

# Claims That NZ is Good for Sex Workers ‘Laughable’

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Family First NZ says that claims by the Prostitutes Collective that New Zealand is the best place on earth to be a prostitute are laughable and from ‘fantasyland’.

“Even the architect of the bill to decriminalise prostitution has admitted that the politicians were naïve regarding the harms to workers, and the Prime Minister John Key believes the legalisation of prostitution has failed to safeguard sex workers and bring a halt to underage prostitution,” says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ.

“The New Zealand Prostitutes Collective are merely trying to justify their existence – but they do no favours to vulnerable women and men who are being sexually abused and exploited. The Collective seems to be the only group in NZ who thinks the law is working. And pimps and brothel owners.”

“Just last year, the police said sex workers in Christchurch are experiencing violence or abuse on at least a monthly basis, and that they were concerned by the “fairly common” victimisation of Christchurch’s prostitutes, much of which went unreported. That doesn’t sound like a safe working environment.”

“The association of prostitution with gang and criminal behaviour, alcohol and drug abuse, underage prostitution, and sexual abuse and violence means that more and more young people and prostitutes are being sentenced to an unacceptable situation,” says Mr McCoskrie.

Councils in Wellington, Christchurch, Auckland, and other regional areas have been given a hospital-pass as they try and negotiate a flawed law.

A delegation of former prostitutes accompanied by their advocates appeared before the Select Committee in Parliament last year and said that prostitution had wrecked their lives, many suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, that their troubled upbringings attracted them to prostitution, and that the only solution is to prosecute buyers in order to help prostitutes out of the industry. “Our government has made legal that which we as a society fail to see as legitimate. Once defined as work, the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) not only encouraged more men to buy sex, but transformed prostitution into an acceptable, even attractive job for young, poor woman in New Zealand,” said Elizabeth Subritzky from the organisation Freedom from Sexual Exploitation (FFSE).

“The ongoing problems of the decriminalisation of prostitution have been reported by retailers and families in Manurewa, Papatoetoe, Christchurch and many other residential areas, schools and family shopping areas being affected by the activities of prostitution, including half-naked prostitutes, used condoms, propositioning of family members, intimidation, noise and nuisance, and a general reduced sense of safety - and the local councils have been powerless to act,” says Mr McCoskrie.

“How can we be serious about reducing sexual violence against women when the state legitimises the sexual abuse and exploitation of vulnerable people. There is a healthy stigma against prostitution – and for good reason.”

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