

## **RhED** - *Resourcing health and Education in the sex industry*

- RhED provides services to the sex industry in Victoria. Includes: street sex workers, private escorts, brothel workers & owners /managers.
- Site based and outreach services
- RhED is located at 10 Inkerman street St Kilda, and is part of the Inner South Community Health Service.



General Manager  
Complex Care and Oral Health

Manager: Complex Care

Coordinator:  
RhED

Health ed & support worker  
Comm Dev Worker  
0.5 EFT

Health ed & support worker  
Comm Dev Worker  
1.0 EFT

Health ed & support (CALD)  
Comm Dev Worker  
1.0 EFT

Health ed & support (male/trans)  
Comm Dev Worker  
0.8 EFT

Health ed & support worker  
Comm Dev Worker  
.8 EFT

SAAP  
Social worker  
1.0 EFT

H2H  
Comm Dev Worker  
0.2 EFT

ARP  
Comm Dev Worker  
0.8 EFT

Pathways to Exit  
Social worker  
0.8 EFT

Pathways to Exit  
Social worker  
0.8 EFT

2 Peer Workers: (paid)  
3 Volunteer Workers.



# The Arrest Referral Program (ARP)...

- Advocates for, and supports, people charged with non-violent drug and street sex work offences in the City of Port Phillip. For example: loitering for the purpose of sex work, possession of illicit drugs and minor shop theft charges.



## History...



- The Victorian Attorney General's Street Prostitution Advisory Group report in 2002 recommended a program to focus on legal issues for street sex workers in the City of Port Phillip.
- The program was established as part of the City of Port Phillip Local Drug Strategy in 2003.
- The program is currently funded until 30 June 2013 by Department of Health, under the Municipal Drug Strategy



## Survey...

- In 2003 a RhED survey of 42 street sex workers found:
  - 60% did not attend court because they were afraid of being jailed or forgot the date
  - 97% would feel comfortable at a court where charges related only to street sex workers
  - 64% said the most suitable court time would be in the afternoon
  - 83% said they would be more likely to attend court if health & legal support was available to assist in the court



# ARP Framework...



- Harm minimisation
- Social model of health
- Therapeutic jurisprudence

**“Therapeutic Jurisprudence suggests that law should value psychological health, should strive to avoid imposing anti-therapeutic consequences whenever possible, and when consistent with other values served by law should attempt to bring about healing and wellness.”**

Bruce J Winick (2003) 'A Therapeutic Jurisprudence Model for Civil Commitment' in Kate Diesfeld and Ian Freckelton (eds), *Involuntary Detention and Therapeutic Jurisprudence: International Perspectives on Civil Commitment*

Tel 1800 458 752



## Key services...



- Free and accessible legal support
- Referrals & linkages to appropriate community agencies for ongoing support
- Advocacy with police, lawyers, courts & the community
- Training, support & secondary consultation for local agencies
- Coordination of monthly 'loiter list' at Melbourne Magistrates Court



# Loiter Court...

- Street sex workers are charged by police with loitering and summonsed/bailed to Melbourne Magistrates' Court
- Previously sex workers did not attend court resulting in:
  - Fines
  - Convictions
  - Warrants
  - Imprisonment





## Client profile...

High prevalence of:

- homelessness
- mental health issues
- street sex work
- street based injecting, and
- Social isolation and marginalisation





# Service provision from 10 Inkerman St...

## Day and after hours- integrated services

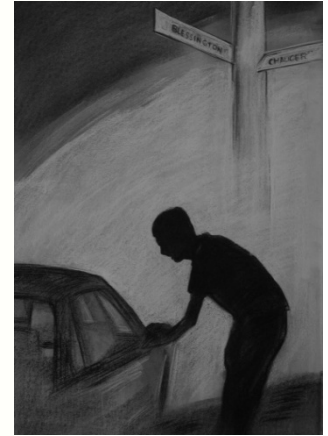
- Hustling 2 Health – sex worker only space, staffed by peer workers, sexual health testing
- Foot patrol & car based late night outreach
- Arrest Referral Program (ARP)  
(Sally Boothby & Emily Gillespie)
- Ugly Mugs Program
- Young Women's Housing Worker
- Drop in service – laundry & shower





# In 9 years ARP has achieved...

- Increased rates of court attendance by street sex workers
- Reduced numbers on monthly loiter list
- Court outcomes more therapeutic
- Clients feel they are treated fairly in loiter list
- Increased access & linkages to health & community services
- Efficient use of court and police resources
- Productive working relationship with police





# Arrest Referral Program & St Kilda Police...



- Sergeant - Street sex worker liaison portfolio
- Regular contact with St Kilda Police members  
RE: serving summons, executing warrants,  
welfare checks
- St Kilda Police refer street based sex workers to  
the ARP & RhED for ongoing support



# RhED liaison with Victoria Police...



- St Kilda Police
- St Kilda Crime Investigation Unit
- Homicide Squad
- Australian Federal Police
- Sexual Crime Squad
- Sexual Offences & Child Investigation Team (SOCIT)



# **COPPSWIN – City of Port Phillip street sex workers' issues network**

- RhED/Inner South Community Health Service
- City of Port Phillip
- Melbourne Magistrates Court
- St Kilda Police
- St Kilda Legal Service
- Victoria Legal Aid
- St Kilda Gatehouse
- Sacred Heart Mission
- SECASA
- Salvation Army
- Streetworks – DHS
- Hanover



# ARP Evaluation...

***“This is an initiative that is remarkable and of which the community and the Courts should be proud. It is an initiative which needs to be supported and protected.”***

(Melbourne Centre for Criminological Research & Evaluation (2007) *Sex Worker Arrest Referral Initiative Evaluation*, University of Melbourne, p6).