

MEDIA RELEASE

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COTA NT Says No to Sex Workers Working in Residential Areas

COTA NT calls on Northern Territory Government Ministers and Opposition to reconsider proposed amendments to the NT Planning Scheme allowing sex work to be undertaken by sex workers in residential zones.

“Our members are very concerned and indeed worried about the proposed amendments to the NT Planning Scheme which would allow sex workers to conduct their business in areas of home occupation, plus apartment blocks,” says COTA NT CEO, Sue Shearer.

“Whilst we support efforts to regulate the sex workers’ industry in the Northern Territory, it beggars belief that the NT Planning Scheme would consider allowing these businesses to operate in residential apartment blocks. Imagine being in a lift with your children or grandchildren, whilst sex workers’ clients are also in the lifts and are visiting these businesses. These clients would be able to visit these businesses at all hours which may create issues of noise pollution, havoc, social unrest and decreased safety, especially for older and more vulnerable members of society. These amendments would affect both tenants and home owners.

“The Residential Tenancy Act states that residents have the right to “the quiet enjoyment” of a home. How can owners or tenants have this “quiet enjoyment” when a sex worker’s business is being conducted at all hours of the day and night?”

Sue further stated, “Owners have worked very hard for their little piece of paradise, a place to call home. These amendments to the NT Planning Scheme would completely devalue their major asset. The Darwin market has already seen a decline in residential housing prices – these amendments would add to a further decline, especially problematic for seniors who may need to sell this asset to move into an aged care facility. These amendments also appear to negate the Body Corporate rules under the Unit Titles Act.”

“We would strongly recommend and urge our Ministers and the NT Planning Scheme to reconsider these amendments, and to allow sex work to be undertaken in purely commercial industrial areas only.”

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- <https://haveyoursay.nt.gov.au/regulationsexindustry>