

**EVALUATION AND FINAL REPORT  
OF THE  
SWOP WEB RESOURCE PROJECT**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

This final evaluation report represents the fulfilment of *Section 11 of the Law and Justice Foundation – Grant Agreement (0607-1045)* of the contract between the Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP) and the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales for a project entitled the *SWOP Web Resource Project*.

### Project summary

The *SWOP Web Resource Project* began with a successful grant application from the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales on the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 2006 for up to \$29,426.79 (including GST). It set out to develop a clear, plain language web-based legal resource for the NSW sex industry that aimed to provide relevant legal information in a number of formats and languages.

The specific aims identified for the project, as outlined in the grant application, were:

- To produce an updated *Sex Industry Legal Kit* that is clear, plain language and web and print based.
- For the resource to provide access to current legal information regarding the laws and regulations governing the NSW sex industry.
- For the resource to be accessible to:
  - NSW sex workers
  - Clients of the sex industry
  - Owners, operators and managers of sex services premises, and
  - Service providers and regulators who work with the sex industry.
- To provide the resource in culturally appropriate formats that meet the needs of:
  - Culturally and linguistically diverse communities – with particular focus on Thai, Korean and Chinese communities
  - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and
  - Workers with low literacy skills, and the disabled.

In order to measure SWOP's success in achieving these broad goals, a variety of evaluation methods were undertaken before, during and after the project was completed, marked by the official *SWOP Website* and *Sex Industry Legal Kit* launch on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

### Project development

To inform the project, SWOP conducted a website survey on Friday 1 August, 2008. This written survey sought to identify what sorts of information and resources sex industry workers would like to see on the planned SWOP website. Anonymous respondents were quantifiable as coming from all over NSW using postcode identification. Respondents ran the gamut from inner city sex workers (2011, 2018, 2027, and 2036); to outer suburb sex workers (2112, 2145, 2176, and 2198); to rural or

regional workers (2480, 2500, 2517, and 2533), answering from areas running all the way to Albury (2640) near the Victorian border. Respondents also included sex workers from SWOP's key CALD communities – Thai, Korean and Chinese. The most common type of request for information circled on these surveys was 'sex work laws'.

During the production of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* and new *SWOP Website*, a second survey was completed on Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2010. This written survey was accompanied by a sample of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit*, with respondents, who included both sex workers and health care workers, directed to read 'Chapter 1: Sex Work in NSW'. Both groups were positive about the draft; with all sex workers making comments along the lines of "easy to understand". Service providers were even more effusive in their praise for the "very informative and useful" booklet, which most considered "very relevant and easy to read", some remarking that "language is not overly advanced". Amongst the positivity there was however one service provider's survey which might have foretold this report's key focus group finding (presented in section two). They wrote: "lower literacy level would be needed" and "additional support to access the information." With the benefit of hindsight, we might go back and listen to that one lone voice standing out from the pack.

### **Project launch**

On 30 November 2010, SWOP officially launched its new website, the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* as well as seven *Legal Fact Sheets*. Each *Legal Fact Sheet* was produced in four languages (English, Chinese, Thai and Korean), with content directly pulled from the kit itself.

The launch event was held at the Surry Hills Community Centre and Library, and was attended by roughly fifty people representing the health sector, local government and the sex industry. There were speeches by ACON Chief Executive Officer, Nicholas Parkhill, SWOP Executive Director Lance Schema, Jo Holden, a former SWOP Manager, and Geoff Mulherin, President of the Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales.

### **Evaluation**

After the *SWOP Web Resource Project* was completed, SWOP focus tested the printed legal resources (both the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* and the *Legal Fact Sheets*) to measure the projects efficacy in meeting the needs of NSW sex workers. The findings of these focus groups are analysed in the second part of this report.

The third section of this report contains an analysis of website hits collected via *Google Analytics* and page impression statistics used to ascertain the number of people accessing the online resource. When these are combined with some in-house statistics, it will go some way toward demonstrating the reach of the *SWOP Web Resource Project*.

The concluding part of this report ties together these two streams of evaluation to ascertain whether or not the project was successful with respect to its initial aims. It also nominates some key ways in which the *SWOP Web Resource Project* could be further built upon, should further opportunities arise.

## 2. FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS

Two focus groups were held with sex workers in Sydney on 21 and 22 June 2010 to review the *Sex Industry Legal Kit*.

The focus groups had a total of 11 participants. Ages ranged from 20 to 67 years old. The average age was 34 years. Six participants were under 30 years old. Seven participants were female; the remaining four participants were male. Seven participants identified as bisexual, two participants as heterosexual, one participant as lesbian, and one as "gay for pay".

An external evaluator facilitated the first focus group, with a SWOP staff member observing. The second focus group was co-facilitated by a SWOP staff member and the external evaluator.

Each focus group ran for approximately 60 minutes. All participants were reimbursed for their time. Participants were recruited through promotion by SWOP, ACON, Scarlet Alliance, social media and word-of-mouth.

As distribution of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* was not able to occur prior to the meeting due in part to maintaining confidentiality for those attending, participants were shown the booklet upon commencement then asked to read the first three sections. During the focus group they were occasionally requested to read other sections of the kit. One of the *Legal Fact Sheets* produced as part of the project was also shown to the groups.

### General response

There was a positive general response to the *Sex Industry Legal Kit*.

"Broad"

"This is like the bible, it's fabulous!"

"Great idea"

Participants often described it as a very comprehensive resource, which could be used as a reference resource.

"This is really an all-round good thing for everyone, whereas before, if you wanted to have this, you had to come in here [SWOP] and have one little book for that, one little pamphlet for that, another pamphlet for this, and now it's all in the one book for anyone in the industry at all!"

"Resourceful"

"Text book"

However, while the kit was seen as a useful resource, it was criticised for not providing more practical advice (this is a significant issue that is explored later in this report).

"I think you might need to work with sex industry groups and workers to work out something that's more... practical."

Although more than one participant stated that the kit may not be very practical because the law itself is not very practical:

"Yes it's useful; again the law is not very practical..."

"Once again, the laws are incomprehensibly bad, so the book can't really be made..."

"...the law's not clear"

By contrast to *Sex Industry Legal Kit*, there was quite a negative response to the *Legal Fact Sheets*:

"Crappy"

"Cheesy"

"Unnecessary"

"Chintzy"

In part, the fact sheets did not receive a favourable response because focus group participants found them unengaging, and designed in a bland manner.

"Overly-bland"

"Front page of a text book"

"Memo"

"Governmental"

## **Relevance**

Focus group participants thought the kit would be relevant to all sex workers.

"Anyone"

"Sex workers"

"People that are interested in the industry, which I suspect would be mainly sex workers"

Several participants thought it might be most useful to those who are new to the sex industry.

"People who are new...to sex work probably would pick it up. I know when I first started I wanted to know the legal ins and outs"

"Well I think it'd be totally useful for anyone starting out in the industry – whether they're opening a place, whether they're starting out working for themselves, or if they're going to work in a place."

It was also noted that the kit could be more broadly relevant to the adult industry at large.

“I don’t think it’s just for sex workers for people that I call the adult industry...strippers, lingerie waitresses,”

“I think this is for everybody in the sex industry, not only people who are working for brothels, or for themselves, also for the receptionists who might be breaking the law because the management tells them to do something, and management, because a lot of management have no idea”

“This is really an all-round good thing for everyone.”

Even though some participants rated their self-knowledge highly, they still reported that the kit was a useful resource which they could imagine using.

“Well I would find it useful myself. Most of it I know; there’s a couple of things in there that have maybe come along. You see I’ve been working for a long, long time, so everybody asks me: Do you know this? Do you know that? Do you know the other? Most of the time, yes I do know it, and I can give them the information that I’ve got, but sometimes, maybe, it’s something in here that I don’t quite... one of the legal ones, so I might just go: ‘Ooh quick, let me get my book!’”

Several participants pointed out that clients might find it useful to read too.

“Clients to some extent”

“People who are going to sex workers, you know, just customers who come in.”

“The client’s meant to as well... they don’t know this stuff!”

## Usefulness

Participants reported that much of the information within the kit was useful.

“Pretty valuable information”

“I think it’s pretty clear on what a legal brothel is.”

However, while participants found the kit provides factual information on the law, some found that it did not provide them with adequate guidance or practical advice that they were seeking. This may not have been the intention behind the resource, however, it appears to be a strong expectation and need among focus group participants.

“It doesn’t seem like it is written from the perspective of people working”

When directed to read specific sections of the kit, participants had a tendency to ask the focus group facilitators for guidance with respect to applying the generalised information to their specific situation. For example, reading **Section 1.4: *The Definition of a brothel or sex service premises***, facilitators were asked:

“For starters, I’m not sure if it has to meet all three criteria, or just one of them?”

“It seems reading that, that would classify my house as being a brothel? ...I don’t advertise the premises... I advertise my services not the premises?”

One facilitator explained that the purpose of the sessions was not to answer questions, but redirected the group to see if they could work out the answer together from the information contained in the kit.

“You do in and out calls? Okay, it’s defined as a brothel, but then... what does that then mean? What’s the negative thing about it, what are the implications? Or is that illegal in itself?”

One participant used this discussion to critique the kit, stating that while it may provide information on defining a brothel, it does not provide the next step, which he saw as advising sex workers on how this impacts upon them, explaining what they may need to do to operate legally.

“If your place is defined as a brothel, then big deal! I mean, how does it impact us? There should be a next section to say: ‘well because of that, you need to follow these rules.’”

This critique of the kit seems a valid one, as closer readings of specific sections of the kit revealed how the kit often raised more questions than it answered for participants. In discussion with their peers, very few of these questions were resolved with correct and decisive answers.

“Is it illegal if transgender or a transsexual doesn’t tell the client... that they are?”  
[10.2: *What is a scheduled STI and when does the law about disclosure apply?*]

“It could be more specific in 10.2, it’s contradictory because it says this applies to hepatitis, and then it goes it does not apply to hepatitis C.”  
[10.2: *What is a scheduled STI and when does the law about disclosure apply?*]

Some questions related to legal terminology.

“What’s ‘importuning’?” [9.1: *What is soliciting and is it an offence?*]

“That’s a big word; I don’t know what it is.” [9.1: *What is soliciting and is it an offence?*]

“What does ‘a scheduled STI’ mean?”  
[10.2: *What is a scheduled STI and when does the law about disclosure apply?*]

Future editions of the kit could benefit from case studies, definition of terms, and further information with respect to how each law might apply to sex workers to help solidify the reader’s understanding of how the law is applied.

One participant thought the problem with the kit was that its audience was too broad, rather than specifically directed at sex workers.

“I don’t think it’s specific who the book’s about. It’s sort of very generalised, so it could be for bureaucrats or sex workers, that’s probably one of the problems with it.”

The participant’s assumption is in fact correct. Project planning documents indicate that the resource was intended to be accessible to ‘NSW Sex workers, clients of the sex industry, owners, operators and managers of sex services premises, and service providers and regulators who work with the sex industry’. The problem with such a wide audience is illustrated by one participant taking this to mean that the kit might be used to aid those who prosecute sex workers.



“It looks like it’s kind of like got a dual purpose, and really doesn’t fulfil either. It looks like it’s produced for workers so they know their rights but it looks like it’s also produced for people who might actually want to prosecute or control sex workers in some bureaucratic way.”

Other participants wanted the kit to practical advice on how to “dodge” the law, even if they recognised this might not be feasible for the producers of the resource.

“Something that I guess you can’t put in is helping people dodge it, dodge the law. I guess you’re covering yourself, right?”

“Although I know you can’t tell us how to dodge things, it would be good if you told us maybe just how they established a statement of facts to provide to the Magistrate, so we knew what that statement of facts would be. I wouldn’t see how that would be illegal?”

Focus group participants understood that the kit was focussed on providing information on the laws and regulations governing the NSW sex industry, however, they felt it did not aid them in figuring out how they can still operate their ‘business’.

“When you run your own small business, the things that I would like to know I guess are stuff like what evidence would the Council need to establish that your premises is a brothel, and if they come to the door, do they need a search warrant or could they enter without it? I went looking for that and I couldn’t. I found a bit about a search warrant, Council use of search warrants, but it doesn’t really give me information on how they can gather evidence to establish that your premises is a brothel, provided that you don’t public [sic] advertise ‘Princes Highway, Rockdale’ or something.”

“If we fit into this category, what’s a way to get around it, you know options, examples”

“If you operate within the guidelines of this handbook you’re never going to be able to earn a dollar”

The kit’s tone was considered by most participants to be “black and white”. Even if they saw this as inevitable because of the relationship to the law; they did note the absence of “user friendly text”.

“Maybe you’re getting that impression from the tone – you know it’s just black and white. It’s not so much from our perspective. There’s no sort of case studies, or FAQs – sort of user friendly type text in there – but to some extent, I don’t think I want that, I just want the plain facts, even though it could sound very harsh, you’ve got to abide by it.”

With many participants demonstrating the desire to operate legally, a future version of the kit would clearly benefit from the addition of case studies, frequently asked questions and definition of terms to enhance understanding of how the law can be applied.

### **Easy-to-use**

While participants found that there was relevant and useful information in the kit, they did not find it was organised in a way that was easy-to-use and most relevant to their needs.

Focus group participants included street workers, private workers, subcontractors and employee brothel workers, and in each case large sections of the kit were not relevant to them.

“Looking at it, I’m just going from page to page to page... A lot of it doesn’t apply to me because I’m a private worker, a hell of a lot of it. “

“Well working in a brothel, I don’t do... so it seems a little bit of a cluster-fuck, so you’re sort of looking through it and trying to find the bit that applies to you.”

As a result of the difficulties participants experienced finding information most relevant to their situation, there were several suggestions about reducing the size of the kit by producing one resource for those who do home-based sexual services and another for those who work in brothels.

“Can I give the feedback that it sort of should be separated? Like I’m just self-employed so to speak, some of it I’d have to weed through for the relevant stuff, so it almost needs to be independent and then employed. Cause here I’m going to have a hard time actually...”

“It’s got to be individual workers, versus...”

“It’s got here street based work; it’s got that separated in one section. Maybe it should be one section there that’s separated for private workers, with maybe some of the things that they need that aren’t really covered by the general here. So they can go to ‘private workers’ and look; and maybe male workers even...”

A male participant requested a booklet for private workers, given that it is more relevant to the situation of the majority of NSW’s male sex workers.

“For me, I’d really like a book that doesn’t have stuff about brothels so much and just has one for private workers, it doesn’t have to be aimed at men because if you’re a private workers and you’re a women its almost the same as if you’re a man. Working in brothels is different for man and women”

### **Appropriateness of a kit**

One of the key questions for focus group participants was whether the production of an 80 page text based resource was appropriate.

Focus group participants thought they were unlikely to read the kit from cover to cover, but were more likely to use it as reference booklet.

“You would pick it up looking for something specific and you would be able to find it ok. You wouldn’t necessarily read the whole thing”

“I would, probably in bits and pieces though. It’s a lot to take in all at once. It’s written in a way that’s good to refer back to.”

“Yeah, I need to go through it with a fine tooth comb I guess, and just check I’m operating legally. It’s a good reference when things go wrong, or if clients have a question... it’s sort of like: ‘well here’s proof!’”

When participants were asked to comment on the size of the kit, some thought it was accessible.

“When I first looked at it, the contents was actually quite overwhelming, there’s a whole heap of it. I’d rather have a whole heap of it...I would just look at parts of it. But in saying that, some of it I find quite interesting”

“The way it comes across it seems like a more of a legal text book kind of thing but a concise version or shortened version for dummies”

Other participants acknowledged that while the resource is personally appropriate for them, it would not be accessible for other types of workers. In one focus group it was suggested that it might be inappropriate for some street based sex workers.

“I think its fine the sort of people that would pick it up, it’s the right size... it’s a whole different target of people who that wouldn’t pick it up”

“Depends on the sex worker... I couldn’t see the local street walking... looking at it... for people like that a little pamphlet or something”

In the other focus group this was not raised directly, perhaps due to some participants indicating that they perform street based sex work, however one participant did hazard that the book may have been written with government workers in mind.

“It could be useful, but the laws, and their practical application and actually defending your rights is very different, so it doesn’t really give information about that, in terms of common situations. It sort of really would be designed for a Government worker.”

It would seem then that some change in the language is required, or alternatively multiple additional resources are needed which are more sex worker focussed, arranged around the various types of sex work that people engage with, to reassure readers of the booklet’s positive intention.

## **Readability**

One of the objectives of the kit was to provide clear and plain language information. Given the time constraints, the focus groups did not review large chunks of the text in great detail. This means the text in only a small selection of the kit has been reviewed.

When participants were asked for their general impression of the kit, most reported it was easy to read, at least initially.

“Concise”

“Quite direct”

“It’s written in a way most people would be able to understand.”

When during the focus group participants were directed to read and then comment on specific sections of the kit, they became more critical of the language that was used.

“There are a lot of big words that a lot of people wouldn’t understand”

“I saw a couple of words that I thought... I can follow this and I know exactly what it all means...it’s not too wordy for any regular person”

“It’s too academic...”

While the participants quoted above reported they could personally understand what was being said, it's not uncommon in focus groups for participants to *not* acknowledge if they find the content difficult to understand, as they are often concerned about how their peers might perceive them.

As the focus group progressed, participants were more frequently stumped across words whose meaning they did not understand and were comfortable highlighting these words to the group.

“What’s ‘importuning?’”[PG 47]

“That’s a big word; I don’t know what it is.”

“What does ‘a scheduled STI’ mean?” [PG53]

While only a few examples are provided, bear in mind participants only read small snippets of the kit. When participants reviewed the fact sheets (which is identical to the wording used in the kit), participants became far more critical of the language used. It may be that they expect the language on a fact sheet to be even more concise and accessible, or the format potentially just highlights the problem with the language more.

One participant stated that it would be beneficial to produce the kit in other languages.

“I think it would be beneficial to be in other languages as well. Some people English isn’t their first language”

This has occurred in part, with all seven fact sheets produced from the kit having been translated to Chinese, Thai and Korean.

### **Cover and design**

There were divergent responses to the cover and design. For most participants, the cover and design were liked and seen as appropriate.

“It’s beautiful!”

“It’s elegant”

“I think it’s beautiful, I think it’s well-worded, I think it’s very thorough.”

Other participants responded favourably because the kit was plain, respectable and discreet.

“I would say it’s quite non-threatening in size and appearance”

“It’s very uncommittal [SIC] and plain and it’s not in-your-face so if somebody actually sees you with it, even though it’s got ‘sex industry’ on it’s... it’s nothing that someone’s going to go: errrggghh”

“It’s very respectable; you could have it on your desk.”

However, some participants thought the kit looked unattractive.

“[I dislike the] design...I like everything else”

“I personally think the cover looks a bit shabby and cheap”

A few participants particularly commented on the yellow background pattern.

“Slightly hotel wall paper”

“I don’t like the yellow, to be honest.”

“The yellow’s a bit yucky, but...”

Despite these different preferences, the overall design of the kit does not interfere with providing the information. However, the design of the kit may impact on readers’ desire to pick-up and engage with the kit. (It’s worth mentioning that for an audience of sex workers, elaborate or noticeable design may be less desirable than plainness and respectability, as issues of discretion, privacy and confidentiality are sometimes paramount.) It is unclear though what direction the designed exterior of a future kit should take.

Participants were also in two minds as to whether naming the resource a ‘kit’ appropriately conveyed the intention of the resource to provide comprehensive information on the law relevant to sex workers.

“It means to me it’s comprehensive... because if it’s a kit then that’s everything I need”

Some participants were disappointed by content that was missing that they would normally expect to find in a ‘kit’.

“I wouldn’t see it as a kit. If you want my input I suppose, I don’t know what you’d call it... I mean it’s almost trying to be like a bible isn’t it, really?”

“I’d expect sort of forms, and examples of certificates, and like a workbook as a kit. I don’t think this is a kit, it’s just information.”

Some participants felt the word ‘legal’ sold short the wide variety of information contained within it.

“It’s not really a legal kit, is it?”

“It’s not all legal as well, it’s just reference.”

“It’s got a legal component, but there’s some just general reference information.”

One participant suggested a different title for the resource.

“I think ‘Sex Industry Guidelines’ would be better.”

One participant also voiced concern regarding how people from a non-English speaking background might interpret the word ‘kit’ (as noted prior, *Legal Fact Sheets* from the kit were reproduced in other languages).

“Except if I didn’t have any English background. If I look at this I would see, I would think ‘kit’ what is it...so from an Asian point of view maybe they’ll think it’s a tool stuff”

One participant thought, given the laws vary across states, it should mention NSW on the cover. A number of participants mentioned working in different states during the focus groups.

“It’s pretty straightforward like that’s what it’s about. I think it would be better if it had NSW written on it”

“Has Queensland got a different book? I’ve worked in Queensland as well.”

Even though NSW is not mentioned on the cover, it is pretty clear from the first section that the kit is referring to legal issues in NSW. However, as indicated by focus group participants, the kit is unlikely to be read from cover to cover meaning some readers may not be aware it is only referring to the law in NSW.

Interestingly, even though participants were participating in a focus group at the SWOP/ACON offices, when asked who produced the resources not all of them were immediately able to identify the relevant organisations.

“It’s on the front, isn’t it?”

“ACON”

“The Law and Justice Foundation.”

This is a reflection of the SWOP and Law and Justice Foundation of New South Wales logos not appearing on the cover. The logos do appear on the left hand corner on the back cover which is done by SWOP on most of its resources to maintain the reader’s anonymity. From an organisational branding point of view, not having the resource easily identified as a SWOP resource may be undesirable. It is also important that the producers of the resource are easily identifiable, particularly if produced by non-government organisations as opposed to government department, as this is likely to contribute to the credibility of the resource with sex workers. From a sex worker perspective though, discretion and confidentiality may indeed be greater concerns so it is unclear whether external or internal branding is the better choice.

### **Access**

Not surprisingly, participants would expect to find the kit in places such as SWOP.

“I would expect to find it in places like SWOP.”

When asked where else they would expect to see the kit they mentioned a very broad range of places including needle and syringe program outlets, council offices, community centres and police stations.

“Well I would like to see it at council offices or maybe even places like some of the needle and syringe places and areas that are obviously like Kings Cross”

“Community centres”

“I would expect to see something like this would be the police station”

It’s probably unrealistic to expect the kit to be available in such a broad range of places. Interestingly, participants stated their workplaces do not provide much information. One participant mentioned in

one prior workplace they had a variety of health and legal information. Another participant mentioned that when she had worked in a neighbouring country, they too had little information available in their workplace.

“I also hope to see it at my workplace. So that I know that place is safe to work”

Participants said they would not search for this type of information online. Even though they agreed that there was anonymity by seeking out such information online, it's not the first place they would think to look for this material.

“It wouldn't be the first place I would think to look...it just wouldn't cross my mind to look online I don't think. It would be more to come into a place like SWOP and pick it up”

“Workers don't have the time to go and find answers to things; they're too busy going to work. Coming home they're so tired they crash out so if they've really got questions...”

### **Legal Fact Sheets**

After having reviewed the kit, focus group participants were shown an example of the *Legal Fact Sheets* that were produced as part of the project. Participants were shown 'Sex work in NSW' (*Legal Fact Sheet No.1 'An Introduction for sex industry workers'*).

There was perceived negative response to this fact sheet. The style was not seen as engaging to some participants.

“Almost like it's designed so people aren't meant to look at it”

“Aesthetically-wise it doesn't really jump out at you...are they the questions you want to be asking?”

“Doesn't make you want to read it”

Participants were not convinced about their usefulness.

“For this (fact sheet) I would want more information, but at the same time it directs you to this (kit)”

Participants thought the fact sheets had potential for display in workplaces, but thought it would need to be briefer if it was to be displayed.

“Briefer (if on workplace on the wall)”

“I still think this sort of thing would be on the wall. You know it wouldn't just be lying around”

In part, the response to the fact sheet was because participants did not understand how and where they would be distributed. This raises the issue of whether choosing the format of fact sheets was most appropriate.

“I think the format will work but depends on where you place it. For example if it's a sexual clinic I prefer to pick this up (fact sheet) than that (kit)”

“I prefer a pamphlet... they're smaller”

Perhaps because of the format of the fact sheets, participants were much more critical of the writing, even though it is, for the most part, a direct copy of what is in the kit. In part this may be because the format of a fact sheet creates the expectation that the questions and answers should be provided more succinctly, or it may simply be that the fact sheet enabled them to more carefully scrutinize the text.

When participants were reviewing the questions posed on *Legal Fact Sheet No.1*, which were identical to the headings used in the kit but reworded as questions, participants commented that they weren't direct enough or were too wordy. Examples include:

- Question 1 asks 'is sex work legal in NSW' and Question 2, 'what is the legal age for a sex worker'. These were thought to be direct questions, however, the answer were not seen as succinct "because you could say the answer in less time".
- Question 5 asks 'what is a brothel or sex services premises?'. Participants wondered why it didn't just say 'what is a brothel' because "if they're both the same then there's no point", and also because brothel is "what most people would know". Although participants understood the use of the term 'sex services premises' was used to imply it is not just brothels but other locations where sex happens, they still thought this could be a more succinct question.
- Question 6 asks 'what is the definition of a sexual service or 'doing sex work'?'. Participants thought it could have just said 'what is sex work?'.
- Question 9 asks 'who is responsible for the health and safety of clients in a workplace?'. Participants thought this was "not the most engaging" and "reads like an OHS video". They were unsure about why it focused on the client instead of the sex worker.

These comments even though very specifically related to one of the *Legal Fact Sheets* (and even then, mainly the headings) do imply that the kit could have been worded more directly and succinctly. If the kit or any part of it is to be reproduced, then SWOP should give consideration to commissioning a professional editor to edit the kit (prior to any edits being accepted, they will need to be reviewed by the authors).

#### **Focus Group Recommendations:**

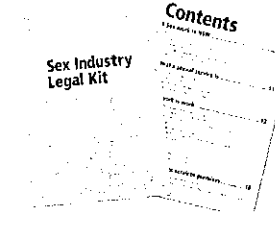
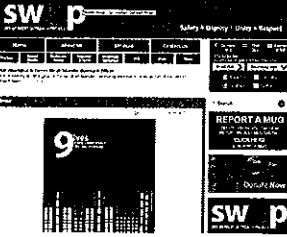


- Ensure future editions of the *Legal Fact Sheets* and *Sex Industry Legal Kit* are edited by an external professional editor.
- Build on the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* using a combination of case studies and frequently asked questions in simpler, easy to follow language that eschews legal terminology.
- Consider running workshops to solidify understanding of complex legal concepts and to integrate their use into the various styles of sex industry workplaces



### 3. SWOP WEBSITE & IN-HOUSE METRICS

#### Extent of distribution of grant materials

Only a handful of the initial 600 printed copies of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* remain, and an additional 380 digital versions were downloaded. While the seven *Legal Fact Sheets* were mostly promoted for online use; the SWOP team has still managed to print and distribute approximately 1,050 printed copies, in addition to the 600 digital versions that were downloaded.

	<p><b>Sex Industry Legal Kit</b>            600 copies printed            90 in NSW State            Library Network            500 with sex workers            &amp; health organisations</p>		<p><b>SWOP Website</b>            29,004 visits            69,796 page views</p>
	<p><b>7 Legal Fact Sheets</b>  <i>(each in 4 languages)</i>            1050 printed in-house            (Sept. 2010-Dec 2011)            600 downloads</p>		<p><b>Sex Industry Legal Kit</b>  <i>(downloadable)</i>            380 PDF downloads</p>

#### Extent of use of the online version of the project

As SWOP had a placeholder website prior to the launch of this one, it is worth having a quick look at a three month period both before and after the new website's launch date. The new SWOP website had a soft launch on the 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2010 quickly followed by the official launch and publicity on the 30<sup>th</sup> November, 2010.

##### *i. Initial jump*

From August 2010 to October 2010 on the pre-existing SWOP placeholder website there were:

- 40,791 hits
- 3,319 visits
- 2536 absolute unique visitors (approx. 845 per month)

From November 2010 to January 2011 the new SWOP website received:

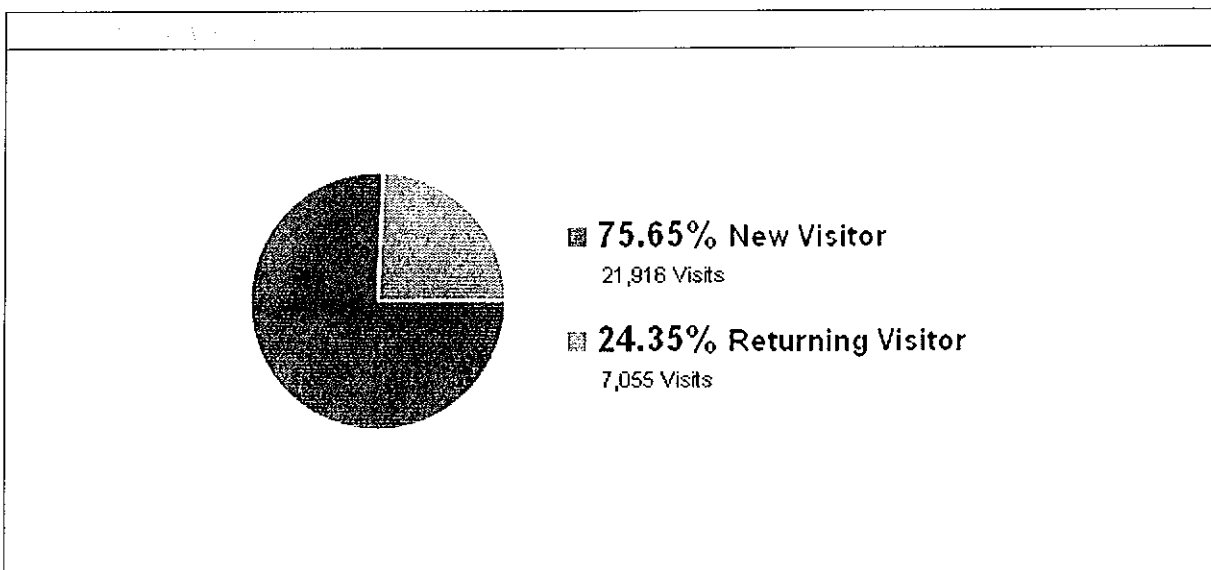
- 221,596 hits
- 5,795 visits
- 4,063 absolute unique visitors (approx. 1,354 per month)

In other words, the new SWOP website had a massive 543% increase in hits when you compare the three months before the launch and the three months immediately after it. In terms of absolute unique visitors, the new SWOP website saw a 160% increase when comparing the same two periods.

ii. Sustained Use

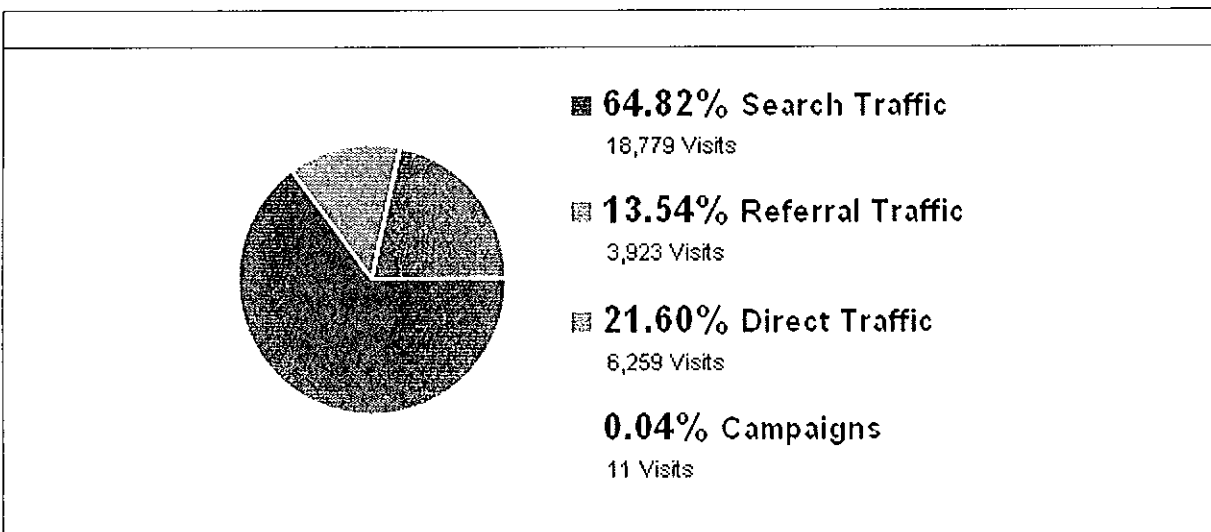
In terms of the sustained use of the online components of this project, the period we have complete data in *Google Analytics* available is from the 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 until the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2012. The data below represents the engagement with online grant materials during this period.

- 29,004 total visits (or 9,860 visits if you exclude bounces)
- 22,173 absolute unique visitors (approx. 2,016 per month)
- 75.65% new visits (see *Figure 1: New Visitors*)
- 65.65% bounce rate (NSW visit bounce rate 58%)
- 73.24% of total visits from Australia (21,217 visits)
- 48% of total visits from New South Wales (13,928 visits)



**Traffic sources to the website**

- 64.82% search engines
- 21.60% direct traffic
- 13.54% referring site



## Search Engines

The main source of traffic to the new SWOP website during our first year was via searches. As one examines the top ten searches that resulted in the new SWOP website being displayed, the reasonably high bounce rate of 65.66% begins to make more sense. If visitors arrive by searching for 'sex', they spend on average 21 seconds on our site, with a bounce rate of 89.78%. By comparison if they search on 'swop' they spend 4.15 minutes on our website, with a bounce rate of 39.59%.

Keyword	Visits	% Visits
sex	5,243	27.92%
swop	2,511	13.37%
swop nsw	336	1.79%
home sex	227	1.21%
thai sex	195	1.04%
sex workers outreach program	192	1.02%
sex workers	189	1.01%
swop sydney	177	0.94%
(not provided)	120	0.64%
sex worker	113	0.60%

Of the top ten search terms provided, those searching for 'sex workers outreach program' had the lowest bounce rate, 28.65%, with visitors spending an average 3.41 minutes on our website. Those who arrived on a search for 'swop nsw' spent the longest average time, 4.58 minutes, on our site with a bounce rate of 31.85%.

Keyword	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
sex	5,243	1.24	00:00:21	89.55%	89.78%
swop	2,511	3.89	00:04:15	50.34%	39.59%
swop nsw	336	4.51	00:04:58	38.99%	31.85%
home sex	227	1.15	00:00:05	92.07%	90.75%
thai sex	195	1.09	00:00:09	95.38%	93.85%
sex workers outreach program	192	3.81	00:03:41	81.25%	28.65%
sex workers	189	2.04	00:00:49	95.77%	67.72%
swop sydney	177	3.60	00:03:04	53.11%	31.07%
(not provided)	120	2.52	00:02:06	90.00%	65.00%
sex worker	113	1.71	00:00:54	92.04%	70.80%

By examining the data contained in *Table 1: Search Engine Terms*, one can approximate that only 17.12% of the people arriving via a search engine were actually likely to be searching for our website in particular. This is assumed because the words they entered were some part of our website address, business name, or (perhaps more cleverly) our business name and geographic locality.

## Referring Sites

The top six referral websites for this period are Wikipedia (697 visits) from their English (324 visits) and Turkish (373 visits) language editions; ACON Health (347 visits); Facebook (291 visits); Australia's

peak body for sex worker organisations, Scarlet Alliance (281 visits); and the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) HIV InSite (103 visits) closely followed by the City of Sydney (100 visits), the local council area that SWOP resides in.

Source	Visits	Pages/Visit	Avg. Time on Site	% New Visits	Bounce Rate
tr.wikipedia.org	373	1.56	00:00:19	100.00%	76.41%
acon.org.au	347	4.39	00:03:44	70.03%	34.87%
en.wikipedia.org	324	2.27	00:01:19	94.14%	64.51%
facebook.com	291	2.46	00:02:36	69.42%	55.33%
scarletalliance.org.au	281	5.04	00:05:50	68.68%	29.89%
hivinsite.ucsf.edu	103	2.54	00:01:31	97.09%	58.25%
cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au	100	3.88	00:02:59	85.00%	37.00%

These six websites account for nearly half of all referrals in the website’s first year of operation. SWOP only really established a social media presence during the last year, so as time continues and our relatively small fan base on Facebook (306 page fans) and Twitter (336 followers) grows, one would assume that these referral points will become much more significant.

**Direct Traffic**

During the recording period, 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2011 until the 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2012, directly typing SWOP’s website URL accounted for 21.60% (6, 266 visits) of the traffic to the website. Over 6,200 SWOP cards and posters have been produced to get the word out about the SWOP website. This has been backed up by a comprehensive advertising campaign, hitting both online and in print media, urban and rural New South Wales. Direct traffic to the SWOP website was generated by the following methods:

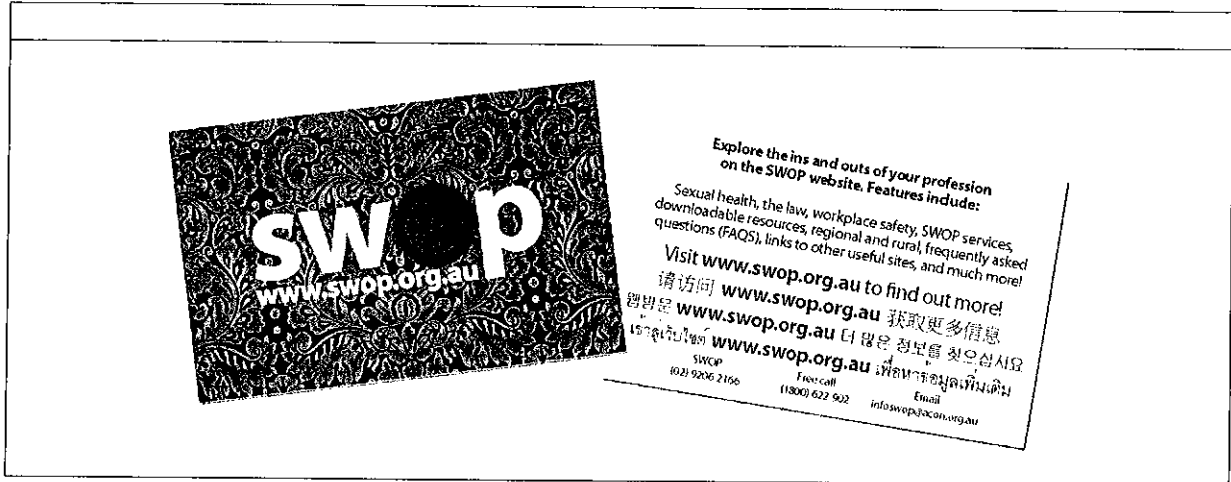
- *Word of Mouth/Flyers*
  - i. At front of house and when performing outreach, SWOP team members direct clients to utilise the resources on the website, unless the client does not have internet access or expresses a strong preference for a printed resource. There are of course still a significant number of SWOP clients (for example many street based sex workers) who find a print based resource preferable to an online one because it is something they have access to in their actual workplace. Some street based sex workers and regional/rural workers might also be influenced by slow download speeds on their mode of accessing the internet, making a printed document preferable to a downloadable PDF.

**TREND: Mobile Device Usage**

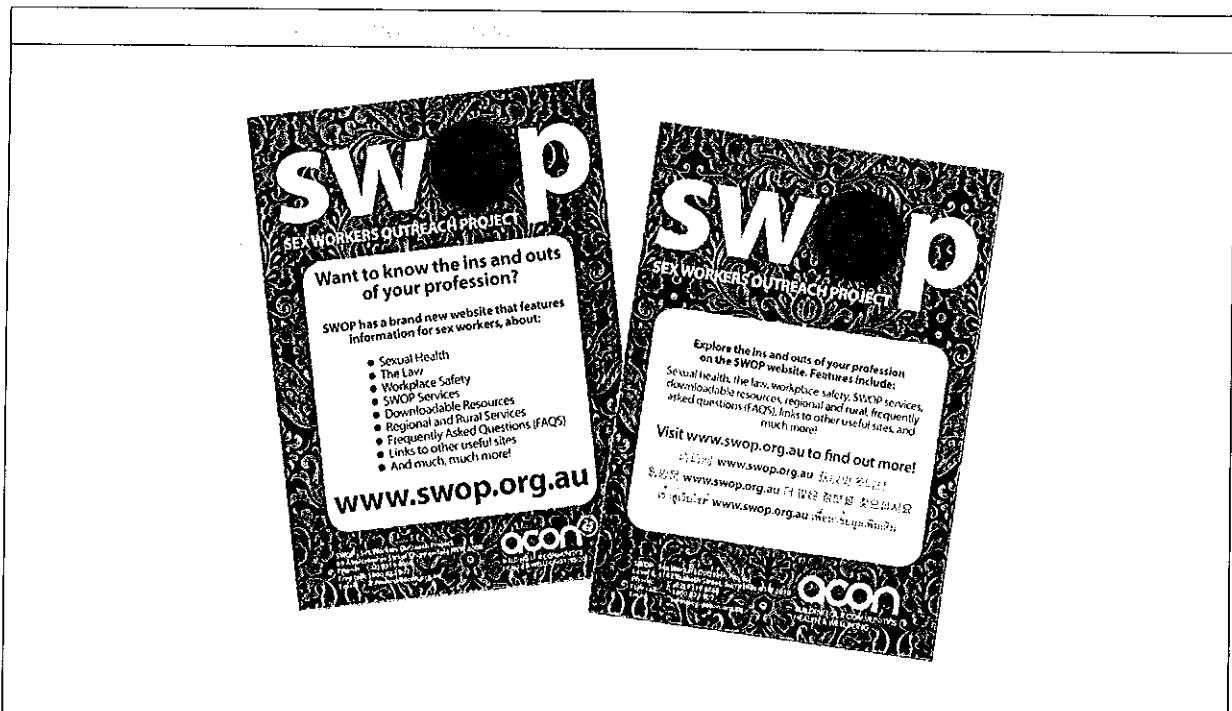
It’s worth pointing out here that during this reporting period; roughly 14% (4047 users) accessed the website using a mobile device. Since SWOP service users are not exempt from trends exhibited by the broader Australian population, it stands to reason that as more and more people change over their World Wide Web access to mobile devices, so will SWOP users. The website produced by this project is not designed to be mobile device friendly – evidenced by non-mobile users spending on average 2.19 minutes onsite to the mobile users’ average stay of 1.27 minutes. This figure should be watched with view to mapping trends that may precipitate a website redesign to make the website more mobile friendly as future usage rates demand.

- ii. Most website referrals are done using a *SWOP Website Promotion Card*. This convenient and durable business card sized resource includes a line promoting our

website in the four most common languages spoken by NSW sex workers (English, Chinese, Korean and Thai). This is perhaps what makes the card (see *Figure 4: SWOP Website Promotion Card*) incredibly popular both with the SWOP team, and with our clients. We are currently handing out our third print run, and can estimate that nearly six thousand of them are in the hands of sex workers or our partner health and non-health agencies across NSW who service the needs of sex workers.



- iii. We also printed two hundred *SWOP Website Promotion Posters* (see *Figure 5: SWOP Website Promotion Posters*) designed to let people know about our new website, and what sort of information they might find there. These posters were concluded after a third, updated print run which also included some information in four languages. These are currently displayed in sex industry premises; drug, alcohol and needle exchange programs; and sexual health services across New South Wales, to let both employees and sex industry workers know about our new online presence.



- *Externally Placed Advertisements*
  - i. A small text ad appeared in the private workers/escort sections of ten different local papers over a five week period. The papers are the *Penrith Press, Hornsby & Upper North Shore Advocate, Parramatta Advertiser, Macarthur Chronicle, Northern District Times, Canterbury Bankstown Express, Wentworth Courier, Blacktown Advocate, Hills Shire Times* and the *Inner West Courier*.
  - ii. Regional/Rural advertisements appeared in newspapers in Orange, Lismore, Newcastle, Port Macquarie and the Illawarra.
  - iii. We also advertised in the gay and lesbian street press, including the *SX, Sydney Star Observer* and the *Sydney Mardi Gras 2012 Festival Guide*
- *Internally Placed Advertisements*
  - i. The new SWOP website and *Sex Industry Legal Kit* were advertised in our internal (sex industry only) publication, *The Professional* in the following issues: *No. 67* (Autumn 2010); *No. 68* (Summer 2010); *No. 69* (Autumn 2011); *No. 70* (Winter 2011) and *No. 71* (Summer 2011).
  - ii. As we reprint all new SWOP resources, each of them is updated with the new SWOP website as matter of course. As an example, in March 2011 we redid the *SWOP Service Brochure* in four languages (a copy of each is included with this report) as our main introduction to new clients and service providers alike. Between March 2011 and January 2012 we have printed and distributed over 5000 of these across all client and service contacts in NSW.

## Engagement

- 69,796 page views
- 3.04 minutes average NSW visit time on site
- 2.88 average NSW pages/visit

The average NSW visit is 3.04 minutes, reviewing almost 3 pages. These averages are higher than that normally found on text-based HIV information websites.

Page	Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate	% Exit
1. /home-page	23,449	00:01:47	64.65%	60.37%
2. /the-law	2,523	00:00:47	39.35%	13.99%
3. /contact-us	2,243	00:01:39	64.34%	43.91%
4. /services	2,050	00:00:51	52.81%	21.41%
5. /about-us	1,714	00:01:02	45.61%	22.93%
6. /download-resources	1,700	00:01:06	58.67%	23.94%
7. /sexual-health	1,641	00:00:50	50.72%	19.32%
8. /faq	1,403	00:01:44	62.31%	30.01%
9. /the-law/sex-work-in-nsw	1,274	00:01:45	46.82%	23.16%
10. /links	1,169	00:01:29	60.76%	26.60%

As expected, the 'Home Page' received the highest number of hits (23,449 page views). This is illustrated in *Table 3: Top Ten Page Views*. After that, 'The Law' is the most looked at section of the website, with 11% (2,523 page views); followed closely by 'Contact Us' tab, which was probably amplified because SWOP moved offices during the analysis period. Website users are also keen to see what 'Services' we offer; and how we describe ourselves and our mission in the 'About Us'

section. After that they're keen to 'Download Resources' (where the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* is the most downloaded resource). There is a fairly good spread of page views across all content.

It's worth noting that in terms of reaching the disabled, some of the most utilised buttons on the home page of the SWOP website are the set of tabs that expand the text size - 19% of clicks on the home page (1,739 clicks apiece) were used to utilise this important mechanism of the website.

**TREND: Travelling Sex Industry.**

While most of the pages in the top ten page views are home page tabs representing broad sections of the SWOP website, one page from 'The Law' also is ranked within the SWOP top ten. This page contains the basic definitions of whether sex work is legal or illegal in NSW.

Of the 1,247 page views of this page alone, 864 are from Sydney, with the remaining 30% coming from cities of origin including Melbourne, Brisbane, Perth, Newcastle, Canberra, Adelaide, Hobart, Dublin and New York. Sex workers often have a mobile workplace which allows them to travel in greater numbers than people in other careers.

Looking for a second at the website's overall visitors (29,004 visits), approximately 27% come from outside of Australia. Below, *Figure 6: Geographic Location of SWOP Website Visitors* marks in deepening shades the intensity and wide range of international online visitors we receive. The top five countries outside of Australia are the United States, India, United Kingdom, Turkey and Thailand. Care should be taken to observe any trends with view to adding globally focused legal, work visa and immigration related material as the need arises.

Views  
1 21,241



**SWOP Website Users and 'The Law'**

In total, there were 13,198 page views of various components of 'The Law' section of the SWOP Website. For any future development in this area, it is worthwhile looking at what users are viewing most. In *Table 4: Top Ten 'The Law' Page Views* you can see that as with the focus group findings, website users use their place of employment (for example brothel, home-based, massage and escort) to navigate the content as a first preference. These are the most popular pages, beyond 'Sex Work in NSW' which defines basic legality of sex work in this particular geographic location.

Page	Page Views	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate
/the-law	2,523	00:00:47	39.35%
/the-law/sex-work-in-nsw	1,274	00:01:45	46.82%
/the-law/brothels-or-sex-services-premises	720	00:01:17	67.08%
/the-law/other-laws-you-should-know/home-based	694	00:02:26	71.43%
/the-law/other-laws-you-should-know/massage	683	00:02:47	74.74%
/the-law/other-laws-you-should-know/escort	546	00:01:29	49.38%
/the-law/sex-work-is-work	450	00:02:36	62.50%
/the-law/regulating-the-industry/australian-taxation-office	445	00:03:43	67.22%
/the-law/a-guide-to-local-councils	425	00:03:44	69.44%
/the-law/other-laws-you-should-know/bdsm	419	00:02:00	81.52%

#### Metrics Recommendations:

- Continue to build SWOP's social media presence so *Facebook/Twitter* referrals increase.
- Continue to update and revise website content to encourage repeat customers.
- Develop a 12 month advertising and promotion plan.
- Implement survey, user testing or focus groups to seek feedback from SWOP website visitors.
- Develop a plan to update to mobile device friendly website.
- Develop new section addressing travelling (both interstate and international) sex workers.



## 4. CONCLUSION

The *SWOP Web Resource Project* has met its objectives by producing a *Sex Industry Legal Kit*, seven *Legal Fact Sheets* in four languages, and a new *SWOP website*. The project was made possible by \$29,426 funding grant from the Law and Justice Foundation of NSW.

To evaluate the project two focus groups were held with sex workers to review the legal kit and fact sheets. There were a total of 11 participants. The focus groups were conducted to gain an understanding of how members of the target audience respond to and engage with the resources. Given evaluation constraints, direct feedback on the website from the target audience was not undertaken; instead engagement with the website was measured by reviewing website metrics. The evaluation was supplemented by reviewing SWOP records regarding the printing and distribution of the resources.

### Extent to which aims were achieved

Overall there was a positive response to the *SWOP Web Resource Project* and the project delivered against the stated aims of its funding agreement with the Law and Justice Foundation. Focus group participants thought the kit produced by the project was highly relevant and useful. Participants thought the kit was a very comprehensive resource, and appreciated that it was produced and made available to sex workers.

As a result of the project:

- 600 copies of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* were produced, 590 copies have been distributed;
- 380 PDF copies of the *Sex Industry Legal Kit* have been downloaded;
- Seven *Legal Fact Sheets* were produced in English, Chinese, Thai and Korean;
- 1,050 *Legal Fact Sheets* have been printed;
- 600 *Legal Fact Sheets* downloaded from the website;
- Significant increases in visits to the SWOP website with 29,004 visits (or 9,860 visits if you exclude bounces) over an eleven month period, of which 13,928 are NSW visits;
- 69,796 website page views;
- 13,198 page views of the 'The Law' section;
- Average time of 3.04 minutes per NSW visit; and
- Average 2.88 page views per NSW visit.

### Areas for improvement

There were three key evaluation findings that can further enhance the resource.

Firstly, the kit still needs further work to ensure it is written in plain and accessible English. While focus group participants generally stated that the kit was well written, at the same time they highlighted questions or phrases that they did not understand the meaning of, or thought were not written in a direct and clear language. Of the initial target groups listed in the aims, one group whose needs were probably not well met were 'workers with low literacy skills'. This is mainly due to the

legal jargon used in the kit. Any future reprints should consider hiring a professional editor to edit the content.

Secondly, both the focus group findings and the website metrics point to the importance of mode of sex work as the primary way that sex industry workers engage with information, this should factor into the further development of the resource. Future reprints should consider organising the content in a manner that is more accessible to the individual employment situation of sex workers.

Thirdly, a potential problem with the kit may be that it is attempting to be too relevant to a broad audience (NSW Sex workers, clients of the sex industry, owners, operators and managers of sex services premises, and service providers and regulators who work with the sex industry) rather than solely to individual sex workers. To meet the needs being expressed by sex workers, SWOP should aim to balance this with the competing demands of funding bodies, government departments and agencies. In this case, sex workers were very clear in wanting the resource to provide some guidance or, in their own words, “practical” advice on what this all means for them. This could mean developing supplementary case studies or frequently asked questions that explain how to best discharge one’s legal obligations as a sex worker.

### **Future website strategy**

With the SWOP website maintaining a great rate of usage it would make sense to investigate trends identified in this report before making any significant changes, as a total mobile-device-friendly redesign might soon be indicated by rising mobile usage statistics. Added to this, there is always scope for New South Wales’ laws to change. Changes, like the ones in the arena of decriminalisation predicted at the time of writing this report, would obviously affect SWOP’s clients in significant, and not always easily predictable, ways. Thus it remains of prime importance that SWOP staff and resources are directed towards being ever-vigilant in aiding their clients navigate through the evolving and ever-changing legal climate we find New South Wales in. This makes SWOP’s decision to create the kit as an online document, a living and breathing website (as opposed to just a booklet), a sound one, and with frequent updating, it should serve them into the future.