisations
- Consultancies

who now can keep easily updated with the latest fire information. Judy Seaborne, Information Manager at the UK London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority said " FIRE WORLDWIDE is extremely useful, it identifies items which would have been missed, particularly technical and forensic information. **And it contains references from expensive journals we could never take**".

**Others, who will benefit from having Fire Worldwide, include universities and consultancies that do not have their own specialist fire information services. Those teaching and learning about fire sciences will find this information source invaluable, because it is such a unique collection of worldwide fire data.**

The databases in Fire Worldwide may be searched either separately or together. These databases provide references to thousands of reports, journal articles, guidance and advice publications, press releases, all appropriate fire legislation, all appropriate interpretations of legislation, research papers, appropriate governmental papers, codes of practice, circulars, reports, monographs, statistics, annual reports, guidance and advice, including references to many hundreds of worldwide publications from many countries.

Updated quarterly, FIRE WORLDWIDE is available for use on a personal computer, networked in an organisation or university, and is also available via the Internet.

**From 1 December 2000 to the end of February 2001, FIRE WORLDWIDE is being offered with a 10% discount FOR NEW CUSTOMERS**

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Consortia buying is encouraged, contact the organisations below.

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**safety AT WORK** reflects the concerns and needs of Safety Practitioners and risk managers around the world. Contributions in support of this goal are generously accepted. If you have an article or a report that you think could be of interest please contact the Editor. All contributions are considered.

### back issues



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## next issue

- Safety passport scheme for managing contractors
- Global Positioning system for solitary work
- Report on the introduction of the NSW OHS Act
- Interview with Prostitutes Institute of Victoria