

Are you living next to a brothel?

ANNA WILLIAMS | April 22 2015

Marlborough residents could be living next door to a brothel without knowing it. An investigation revealed no official means to find out if brothels operated in Marlborough, and where they were. The Marlborough District Council does not have any bylaws dealing with prostitution or brothels.

In 2003, brothels in New Zealand became legal under the Prostitution Reform Act.

Any operators of a prostitution business with five or more sex workers are required to hold a certificate, which is issued by the Ministry of Justice. But a small owner-operated brothel, with four or fewer sex workers who each control their earnings, is not classed as having an operator, therefore no certificate is needed. Information on where certificates for brothels has been issued was not available.

A Ministry of Justice spokesman said the Ministry was "legislatively prohibited" from giving out information on certificates issued to operators of a prostitution business. Police were also limited under the legislation, and could only get records about certificate holders if they were investigating an offence.

Marlborough District Council solicitor Kaye McIlveney said while council did not have to licence or register brothels, brothels could not operate in a residential zone without a resource consent under the Resource Management Act. There was no record of any consents for brothels in residential zones in Marlborough, she said.

A Marlborough businessman who was rumoured to have set up a brothel near Blenheim with predominantly Thai sex workers, denied any knowledge of a brothel, gentlemen's club, or a sex worker operation. A woman advertised in the Marlborough Express three times last month for "large premises suitable for upmarket gentlemen's club.

The woman could not be contacted on the number provided. Twelve escorts advertised their services in the *Express* on Friday. Of the 12 escorts, four were Asian. Three of the women advertised as Asian said they were from Thailand. They did not know of a brothel in Blenheim, they said. The fourth could not be contacted.

One of the woman advertised, who goes by the name Princess, had worked for herself as an escort in Blenheim for the past three years. She had heard rumours there was a new brothel in town, but didn't know where it was.

"The odd clients do say things, but no-one actually knows," she said.

Boots 'n' All owner Andy Hall said people regularly asked if he provided a sex service when they saw the R18 adult section of his shop, Spicy Nights. The previous location of Boots 'n' All on Queen St was also next door to a Thai massage shop, which provided genuine Thai therapeutic massage.

"People would ask if there were girls upstairs," Hall said.

He had been asked about 15 times, all by Asian men, if he ran a sex business, he said.

"It's not a service we offer. We refer people to the local paper where these ladies advertise."

After the shop moved to a different spot on Queen St in November last year, people no longer asked, he said.

Hall didn't know of any operating brothels in Marlborough.

"If there isn't, there probably should be," he said.

New Zealand Prostitutes Collective regional co-ordinator Anna Reed, who covers the Marlborough area, said she had not heard of any brothels in operation in Marlborough.

If there was one, the owner would most likely need to advertise to generate business, she said.

In 2004, a Blenheim man was charged with setting fire to a Kinross St brothel.

The charges were dropped due to insufficient evidence.

- The Marlborough Express

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/marlborough-express/67733614/are-you-living-next-to-a-brothel>