

To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to you in regards to the new Online Safety Bill. Often these well intended, blanket approach responses to moderation, have inadvertent consequences for communities the government fails to consider.

I have worked as an escort and porn performer for ten years. Having shot scenes for international and local studios, my videos are available for streaming world wide. Pre-covid, I would tour every 6 - 8 weeks to meet with clients across the country. I am concerned this bill will effect my ability to promote my services and content. Currently I rely on multiple online escort directories and social media. Sites like Twitter have allowed me to develop my brand further and market myself to a wider demographic. The classification system proposed in this bill is outdated, conservative and lacks clarity. If other businesses are able to use online platforms to advertise and expand their client reach, sexual material and services should be permitted to do the same. At present there is no mention of any avenues for recourse or right to appeal the commissioners decision or a complaint. Without the option for users to defend their content before it's removal, sex workers remain vulnerable to community harassment and being unfairly targeted.

The adult industry has been largely responsible for developing it's own safe working practices and harm reduction strategies. I am scared of losing contact with this community. Social media and internet based messaging services have given us the space to collectively organise on a larger scale and provide peer support. When I left brothel work and began escorting I wasn't aware of the resource sharing groups that have become so integral to my safety at work. Having access to digital peer spaces might have supported me to avoid unsafe environments and situations when I was starting out as an independent worker. We already face an increased risk of being deplatformed due to the passing of US legislation SESTA/FOSTA. Recently updated terms of use for Facebook and it's affiliated platforms have lead to the purging of workers accounts and the censoring of our forums. I worry that with the implementation of this bill as it currently reads, platforms will be incentivised to restrict our access even further, and the networks that have saved me so many times from high risk situations will vanish.

The Online Safety Bill is vague and naive at best. It gives too much discretionary power and trusts an unelected individual to remain objective, while taking away the agency of individuals to self moderate their media consumption. If the Australian government has the sense to legalise the adult industry, it should not penalise it's online existence. Without modifications made in consultation with sex worker peer organisations, I not only worry for my own financial security and safety at work, but for the freedom and agency of the wider public.

Regards,  
Sariah Saibu