

Criminologist says Amnesty's call to decriminalise prostitution makes sense

August 28 2015, by Niki Widdowson



Professor John Scott

A QUT criminologist who has researched male sex work extensively has endorsed Amnesty International's call for international decriminalisation of prostitution.

Professor John Scott, from QUT's Crime and Justice Research Centre, said where prostitution was decriminalised the health of [sex workers](#) and clients had improved and rates of corruption, bribery and other forms of vice had dropped.

"People have been making laws to outlaw or control the world's oldest

profession since time immemorial and none have stamped it out," Professor Scott.

"It's a waste of time to be making laws involving rational, consenting adults. Police time is better spent on other policing matters.

"Laws can't be restricted to criminalising the clients either because where that's been tried it has led to blackmail, bribery and pimps.

"Amnesty's proposal is a move in the right direction because the state shouldn't interfere in matters associated with adults' choice."

Professor Scott said his research, contained in the book *Male Sex Work and Society* and co-authored with Professor Victor Minichiello, showed that the internet had made sex work safer.

"It's crazy, for instance that US authorities arrested the CEO and employees of the US's largest online male escort service, rentboy.com last week and charged them with prostitution," Professor Scott said.

"Our research shows that the internet has not only helped professionalise sex work it's helped improve access without stigma.

"About 90 per cent of male escorts are freelancers who work independently or get business from their online profiles on professional agency sites, with no pimps involved.

"These workers are discreet or they don't make any money so there are problems with amenity as with street prostitution.

"The rentboy site was the most well-visited site and longest established. It will pose problems for prosecutors because [prostitution](#) is decriminalised in some states.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

Citation: Criminologist says Amnesty's call to decriminalise prostitution makes sense (2015, August 28) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-08-criminologist-amnesty-decriminalise-prostitution.html>

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