

Media Release 07 May 2015

New Zealand participates in tonight's provocative Oxford Union debate

Tonight (local UK time) the world's most famous debating society, the Oxford Union situated in the heart of Britain's Oxford University, is set to tackle a provocative Motion with participation from New Zealand's Stop Demand Foundation.

The motion, "This House Embraces Sex Work as a Career Choice", will be debated by eight speakers drawn from four countries.

An Oxford University student opens the debate for each side. Further speakers *for* the proposition are Ms Diane Duke, founder of America's Free Speech Coalition; Ms Catherine Stephens, from the UK's International Union of Sex Workers; and Germany's Mr Fabian Thylmann, former porn webmaster and managing partner of adult entertainment conglomerate Manwin headquartered in Luxembourg.

Speaking *against* the motion will be Dr Heather Brunskell-Evans, founder of UK's Stop Porn Culture; Dr Finn Mackay, author and activist in the UK's Women's Liberation movement; and Stop Demand trustee Ms Sarah O'Brien from New Zealand.

Stop Demand's founder, Denise Ritchie, said it was an honour for her group to receive the invitation, which stated: "*Stop Demand has been at the forefront of the campaign to stop sexual exploitation through prostitution, the porn industry, trafficking and sexual violence. The work of your organisation has been an inspiration to many other feminists and grass roots movements and we believe you would be the ideal candidate to speak on this motion.*" She said fellow trustee Sarah O'Brien, a solicitor who has had a long-standing involvement in prostitution policy, is ideally suited to speak against the motion.

Oxford's "Thursday debates" boast a long history of famous speakers including New Zealand's former Prime Minister, the late David Lange, internationally renowned for his "I can smell the uranium on [your breath]" quip, while arguing against nuclear weapons. Lange later claimed the Oxford Union appearance was a highlight in his political career.

The event is a formal affair which kicks off at 6pm, with rounds of pre- and post-debate drinks and a black tie dinner. The debate, which runs from 8:30-10:15pm (7:30-9:15am Friday, NZ time), will be posted on Oxford Union's YouTube website in the next two weeks. The event is also being attended by Stop Demand's chair, Mike Pinkney.

Stop Demand Foundation calls for action to stop sexual violence, sexual exploitation and sexual denigration of women and children www.stopdemand.org

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