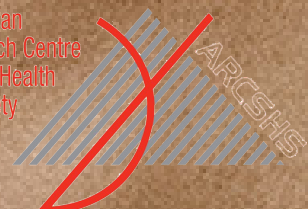


# HOOK-UP?

A study of male sex work in  
NSW and Queensland 2014



Australian  
Research Centre  
in Sex, Health  
& Society



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A study of male sex work in NSW and Queensland 2014

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## ***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

### **Summary of the findings**

This study of male sex work in NSW and Queensland recruited a total of 471 respondents in NSW and 250 in Queensland, among whom 94 men in NSW (20.0%) and 55 men in Queensland (22.0%) reported having engaged in male-to-male sex work. These male sex workers were similar in most respects to gay and bisexual men in general, both demographically and behaviourally, and were generally well-connected to information and support. Mostly, they did not engage in behaviours that represented a risk for HIV transmission. Nonetheless, male sex workers face numerous challenges in their work, many of which concerned issues of stigma and uncertainty about legal status. In a context where sex work is widely viewed negatively and where the legal framework at the very least positions sex work as problematic, sex workers in general, including male sex workers, tend to find it difficult to pursue their work.

There were some male sex workers who were less well-connected to support, and who also faced greater challenges, both in the conduct of sex work and in the potential for harms due to risky behaviours, both sex and drug related. Also, in general, there appeared to be some differences between male sex workers in NSW and in Queensland that would suggest that male sex workers in Queensland face somewhat greater challenges, and may be at consequent greater risk, than those in NSW.

Most male sex workers have regular health checks, and they appear to value the expertise of the health service providers. There is little evidence in this study to support a claim that sex work, per se, puts these men at increased risk, or that these men are compromising the health and safety of either themselves or their partners. That said, however, male sex workers appear to be not unlike other highly sexually active and sexually adventurous gay and bisexual men in general, and are therefore at increased risk as a consequence of their private (non sex work) circumstances. Also, despite the fact that most male sex workers do not engage in high risk behaviours, such as condomless sex, with their clients, there is a small minority that do appear to do so, and among these men, there appears to be little evidence of other methods of risk reduction (at least for the purposes of protecting themselves). Also, some male sex workers appear to lack clear understandings of other methods of risk reduction, including the impact of HIV treatments on reducing HIV transmission, and a recognition of the role of undiagnosed HIV infection in HIV transmission.

Most male sex workers find information about sex work and safe sex primarily through the internet. Some obtained information from sex worker or HIV organisations, and were generally satisfied with the information they obtained.

### **Comments**

Although the sexual risk behaviour of some male sex workers has less to do with being paid for sex than with their participation in sexually adventurous networks, there is a strong argument for prioritising HIV-prevention work within this population. It may, however, be that the content of these interventions should focus on sex outside the context of sex work. Also, male sex workers may face a range of issues, not all of which are associated with HIV prevention, and, indeed, not all of them directly resulting from their involvement in male-to-male sex work.

## **BACKGROUND**

While sex workers have been classified as being at high risk for HIV internationally, there has been little evidence of HIV infection within the Australian sex industry.<sup>1</sup> These differences are often attributed to the fact that sex work tends to operate mainly in legalised, although restricted, frameworks in Australia, and peer-led sex worker organisations tend to be supported in their HIV prevention and broader sexual health efforts. However, most available Australian data apply to female sex workers (Kirby Institute, 2014; Perkins, 1991; Stevens, 1994; Donovan, 2008). While up to one in five homosexual men may have been involved in male-to-male sex work (Perkins & Bennett, 1985; Weber et al., 2001; Grulich et al., 2014), less than 5% report recent sex work (Rissel et al., 2003; Van der Snoek et al., 2004; Weinberg et al., 2001). Whereas female sex workers tend to be reported as often depending on sex work for their income, many gay male sex workers are reported to only engage in sex work intermittently (Perkins & Bennett, 1985; Prestage, 1994).

Like their female counterparts, male sex workers are reported as practicing safe sex with their clients (Minichiello et al., 2001, 2003; Rissel et al., 2003; Stevens, 1994), and where it has been investigated HIV prevalence has often been found to be lower or similar to what has been found among gay and bisexual men in general (Estcourt et al., 2000). Nonetheless, in some settings, HIV seroprevalence has been found to be relatively high (Weber et al., 2001; Belza et al., 2005; Mimiaga et al., 2009). There are several possible explanations for this. Their sexual behaviour outside the context of sex work is often reported as being less safe (Parsons et al., 2004; Sethi et al., 2006; Weinberget al., 2001; Ziersch et al., 2000) and many appear to engage in other risk activities, such as illicit drug use, which has been linked to increased sexual risk (Clatts et al., 2005; Darrow et al., 2005; Halkitis et al., 2005; Mao et al., 2006; Prestage et al., 2007; Ross et al., 2003), at increased rates compared with other gay men (O'Connell et al., 2004; Rietmeijer et al., 1998).

In the Health in Men (HIM) cohort study of gay and bisexual men (GBM) about 5% reported being paid for sex during a six-month period prior to interview, and 14.7% had been paid for sex at some time prior to the study period. Over half (59.1%) of those recently paid for sex had engaged in sex work only once or twice. The majority appears to have been infrequent sex workers. The Pleasure and Sexual Health study had similar findings (Prestage et al., 2014). One in six of those in HIM who were recently paid for sex (18.3%) indicated they had engaged in condomless anal intercourse with their clients (CLAI-client). On the

other hand, two thirds (62%) indicated they had engaged in CLAI with casual partners (CLAI-casual) in the same time period, compared with 34.2% of the men who did not report recently being paid for sex ( $p < 0.001$ ). There was also no evidence that those recently paid for sex were using other risk-reduction strategies more or less frequently than other men.

Compared with non sex workers, both those who had been recently paid for sex and those who had previously been paid for sex were more likely to: use illicit drugs, and to be more sexually adventurous in general. They tended to be engaged in behaviours that have been characterised as 'intensive sex partying' (Hurley and Prestage, 2010). These findings were generally true for both men who reported recent payment for at baseline and those who reported recent payment for sex at follow-up.

The relative non-dependence on sex work of the male sex workers in these studies may provide them some relative control in their sex work encounters, which is a key factor in whether sex workers can restrict the encounter to safe sex (Bloor et al., 1992; McKegane et al., 1990; Simon et al., 1994). This is a claim that likely could also be said of female sex workers as well, or indeed, of anyone in a circumstance where they are not in a dependent relationship. That the men in these studies tend to be more likely to use condoms in the context of sex work than during casual sex encounters indicates that they did not engage in sex work without some consideration of the potential risk. They were probably not mere 'victims of circumstance', in contrast to samples of male sex workers who lacked other income options (Haley et al., 2004).

However, although they reported less CLAI-client, both current and former sex workers were more likely to engage in CLAI-casual than were men who did not engage in sex work. They were also more likely to engage in other behaviours that have been associated with risk of HIV and other STIs. These cross-sectional analyses cannot indicate causation, but that these correlations apply to both current and former sex workers suggests that sex work among these gay men may be related to being more 'sexually adventurous' generally. As in other studies (Ziersch et al., 2000), the men who had done sex work appeared to be more sexually active in general and more likely to engage in HIV-related risk behaviours than other gay men.

These previous studies indicate that gay men who engage in sex work may be at increased risk of HIV infection but this does not appear to be directly related exclusively to the sex work itself. Indeed, some men involved in sex work may be at increased risk due to participation in sexually adventurous subcultures that are not related directly to sex work. It



is therefore likely that male sex workers may be at high risk as a consequence of their private sexual behaviour and their personal sexual preferences, despite taking the appropriate precautions to protect themselves and their clients in the context of their professional lives as sex workers. Thus far, however, there has been little research targeting male sex workers in Australia that explores their beliefs about HIV and risk or how they negotiate sex with both their clients and their private sex partners. There has also been little investigation into how male sex workers access HIV-prevention information and resources, and whether they do so differently with respect to their professional and private lives.

As with female sex workers, male sex workers appear to behave quite differently depending on whether they are working or whether they are conducting private sexual relationships. Also, men who engage in male-to-male sex work may do so intermittently or only for temporary periods of their lives, and they may not always be engaged in gay community life, especially if they do not identify as gay. This being the case, it is inappropriate to assume that all such men will necessarily seek or relate to HIV-prevention information and resources in the same way. It is highly likely that the way that they identify, both in terms of their sexuality and in terms of their involvement in sex work, will influence what resources and information they believe they need and how and where they will access them.

Poor mental health indicators have often been reported among male sex workers, as they have amongst gay and bisexual men in general as well. In the case of male sex workers, these could be a consequence of their experience of sex work, the stigma that is directed at sex work in general, or may be associated with those factors that lead men to engage in sex work (Sagarin et al., 1997; McCabe et al., 2011). However, some male sex workers may find sexual excitement through their work, or even use the experience of sex work to enhance their self-esteem (West et al., 1993). It would not be unusual in any occupation to find that those who are comfortable with their work suffer few negative effects from it, while those who find it problematic may also experience negative effects on their mental health. In the case of sex work, the negative stressors of anti-sex work stigma, and of sex-phobia in general, are undoubtedly factors to consider in whether individual sex workers experience any mental health effects. The poor mental health indicators found among gay and bisexual men in general have been consistently associated with anti-homosexual stigma, and individuals' lack of self-acceptance: Those who self-identify as gay, and those who feel comfortable about their sexuality tend to have significantly better mental health indicators.

This should likewise apply in the case of sex work: Those who feel comfortable as sex workers, and who find little difficulty in doing sex work, most likely experience far fewer mental health difficulties than those who feel uncomfortable about it.

As is the case with any form of occupation, it appears that the reasons some gay and bisexual men turn to sex work include both material and circumstantial factors, as well as, for sex work, factors that reflect individuals' sexuality. Some men who appear to be less financially secure – usually young men – probably choose to take payment for sex because they have the financial need for additional income, and they have the capacity to attract clients. Many male sex workers may also provide paid sex because they are fairly adventurous regarding sex in general. Perhaps some men do so specifically because paying for sex reflects aspects of their own sexual desires, or simply because their own sexualities do not preclude it, and that, in particular circumstances, it seems a reasonable choice. Nonetheless, at least some men presumably receive payment for sex, or even pay for sex, because they have few other options even despite feeling uncomfortable about this choice. And, again, as with any occupation or form of work, levels of discomfort with that work have multiple sources, but necessarily have a very significant bearing on the individual workers' sense of self. In the case of sex work, the particular role of stigma – whether that be specifically directed at sex work itself, or more general sex-phobia – is particularly key to understanding the 'uncomfortableness' of some sex workers.

## **METHODS**

This research project addressed risk behaviours and beliefs among male sex workers in NSW and Queensland. This study aimed to:

- Investigate the sexual and other risk behaviours of men who engage in sex work in NSW and Queensland, in both their work environment and in their private relationships and networks;
- Explore in detail how male sex workers negotiate their sexual and other risk behaviours with their sexual partners, both personal and professional, and with individuals within their social networks;
- Identify male sex workers' own attitudes toward and feelings about the risks associated with sex work;
- Investigate what HIV-prevention information and resources male sex workers believe they require and how they access such information and resources;
- Directly inform the development and refinement of community health promotion strategies addressing male sex workers.

The key components of this project were an online survey exploring the key issues and measuring risk behaviour, and more detailed face-to-face interviews to explore men's motivations, attitudes and beliefs regarding male sex work and associated sexual and drug-using risk behaviours. The study was developed in consultation with key stakeholder organisations. Ethics approval was obtained from the University of New South Wales and La Trobe University.

Eligibility criteria for the study included being male; having engaged in sex with other men in the preceding twelve months or identifying as gay or bisexual; being aged 16 years or above; and living in either NSW or Queensland. While the focus of the study was male-to-male sex work, for comparative purposes, men who had not been engaged in sex work were also eligible to participate. Nonetheless, the focus of the targeted recruitment for the study was those men who had recently engaged in sex work.

Recruitment into the study was achieved through a variety of methods. Direct referrals to the website were received through referrals from outreach by sex worker organisations and through promotion within sex worker and gay community organisations, media and events and through online promotion. Study staff liaised closely with staff at key stakeholder

organisations to develop appropriate promotional activity and ensured that this promotional activity was ongoing and efficient. That said, the timeframes for completion of this project were tight, particularly in Queensland, and recruitment may have been improved with longer timeframes.

Enrolments occurred through: direct referrals from local community organisations targeting male sex workers and gay men in NSW and Queensland; online promotion through gay dating websites and through social networking sites; direct contact with men advertising themselves as sex workers; or direct online enrolment by individuals who have found a link to the survey posted on another website. The study website provided all the information and consent requirements for the study, and individuals could then directly access the online survey component themselves. A group page was set up on a popular social networking site with details of the study through which men were invited to join, and were invited to spread the link among their social networks for others to join as well. This also allowed us to post regular calls for participation, updates on the research, and to utilise the focused advertising available through this website and the page we had established.

Paid banner advertisements and targeted, paid email approaches through popular gay dating and hook-up sites as well as social sites were also used, and free direct email approaches through community organisations were conducted throughout the course of the recruitment period.

### **Online survey**

Participants completed an online questionnaire to enrol into the study. The questionnaire included demographic characteristics, details of their experiences of sex work in the previous twelve months, sexual relationships and behaviours, details of what occurred during their most recent sex work encounter, their sexual and drug use behaviour in the six months prior to survey, their beliefs about sex work, sources of support and contact with the community and measures of mental well-being. Validated measures included: A measure of social engagement with gay men that has typically been used in Australian research to assess the degree of association with gay community life (Zablotska et al., 2012); a measure of sexual sensation-seeking, which has commonly been used as an indicator of men who tend to be relatively more sexually adventurous and thereby at greater risk of HIV infection (Kalichman et al., 1994; Kalichman, 2014); the Rosenberg measure of global self-esteem (Rosenberg et al., 1995); the Kessler six-item (K-6) distress battery (Kessler et al., 2002).

There were a number of open-ended questions in the survey, which allowed respondents to provide detailed responses; some of those responses are presented in this report to help illustrate common themes and patterns or in some cases, of uncommon or atypical cases.

A website was created as a portal to provide information about the Hook Up study and to direct recruitment directly to the survey. This website also contained information and links to our research partners, funding information, and ethics and privacy parameters.

### **In-depth interviews**

Respondents to this questionnaire were also invited to participate in a more detailed face-to-face interview, during which their motivations and rationalisations for the sorts of decisions they make about HIV and 'safe sex' during both their private and professional sexual encounters were addressed.

In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve participants who volunteered for these interviews after completing the online survey or who were approached directly. They were compensated for their time in recognition that these interviews concerned their work situation and were conducted at a time when they might otherwise be earning an income. While the focus of the interview was similar to that of the online questionnaire – a description of their experiences of and motivations for having engaged in sex work – they were also asked to discuss the relevance of recent changes in HIV prevention, including Treatment as Prevention and Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis, and how these might impact on their future behaviours as sex workers.

## **DESCRIPTION OF THE SAMPLE**

There were a total of 471 respondents in NSW and 250 in Queensland. Of these respondents, 94 in NSW (20.0%) and 55 in Queensland (22.0%) reported having engaged in male-to-male sex work. Most of those who reported having ever engaged in sex work, had also done so within the previous year: In NSW 67 men (13.6%) reported having engaged in sex work within the previous year, while in Queensland 36 men (14.4%) had done so. Three of the 67 NSW men who had engaged in sex work during the previous twelve months did not provide details of their sex work encounters. For the purpose of this report, we have described both the sample of men who had recently engaged in male-to-male sex work ('Recent sex workers'; 64 men in NSW and 36 men in Queensland) as well as the sample of all men in each state who had ever engaged in sex work. Although it was not possible from these data to determine precisely when those who had not engaged in sex work in the previous year (27 men in NSW and 19 men in Queensland) had last done so, it appears that fourteen NSW men and eleven Queensland men had most likely done so within the previous five years

### **Age**

For the most part, male sex workers are generally believed to be young, and relatively immature, men. While it is true that about half the sex workers in this sample were aged under 30, and the men who had not engaged in sex work were generally older, about a quarter of these male sex workers were aged in their 40s and 50s. The Queensland sex workers tended to be somewhat younger but nonetheless had similar proportions of older men doing sex work as well.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Age</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Under 25	11 (17.2)	12 (33.4)	13 (13.9)	17 (30.9)	43 (11.4)	25 (12.8)
26–34	23 (35.9)	13 (36.1)	32 (34.0)	15 (27.3)	81 (21.5)	49 (25.1)
35–54	27 (42.2)	9 (25.0)	43 (45.7)	20 (36.4)	168 (44.6)	85 (43.6)
55 or more	3 (4.7)	2 (5.6)	6 (6.4)	3 (5.4)	85 (22.6)	36 (18.4)

Age often plays a significant role in how some sex workers represent themselves, in recognition of the tendency among clients to prefer younger men:

*[I'm] 31 ... advertise as 28. Because I think that I will attract one range of customer that it's more attract from that range of age, from one escort that is working that kind of age." (31, gay, Brisbane).*

*"[I'm] 20. Working age, 19. Just market [my]self as a teenager." (20, Bisexual, Sydney).*

Many sex workers advertise themselves using their correct age, in some cases because their actual age falls into the age range that is in most demand:

*"I actually just turned 28 ... so, yeah, I do. I don't lie about my age." (28, gay, Sydney).*

Others, though simply report that they have found no problems with attracting clients and therefore see little reason to adjust their age:

*"I am 37. I know I fall into the older category of being a sex worker, but, look, I, I, know, I haven't had a problem with advertising [in] that age bracket. (38, queer, Brisbane)*

Some younger sex workers, though, occasionally represent themselves as being slightly older to avoid playing particular roles associated with being perceived as 'young':

*"[I'm] 21. [I advertise] 23. Guys always say I'm more mature than what I am, than my age, so yeah, they tend to go the other way; they think I'm a lot older than 23, so I just bump myself up a bit. The person bases the, the age on someone based on their maturity, so, you know, if someone's looking for a 21-year-old, they're generally looking for a, you know, someone that acts like a, you know, a 21 that doesn't have it together. So, so I go older to get those sort of people." (21, bisexual, Brisbane).*

Others have found that being slightly older can be an advantage in that some clients prefer a somewhat more mature man:

*[I'm] 40. [I advertise] In the range of 38 to 40 ... "Well, okay, some, some sites have bumped it up to 40 but the 40 was, it sounds terrible. Like, you know, a big four in front of your thing. So I try to keep it lower just to possibly attract more clients. I find that some people are actually looking for someone more mature, experienced, so there's definitely some people looking for older sex workers. (40, bisexual, Brisbane).*

But even so, these men often feel the need to lower their age somewhat:

*“I’m 37... I advertise as 34. Because there is an age discrimination within, well specifically in the gay community, so, but, generally, my clients go for me because I am older and I have experience, and I’m in a different bracket, in a different kind of ... the services I offer are specific to a certain client and my age adds to that.” (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

*“I’m 36. [Advertise as] 33 ... it’s a superficial industry. You’re, you’re selling a product at the end of the day. I think, instinctively, it was probably because the vast majority were a lot younger, which is actually a mistake. In hindsight, it turns out there’s a, a gap in the market for older than 33 but that, that’s what I’ve, I’ve changed it, and I sort of have to go with it now.” (36, gay, Sydney).*

### Relationship status

Only a minority of men reported being in a relationship with a regular partner. Sex workers in NSW were somewhat less likely than non sex workers to report being in a relationship, while Queensland sex workers were slightly more likely to be in a relationship.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Relationship status</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Had regular partner	16 (24.9)	13 (36.1)	27 (28.7)	21 (38.2)	138 (36.7)	57 (29.2)
No regular partner	48 (75.1)	23 (63.9)	67 (71.3)	34 (61.8)	239 (63.3)	138 (70.8)

### Sexuality

In this sample, while a substantial minority were not gay-identified, most were, and of those who were not gay, none identified as heterosexual. Indeed, the male sex workers in the sample were more likely to identify as gay than were the men who had never been paid for sex. Nonetheless, the men in Queensland were less likely to identify as gay.



	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Sexual identity</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Gay/homosexual	51 (79.7)	21 (58.3)	76 (80.9)	37 (67.3)	252 (66.8)	111 (56.9)
Bisexual	12 (18.8)	15 (41.7)	17 (18.1)	18 (32.7)	125 (33.2)	84 (43.1)
Not provided	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

While these data suggest that the men who engaged in sex work tended to be more likely to identify as gay and (see below) more closely associated with gay community life, the recruitment methods relied on men either identifying themselves as gay or bisexual, or participating in gay community life in some way. It is possible that some heterosexual men who engaged in sex work may not have been able to participate.

Male sex workers who were in relationships with women sometimes reported having fairly open, non-traditional types of relationships with those partners:

*“I’m in a long-term relationship more than 10 years with a female. You could call it de facto but we maintain separate units that are next to each other. So sort of a little bit, a little bit de facto.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

*“[I’m] partnered. Have been for 10 years. [A] girlfriend. We’ve always been open so, and we’ve always played outside. I guess, obviously, I’m more the, the one that ventures more. She has a few times but not very many. She’s not very sexually active so ... Yeah. So it’s, you know, we’ve always been open. We’ve always both wanted to play with other people. I started playing with guys three years ago ... Yeah. So woke up with one one day and, obviously, told her straight away. And, you know, she kind of felt more comfortable me playing with other guys than other girls ... I guess it’s, you know, kind of she’s a girl, I’m playing with a guy so it’s not like I’m getting something that she can’t offer.”* (21, bisexual, Brisbane).

## **Education**

The perception that men who engage in sex work tend to lack education is also contradicted by these data to some extent. The majority of NSW sex workers and at least a quarter of Queensland sex workers had received university-level education. Indeed, the male sex workers in the sample were generally as well-educated as were the men who had

not been paid for sex, although this was slightly less true of the Queensland sex workers. Overall, these male sex workers appeared to be fairly well-educated.

Some sex workers reported professional qualifications in high-income occupations apart from sex work:

*“Post-graduate. Got law and arts degrees but I’ve also got a master in government.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

Many also reported currently pursuing further education:

*“Senior certificate but I’m currently studying at the moment.”* (33, gay, Brisbane).

And in some cases, they were pursuing qualifications that could enhance the kinds of services they offer:

*“I do have diplomas on cooking, cheffing and pastry, and I myself have PT recently and masseur as well. I recently finished my study [Okay] so I’m doing my one-month work experience in aging.”* (30, gay, Brisbane).

*“Year 11 but I’m currently doing my advanced diploma in remedial massage that is.”* (34, gay, Brisbane)

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Highest level of education</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Less than university	27 (42.2)	27 (75.1)	44 (46.8)	48 (69.1)	178 (47.2)	117 (60.0)
University undergraduate	23 (35.9)	6 (16.7)	30 (31.9)	10 (18.2)	120 (31.8)	51 (26.2)
University postgraduate	14 (21.9)	3 (8.3)	20 (21.3)	7 (12.7)	78 (20.7)	26 (13.3)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)	1 (0.5)

## Occupation

The perception that men who engage in sex work tend to be unable to find other forms of employment is also contradicted by these data. The majority were also in employment in addition to their sex work. One third of the NSW sex workers and a quarter of the Queensland sex workers were in managerial or professional occupations, although this was considerably less than was the case among non sex workers. Queensland sex

workers also appeared to be less likely to be in full-time employment. Overall, these male sex workers were often in employment other than sex work, even though this was somewhat lower than was the case among gay men generally – of course, in some cases, they had no particular reason to be in other employment as they earned sufficient from sex work, or had chosen to pursue sex work as their career at that time.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b>Employment</b>						
Full-time employed	33 (51.6)	13 (36.1)	55 (58.5)	21 (38.2)	225 (59.7)	133 (68.2)
Part-time employed	9 (14.1)	14 (38.9)	10 (10.6)	17 (30.9)	47 (12.5)	23 (11.8)
Student	6 (9.4)	5 (13.9)	8 (8.5)	9 (16.4)	27 (7.2)	9 (4.6)
Other	16 (25.0)	4 (11.2)	21 (22.3)	7 (12.7)	76 (20.6)	28 (14.4)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.0)
<b>Occupation</b>						
Managerial	5 (7.8)	4 (11.1)	13 (13.8)	6 (10.9)	78 (20.7)	35 (17.9)
Professional	16 (25.0)	4 (11.1)	22 (23.4)	7 (12.7)	148 (39.3)	65 (33.3)
Other	23 (35.9)	19 (52.8)	33 (35.1)	25 (47.3)	75 (19.8)	59 (30.3)
Not in workforce	20 (31.3)	9 (25.0)	26 (27.7)	16 (29.1)	76 (20.2)	36 (18.5)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

Some sex workers did other work to supplement their income from sex work:

*“I do, yes. Unfortunately, my sex work will not support me full-time so I do work various other jobs and one of the reasons I kind of fell into the sex work was because that I have, a lot of my jobs are creative jobs and therefore it’s very hard to find steady employment and that kind of thing. So I take bits and pieces from wherever I can and, yeah, go from there.”* (38, queer, Brisbane).

Others appeared to have no clear occupation with sex work being one of a number of sources of income they relied on:

*“I work sometime as a pizza maker. I work one year one month enough as a pizza maker. Two weeks as a waiter ... Also like a tutor - one section of tutor, [language]*

tutor for one kid ... And two lesson of music because I'm musician and so I'm just two hours, occasionally." (31, gay, Brisbane).

And in some cases, they were taking time off from their usual occupation:

"I'm a nurse so, but I'm not working as a nurse at the moment." (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

Students often found casual work where they could to fit into their studies, and sex work was one of the options available to them:

"I do some freelance design work on, in like out of my own, around my uni hours and stuff like that, so just some basic graphic design - business cards, bit of social media stuff." (33, gay, Brisbane).

### Cultural background

Most sex workers in this sample were Australian-born, and the majority were of Anglo-Celtic background. It is widely believed that many male sex workers are non-Australians, being either students or recent arrivals, or even visitors who are using sex work to fund their travels. There was little evidence of this in these data. Of course, not being local, such persons may have remained unaware of the survey, or they may have found the language barrier too difficult.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b><i>Country of birth</i></b>						
Australia	48 (75.0)	29 (80.6)	69 (73.4)	45 (81.8)	298 (79.0)	164 (84.1)
Other	15 (23.4)	5 (13.8)	23 (24.4)	8 (14.6)	77 (20.4)	31 (15.9)
Not provided	1 (1.6)	2 (5.6)	2 (2.2)	2 (3.6)	2 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
<b><i>Cultural background</i></b>						
Anglo-Celtic	30 (46.9)	21 (58.3)	51 (54.3)	36 (65.5)	244 (64.7)	135 (69.2)
Indigenous Australian	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.3)	1 (1.8)	10 (2.7)	3 (1.5)
Other	27 (42.2)	13 (36.1)	30 (36.9)	25 (29.1)	124 (29.8)	51 (26.3)
Not provided	4 (6.2)	2 (5.6)	5 (5.5)	2 (3.6)	8 (2.4)	6 (3.0)

## **SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WITH GAY COMMUNITY**

For the most part, male sex workers in this sample were often socially engaged with gay men in general, Queenslanders somewhat less so than those in NSW. The sex workers in both states were more socially engaged with gay men overall than were the men in each state who had never been paid for sex. About a third of NSW sex workers and a quarter of Queensland sex workers had mainly gay friends and spent much of their free time with them. These data suggest that the male sex workers in this sample were fairly well-connected, socially, to gay men in general.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b><i>Proportion of gay friends</i></b>						
None	7 (10.9)	1 (2.8)	10 (10.6)	4 (7.3)	47 (12.5)	33 (16.9)
A few	16 (25.0)	17 (47.2)	23 (24.5)	24 (43.6)	133 (35.3)	94 (48.2)
Some	16 (25.0)	6 (16.7)	21 (22.3)	11 (20.0)	95 (25.2)	41 (21.0)
Most	23 (35.9)	11 (30.6)	38 (40.4)	15 (27.3)	90 (23.9)	25 (12.8)
All	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.6)	1 (0.5)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	6 (1.6)	1 (0.5)
<b><i>Time spent with gay friends</i></b>						
None	5 (7.8)	2 (5.6)	6 (6.4)	4 (7.3)	40 (10.6)	19 (9.7)
A little	14 (21.9)	8 (22.2)	23 (24.5)	16 (29.1)	142 (37.7)	91 (46.7)
Some	24 (37.5)	15 (41.7)	31 (33.0)	19 (34.5)	109 (28.9)	58 (29.7)
A lot	21 (32.8)	9 (25.0)	33 (35.1)	14 (25.5)	83 (22.0)	24 (12.3)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)	1 (1.1)	2 (3.6)	3 (0.8)	3 (1.5)

The male sex workers tended to see themselves as being more involved in gay community life than did the gay and bisexual men who had never been paid for sex.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Involvement in gay community</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Not at all	20 (31.3)	11 (30.6)	32 (34.0)	17 (30.9)	165 (43.8)	98 (50.3)
A little	20 (31.3)	12 (33.3)	26 (27.7)	20 (36.4)	124 (32.9)	65 (33.3)
Somewhat	14 (21.9)	10 (27.8)	22 (23.4)	14 (25.5)	58 (15.4)	24 (12.3)
Very	10 (15.6)	2 (5.6)	14 (14.9)	2 (3.6)	26 (6.9)	6 (3.1)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.6)	4 (1.1)	2 (1.0)

In considering social connectedness, an important source of friendships and support is often work colleagues. Although many sex workers tend to work alone, they may nonetheless maintain close friendships with other sex workers. In particular, in an often marginalised occupation like sex work, others who are involved in the same activity can often be an important source of information and affirmation. Less than half, though, spent time with other sex workers; few non sex workers appeared to be socially connected to male sex workers. Only a minority of the male sex workers in this sample appeared to participate in networks of male sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Time spent with male sex workers</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
None	33 (51.6)	20 (55.6)	54 (57.4)	34 (61.8)	312 (82.8)	159 (81.5)
A little	12 (18.8)	8 (22.2)	16 (17.0)	11 (20.0)	35 (9.3)	20 (10.3)
Some	11 (17.2)	4 (11.1)	12 (12.8)	4 (7.3)	4 (1.1)	3 (1.5)
A lot	5 (7.8)	2 (5.6)	5 (5.3)	2 (3.6)	1 (0.3)	0 (0.0)
Not provided	3 (4.7)	2 (5.6)	7 (7.4)	4 (7.3)	25 (6.6)	13 (6.7)

## SEXUAL HEALTH

Both gay men and sex workers in Australia appear to have relatively regular sexual health checks, and it is generally asserted that sex workers, as a profession, 'should' test very frequently. However, given that most male sex workers appear to engage in sex work sporadically, it might be expected that they would not have sexual checks as often as those who do sex work as their primary or even a major source of income. Yet, most sex workers in this sample reported having regular sexual health checks, with nearly two thirds indicating that they did so at least every three months.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b><i>Regular sexual health checks</i></b>						
No	5 (7.8)	7 (19.4)	10 (10.6)	14 (25.5)	136 (36.1)	77 (39.5)
Yes	59 (92.2)	29 (80.6)	84 (89.4)	41 (74.5)	234 (62.1)	117 (60.0)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (1.9)	1 (0.5)
<b><i>How often have sexual health checks</i></b>						
Monthly	10 (15.6)	6 (16.7)	12 (12.8)	8 (14.5)	1 (0.3)	3 (1.5)
Three monthly	29 (45.3)	16 (44.4)	43 (45.7)	19 (34.5)	83 (22.0)	33 (16.9)
Six monthly	16 (25.0)	5 (13.9)	22 (23.4)	6 (10.9)	82 (21.8)	38 (19.5)
Annually	2 (3.1)	2 (5.6)	5 (5.3)	7 (12.7)	63 (16.7)	32 (16.4)
Less than annually	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	1 (1.8)	5 (1.3)	5 (2.6)
No regular checks	5 (7.8)	7 (19.4)	10 (10.6)	14 (25.5)	136 (36.1)	77 (39.3)
Not provided	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.3)	5 (2.6)

Over three quarters reported their last sexual health check had occurred in the previous three months. Despite this, there were nonetheless small numbers who had not had a sexual health check for some time. Non sex workers reported far less frequent sexual health checks with over a third indicating that they do not have regular checks.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Most recent sexual health check</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Less than a month ago	26 (40.6)	15 (41.4)	32 (34.1)	17 (30.9)	60 (15.9)	21 (10.8)
1-3 months ago	24 (37.5)	11 (30.6)	37 (39.4)	15 (27.3)	90 (32.9)	40 (20.5)
4-6 months ago	6 (9.4)	2 (5.6)	9 (9.6)	3 (5.5)	46 (12.2)	25 (12.8)
7-12 months ago	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	2 (2.1)	4 (7.3)	27 (7.2)	15 (7.7)
Over a year ago	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.8)	6 (1.6)	5 (2.6)
Never	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)
Not provided	6 (9.4)	7 (19.4)	11 (11.7)	15 (27.3)	148 (39.3)	88 (45.1)

About half of the male sex workers in NSW, and a quarter of those in Queensland, had their last sexual health check at a Sexual Health Centre.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Location of last sexual health check</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Local doctor	21 (32.8)	16 (44.4)	30 (31.9)	25 (45.5)	97 (25.7)	61 (31.3)
Non-local doctor	4 (6.3)	2 (5.6)	4 (4.3)	2 (3.6)	12 (3.2)	9 (4.6)
Sexual health centre	32 (50.0)	10 (27.8)	46 (49.0)	12 (21.8)	113 (29.9)	37 (19.0)
Other	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	3 (3.2)	2 (5.6)	12 (3.2)	2 (1.0)
Never tested	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)
Not provided	6 (9.4)	7 (19.4)	10 (10.6)	14 (25.5)	143 (37.9)	86 (44.1)

While convenience was the most common reason for their choice about where to have a sexual health check, confidentiality was nonetheless a factor for about half of NSW male sex workers and for a third of those in Queensland. Being a gay-friendly service was a



factor in their choice of service for about a third of sex workers. While expertise was a factor in this choice for over a third of NSW sex workers, it was a consideration for far fewer Queensland sex workers. Non sex workers appeared to be less concerned about any of these factors in their choice of where to go for a sexual health check.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Reasons for choosing location of sexual health checks</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Convenience	39(60.9)	18 (50.0)	47 (50.0)	27 (49.1)	160 (42.4)	62 (31.8)
Confidentiality	30 (46.9)	13 (36.1)	41 (43.6)	16 (29.1)	108 (28.6)	44 (22.6)
Cost	27 (42.2)	9 (25.0)	36 (38.3)	11 (20.0)	72 (19.1)	30 (15.4)
Expertise	26 (40.6)	3 (8.3)	33 (35.1)	7 (12.7)	65 (17.2)	26 (13.3)
Gay-friendly	23 (35.9)	10 (27.8)	31 (33.0)	14 (25.5)	108 (28.6)	33 (16.9)
Friendly	18 (28.1)	5 (13.9)	28 (29.8)	12 (21.8)	72 (19.1)	22 (11.3)
Supportive	21 (32.8)	6 (16.7)	28 (29.8)	10 (18.2)	61 (16.2)	21 (10.8)
Recommended to me	9 (14.1)	3 (8.3)	10 (10.6)	4 (7.3)	16 (4.2)	4 (2.1)

Convenience was a factor in choice of sexual health service, but it was not the only consideration. Many sex workers chose particular services because they offered appropriate services, confidentially, in appropriate locations:

*“[I go to the] The [specialist] Clinic ... I’ve started going there because of the brothel, proximity to the brothel, even though I know, I think there’s one closer ... So, and look I think there’s something a bit more reassuring about going to a place like that in a fairly dodgy kind of gay or, or sex-oriented part of the city. I know, you know, it’s not gonna make it any better but, if it was in the middle of a, a lovely suburb and you were walking to the sexual health clinic, and the kids are going to school or whatever, and, I don’t know, it just wouldn’t feel right to me. And also the, the, the hours of operation, if they happen to be open ’til midnight, for instance, and everyone’s partying or whatever, it’s a little bit sort of [Yeah] more convenient there too, yeah.” (36, gay, Sydney).*

But, for many convenience, whether it be location or opening hours, is the single most important factor:

*"I go to a variety of different places. I go to, I've recently discovered RPA because it's close to where I live. I used to go to [specialist] Clinic. Sometimes I do when [sexual health centre]'s not open and it's difficult to get an appointment ... Not difficult but it just takes more time and you can just walk into [specialist] Clinic." (23, queer, Sydney).*

Often, sex workers preferred to go to health services that specialise in sexual health for anything related to their sexual behaviour, including sex work:

*"Because, well they're just like the best at what they do, so ... I mean I could go to my local GP but I just figure it's best just to go there. You know, there's been situations where like I've just, you see more what they do. Like they do like contact tracing like if there is like a drama with anything particular. And, you know, they just, all the nurses are there. Like they're probably, they have more of like a, of a specialist role I guess as opposed to ... My GP doctor is cool but I don't wanna talk to him about like gay sex and stuff like that. Like it's just sort of, I'd rather just go to someone more, it's almost like going to, you know, your GP with foot problems when you just need to go to a podiatrist, you know." (33, gay, Brisbane).*

Both experience and knowledge of issues related to homosexuality, sex work, and sexuality in general, are often key considerations in choice of a health service:

*"They [sexual health centre] do look after a lot of gay, lesbian people around the area so they have, you know, basically, most of times they're just looking after the people going there for sexual check-ups pretty much. So, and I did use a couple of times, there's the [sexual health centre] in here, Brisbane. So I did go there a couple of times when I lived up this way." (30, gay, Brisbane).*

*"They just, they, they know. Like they have that experience. And look my, you know, I have been to my GP for, for general sexual health. Again, that was before I started the professional work. I don't think he'd have a problem with it but I just feel like there's a bit more of a knowledge base in, in the sexual health clinic. And that was absolutely, you know, this is why it's ridiculous that [sexual health centre] got shut down and shit like that, you know." (38, queer, Brisbane).*

Additionally, providing a welcoming and accepting environment is often an important consideration:

*"It's really nice. There's like a hot guy at the counter who's always there and they're like sex worker friendly and gay friendly. The only thing that's kind of like a dumb*

side but I'm not judging is that people like get Methadone - they also like are there. So sometimes it's a bit hectic-looking. But like I've seen it all now. Not all but like I've seen things plenty of things I didn't wanna see, so I'm fine." (28, gay, Sydney).

The choice of health service also depends on other health needs:

"I do go. I used to go there [sexual health centre] but I still go there for my, for the needle exchange program. But I go to my GP/HIV specialist ... Because it is a GP and HIV specialist in one. I, so it's a one-stop shop. I really like the doctor that I have. It's a great service that he provides and, yep, I just feel really comfortable going there." (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

Few sex workers had not been tested for HIV, although that was more often the case in Queensland than it was in NSW. As it was in regard to sexual health screening in general, the majority had been tested for HIV within the previous six months.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b><i>Ever tested for HIV</i></b>						
No	5 (7.8)	7 (19.4)	6 (6.4)	9 (16.4)	62 (16.4)	53 (27.2)
Yes	58 (90.6)	29 (80.6)	86 (91.5)	46 (83.6)	307 (81.4)	137 (70.3)
Not provided	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.1)	5 (2.6)
<b><i>Last tested for HIV</i></b>						
Less than a month ago	18 (28.2)	11 (30.6)	22 (23.4)	13 (23.6)	51 (13.5)	22 (11.3)
1-3 months ago	20 (31.3)	11 (30.6)	27 (28.7)	13 (23.6)	80 (21.2)	38 (19.5)
4-6 months ago	5 (7.8)	2 (5.6)	8 (8.5)	4 (7.3)	44 (11.7)	19 (9.7)
7-12 months ago	2 (3.1)	2 (5.6)	3 (3.2)	7 (12.7)	33 (8.8)	18 (9.2)
Over a year ago	10 (15.6)	3 (8.4)	23 (24.3)	9 (16.4)	93 (24.7)	39 (20.0)
Never	5 (7.8)	7 (19.4)	6 (6.4)	9 (16.4)	62 (16.4)	53 (27.2)
Not provided	4 (6.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (5.3)	0 (0.0)	14 (3.8)	6 (3.1)

Most male sex workers had tested HIV-negative but about one in eight were HIV-positive, most of whom were on treatments and had undetectable viral load. This rate of HIV in this sample was only slightly higher than it was among gay men generally.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>HIV status</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
HIV-positive	10 (15.6)	4 (11.1)	20 (21.3)	6 (10.9)	30 (8.0)	10 (5.1)
HIV-negative	44 (68.8)	26 (72.2)	61 (64.9)	42 (76.4)	285 (75.6)	134 (68.7)
Unknown	8 (12.5)	6 (16.7)	10 (10.6)	7 (12.7)	53 (14.1)	46 (23.6)
Not provided	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	3 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	9 (2.4)	5 (2.6)

## SEX WORK IDENTITY & HISTORY

### History of Sex Work

Few of those who engaged in sex work, either recently or in the more distant past, reported having been first paid for sex before the age of 18. The most common age at which they had first received any payment for sex was between ages 18 and 25, but some men reported having first been paid for sex when they were aged over 35. They did tend to have been engaged in sex work long-term, even if it was on a casual basis. The majority, even of current sex workers, had first done sex work at least two years beforehand.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
<b><i>Age first was paid for sex</i></b>				
Under 18	4 (6.3)	4 (11.1)	4 (4.3)	5 (9.1)
18-25	34 (53.2)	14 (38.9)	54 (57.4)	27 (49.1)
26-35	7 (10.9)	7 (19.4)	8 (8.5)	8 (14.5)
Over 35	8 (12.5)	3 (8.3)	10 (10.6)	3 (5.4)
Not provided	11 (17.2)	8 (22.2)	18 (19.1)	12 (21.8)
<b><i>First time was paid for sex</i></b>				
Previous year	12 (18.8)	8 (22.2)	13 (13.9)	8 (14.5)
1-5 years ago	20 (31.2)	13 (36.1)	24 (25.6)	20 (36.4)
Over 5 years ago	26 (40.6)	11 (30.6)	48 (51.1)	19 (34.5)
Not provided	6 (9.4)	4 (11.1)	9 (9.6)	8 (14.5)

For some men, they began doing sex work at an early age and it continued to be a way to supplement their income for many years:

*“So I was, I was 18. And, yeah, that was the first time. So ... this was the, this is the first time I’ve done it and I haven’t been employed. It’s usually something that I do to supplement my income because I do have a certain lifestyle that I like to live. And the money that I get from escorting is fantastic, and it’s, because it isn’t recognised as ... a form of employment, ... it’s easy money.” (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

Others move into and out of sex work, full- or part-time, over the years:

*“I did my first job at just a one-off and that was, that would be about maybe 10, 11*

years ago. That was a one-off. I didn't do it again for a long time until I, until about five years ago, actually. And then again it was only, it was in a part-time capacity. It was only ever in a part-time capacity until this year." (36, gay, Sydney).

In this sample, sex work was not the primary occupation for most men engaged in sex work. Only a small proportion indicated that sex work was their sole or primary source of income, although most did indicate that they used sex work to supplement their income.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>Sex work is main income</i></b>		
No	54 (84.4)	33 (91.7)
Yes	10 (15.6)	3 (8.3)
<b><i>Ever taken money for sex to supplement income</i></b>		
No	7 (10.9)	4 (11.1)
Yes	57 (89.1)	32 (88.9)

For some, the opportunities of sex work had transformed over time to become their primary income:

*"It began as a bit of fun. Now it is main source of income and I get paid nicely. I have a very comfy life."* (24, gay, inner Brisbane).

In some cases, the additional income was a pleasant bonus to something they enjoyed doing anyway:

*"It's not how I make my living but something I do because I enjoy it."* (43, bisexual, inner Sydney).

While many men indicate they cannot rely on sex work for a steady income, they do appreciate the additional income it does provide them:

*"I try to rely on it as little as possible because it does come in such big waves. So I do have a steady, regular job that pays the bills and then I have all these other bits and pieces that come in from the side. To be honest, since I've been doing the sex work it's the first time I've ever had money on the side, which has been brilliant. Before that I've always just lived week-to-week."* (38, queer, Brisbane).

Other men used sex work just to supplement a low, or inadequate income. This was often reported to be the case by students:

*"The money. That's about it. I only do it because I can't afford to live day-to-day. I'm a full time University student, full time employed in retail and I'm still not making enough to live". (23, gay, regional NSW).*

*"I rely on it a fair bit just because I wouldn't get enough money with the student Centrelink and I don't really wanna live off noodles all the time. I also think that I'm pretty like reckless with spending. I, I should, I used to be really good with saving my money but I'm, I'm just not anymore." (23, queer, Sydney).*

Some men, though, appear to make a fairly good income from sex work, even if their other work provides insufficient income:

*"I make between two and three thousand a week." (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

*"I don't get paid for my work experience because I have to do it as a part of my course. ... well, put it, put it this way: I bought a very expensive car. And I paid off my loans. And, and I'm saving money for a house." (30, gay, Brisbane).*

For some men, specialising in particular kinds of sex work has meant they are able to earn more:

*"I do a lot of fetish stuff and that's what, why I'm able to make so much money in a short period of time because I charge a higher rate of, per hour for, for that work. (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

About a third indicated that they engaged in sex work at least once a week, while over half had done so on a less than monthly basis during the previous year. The patterns of work were similar in NSW and Queensland.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>How often was paid for sex in previous year</i></b>		
At least weekly	21 (32.8)	11 (30.6)
At least monthly	8 (12.5)	7 (19.4)
Less than monthly	35 (54.8)	18 (50.0)
<b><i>Last time was paid for sex</i></b>		
Today	11 (17.2)	4 (11.1)
Less than a week ago	12 (18.8)	9 (25.0)
Less than a month ago	11 (17.2)	12 (33.3)
Over a month ago	22 (34.4)	10 (27.8)
Not provided	8 (12.5)	1 (2.8)

Some men indicated that sex work was their primary source of income and they were therefore available most days. However, there, of course, limits to how many clients they can take each day:

*“Well I’m, I’m basically available all the time and that is every day and every night, all night, in principle, unless there’s things that happen or I fall asleep or, or whatever, or I have responsibility with property. So I certainly aim at getting a job every day, ideally two. Two is enough. Two a day. But like I’ve taken up to four in, in one day. That, I can’t sustain that. That would, that would destroy me after just a few days. But one to two is not a problem. I, I am averaging more than one but it would be good to average let’s say two. So, yeah, that would, that would easily then make it as good as middle level management and stuff like that.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

Others average somewhat fewer clients each week:

*“I probably do five clients a week. Yep. So they vary in times. That’s average.”* (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

As they move in and out of part- and full-time sex work, some men have periods when they average only a few clients each month:

Recently, I haven’t been doing it as much. I’m planning to start up again in mid-December, mid this month or beginning of next year. So lately it’s been about two times a week or once a month, or something like that. (23, queer, Sydney).



For some men, they only make themselves available for restricted periods:

*"... when I'm in Sydney, two to three a week. And most of the times two will be a regular and then [Okay] one will just be a random."* (20, Bisexual, Sydney).

Some men spoke about how difficult it was to rely on sex work as a reliable source of income:

*"Unpredictable with clients and how often you will get work."* (24, gay, NSW).

Several commented on both the positives and negatives of sex work, noting that the money was good, but also unreliable:

*"Good money, far better than a student my age would normally be getting. [But] it's irregular - money isn't consistent."* (20, gay, suburban Brisbane).

Several men spoke about the benefits of sex work as a profession, providing them with a good income, flexibility, and other advantages:

*"Work for yourself. Own hours, travel, and good money."* (22, bisexual, inner Brisbane).

Saving money for specific purposes was often cited as a reason for doing sex work:

*"It is a good way to save lot of money."* (19, bisexual, inner Sydney).

But some also noted that sex work fitted both their lifestyle and their personality:

*"Being paid for sex is beneficial for myself financially. I am ... saving up for a deposit for a house. I have a professional job and earn 80000 annually from my primary job. I set a goal for myself to save enough for a deposit of 65000 in one year for a house that I can afford. To do this I needed to work two jobs. Working in a pub pouring beers in a physically demanding job would not meet my financial goals. I considered selling drugs; however, felt that this did not align with my values. Prostitution does for many reasons including: 1. I'm very good at sex; 2. I am an empathetic person and always leave my client confident that they feel great physically and emotionally; 3. I am a strong person and have learned many life lessons about myself through this job - mostly about my sexuality, what I like and what I don't like; 4. I find working as an escort empowering where the client respects me and I am always in control."* (29, gay, inner Sydney).

Nonetheless, several men also noted the demands on their time and energy that was also required to be an effective sex worker:

"It is better paid than an average job...(but it needs) 24 hour availability in order to ensure success, resulting in sleep deprivation. Most bookings are for very late at night, with perhaps a third after midnight, with very few during the day. Some clients exchange dozens, even up to a hundred messages and require a detailed scenario to be written out, but are just as likely to pull out of an appointment shortly before it is scheduled, or just never make a firm booking. This is very time-consuming and realistically should be counted as part of the hourly rate." (44, bisexual, inner Brisbane).

About one in seven sex workers, including past workers, reported having also paid for sex with another man in the previous year.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Ever paid man for sex in previous year</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
No	53 (82.8)	31 (86.1)	79 (84.0)	48 (87.3)
Yes	11 (17.2)	5 (13.9)	15 (16.0)	7 (12.7)

## Sex Work Identity

Only a minority of those who were paid for sex in the previous twelve months described themselves as 'sex workers'. Less than half reported identifying 'at all' with the 'sex worker' label.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>Consider self a sex worker</i></b>		
No	23 (35.9)	16 (44.4)
No, but does sex work	10 (15.6)	5 (13.9)
Yes	20 (31.3)	9 (25.0)
Not provided	11 (17.2)	6 (16.7)
<b><i>Extent of identification as a sex worker</i></b>		
Not at all	24 (37.5)	13 (36.1)
A little	8 (12.5)	3 (8.3)
Somewhat	9 (14.1)	2 (12.5)
Very much	12 (18.8)	2 (12.5)
Not provided	11 (17.2)	2 (12.5)

The labels men used to describe themselves in relation to sex work sometimes seemed to shift depending on context:

*"Yeah, yeah, so that's my line of work. Escort, whatever you wanna call it ... Depending on what the context is, obviously. ... It really depends on how, how the topic comes up. If somebody's actively approaching me and I know the solicitation question mark is, is out of the way I have no problems sort of, you know, calling it what it is or whatever. If, for instance, I'm in a, a less than, than direct escort advertising forum and I want to suggest what the possibility of as a potential kind of counter offer, if you like, I'll be a little bit more formal about it and, you know, and probably use the escort word, which is not something I'd normally have used. I would tend to go a bit more crass than that anyway ... I'd go 'hooker'. Yeah, yeah. But I, I try to class it up a tiny bit, you know, and sort of up-sell myself slightly. [Yeah] But, yeah, I'd say escort, yeah."* (36, gay, Sydney).

Apart from 'sex worker', labels that were commonly used included 'rentboy' and 'escort'. Given that some sex workers also reported having paid for sex with other men, it

was notable that 15.6% of NSW regular sex workers and 8.3% of Queensland regular sex workers also identified 'very much' as clients of sex workers.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Identify at all with these terms</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Sex worker	29 (45.3)	7 (19.4)
Call boy	22 (34.4)	16 (44.4)
Escort	31 (48.5)	18 (50.0)
Hooker	18 (28.2)	7 (19.4)
Hustler	12 (18.8)	7 (19.4)
Masseur	16 (25.0)	14 (38.9)
Prostitute	20 (31.2)	11 (30.6)
Rentboy	28 (43.7)	19 (52.8)

Some men reported quite negative feelings about doing sex work, many of whom indicated that they had started sex work for purely financial reasons. They often did not identify as sex workers in any way. Many also reported that they were very restricted in both the types of clients they take, and in the kinds of sex practices they were willing to engage in with clients:

*"There is nothing good about it. I choose my customers and I don't take even 5% of all the calls I get. It started with me when I did not make enough money for 2 years. First man paid me was a bi married man. He offered me \$50 only to suck me in his car. I don't feel ok when I have sex with someone he is not my type. So I tell all my customers no kiss, no suck. I only can fuck you. I have a high sex drive. I don't think I am an escort as I don't force myself to take customers. I am not into, like Asian or people they are on drugs. In the last 2 months, I got a part time job and I only took one regular customer who likes to be fucked and he don't want me to kiss or suck him."* (36, gay, inner Sydney).

Stigma and shame clearly play a significant role in how some men feel about doing sex work:

*"I think I feel guilty over it because I think that it's in stark contrast to the way that ... like I don't present myself in a particular way but I just know for a fact that people in my life would be very, very shocked by the stark contrast of the behaviour. And like I'm very passionate about mental health, and I just don't really feel like that's really something that I wanna engage in."* (33, gay, Brisbane).

Other men commence sex work with somewhat negative feelings about it and over time develop a more positive outlook:

*"Oh yeah. Totally. I felt [guilty], I think it had a lot to do with the fact that I couldn't, didn't feel like, I mean, I mean I couldn't do anything else. I was just chronically unemployed and I guess why I feel better about it now is because I guess I am making progress."* (23, queer, Sydney).

For some, there appeared to be very mixed feelings about doing sex work, often accepting that they are doing sex work but nonetheless viewing themselves in quite negative ways:

*"I, look I've got no, well look I say I've got no dramas with it and I love, I get turned on by it - long story short. I think knowing psychology, knowing my psychology, I probably don't have the highest view of myself subliminally ..."* (36, gay, Sydney).

For a few men, their choices about clients were also based on assumptions about sexual health and HIV:

*"I assume I'll never meet up with someone who is HIV-positive and denies it but it could happen. That's always been a worry."* (18, bisexual, suburban Brisbane).

On the other hand, some men seemed to enjoy sex work so much that the money was almost irrelevant:

*"I just love to have sex and if i get paid for it, it's like a hobby."* (31, gay, inner Brisbane).

*"I, I like it. It, it, it gives me a little bit of a buzz. I feel like I'm worthy and doing something useful like I mentioned before. It's, yeah, and also I suppose, yeah, I'm in control in any case. I don't feel used. It is possible that part of, part of the reason I feel like this is I play kind of a dominant role. I also, I sort of advertise that I employ imagination, that I guide people, that I, you know, so I feel kind of in control. And I think that takes it further away from me starting to think I'm being used. I've never felt used. So yeah."* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

## **DOING SEX WORK**

Male-to-male sex work is a diverse occupation. Men offered a range of services and worked through multiple and various methods with many different kinds of clients.

### **Services Offered**

Most men offer mutual masturbation, massage, and oral intercourse as sex work services. The majority also offer anal intercourse, usually both insertive and receptive. Over a third offer S/M, master/dom, and slave/sub services. There was little difference between the NSW and Queensland sex workers in the services offered, although the Queensland sex workers were somewhat more likely to offer some of the less common services.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>What services provided</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Massage	40 (62.5)	20 (55.6)
He masturbates me	41 (64.1)	25 (69.4)
I masturbates him	46 (71.9)	28 (77.8)
Oral insertive	45 (70.3)	26 (72.2)
Oral receptive	43 (67.2)	26 (72.2)
Anal insertive	37 (57.8)	19 (52.8)
Anal receptive	35 (54.7)	21 (58.3)
S/M	21 (32.8)	17 (47.2)
Master/Dom	25 (39.1)	15 (41.7)
Slave/Sub	21 (32.8)	15 (41.7)

A minority indicated that they sometimes also do stripping, porn, or modeling work, although stripping and porn work was more common among the Queensland sex workers. Few men did this kind of work very often: Just 4.8% of NSW sex workers and 11.2% of Queensland sex workers reported stripping at least monthly; 4.8% of NSW sex workers, but no Queensland sex workers, reported working in porn at least monthly; and just 2.8% of Queensland sex workers, but no NSW sex workers, reported doing modeling work monthly.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Other sex work</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Stripping	16 (25.0)	18 (50.0)
Porn	15 (23.4)	15 (41.7)
Modelling	13 (17.2)	9 (25.0)

Some men are quite specific about what they are willing to do with clients. Their choices may have as much to do with what they want themselves sexually as what they are willing to let clients do.

*"I only suck guys off. But when I do I enjoy it and I enjoy getting a guy to climax. You don't know the person's sexual history. You can't trust them. They don't give a shot about you; they just want to get off. Please note I'm paid for oral sex. I don't have sex with other men for money and rarely have sex with men at all. Almost all of my encounters are anonymous and they simply show up at my place, cum, and leave."* (27, gay, suburban Sydney).

The boundaries between different categories of sex work can often become blurred, particularly depending on the individual clients involved and the circumstances. Regular clients often receive additional attention:

*"I am an adult masseur so I enjoy giving all my clients a good service and the majority of them book a more erotic style of massage. Some of my regulars we go further than what is classed as a rub and tug massage."* (45 year old, bisexual sex worker in regional Queensland).

The boundaries some men have during their sex work are often very different to what they will do with private, non-paying, sex partners.

*"Basically, while working, I know this might sound a bit funny, and I do top. I do topping as well so I don't get fucked by the clients. But, for casual sex that I have with my regular fuck buddies, I do. And I don't suck while working."* (30, gay, Brisbane).

The boundaries between what they will do during their sex work and their private sex are often important to clearly distinguish.

*"I'm, I'm always a top, so ... The bottom thing's just for me. That's my bit. Like, you know, it's not for sale, so-to-speak."* (34, gay, Brisbane)

Some men see their sex work in therapeutic terms and take pride in the professional

services, and support, that they offer. Nonetheless, they sometimes feel that the boundaries can be difficult to maintain:

*"Valuing the skills I have in providing them with skills and experience to expand their erotic landscape/experience. Sometimes it muddies/confuses the boundaries - and they have a sense of entitlement - and I can feel some shame and sense of degradation. My paid sex work is as a sex educator/ erotic bodyworker - a bit different to normal sex work."* (59, gay, inner Sydney).

Some men cater to specific needs. Fetish and S/M services are often cited:

*"Great money, freedom, Enjoying what I do, therapy for the men I work with, bonding, developing my skills, living the SM lifestyle. ... Because of the area I work I'm not really a 'normal' sex worker - mostly doing S/M as a dominant top and rarely fucking."* (38, gay, inner Brisbane).

Sometimes, what they are willing to do depends on the client:

*"A guy wanted a heavy, heavy caning and impact play session and I'd done a little bit of that ... BDSM. Look, I mostly top. Well, okay, I'm 100 per cent top. I don't, I don't, there's no penetrative sex for me. I will penetrate some of the men. It's kind of ... I only really do cock in arse with a few of my regulars. It's not something I offer to everyone."* (38, queer, Brisbane).

On the other hand, though, many men are not so concerned about boundaries and are willing to engage in a broad range of practices as part of their sex work:

*"Oh God, all types. Oral sex. Anal sex. Like a lot of fetishes and stuff like that. I, I do a lot of fisting. I do a lot of, lots of toys."* (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

And many men simply respond to whatever the client prefers:

*"Look, play, play it by ear, to be honest with you. So I offer, even though I'm not a masseur, I'll offer a massage to, to sort of relax them sort of thing. If they've engaged me just for an erotic massage, it will only be limited to oral sex or, or a jerk-off. A lot of guys, because they're first-timers, aren't really comfortable with the idea of, of anal sex or don't know that they are. You'll find there's, there's generally two guys out there: the guys that wanna go straight to that, 'screw the massage thanks very much' because they've done a little bit of it or they're so super turned-on and keen that they wanna dive in or the guys who are 'yeah, no, that's not my kind of thing' or ... or 'it might be but I just don't know be able to top/bottom' whatever. But*



*look I, I'm sort of fluid enough to, to go with, with whatever sort of pops up, if you know what I mean. My preference would be anal sex every time' cause it's easier, it's more enjoyable and all this sort of stuff. But, yeah, look I, I try to ... Some guys want me to take the lead just even in terms of a role, not so much for sex. So I've gotta be very careful there 'cause you can push boundaries that ... yeah."* (36, gay, Sydney).

For some men, they are willing to engage in a very broad range of practices but will restrict themselves in terms of the role they play:

*"Anything, really. I mean I'm standard, you know, head jobs, fucking, rimming, that kind of thing. But I'm also willing to do role-play and other kinky things like water sports and scat. But the, the one qualification for me is simply that I'm a top so I do it as the active person. And group things, and that, that kind of thing. I've got no problem with, with anything; it's just that naturally I'm a top and in my brain I'm a top, and I think of scenarios and situations from that point of view, come up with ideas from a top's point of view. So it's the only qualifier I put on it."* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

Doing porn was discussed by a few men. Being fairly open about doing sex work seems to be a prerequisite for feeling comfortable about doing porn:

*"Yes. I've done one porn film ... Just for fun. I mean the money wasn't that good. It's just a bit, it was just \$200. Honestly, like it was just for fun. I, I don't mind myself being naked on the Internet for people to see. I mean I can see why a lot of people would but I feel like my sexuality is kind of just really open anyway. So yeah. Most of my friends know that I do sex work. I just, I can't be bothered being secretive about it. I really can't."* (23, queer, Sydney).

Doing porn and being photographed were not problematic for some men:

*"Yeah. I do porn in Sydney. It also changed the way like they [potential clients] see me 'cause well they take photos during the shoots so I get to have photos of me fucking a dude, of me like being in and like they look professional. They look good. I look really good. Sometimes I'm just like, I'm shocked. So now like all those photos they're like my profile photos, even if I'm not allowed to 'cause there's like copyright and shit. But I wouldn't care."* (28, gay, Sydney).

## Finding Clients

Online cruising and dating sites are the most common methods used for finding clients. Websites listing sex workers were also fairly commonly used. About a quarter of these sex workers also found clients through their own personal online profiles. About a third also received clients through personal referrals.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>How finds clients</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Online cruise site	35 (54.8)	29 (80.6)
Online sex work site	25 (39.1)	14 (38.9)
Gay media	12 (18.7)	2 (5.6)
Escort service	11 (17.2)	6 (16.7)
Parlour/brothel	10 (15.6)	1 (2.8)
Private referral	23 (35.9)	15 (41.7)
Gay bar	9 (14.1)	6 (16.7)
Sex venue	10 (15.6)	10 (27.7)
Local paper	8 (12.5)	3 (8.3)
Through personal profile	17 (26.6)	10 (27.7)

Men often reported using a variety of methods to find clients:

*“Well I, probably [use] about 20 different places. I do maintain some official escort profiles which, some free, some, some paid. So this is like people will find me if they are specifically looking for a sex worker but I also, on websites and, and iPhone apps, I, some of them I realise that they are very strict with what kind of profile you have and how you word things. So, in that case, it’s just sometimes people just randomly offer. It’s their choice. And I take them up on it. Other times, I put something in the profile that gives them a clue but they’re not, like I’ve maybe five or six official ones and maybe about 15, 20 others. By the same token, before I became a sex worker, I was active in hooking up with people and so I had many, many men that I saw who, once I became a sex worker, I didn’t really have the time or energy, or, you know, I need recovery period and all that. I had to keep saying no, no, no to and a bunch of them have now realised that they have to start paying if they’re ever gonna see me again. And so it’s another way. And also once or twice just in a club or in, in the street, or once on a sex-on-premises venue just randomly.” (40, Bisexual, Sydney).*

They most commonly find clients online:

*"It's all on-line with me at the moment. It's a combination of, of obvious sex worker websites. I've got my own website now too which I guess I direct people toward as sort of an end-game, just really to set a bit of a stamp of, of serious professionalism about myself. Others are the websites of I guess cruise, gay cruising websites. You know, gay sex, that sort of thing. With each, and their own, you know, unique slant. Obviously, they have a different bent all of them. As long as it's allowed. So, generally, obviously, the, you'll know when it's allowed. There'll be a, you know, a section where you can say you're either an escort or a masseur, or you're a gay looking into hook-up or bi guy, or whatever." (36, gay, Sydney).*

Some men rely on their reputation and find many of their clients by word of mouth:

*"I use websites. I use, I'm lucky because I am a pretty good sex worker. I have good word-of-mouth. I have good, I have a good reputation so I get referrals from other people. I get a lot of repeat service and, yeah, just using the websites, and things like that." (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

Some men have worked in parlours but found that they could do better by working independently and using online methods to find clients, although it does require some effort on their part:

*"When I first started working, I was working in a parlour. Then I figured out it's shit to work there 'cause you can earn so much more money privately. And, but it's a, it's a lot of effort. I mean you're getting calls all the time and it's really busy. That's the only reason I haven't been advertising privately lately because I know, when I begin, it's gonna kind of be full-on. I'll always be getting calls and things. I just wanted to kind of prepare for it, maybe go to the gym, buff up. Yeah ... So, so, and, yeah, I find the private clients I would advertise either on a website called [gay cruise site] or [male sex work site]. I've also heard there's other avenues to advertise such as newspapers but I haven't tried any of that. And I also haven't tried a couple of other, the websites that, that have been suggested to me." (23, queer, Sydney).*

Sometimes they will rely on just a single website:

*"Usually just on that, on the [gay cruise site] profile. I have it all listed there. It's all pretty honest and it's got exactly sort of what you want. And I guess I used to have a personal profile on there." (33, gay, Brisbane).*

Commonly, though, they will use different methods for finding clients as the circumstances change and opportunities arise:

*“Basically, through my website, most of them. And I did work at a place sometime ... like it says, kind of massage place and I just worked there. So a lot of the people know me through there as well. So, basically, and I have clients from that side as well. And, and the word-of-mouth as well pretty much ... Sometimes like application on the iPhone like [mobile cruising apps], that sort of stuff. So, and I use that - send me a message, I generally say, “Hey, I’m doing this sort of service, massage service,” or, you know, and la, la. And, “If you’re interested, let me know.” So I kind of use them as a advertising as well.” (30, gay, Brisbane).*

It appears that these male sex workers tended to repeatedly use whatever methods they used to find clients. However, in gay venues, such as bars and sex-on-site venues, which may have been more opportunistic as sources for clients, it appeared that sex workers were less likely to use these sorts of venues to meet clients on multiple occasions. Of course, these sorts of venues often discourage sex work on the premises.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Has found clients this way &gt;5 times</i></b>	<b>N=64 (100.0)</b>	<b>N=36 (100.0)</b>
Online cruise site	21 (32.9)	21 (58.4)
Online sex work site	20 (31.2)	9 (25.0)
Gay media	9 (14.0)	2 (5.6)
Escort service	10 (15.9)	5 (13.9)
Parlour/brothel	7 (10.9)	0 (0.0)
Private referral	13 (20.3)	8 (22.2)
Gay bar	3 (4.7)	3 (8.4)
Sex venue	3 (4.7)	5 (13.9)
Local paper	7 (10.9)	3 (8.3)
Through personal profile	15 (23.5)	7 (19.4)

Many men reported negative experiences of working in parlours:

*“Well I first started working as a sex worker at [escort agency 1] so, which is in the Cross. Since then, recently, I, I heard that the management’s changed. I’m gonna go back ‘cause I have nine days left until I leave Australia. I need to make cash. I left ‘cause they were pretty dodgy with like their drug policy. You had clients like doing*

*meth, clients doing meth and like encouraging workers to do meth too, so I wasn't really comfortable with that, so I quit. And then I did [escort agency 2], and slightly better ... But there's ... always that assumption in brothels that like you're free to say no to like a booking but, actually, no; you're booked and then you have to go for it. ... but like I say, working privately I make twice as much money, so fuck them."* (28, Gay, Sydney)

Some men were particularly hostile to the idea of working in a parlour, and felt that it was demeaning:

*"...they take a lot of money from your fees. So it's like to be raped. ... and that was also pretty dirty, disgusting and I have a lot of respect for myself"* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

### **Sex with Clients**

Assertions as to male sex workers tending to be 'tops' or 'bottoms' (ie, taking the insertive or receptive role during anal intercourse) do not appear to be supported by these data - in either direction. The majority of sex workers reported having engaged in anal intercourse and using a condom with their clients during the previous year. And they did so in both the insertive and receptive positions. There was little indication in these data that many of these sex workers restricted themselves to either the insertive or receptive positions. Considerations about whether they tended to use or not use condoms during anal intercourse with clients also do not appear to find easy answers in these data. About a quarter reported having engaged in condomless anal intercourse with clients, and about equally in the insertive and receptive positions. These rates of condomless anal intercourse are only slightly lower than what is found among gay men generally. Over half reported having engaged in oral intercourse with clients, again equally likely in the insertive and receptive positions, and a similar proportion reported erotic massage with their clients.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with clients/sex workers in previous year</i></b>	<b>N=64 (100.0)</b>	<b>N=36 (100.0)</b>
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	38 (59.4)	19 (52.8)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	34 (53.1)	21 (58.3)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	12 (18.8)	9 (25.0)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	12 (18.8)	12 (33.3)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	10 (15.6)	12 (33.3)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	10 (15.6)	15 (41.7)
Insertive oral intercourse with ejaculation	47 (73.4)	24 (66.7)
Receptive oral intercourse with ejaculation	41 (64.1)	27 (75.0)
Massage with ejaculation	30 (46.9)	21 (58.3)

Most male sex workers simply never engaged in condomless sex with clients, regardless of the circumstances:

*“I would use condoms for anal sex for clients all the time.”* (23, queer, Sydney).

*“Some people ask and, you know, I always say: ‘Wear the condom’.”* (21, bisexual, Brisbane).

Some others report always using condoms with clients, but tend to be somewhat uncertain about their reasons for doing so:

*“It’s just a not negotiable, really. Like I guess, in my personal life, like with partners, like it’s something that we’ve discussed and taken certain avenues like to sort of do it. And, yeah, I don’t know. It’s kind of, it’s not that I don’t believe them; it’s just I don’t know.”* (33, gay, Brisbane).

Some sex workers also reported using condoms for oral sex, although this was often not as consistent as for anal sex:

*“Look, for head jobs and things like that we, we don’t always use them but most of the time I do use condoms.”* (38, queer, Brisbane).

While uncommon, some male sex workers nonetheless engaged in condomless sex with some clients. Reasons for doing so were sometimes based on assumptions about relative risk and HIV status.

Occasionally, some men will make an exception, based on the particular circumstances:

*“There was that virgin guy. For his 18th birthday. I fucked him. Well it was that Chinese kid who lived in Melbourne and he was like a virgin. And the day of his birthday he booked me in. I fucked him [without a condom]. It was fun ... cause he was a virgin and he was like, like clean as. So I just wanted to give for experience. But other than that, no.”* (28, gay, Sydney).

This man reported that most of his clients were married or closeted, bisexual men, causing him to believe that the risk involved was therefore relatively low:

*“So the, the married male or the straight male, or confirmed straight men I’d have to a pretty good gut feel about them. Many of them have come back and sort of gone, ‘Last time, you know, we did this’. All that kind of thing. And, and, or I mean we’ll have a chat about it first but, if it’s inevitable kind of if someone’s nudging their cock into your arse and, and, you know, you know that they’re pretty much ready to go”* (36, gay, Sydney)

Others have special agreements with certain regular clients they feel they can trust:

*“There are a couple of long-term, very frequent, regular clients who I have developed a trust for who have asked that I don’t wear condoms. And, in fact, I don’t anymore but I will maintain a testing regime and ask them as well.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

Some men occasionally engage in condomless sex with clients, sometimes for extra money. But, they often also regret doing so:

*“I think obviously you explore because they give you more money but you have to be really experienced and you have to be conscious that you are doing a big fucking bullshit. ... I explore the area, yes. ... I fuck for, I can fuck for like, you know, 30 second without. This is the deal with they ask to me to do it. I immediately say no ... And I said to them, ‘If you want, you can pay me more’... but later that I, from my experience, making again a big mistake.”* (31, gay, Brisbane).

The issue of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) was discussed during the face-to-face interviews. In general, while it was of interest to them, it was generally unlikely to be an option they would consider. Indeed, those who were most interested in accessing PrEP were usually interested in it for use in relation to their private life rather than for their sex work.

Many male sex workers were unaware of PrEP, often confusing it with post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP):

*“PrEP? Yes... That’s what I had to go to a, years ago, once I had that experience” (30, gay, Brisbane)*

Often they remained skeptical about the effectiveness of PrEP, mainly because they had little information about it:

*“I have thought about PrEP. I, I’m still not convinced. Look I think it’s amazing and, hopefully, you know, the more I read about it, the better it sounds. Like someone was saying, you know, it could wipe out HIV in a generation, which would be amazing, you know. At the same time, ... condoms are condoms.” (37, queer, Brisbane)*

*“I’d have to make a bit more of an informed decision, look at the side effects and wot-not but, if there is considerable side effects, probably not ... Of course, it’d be great to reduce my risk of the unfortunate event of getting HIV from oral sex but it, yeah, it just doesn’t seem like too good of a trade-off at this stage. But again I’ve gotta read more into it.” (20, bisexual, Brisbane)*

There were also issues about professional responsibility to protecting their clients that were sometimes raised, although PrEP may have been a greater consideration for their private lives:

*“Look, I have thought about it and I have thought about what that could mean actually more in my private life than my employment. I still think, you know, again with the men who come and see me and that, I think it, I just don’t, wouldn’t feel comfortable putting them at risk... I mean HIV is awful but even, even giving a client like gonorrhoea or something would just, wouldn’t, you know, wouldn’t be right.” (37, queer, Brisbane)*

Nonetheless, some male sex workers were excited by the prospect of PrEP and would be keen to have access to it, particularly for the added security and the opportunity for greater sexual pleasure:

*“Yeah. If that was available, yeah. I’d use that. To be double-sure and maybe, too, you know, a bit more fun. I mean condoms are, you know, ... It’s not as good as the real thing. We all know that.” (34, gay, Brisbane)*

There were some male sex workers who could see some potential benefit to them in how they do their sex work:

*“If they, if they [his clients] wanted to. I’ve, I, I’ve never come across it but, if they wanted to, absolutely. Absolutely.” (37, bisexual, Brisbane)*



For some male sex workers who do not always use condoms with their clients, the possibility of using PrEP seemed a sensible safeguard. This man's clients tended to closeted and married men that did not tend to want to use condoms, so he sometimes engaged in condomless sex with them and felt that PrEP would be a good option for him:

*"Because of the exposure that I've, I've had to date, just being sensible. Because obviously what I've done is not sensible, in reality. I'm mindful though that I see a lot of guys using it as a 'well now I can go and do whatever the hell I want because I've got this wonderful little pill' kind of thing. So I'd, I'd wanna be very educated on the realities of the whole thing. But look I think a bit more of a safeguard of any kind is, is probably a good thing."* (36, gay, Sydney)

Some also referred to informal use of PrEP that had already been occurring. This man described how some men had used HIV-positive men's treatments for this purpose in the past:

*"Even before it was available, it's been something that's been in the community where like people will send off their medication to someone and, you know, 'We'll give them a month's worth', and they'll take medication for a month before they come and interact."* (37, bisexual, Brisbane)

But others saw little benefit, at least in relation sex work, if they did not also derive sexual pleasure from the sex work itself:

*"... probably not because, again, it's something that this work isn't something that it's purely recreational. I don't care if I'm using a condom or not; I'm just getting the job done, in a sense."* (20, bisexual, Brisbane)

This man, on the other hand, believed it would benefit him, by providing an additional layer of protection and relieving some of his anxiety:

*"I'm, I've signed up for the trial. I really, really want to use it. Just it's, it would be such a like ... it would be such a nice thing to have in the back of my head, 'Yeah, okay, that's, that's there.' Like just the nice kind of like safety feeling."* (23, queer, Sydney).

## **MOST RECENT CLIENT**

The most common reason given for engaging in sex work on their most recent occasion was that they needed the money, or it was easy money, although only about one in five indicated that it was how they earned a living. About a third said they did it for fun. How it was decided that he would be paid for sex was very different between NSW and Queensland participants. In NSW, most commonly, payment was taken for granted, suggesting that the context in which the encounter occurred more explicitly indicated that sex work was involved. However, in Queensland, the majority indicated that the client offered to pay, which could suggest that the sex work on this occasion may have been a more informal public encounter, and reflected particular, individual situations rather than explicit sex work. When payment was not taken for granted in NSW, it was more often at the suggestion of the client than the sex worker.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>Reasons for being paid for sex on last occasion</i></b>		
Needed money	25 (39.1)	16 (44.4)
Fun	21 (32.8)	15 (41.7)
Something different	10 (15.6)	6 (16.7)
Easy money	25 (39.1)	15 (41.7)
To earn a living	14 (21.9)	7 (19.4)
<b><i>How was payment decided</i></b>		
Taken for granted	30 (46.9)	5 (13.9)
Client offered to pay	16 (25.0)	20 (55.6)
Sex worker asked client to pay	8 (12.5)	8 (22.2)
Not provided	10 (15.6)	3 (8.3)

Many of the men commented that they enjoyed doing sex work:

*"I get money for doing something I enjoy."* (25, gay, suburban Sydney).

For some, the working conditions suited them:

*"Quick easy money. Can work less hours and get paid more than a regular job. Can work when it suits me."* (30, gay, inner Sydney).

For others, being paid to do what they enjoyed seemed to be a pleasant bonus that almost suggested they enjoyed the sex as much as the work:

*"Get paid to fuck and blow; isn't that what we all want?" (22, bisexual, suburban Brisbane).*

*"Well you see sex is my hobby in any case so, so I suppose going down to the nuts and bolts, so it's, it's good to find something that you can do that you would enjoy in any case." (40, bisexual, Brisbane).*

*"The sex is like, you know, it's, it's an enjoyable part of it. You know, it's not gonna, not gonna say it's not enjoyable because, you know, half the time you're getting paid to have sex with someone that you wouldn't, I would pay to have sex with them, you know. So like, you know, they're good-looking and the sex is great ..." (37, bisexual, Brisbane).*

For some men, they felt that their personal sex life benefited from what they learned doing sex work:

*"Yeah, just the variety of guys and it makes me a better lover every time as well 'cause you always like learn new tricks. So that's fun. And the money's good when the work is there." (28, gay, Sydney).*

*"The money. The hours. And you get good at sex. I, I didn't ever think that sex was something that you could get good at but then the best sex that I've had has been with other sex workers. It's, it's just strange. You get good at sex. I never thought that would happen, like that was a thing. Yeah. That's another good thing." (23, queer, Sydney).*

Some men clearly derived considerable pleasure from being skillful at their work, and giving pleasure to their clients:

*"I enjoy that I'm getting paid to use my skills and I've always felt like it was better sex. So it's kind of, it's kind of, yeah. You know, I get paid to tie people up, which I love doing anyway. And there's a real skill and an art to it. So it's kind of, it's really nice to, to then use that to also make money off is, is great. So I really love that. I love that, you know, you do build quite a strong connection with the men that you work with and, like I said, there are some really lovely, lovely guys that I do stuff with. And they come in all age brackets, all shapes, all sizes, all nationalities, you know." (38, queer, Brisbane).*

*"I guess ... sometimes like, sometimes you can just kind of have a click with someone and you know that you've kind of, I don't know, for one reason or another kind of*

*lifted up like their spirits for the day or whatever the case is. It's usually just people are lonely I guess and I've always been a really like patient person and I kind of don't really have an ego. And I just kind of get, get the universe, and I just kind of go along with it. And, yeah, I'm not, I don't, I don't sit on the fence or be fake but I just listen and, yeah, I don't know. It's, I just sometimes like I just know that it's definitely like made a big impact for them."* (33, gay, Brisbane).

There were other aspects of sex work aside from the sex and the money and flexible hours that men enjoyed. Some cited having the opportunity to interact with someone, making a personal connection that was both satisfying and fulfilling.

*"... you just get to interact with people that who don't get to interact with people from, from, from my community every day. And so, when they feel comfortable with me, they, they always ask lots of questions, and we always spend lots of time talking, and interacting that way because they feel free. And, in that, in this little bubble of whether it be a hotel room or my bedroom, or my house, or their house, it's a moment where they can be gay. And that's the bit that I like to enjoy."* (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

Of course, some men just did it for the additional income:

*"Just that you get a bit of extra cash on the side."* (23, gay, suburban Sydney).

*"Well, as I say, in a short period of time, I make a lot of money and I'm always booked so I like that."* (30, gay, Brisbane).

And some noted that there were negative aspects to doing sex work that not everyone could deal with:

*"The money, easy work if you can deal with feeling used. Feeling like an object."* (24, gay, NSW).

Sometimes, men reported that they commenced doing sex work for other reasons, and then later found themselves dependent on the income from sex work. For this man, after starting sex work to help pay for his education and home, he subsequently found himself dependent on sex work to pay for a drug habit, at least for a while:

*"That motivation are degree, conservatory school, ... One house. One mortgage. ...And, in one moment, a lot of drug. The drug take me completely, was fucking me completely. This is the big mistake. And, especially with that kind of drug, the*

*cocaine, make you change a lot your point of view. Fortunately, nothing irreparable for the situation.” (31, bisexual, Brisbane)*

Somewhat contrary to expectations, only a minority of sex workers reported their last client was aged 55 or older, and about a third were aged less than 35. The Queensland sex workers reported a greater proportion of younger clients.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Age of last client</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Under 25	6 (9.4)	3 (8.3)
26–34	12 (18.8)	14 (38.9)
35–54	27 (42.2)	10 (27.8)
55 or more	9 (14.1)	8 (22.2)
Unsure of age	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)
Not provided	7 (10.9)	1 (2.8)

The majority indicated that this was not the first occasion they had had sex with this particular client and about half had done so on several occasions.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Previous sex with last client</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
No previous sex	22 (34.4)	8 (22.2)
Once before	5 (7.8)	5 (13.9)
More than once before	26 (40.6)	20 (55.6)
Do not know	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)
Not provided	10 (15.6)	2 (5.6)

It has commonly been reported by male sex workers themselves that their estimate is that about half their clients are closeted men, in a relationship with a woman. Here, however, we find that only between a quarter and a third reported that their most recent client was in a relationship, although most of those were in relationships with women.

	NSW	Qld
<b>Relationship status of last client</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
In relationship with a man	4 (6.3)	2 (5.6)
In relationship with a woman	11 (17.2)	9 (25.0)
In relationship with unknown gender	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)
Not in relationship	19 (29.7)	9 (25.0)
Do not know	21 (32.8)	15 (41.7)
Not provided	8 (12.5)	1 (2.8)

About half were aware of the client's HIV status, and very few of their clients were known to be HIV-positive.

	NSW	Qld
<b>HIV status of last client</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
He said he was HIV-positive	2 (3.1)	2 (5.6)
Believed he was HIV-positive	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
He said he was HIV-negative	24 (37.5)	19 (52.8)
Believed he was HIV-negative	5 (7.8)	3 (8.3)
Did not know his HIV status	25 (39.1)	11 (30.6)
Not provided	8 (12.5)	1 (2.8)

Some men expressed reservations and concerns about doing sex work with HIV-positive clients. In some cases, if they became aware of a client being HIV-positive they would avoid meeting him:

*"They said to me, 'I'm HIV positive.' ... I said some bullshit. 'I cannot meet you.'*  
 [Interviewer: *'But, so you didn't tell him it was because he was positive?'*] *Yeah. To don't make feel them, them bad."* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

For some men, the question of HIV status and disclosure seemed to be somewhat problematic, and they did not appear to have a clear strategy:

*"I've never known if any of my clients have been HIV positive. I, I'm sure they would have been. There's no opportunity to ask. I don't know how I would go about doing it."* (23, queer, Sydney).

Others, however, seemed quite confident about dealing with HIV-positive clients:

*"I've had sex with positive guys. I don't care, as long as it's safe. I had like two PEPs*

*because the first time the condom broke and I knew he was positive ... But like I was like, 'It's my own fault mate. The condom broke'.* (28, gay, Sydney).

Many simply reiterated that they always have safe sex anyway, and always assume their clients are HIV-positive, and that therefore having HIV-positive clients is not something they are concerned about:

*"I actually get lots of guys who are HIV positive and what I do it doesn't matter. And I have no stigma about having sex with men who are HIV positive anyway. You know, I, I always say to the guys who say that to me, I'm like, I think everyone is HIV positive and, therefore, I can then assess the risks and make the right decisions rather than, you know, going, 'Oh you're negative. Of course we're gonna bareback' you know."* (38, queer, Brisbane).

*"I don't generally ask them, no. I have safe sex so ..."* (21, bisexual, Brisbane).

On the other hand, some of the small number of HIV-positive sex workers specialise in doing sex work with HIV-positive clients. In this case, even though he worked with HIV-positive clients, and usually did not use condoms with them as the clients preferred, he mostly chose not to ejaculate inside them or let them ejaculate in him:

*"Well, as a positive sex worker, I mostly have sex with other positive guys so the need for a condom is not necessary. And, even though ... Look, I would say anal sex is probably only 20 to 25 per cent of what I do as a sex worker. I do a lot of fetish stuff and ..., so the need for condoms aren't like really necessary in those... I do use condoms. Sometimes. But, generally, the clients choose not to and that's by their choice. And that's the kind of client that I choose to interact with. It's not that I, I don't like condoms but it's just something I don't like. But I don't ejaculate very, I rarely ejaculate with my clients. They do and it's usually like on themselves or on me. It's never in me or anything like that. "* (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

The most common way that the sex workers in this sample had met their most recent client was through an online interaction, mainly through an Internet dating or cruising website.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>How did you find last client</i></b>	<b>N=64 (100.0)</b>	<b>N=36 (100.0)</b>
Online cruise site	26 (40.6)	23 (63.9)
Online sex work site	10 (15.6)	2 (5.6)
Escort service	4 (6.3)	3 (8.3)
Parlour/brothel	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
Private referral	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)
Other	9 (14.0)	5 (13.9)
Not provided	10 (15.6)	3 (8.3)

On this most recent occasion of sex work, the male sex workers in this sample did not always engage in anal intercourse with their client; they did so in only about half of the encounters reported. Most of the anal intercourse included the use of a condom, but a not insignificant minority involved condomless anal intercourse, and this was more commonly the case among the Queensland sex workers. The male sex workers overall were somewhat more likely to take the insertive position than the receptive position when using a condom, but during condomless anal intercourse they tended to take the receptive position more than the insertive position. It is possible that this could reflect some consideration of risk reduction: It may be that some sex workers chose to take the receptive position during condomless intercourse to minimise the possibility of risk to their clients, regardless of their own HIV status. Nearly half reported having engaged in oral intercourse with their last client, equally likely in the insertive and receptive positions, and many also reported erotic massage with their last client.



	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with last client</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<i>Any anal intercourse with/without condom</i>	43 (67.2)	27 (71.0)
<i>Any anal intercourse with condom</i>	34 (53.1)	12 (33.3)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	23 (35.9)	10 (27.8)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	18 (28.1)	5 (13.9)
<i>Any anal intercourse without condom</i>	12 (18.8)	17 (47.2)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	3 (4.7)	2 (5.6)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	5 (7.8)	5 (13.9)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	4 (6.3)	7 (19.4)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	9 (14.1)	13 (36.1)
Insertive oral intercourse with ejaculation	29 (45.3)	20 (55.6)
Receptive oral intercourse with ejaculation	22 (34.4)	19 (52.8)
Massage with ejaculation	14 (21.9)	11 (30.6)

Among those who reported condom use with their most recent client, the decision to use a condom was mutual in the majority of encounters, but for a substantial number the use of condoms was at the instigation of the sex worker. Only a small number indicated that condom use was at the instigation of the client.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Who made decision to use condom on last occasion with client</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Both agreed	19 (29.7)	6 (16.7)
Nothing was said	10 (15.6)	4 (11.1)
Sex worker asked to use condom	15 (23.4)	4 (11.1)
Client asked to use condom	2 (3.2)	2 (5.6)

Similarly, among those who reported condomless anal intercourse with their most recent client, the decision not to use a condom was mutual in the majority of encounters. In the minority of cases where this decision was not mutual, it was about equally at the instigation of the sex worker or the client.

	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Who made decision NOT to use condom on last occasion with client</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Both agreed	9 (14.1)	10 (27.8)
Nothing was said	4 (6.3)	5 (13.9)
Sex worker asked not to use condom	3 (4.7)	3 (8.3)
Client asked not to use condom	3 (4.7)	6 (16.7)
Client did not use condom without permission	0 (0.0)	1 (2.8)

About one in seven sex workers reported using erectile medication during their most recent sex work encounter, suggesting that use of these medications to aid performance during sex work may not be the norm. They were slightly more likely to report that their clients had used erection pills on that occasion. Similarly, only about one in eight sex workers reported use of other drugs on this occasion, but where this did occur they often did so with their client on that occasion: the sex workers reported that their clients had used drugs slightly more often than they had themselves. While drug use was not the norm during their most recent sex work encounter, the most common drugs reported were amyl and crystal, both of which are often used to enhance and extend sexual encounters and performance. Other drugs that were used by a small number of sex workers were marijuana, GHB, ketamine, cocaine, and ecstasy. None reported using speed, heroin, or LSD on this last occasion of sex work. Use of any drugs other than marijuana and amyl was less commonly reported by the Queensland sex workers.

	NSW	Qld
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b>Use of erection pills with last client</b>		
Sex worker used it	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)
Client used it	3 (4.7)	4 (11.1)
Both used it	4 (6.3)	1 (2.8)
Neither used it	41 (64.1)	28 (77.8)
Not provided	13 (20.3)	3 (8.3)
<b>Drug use with last client</b>		
Sex worker used it	1 (1.6)	2 (5.6)
Client used it	5 (7.8)	2 (5.6)
Both used it	6 (9.4)	2 (5.6)
Neither used it	41 (64.1)	27 (75.0)
Not provided	11 (7.2)	3 (8.3)
<b>Type of drugs used with last client</b>		
Amyl	6 (9.4)	3 (8.3)
Marijuana	1 (1.6)	2 (5.6)
Crystal	5 (7.8)	1 (2.8)
Cocaine	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
GHB	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
Ecstasy	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)
Ketamine	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)

Erectile dysfunction medications were sometimes used to assist in their ability to perform during some sex work encounters, but most male sex workers indicated that they tried to avoid using other drugs when they are working:

*“I do use Viagra if I’m in a stressful situation or in a, you know, I’ve just, just seen a client, or something like that. But other drugs I think, if you want to be professional, well basically stay away from them. You’re not going to be a successful sex worker if you use drugs. It’s just that’s just the truth. Just how it is.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

Some men purposefully avoid sex with clients that are using drugs, particularly methamphetamine:

*“... when they [use] methamphetamine, Tina, Crystal ... they start to be very bad”* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

They often do, however, tend to permit clients to use amyl nitrite and alcohol:

*"I don't use it but I do allow guys to use like amyl. Well it's not real amyl but, yeah. You know, poppers and things like that; that's about as far as it goes. A little bit of alcohol occasionally but it's very light. The BDSM and drugs don't mix at all."* (38, queer, Brisbane).

Nonetheless, some male sex workers felt that drugs could be employed to enhance the sexual encounter with clients:

*"Meth. Sometimes pot. But mostly meth. Generally the clients will want, will want to use it. So they'll ask me to source the drugs for them, so I'll bring it along and then they'll ... pay for it. I don't, I don't see it as me being a drug supply but I guess I am dealing drugs in a way. But it's, it's like I would rather them ... like it's like I'd rather them use good quality drugs and then use them in, use them properly and so because, generally, nine times out of 10, there's injecting involved and I'd rather them, ... you know, inject properly with me and use, use quality drugs than to use something that's shit. And, you know, something like that, so ... For me, personally, it enhances sex, of course. When you're getting to like, you know, late Sunday afternoon and you've been, you know, probably fucking for, you know, because like the work, when I, when I'm with a client, I give them my all, you know. So by Sunday night I'm exhausted. And, so there's the, there's the, the, the energy it gives you but mostly it just, it's great for enhancing sex."* (37, bisexual, Brisbane).

*"It's really been restricted to crystal meth and GHB. Little bit of marijuana to begin with. I don't, I don't really smoke pot. I don't like it but the first job I did at [escort agency], I had a, had a, a hit of J. Done the odd, odd job when I've, I've been pissed. I don't rely on, I don't do the booze thing at all. Predominantly, crystal meth. Used an, yeah, an erectile dysfunction drug."* (36, gay, Sydney).

## **ATTITUDES & REACTIONS TO SEX WORK**

### **Feelings about Sex Work**

Commonly, sex work is characterised as a form of work that most find either unpleasant or difficult. This appears to apply to only a minority of the men in this sample. For the most part, for the men in this sample, sex work is much like any other form of employment, and like any other career. It has good and bad aspects, and some sex workers are good at their job while others are less so. And, like any other work, some enjoy it and others do not:

*"I have a very strong feeling that sex work is overwhelmingly like any job. If you do it professionally, it is like doing anything professionally. And it is just sad and frustrating that it is not treated that way. I know there's, you know, you're obviously doing things that is treating it seriously but it is serious. This is, there's a genuine demand out there for it. It helps people. Why is that money any dirtier than any other money you might get? Especially imagine working as a lawyer, which I have done, or as a politician. Like why, why is getting money for sex work any dirtier than say working at, in those fields?" (40, bisexual, Brisbane).*

Many men expressed some degree of enthusiasm for the mixture of sex and being paid that sex work provides:

*"Enjoyment of sex and getting paid: Two very positive things." (29, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"I get paid for something I really enjoy doing and that I'm good at! It's good for ones self esteem / ego - that other guys are willing to pay to have sex with me." (43, bisexual, inner Sydney).*

Some men felt positive about the fact that they could be their own boss:

*"You are not forced to be a slave to someone else" (31, bisexual, Brisbane)*

In this case, he has carefully considered how to manage his sex work, as a business, and at the same time seems to enjoy observing it, as a professional:

*"I think it's amazing. Well I mean, since I've started doing it because I want to write about it, to keep writing about sex, it was like the best possible way 'cause I could like access guys that wouldn't necessarily have like been attracted to. And, I don't know, like I really see that as like a service that I provide therefore I should be paid for, and I have, I think I'm pretty much the only one in Sydney who has that like as*

*many like different services as possible and like different rates for it. I've always been really smart about it."* (28, gay, Sydney).

Some men were relatively unconcerned about the boundaries between work and pleasure and viewed the money as simply necessary to enable them to do the work:

*"Just a pity I need the money to provide my service, otherwise I would probably do a few more just for the pure pleasure I receive from giving a sensual massage, but unfortunately it needs to help pay the bills."* (45, bisexual, regional Queensland).

While most felt at least somewhat good about doing sex work, this was not at all the case for about one in ten of the male sex workers in this sample:

*"There is nothing good about it, but if he insists on paying for my youth, then let him. It could become a bad habit."* (19, gay, suburban Sydney).

	Recent sex workers		Any sex work ever	
	NSW	Qld	NSW	Qld
<b>Feel good about sex work?</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
Not at all	7 (10.9)	4 (11.1)	15 (16.0)	8 (14.5)
A little	2 (3.1)	5 (13.9)	7 (7.4)	6 (10.9)
Somewhat	17 (26.6)	8 (22.2)	26 (27.7)	12 (21.8)
Very much	26 (40.6)	13 (36.1)	29 (30.9)	18 (32.7)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	6 (16.7)	17 (18.1)	11 (20.0)

And some men expressed many reservations about doing sex work because they felt they could do 'better':

*"I felt to be guilty in the beginning ... I was full of that and I still feel and think that it's not completely right if you are educated, if you are ... ambitious. And ... I want to have that. And, if that is one thing that you can have and it, it is just about money, I completely agree that you can be an escort. If that thing that you want to have is, for example, something where you have to use your brain, where you have to, you know, work in a different way, express yourself, express your capacity - capacity - in another way, I believe that you are, as an escort, in the situation making a big, huge mistake because you are in a comfort area and can be very, very dangerous for, for yourself and for your, for your future."* (31, gay, Brisbane).

The majority experienced little or no stress from doing sex work but about one in ten found it at least somewhat stressful. About half found sex work at least somewhat pleasurable.

*"Well I don't have sex with someone for money that I wouldn't have sex with anyway. So it's like normal sex but you get paid for it. Mind blowing stuff!"* (18, bisexual, suburban Brisbane).

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
<b><i>Is sex work stressful?</i></b>				
Not at all	37 (57.8)	17 (47.2)	52 (55.3)	25 (45.5)
A little	9 (14.1)	11 (30.6)	15 (16.0)	15 (27.3)
Somewhat	3 (4.7)	2 (5.6)	5 (5.3)	3 (5.5)
Very much	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	5 (5.3)	1 (1.8)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	6 (16.7)	17 (18.1)	11 (20.0)
<b><i>Is sex work pleasurable?</i></b>				
Not at all	5 (7.8)	5 (13.9)	9 (9.6)	8 (14.5)
A little	13 (20.3)	8 (22.2)	21 (22.3)	10 (18.2)
Somewhat	15 (23.4)	6 (16.7)	21 (22.3)	12 (21.8)
Very much	19 (29.7)	11 (30.6)	25 (26.6)	14 (25.5)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	6 (16.7)	18 (19.1)	11 (20.0)

It is possible, however, for sex workers to have quite mixed feelings about doing sex work. For some men, while they can rationalise their decision to do sex work, and feel that it is the right decision for their current situation, they may nonetheless harbour negative feelings about doing sex work in general. They may view it just as a temporary situation.

*"I'm not completely proud. I just, my mind create ... to fuck the system because, from my history, ... a lot of different situation take me in this point and, in this point, I feel comfortable to say it's good to do it for right now. If I see me in two years', I completely sure that I will not keep going to do it."* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

More often, though, they tended to focus on a number of positive aspects of doing sex work, such as flexibility, income, adventure, and self-image:

*"Good money. Clients usually adore me (good for self esteem). Opportunities to meet new and people, travel opportunities." (32, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"Meet lots of people, have lots of sex, get paid; what's not to like. (But) it is a job; has good and bad days, like anything else. But flexible hours, own boss, get to travel, and learn stuff." (39, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"Extra money to pay bills and it makes me feel good to know that I can still get paid for it after all these years. I don't see anything wrong with it." (40, gay, regional NSW).*

Some men had carefully considered opinions on why sex work was an overall good experience for them:

*"The fact that many clients are younger and fit and attractive, and would be people I would choose to hookup with in any case, even if no money was on offer. Knowing that I am providing emotional and physical support to clients as well as a more convenient option than clubbing or apps / online. Knowing that I am providing a much-needed release or alternative sex options that clients cannot get (or feel uncomfortable asking for) from their regular partners. That the very wide range of interests and backgrounds of clients (including sexual elements) increases my life experiences and appreciation of the complexity of the human condition, compared to the self-selection that inevitably happens if no payment was on offer that would otherwise result in more narrow experiences and understanding. That I can (unlike in most other jobs) use my full breadth of skills, educational qualifications, language knowledge and general personal qualities to enhance my clients' experience and to promote myself." (44, bisexual, inner Brisbane).*

*"On a pragmatic level, it is a reliable source of ... income that can be earned almost entirely at leisure. In other words, my work hours are entirely flexible, leaving me with plenty of time to pursue interests conventional employment would not. On a subtler level it is an endlessly fascinating profession. I am witness to people in their most private states, when all social veils are dropped, and what is quite often a very secret element of their personality is laid bare before me. This is very stimulating. There are no downsides to being paid for sex that can not also be applied to having sex without being paid for it. I would recommend prostitution to anyone. You would be a fool not to capitalise on your youth. It is the ideal employment for students at university, for people who require flexible working hours or for anyone who would*



*just like more time to be themselves and would like to be their own boss. ...I find prostitution a far more honest trade." (26, bisexual, NSW).*

However, even those with well-considered opinions on why they enjoy doing sex work could raise issues and highlight particular problems, often related to stigma against sex work or having to deal with some difficult clients.

*"I have something to offer these men, which they can't get anywhere else, and it's beautiful. The money. The breaking down of mystery around an industry that is really just like any other business. Opening of your own mind and lowering of inhibitions, exploring your own self and sexuality. The surprising friends who aren't supportive when you expected them to be. Occasional clients who treat you like dirt, as if they are doing you a favour." (30, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"Well 80 per cent of the times I'm okay. There are times like, you know, I regret of my job. I don't know. It's just the way that people look at you most of the time. So, and I mean these days not too bad but I had a couple of people, you know, like I became friends with some people. Totally, once they found out what I was doing for a job, I don't necessarily tell them straight away and so, you know, my, I lost, I think they didn't want to maybe contact with me because of that. So, you know, that's sort of like kind of, okay, you know, what I do because I've been judged." (30, gay, Brisbane).*

Nonetheless, the majority felt comfortable doing sex work.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Feel comfortable about sex work?</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
Very comfortable	30 (46.9)	12 (33.3)	38 (40.4)	16 (29.1)
Comfortable	8 (12.5)	12 (33.3)	16 (17.0)	18 (32.7)
Neither comfortable or uncomfortable	9 (14.1)	6 (16.7)	16 (17.0)	7 (12.7)
Uncomfortable	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	3 (5.5)
Very uncomfortable	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)	4 (4.3)	0 (0.0)
Not provided	13 (20.3)	6 (16.7)	18 (19.1)	11 (20.0)

In contrast to how sex work is usually characterised, many felt that sex work made them feel good about themselves.

*"Elevates your (self-)esteem." (37, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"I feel pretty good, actually. Occasionally, I kind of, I don't ... oh no. I wonder if it's, if it's going to affect my sex life sometimes but, generally, I feel pretty good about it. It makes you feel quite valued, you know. You have a value and this is, here's someone who's actually so wanting to, to get your services and to have sex with you that they're willing to part with money, which is kind of cool. Yeah. It's very complimentary." (38, queer, Brisbane).*

*"Well, you know, I guess it makes you feel good about yourself. Well, you know, anyone can go out and find sex but they want to have sex with you and they're happy to pay for it, so - it's a bit of an ego boost." (21, bisexual, Brisbane).*

Nonetheless, some men identified negative aspects of sex work that necessarily involved at least some discomfort:

*"The high risk of STIs, having sex with people I don't want to, the illusion of consent." (23, gay, regional NSW)*

The majority of recent sex workers found doing sex work at least slightly 'kinky'. Most also felt at least slightly adventurous doing sex work.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>Feel kinky doing sex work?</i></b>		
Very vanilla	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat vanilla	7 (10.9)	2 (5.6)
Slightly vanilla	3 (4.7)	0 (0.0)
Slightly kinky	9 (14.1)	3 (8.3)
Somewhat kinky	19 (29.7)	10 (27.8)
Very kinky	10 (15.6)	11 (30.6)
Not provided	14 (21.9)	8 (22.2)
<b><i>Feel adventurous doing sex work?</i></b>		
Very conservative	4 (6.3)	0 (0.0)
Somewhat conservative	3 (4.7)	3 (8.3)
Slightly conservative	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)
Slightly adventurous	2 (3.1)	3 (8.3)
Somewhat adventurous	21 (32.8)	7 (19.4)
Very adventurous	19 (29.7)	14 (38.9)
Not provided	14 (21.9)	8 (22.2)

Some men seemed to view the ‘kinkier’ and adventurous aspects of sex work as part of the enjoyment of doing sex work:

*"I'm horny and enjoy sex, the money is great too." (25, gay, suburban Sydney).*

This man noted that the excitement of doing sex work can wear off over time:

*"It is no longer a thrill like it was when I started but it is certainly interesting. My ad is very straight forward: sexy, fit, clean, intelligent. I advertise to men who want nothing extreme." (36, gay, inner Sydney).*

A common concern about how sex work might affect their personal relationships was being balanced against the opportunity sex work posed for this man to enjoy aspects of his sexuality:

*"I feel torn between love for my long term partner and a desire to explore my sexuality with other men while I'm still young enough to enjoy it." (30, gay, inner Sydney).*

Less than half of the recent sex workers in this sample reported speaking with others at least somewhat openly about doing sex work.

Many men indicated that their friends were fairly accepting about their sex work:

*“Look, they ... I think that they are pretty honest with me. They don’t care. They love me as a person. Maybe one is not completely. Obviously, she doesn’t like.”* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

Being open about sex work was more problematic when it came to family members:

*“I don’t feel guilty about my family right now because my life is my life and I would like they will never know because ... it’s their idea of the life ... It’s impossible to change it. They are 60 years old. My brother know about me. He doesn’t like but accept and I say, ‘Okay, I stop.’”* (31, bisexual, Brisbane)

Recent sex workers	NSW	Qld
<b>Openness about sex work</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Completely	7 (10.9)	5 (13.9)
Somewhat	20 (31.3)	8 (22.2)
Not very	14 (21.9)	9 (25.0)
Not at all	10 (15.6)	5 (13.9)
Not provided	13 (20.3)	9 (25.0)

Some men were very open about doing sex work:

*“I’ve got family. Everyone knows what I’m doing. I’m not hiding from anything. I enjoy what I’m doing. I get paid well. Haven’t been raped. Haven’t been, you know, they might, you know, this, this might all go out the window, everything, if I had a shit experience and got fuckin’ raped. Yeah, my, my friends, family know. We all talk about it. It’s nothing weird. My little brothers know. Like he’s 15. He laughs about it. Like it’s all cool.”* (20, bisexual, Sydney).

Sometimes, male sex workers had friendship networks that were very accepting:

*“Most of my good friends do ... Without exception, they really liked the idea. So, but that doesn’t mean that I feel I can suddenly now tell everybody. So yeah. And, in fact, some of them have, you know, suggested possible clients or suggested me to possible clients.”* (40, bisexual, Brisbane).

One of the main reasons men cited for not always being open about being paid for

sex was the stigma that is often attached to sex work, and what people might therefore assume about them:

*"The stigma of society have on sex workers, like we are awful, evil people." (41, bisexual, suburban Sydney).*

*"What people think about you, how you can feel dirty after that." (19, bisexual, inner Sydney).*

Issues of stigma, and the associated issues of the legal status of sex work, can also have some direct impacts on how male sex workers think about their clients, and themselves:

*"Worry over the legality of it. Concern about the client being deceitful and taping the encounters and what might happen if they wanted to be spiteful and cause trouble. Concern about what people close to me might think of it. Concern that sex in this way may affect the way I relate emotionally to sex." (30, bisexual, suburban Sydney).*

Over half the sex workers in this sample speak at least somewhat openly about having sex with men. They were considerably more open about their sexuality than were the men who had never done any sex work.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Openness about sexuality</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Completely	25 (39.1)	11 (30.6)	39 (41.5)	17 (30.9)	99 (26.3)	33 (16.9)
Somewhat	16 (25.0)	5 (13.9)	23 (24.5)	9 (16.4)	81 (21.5)	37 (19.0)
Not very	7 (10.9)	4 (11.1)	7 (7.4)	6 (10.9)	58 (15.4)	39 (20.0)
Not at all	2 (3.1)	4 (11.1)	4 (4.3)	6 (10.9)	93 (24.7)	59 (30.3)
Not provided	14 (21.9)	12 (33.3)	21 (22.3)	17 (30.9)	46 (12.2)	27 (13.8)

### **Feelings about Clients**

Many sex workers describe their work as involving considerable support and ability to respond to clients' emotional needs. Few, however, indicated having particular difficulty dealing with their clients' emotional needs:

*"Some clients can become demanding and emotionally draining. Affects relationships, double and secret life." (32, gay, inner Sydney).*

*"Clients often have odd personalities which can sometimes be difficult to manage. The client may not be sexually arousing (physique, emotional connection, personal hygiene)." (25, gay, suburban Sydney).*

Nonetheless, sometimes sex workers developed ongoing friendships with their clients; sometimes these became very close. This man eventually developed a relationship with one of his clients:

*"We met two time as, you know, he was my customer. Later, yeah, we start to talk by phone, Facebook and so start a good friendship ... He's waiting that I stop [doing sex work]." (31, bisexual, Brisbane)*

	Recent sex workers		Any sex work ever	
	NSW	Qld	NSW	Qld
<b>Difficult dealing with clients' emotional well-being?</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)
Not at all	25 (39.1)	23 (63.9)	40 (42.6)	34 (61.8)
A little	22 (34.4)	5 (13.9)	26 (27.7)	7 (12.7)
Somewhat	4 (6.3)	2 (5.6)	7 (7.4)	3 (5.5)
Very much	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	0 (0.0)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	6 (16.7)	19 (20.2)	11 (20.0)

Nonetheless, male sex workers often reported that they needed to spend time and effort managing their clients:

*"Managing neurotic clients and being concerned you won't meet their strict expectations." (30, bisexual, suburban Sydney).*

*"Pressure to perform when you are not attracted to a client. Clients becoming emotionally attached." (30, gay, inner Sydney).*

Very few reported any direct problems in their dealings with clients, although it was more common in Queensland with one in eight having been assaulted by clients. This had occurred more than once for 8.3% of regular Queensland sex workers.

Often they noted that the circumstances in which the sex work occurs can feel intimidating, particularly when meeting a client for the first time:

*"It's always a bit nerve wracking the first time you meet with someone." (29, gay, inner Sydney).*

Nonetheless, many men reported that their clients were generally friendly and easy to work with:

*"That clients are, on average, more friendly, appreciative and pleasant to meet or even in the exchange of messages or phone calls beforehand, than the average unpaid hookup. .... there are fewer annoyances in this type of work than in most office, work from home, managerial or labouring jobs that I have done in the past."* (44, bisexual, inner Brisbane).

Many men also reported that they avoided situations that felt uncomfortable:  
*"I connect well with my clients both physically and mentally. Often they are very interesting, intelligent, and sometimes influential people.... I choose not to see anyone where a bad situation may occur. The worst thing I can think of is occasionally smoker breath - that's gross."* (36, gay, inner Sydney).

About a quarter to a third of the male sex workers in this sample indicated that at least one client had pressured them into unsafe sex; for more than one in ten this had occurred more than once. Also, about one in six NSW sex workers and a third of Queensland sex workers reported at least one incident of a client refusing to pay; nearly one in five of the men from Queensland, and one in ten of the NSW sex workers, indicated that this had occurred more than once.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Have clients ever:</i></b>	<b>N=64 (100.0)</b>	<b>N=36 (100.0)</b>
Physically threatened you	4 (6.3)	6 (16.7)
Assaulted you	3 (4.7)	5 (13.9)
Pressured you to have unsafe sex	13 (20.3)	12 (33.3)
Pressured you into something else	9 (14.1)	8 (22.2)
Refused to pay	11 (17.2)	13 (36.1)

Some men reported that the interactions with clients can sometimes feel difficult and that clients can sometimes be controlling:

*"Can sometimes feel like they control you. It can also be dangerous for some people."* (23, gay, suburban Sydney).

## NON-COMMERCIAL SEX PARTNERS

A common belief about sex workers, including male sex workers, is that they are unlikely to be in a relationship. However, about a third of the sex workers reported that they had a regular male partner, or boyfriend, similar to what was found among the non sex workers. Over half also reported having had sex with a fuckbuddy or a friend in the previous six months, which was slightly less than was the case among the non sex workers. Nearly two thirds of the sex workers reported having sex with casual male partners in the previous six months, compared with about three quarters of the non sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Reported partners in previous six months</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Regular partner/boyfriend	21 (32.8)	14 (38.9)	34 (36.2)	22 (40.0)	156 (41.4)	65 (33.3)
Fuckbuddy	35 (54.7)	25 (69.4)	57 (60.6)	35 (63.6)	229 (60.7)	107 (54.9)
Casual partner	40 (62.5)	22 (61.1)	64 (68.1)	32 (58.2)	284 (75.3)	142 (72.8)

### Regular Partners or Boyfriends

Among those with a regular male partner, or boyfriend, most reported having had sex with that partner in the previous month. Somewhat fewer of the Queensland non sex workers reported recent sex with their regular partner than was the case for the Queensland sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Last time had sex with regular partner/boyfriend</i></b>	N=21 (100.0)	N=14 (100.0)	N=34 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=156 (100.0)	N=65 (100.0)
Less than a month ago	14 (66.7)	12 (85.7)	23 (67.6)	20 (91.0)	110 (70.5)	45 (69.2)
Over a month ago	4 (19.1)	2 (14.2)	8 (23.5)	2 (9.0)	38 (24.3)	18 (27.7)
Not provided	3 (14.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (8.8)	0 (0.0)	8 (5.1)	2 (3.1)

Among those with a regular male partner, or boyfriend, the male sex workers in the sample tended to have somewhat younger partners than did the non sex workers.



Queensland sex workers, in particular, were more likely to have regular partners who were under 25 years old.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Age of regular partner/boyfriend</i></b>	N=21 (100.0)	N=14 (100.0)	N=34 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=156 (100.0)	N=65 (100.0)
Under 25	4 (19.0)	6 (42.9)	5 (14.7)	8 (36.4)	17 (10.9)	9 (13.8)
26–34	7 (33.3)	1 (7.1)	11 (32.4)	2 (9.1)	37 (23.7)	22 (33.8)
35–54	9 (42.9)	5 (35.7)	16 (47.1)	10 (45.5)	83 (53.2)	27 (41.5)
Over 54	0 (0.0)	2 (14.3)	1 (2.9)	2 (9.1)	17 (10.9)	7 (10.8)
Not provided	1 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.3)	0 (0.0)

The NSW sex workers in this sample were more likely to have direct knowledge of their regular partners' HIV status than were the non sex workers, but the Queensland sex workers were more likely to believe their regular partners were HIV-negative, although they had not been directly informed by their partners that this was the case. NSW sex workers were more likely to report having an HIV-positive regular partner than were either their Queensland counterparts or the non sex workers in the sample.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>HIV status of regular partner/boyfriend</i></b>	N=21 (100.0)	N=14 (100.0)	N=34 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=156 (100.0)	N=65 (100.0)
He said he was HIV-positive	4 (19.0)	1 (7.1)	8 (23.5)	2 (9.1)	15 (9.6)	4 (6.2)
Believed he was HIV-positive	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
He said he was HIV-negative	14 (66.7)	8 (57.1)	21 (61.8)	14 (63.6)	109 (69.9)	50 (76.9)
Believed he was HIV-negative	2 (9.5)	5 (35.7)	3 (8.8)	6 (27.3)	23 (14.7)	4 (6.2)
Did not know his HIV status	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (4.5)	7 (10.8)
Not provided	1 (4.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (5.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.6)	0 (0.0)

The male sex workers in this sample were about as likely to be 'tops' as 'bottoms' (ie, taking the insertive or receptive role during anal intercourse) during sex with their regular partners. About as many reported using condoms as reported not using condoms during their most recent sex with their regular partners. These rates of condomless anal intercourse with regular partners were slightly higher than what was found among the non sex workers in the sample.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with regular partner/boyfriend on last occasion</i></b>	N=21 (100.0)	N=14 (100.0)	N=34 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=156 (100.0)	N=65 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	5 (23.8)	3 (21.4)	6 (17.6)	3 (13.6)	29 (18.6)	19 (29.2)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	8 (38.2)	1 (7.1)	10 (29.4)	4 (18.2)	25 (15.9)	19 (29.2)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	6 (28.6)	1 (7.1)	9 (26.5)	2 (9.1)	21 (13.5)	13 (20.0)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	6 (28.6)	1 (7.1)	9 (26.5)	1 (4.5)	20 (12.8)	8 (12.3)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	9 (42.9)	4 (42.9)	16 (47.1)	10 (45.5)	45 (28.8)	19 (29.2)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	5 (23.8)	7 (50.0)	11 (32.4)	12 (54.5)	50 (32.0)	21 (32.3)

About half reported having engaged in anal intercourse and using a condom with their regular partners during the previous year, and slightly more than half reported condomless anal intercourse. These rates of condomless anal intercourse with regular partners were slightly higher than what was found among the non sex workers in the sample.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with regular partner/boyfriend in previous year</i></b>	N=21 (100.0)	N=14 (100.0)	N=34 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=156 (100.0)	N=65 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	7 (33.3)	4 (42.9)	8 (23.5)	8 (36.4)	45 (28.8)	24 (36.9)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	10 (47.6)	1 (7.1)	13 (38.2)	5 (22.7)	41 (26.3)	24 (36.9)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	11 (52.4)	3 (21.4)	15 (44.1)	5 (22.7)	49 (31.3)	27 (41.5)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	11 (52.4)	2 (14.2)	18 (54.0)	5 (22.7)	47 (30.2)	19 (29.3)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	12 (57.2)	7 (50.0)	19 (55.8)	12 (54.5)	70 (44.8)	25 (38.5)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	11 (52.4)	6 (42.8)	21 (61.8)	11 (50.0)	71 (45.4)	26 (39.9)

## Other Regular Partners or Fuckbuddies

Most of the men with fuckbuddies, both sex workers and non sex workers alike, reported having sex with those partners in the previous month.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Last time had sex with fuckbuddy</i></b>	N=35 (100.0)	N=25 (100.0)	N=57 (100.0)	N=35 (100.0)	N=229 (100.0)	N=107 (100.0)
Less than a month ago	24 (68.5)	19 (76.0)	41 (71.9)	25 (71.4)	149 (65.1)	71 (66.4)
Over a month ago	10 (28.6)	6 (24.0)	15 (26.3)	10 (28.6)	75 (32.7)	36 (33.6)
Not provided	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	5 (2.2)	0 (0.0)

As was the case with respect to their boyfriends, among those with a fuckbuddy, the male sex workers in the sample tended to have somewhat younger partners than did the non sex workers. Also as was the case with boyfriends, Queensland sex workers, in particular, were more likely to have fuckbuddies who were under 25 years old.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Age of last fuckbuddy</i></b>	N=35 (100.0)	N=25 (100.0)	N=57 (100.0)	N=35 (100.0)	N=229 (100.0)	N=107 (100.0)
Under 25	9 (25.7)	12 (48.0)	10 (17.5)	15 (42.9)	39 (17.1)	21 (19.6)
26–34	13 (37.1)	4 (16.0)	21 (36.8)	7 (20.0)	72 (31.4)	29 (27.1)
35–54	12 (34.3)	9 (36.0)	25 (43.9)	13 (37.1)	97 (42.4)	51 (47.7)
Over 54	1 (2.9)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	20 (8.7)	6 (5.6)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.4)	0 (0.0)

The sex workers in this sample had similar levels of knowledge of their fuckbuddies' HIV status as did the non sex workers. NSW sex workers were more likely to report having an HIV-positive fuckbuddy than were either their Queensland counterparts or the non sex workers in the sample.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>HIV status of last fuckbuddy</i></b>	N=35 (100.0)	N=25 (100.0)	N=57 (100.0)	N=35 (100.0)	N=229 (100.0)	N=107 (100.0)
He said he was HIV-positive	6 (17.1)	1 (4.0)	13 (22.8)	2 (5.7)	17 (7.4)	5 (4.7)
Believed he was HIV-positive	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.7)	0 (0.0)
He said he was HIV-negative	18 (51.4)	17 (68.0)	29 (50.9)	23 (65.7)	117 (51.1)	71 (66.4)
Believed he was HIV-negative	3 (8.6)	2 (8.0)	6 (10.5)	4 (11.4)	40 (17.5)	13 (12.1)
Did not know his HIV status	8 (22.9)	5 (20.0)	9 (15.8)	6 (17.1)	51 (22.3)	18 (16.8)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)

The male sex workers in this sample were about as likely to be 'tops' as 'bottoms' (ie, taking the insertive or receptive role during anal intercourse) during sex with their fuckbuddies. These rates of condomless anal intercourse with fuckbuddies were higher than what was found among the non sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with fuckbuddy on last occasion</i></b>	N=35 (100.0)	N=25 (100.0)	N=57 (100.0)	N=35 (100.0)	N=229 (100.0)	N=107 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	14 (40.0)	9 (36.0)	18 (31.6)	10 (28.6)	79 (34.5)	38 (35.5)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	18 (51.4)	5 (20.0)	22 (38.6)	8 (22.9)	85 (37.1)	35 (32.7)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	5 (14.3)	1 (4.0)	8 (14.0)	2 (5.7)	20 (8.7)	10 (9.3)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	4 (11.4)	6 (24.0)	11 (19.4)	7 (20.0)	20 (8.7)	18 (16.8)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	4 (11.4)	5 (20.0)	10 (17.5)	9 (25.7)	24 (10.5)	17 (15.9)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	10 (28.6)	11 (44.0)	18 (31.6)	13 (37.1)	22 (9.6)	19 (17.8)

About half the male sex workers reported having engaged in anal intercourse and using a condom with their fuckbuddies during the previous year, although this was less common among the Queensland sex workers. Between a third to a half reported condomless anal intercourse. The Queensland men appeared to engage in condomless anal intercourse with fuckbuddies somewhat more often than did the men in NSW, particularly in the receptive position.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with fuckbuddies in previous year</i></b>	N=35 (100.0)	N=25 (100.0)	N=57 (100.0)	N=35 (100.0)	N=229 (100.0)	N=107 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	23 (65.7)	15 (60.0)	33 (57.8)	21 (60.0)	138 (60.3)	62 (57.9)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	27 (77.2)	15 (60.0)	37 (64.9)	21 (60.0)	137 (59.8)	56 (52.4)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	15 (42.8)	9 (36.0)	24 (42.1)	12 (34.3)	61 (26.7)	29 (27.1)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	14 (40.0)	13 (52.0)	28 (49.2)	16 (45.7)	55 (24.0)	30 (28.0)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	12 (34.3)	12 (48.0)	23 (40.3)	16 (45.8)	49 (21.4)	31 (29.0)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	12 (34.3)	14 (56.0)	22 (38.6)	18 (51.4)	44 (19.2)	39 (36.4)

### **Casual Sex Partners**

Most of the men who reported (non commercial) sex with casual male partners, both sex workers and non sex workers alike, reported having sex with those partners in the previous month.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Last time had sex with casual partner</i></b>	N=40 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=64 (100.0)	N=32 (100.0)	N=284 (100.0)	N=142 (100.0)
Less than a month ago	32 (80.0)	19 (86.4)	51 (79.7)	27 (84.4)	160 (56.3)	96 (67.6)
Over a month ago	7 (17.5)	3 (13.6)	13 (18.7)	5 (15.6)	116 (40.6)	46 (32.4)
Not provided	1 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.8)	0 (0.0)

As was the case with respect to any of their regular partners, among those who reported sex with a casual partner in the previous six months, the male sex workers in the sample tended to have somewhat younger partners than did the non sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Age of last casual partner</i></b>	N=40 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=64 (100.0)	N=32 (100.0)	N=284 (100.0)	N=142 (100.0)
Under 25	13 (32.5)	5 (22.7)	15 (23.4)	7 (21.9)	46 (16.2)	26 (18.3)
26–34	18 (45.0)	9 (40.9)	28 (43.8)	15 (46.9)	96 (33.8)	52 (36.6)
35–54	8 (20.0)	4 (18.2)	19 (29.7)	6 (18.8)	108 (38.0)	43 (30.3)
Over 54	0 (0.0)	1 (4.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.1)	11 (3.9)	10 (7.0)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.1)	3 (9.4)	23 (8.1)	11 (7.7)

The sex workers in this sample had similar levels of knowledge of their casual partners' HIV status as did the non sex workers. NSW sex workers were more likely to report having sex with an HIV-positive casual partner than were either their Queensland counterparts or the non sex workers in the sample.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>HIV status of last casual partner</i></b>	N=40 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=64 (100.0)	N=32 (100.0)	N=284 (100.0)	N=142 (100.0)
He said he was HIV-positive	5 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	11 (17.2)	0 (0.0)	10 (3.5)	4 (2.8)
Believed he was HIV-positive	1 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.1)	0 (0.0)	4 (1.4)	2 (1.4)
He said he was HIV-negative	16 (40.0)	12 (54.5)	21 (32.8)	17 (53.1)	106 (37.3)	69 (48.6)
Believed he was HIV-negative	4 (10.0)	2 (9.1)	5 (7.8)	3 (9.4)	25 (8.8)	13 (9.2)
Did not know his HIV status	14 (35.0)	8 (36.4)	25 (39.1)	12 (37.5)	139 (48.9)	53 (37.3)
Not provided	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.7)

The male sex workers in this sample were about as likely to be 'tops' as 'bottoms' (ie, taking the insertive or receptive role during anal intercourse) during sex with their casual



partners, although they were more likely on the most recent occasion of sex with a casual partner to have taken the receptive position during condomless anal intercourse that involved ejaculation inside the anus. These rates of condomless anal intercourse with casual partners were higher than what was found among the non sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with casual partner on last occasion</i></b>	N=40 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=64 (100.0)	N=32 (100.0)	N=284 (100.0)	N=142 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	11 (27.5)	5 (22.7)	19 (29.7)	5 (15.6)	98 (34.5)	47 (33.1)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	13 (32.5)	7 (31.8)	19 (29.7)	9 (28.1)	93 (32.7)	44 (31.0)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	5 (12.5)	2 (9.1)	8 (12.5)	4 (12.5)	13 (4.6)	11 (7.7)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	4 (10.0)	3 (13.6)	5 (7.8)	5 (15.6)	19 (6.7)	11 (7.7)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	5 (12.5)	2 (9.1)	10 (15.6)	2 (6.3)	15 (5.3)	7 (4.9)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	12 (30.0)	9 (40.9)	19 (29.7)	10 (31.3)	19 (6.7)	17 (12.0)

Between a quarter and a third reported having engaged in anal intercourse and using a condom with their casual partners during the previous year. Between a third to a half reported condomless anal intercourse. The Queensland sex workers appeared to engage in condomless anal intercourse with casual partners somewhat more often than did the sex workers in NSW.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Sex with casual partners in previous year</i></b>	N=40 (100.0)	N=22 (100.0)	N=64 (100.0)	N=32 (100.0)	N=284 (100.0)	N=142 (100.0)
Insertive anal intercourse with condom	27 (67.5)	11 (50.0)	40 (62.5)	19 (59.5)	173 (61.0)	62 (57.9)
Receptive anal intercourse with condom	27 (67.5)	14 (63.6)	41 (64.1)	21 (65.6)	169 (59.5)	76 (53.5)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	15 (42.8)	9 (36.0)	19 (29.7)	13 (40.6)	67 (23.5)	25 (17.6)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – no ejaculation	12 (30.0)	13 (59.1)	23 (35.9)	17 (53.1)	61 (21.5)	25 (17.6)
Insertive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	14 (35.0)	11 (50.0)	25 (39.1)	16 (50.0)	47 (16.6)	31 (21.6)
Receptive anal intercourse without condom – ejaculation inside	13 (32.5)	13 (59.1)	25 (39.1)	17 (53.1)	43 (15.2)	33 (23.2)

Most male sex workers reported multiple male sex partners in the previous year, with many reporting over 50 partners. Sex with clients likely accounts for some of this. Male sex workers were also more likely to report having engaged in group sex during the previous year, some of which also may have been in the context of sex work.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Number of male partners in previous year</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
None	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.3)	7 (3.6)
One	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (3.6)	17 (4.5)	14 (7.2)
2-5	4 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	8 (8.5)	4 (7.3)	108 (28.6)	54 (27.7)
6-10	4 (6.3)	4 (11.1)	9 (9.6)	5 (9.1)	64 (17.0)	38 (19.5)
11-20	5 (7.8)	2 (5.6)	8 (8.5)	6 (10.9)	64 (17.0)	29 (14.9)
21-50	13 (20.3)	8 (22.2)	19 (20.2)	10 (18.2)	41 (10.9)	21 (10.8)
More than 50	24 (37.5)	10 (27.8)	30 (31.9)	10 (18.2)	31 (8.2)	5 (2.6)
Not provided	14 (21.9)	12 (33.3)	20 (21.3)	18 (32.7)	47 (12.5)	27 (13.8)
<b><i>Group sex in previous year</i></b>						
Never	8 (12.5)	2 (5.6)	9 (9.6)	8 (14.5)	146 (38.7)	94 (48.2)
Once	6 (9.4)	6 (16.7)	11 (11.7)	8 (14.5)	79 (21.0)	33 (16.9)
Occasionally	31 (48.4)	8 (22.2)	48 (51.1)	13 (23.6)	90 (23.9)	38 (19.5)
Often	5 (7.8)	8 (22.2)	6 (6.4)	8 (14.5)	15 (4.0)	3 (1.5)
Not provided	14 (21.9)	12 (33.3)	20 (21.3)	18 (32.7)	47 (12.5)	27 (13.8)

When asked about how they met men for sex in general (ie, not just during sex work), most sex workers reported meeting men for sex in a variety of ways. Over half indicated that they used 'beats', or public sex environments, to meet partners, although this was more common in Queensland. The majority in both states used sex-on-site venues, and about half had attended sex parties to meet partners. On the other hand about half met partners through friends or at gay bars, and about a third met partners at the gym. Almost all used online cruising sites and mobile phone applications to meet partners. The patterns of use of these different methods for meeting sex partners were similar among the non sex workers, but the actual rates of use of each method were much lower among non sex workers. Non sex workers were, however, especially less likely to use mobile phone apps to meet partners.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>How met sexual partners in previous year</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Beats	32 (50.1)	25 (69.4)	46 (49.0)	34 (51.9)	160 (42.4)	83 (42.5)
Saunas	35 (56.2)	33 (91.7)	53 (56.4)	29 (52.7)	156 (41.4)	64 (32.8)
Sex clubs	33 (51.5)	19 (52.7)	48 (51.1)	25 (45.5)	111 (29.4)	53 (27.2)
Backrooms	25 (39.1)	14 (38.9)	33 (35.1)	17 (30.9)	64 (17.0)	26 (13.4)
Sex parties	23 (36.0)	20 (55.6)	29 (30.9)	21 (36.4)	51 (13.5)	20 (10.4)
Through friends	29 (45.4)	19 (52.8)	39 (41.4)	24 (43.6)	106 (28.1)	49 (25.2)
Gay bars	32 (50.1)	16 (44.4)	43 (45.8)	21 (36.4)	82 (21.8)	37 (19.0)
Gyms	17 (26.7)	13 (36.1)	22 (23.4)	16 (29.1)	49 (13.0)	13 (6.7)
Online cruising sites	54 (84.4)	33 (91.7)	79 (84.0)	45 (81.8)	267 (70.8)	147 (75.3)
Mobile phone apps	44 (68.7)	31 (86.1)	69 (73.3)	39 (70.9)	188 (49.9)	84 (43.1)

## DRUG USE

Drug use is relatively common among gay men compared with the broader population in general (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2014). This also appears to apply to this sample of male sex workers, who appear to use drugs at rates somewhat higher than the non sex workers in the sample. Amyl and marijuana were the most common drugs used, although about a quarter reported crystal use, with somewhat more in NSW reporting crystal use. Very few men reported heroin use. About a third reported use of erection medication, but this was also somewhat less common among the Queensland sex workers.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Type of drugs used in previous year</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Amyl	33 (51.5)	16 (44.5)	54 (57.5)	24 (43.7)	163 (43.2)	70 (35.9)
Marijuana	19 (29.7)	10 (27.8)	33 (35.1)	21 (38.2)	92 (24.4)	41 (21.1)
Ecstasy	19 (29.7)	6 (16.7)	31 (33.0)	9 (16.4)	66 (17.5)	9 (5.6)
Speed	8 (12.5)	3 (8.3)	20 (21.3)	5 (9.1)	25 (6.6)	7 (3.6)
Crystal	16 (25.0)	4 (11.1)	29 (30.9)	5 (9.1)	35 (9.2)	7 (3.6)
GHB	14 (21.8)	2 (5.6)	23 (24.5)	2 (3.6)	26 (6.9)	3 (1.5)
Ketamine	6 (9.3)	0 (0.0)	12 (12.7)	0 (0.0)	13 (3.4)	2 (1.0)
Heroin	1 (1.6)	1 (2.8)	2 (2.2)	1 (1.8)	2 (0.6)	0 (0.0)
Viagra, etc	24 (37.5)	8 (22.2)	38 (40.4)	13 (23.7)	99 (26.3)	40 (20.6)

Although fairly uncommon, the proportion of male sex workers in this sample that reported injecting drug use was higher than is generally found among gay men. The rates in NSW were higher than those in Queensland.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Injected drugs in previous year</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
No	46 (71.9)	22 (61.1)	61 (64.9)	36 (65.5)	329 (87.3)	166 (85.1)
Yes	6 (9.4)	2 (5.6)	16 (17.0)	3 (5.5)	11 (2.9)	6 (3.1)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	12 (33.3)	17 (18.1)	16 (29.1)	37 (9.8)	23 (11.8)

Alcohol use was also fairly high in this sample but male sex workers appeared little different to non sex workers in their rates of alcohol consumption.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
<b><i>Frequency of alcohol use</i></b>						
Never	7 (10.9)	2 (5.6)	10 (10.6)	4 (7.3)	30 (8.0)	19 (9.7)
Less than monthly	12 (18.8)	5 (13.9)	17 (18.1)	9 (16.4)	92 (24.4)	42 (21.5)
2-4 times per month	17 (26.6)	9 (25.0)	22 (23.4)	12 (21.8)	71 (18.8)	35 (17.9)
2-3 times per week	11 (17.2)	8 (22.2)	19 (20.2)	11 (20.0)	85 (22.5)	52 (26.7)
4+ times per week	6 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	10 (10.6)	3 (5.5)	63 (16.7)	28 (14.4)
Not provided	11 (17.2)	12 (33.3)	16 (17.0)	16 (29.1)	36 (9.5)	19 (9.7)
<b><i>Number of drinks</i></b>						
None	7 (10.9)	2 (5.6)	10 (10.6)	4 (7.3)	30 (8.0)	19 (9.7)
1-2	18 (28.1)	7 (19.4)	23 (24.5)	11 (20.0)	131 (34.7)	64 (32.8)
3-4	11 (17.2)	8 (22.2)	17 (18.1)	16 (29.1)	111 (29.4)	50 (25.6)
5-6	9 (14.1)	5 (13.9)	16 (17.0)	6 (10.9)	44 (11.7)	23 (11.8)
7-9	2 (3.1)	1 (2.8)	3 (3.2)	1 (1.8)	10 (2.7)	6 (3.1)
10+	5 (7.8)	1 (2.8)	7 (7.4)	1 (1.8)	12 (3.2)	12 (6.2)
Not provided	12 (18.8)	12 (33.3)	18 (19.2)	16 (29.1)	39 (10.3)	21 (10.8)

Male sex workers also appeared no more or less likely than non sex workers to have engaged in binge drinking.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Binge drinking (6+ drinks)</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Never	23 (35.9)	6 (16.7)	30 (31.9)	10 (18.2)	131 (34.7)	61 (31.2)
Less than monthly	16 (25.0)	12 (33.3)	24 (25.5)	18 (32.7)	113 (30.0)	64 (32.8)
Monthly	6 (9.4)	4 (11.1)	12 (12.8)	7 (12.7)	53 (14.1)	25 (12.8)
Weekly	7 (10.9)	2 (5.6)	9 (9.6)	3 (5.5)	37 (9.8)	17 (8.7)
Daily	1 (1.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (2.1)	1 (1.8)	5 (1.3)	7 (3.6)
Not provided	11 (17.2)	12 (33.3)	17 (18.1)	16 (29.1)	38 (10.0)	21 (10.8)

## SERVICES AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

The most common source of information about sex work and safe sex for most of the male sex workers in this sample was the Internet. Other sex workers, clients, and simple trial and error were also often cited. Although only about one in five obtained information directly from sex worker or HIV organisations, those who did so mostly reported satisfaction with their services and information.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
<b><i>Obtained information about sex work</i></b>		
Local HIV organisation	12 (18.8)	3 (8.3)
Local sex work organisation	16 (25.0)	3 (8.3)
Friends	4 (6.3)	3 (8.3)
Clients	15 (23.4)	5 (13.9)
Sex workers	25 (39.1)	8 (22.2)
Internet	29 (45.3)	18 (50.0)
Trial & error	19 (29.7)	12 (33.3)
Health professional	3 (4.7)	2 (5.6)
Nowhere	10 (15.6)	7 (19.4)
<b><i>Obtained information about safe sex</i></b>		
Local HIV organisation	14 (21.9)	3 (8.3)
Local sex work organisation	12 (18.8)	2 (5.6)
Friends	6 (9.4)	3 (8.3)
Clients	5 (7.8)	5 (13.9)
Sex workers	14 (21.9)	6 (16.7)
Internet	21 (32.8)	14 (38.9)
Trial & error	10 (15.6)	6 (6.7)
Health professional	10 (15.6)	3 (8.3)

Many male sex workers reported that they learned many of the things they needed to know from other sex workers:

*“From one escort friend ... And he start showing me, yeah, ... So he had me a lot to understand the customer answering this way, blah, blah, blah ... And I, I remember that he showing me everything but in one time.” (31, gay, Brisbane).*



*“I made a lot of friends with, who are sex workers as well - male and female - and, yeah, so I learn a lot through them and I learn a lot through clients because they hire other people as well. So they talk, always talk about, you know, everyone. So ... pretty much, yeah, you learn a lot, yeah.” (30, gay, Brisbane).*

Finding their own way and learning as they go, was a common story, but even in those situations they sometimes sought assistance or information:

*“Nothing that I couldn’t Google. I never sought out help. I’ve just been able to figure everything out. Yeah, through blogs, through reading resources, through ... actually, no, that’s not true. When I first started, I did ring SWOP and ask a few questions. I can’t remember what they were. Yeah. Just before I’d actually been paid for the first time, I was just asking one or two questions, yeah.” (20, Bisexual, Sydney).*

*“Before I came up to Queensland, I actually did quite a bit of research into things and I knew a guy who worked for ACON ..., and I spoke to him a fair bit about it and, you know, the ins and outs. So I kind of had an idea of what to do when I got here but - You know, just, you know, legalities. That was more my concern than the act, so-to-speak. But, and then, once I moved into my place and the [other sex worker] was across the hall, and she was, you know, already travelling here, there and everywhere, I just basically mimicked her I guess, and listened to the way she spoke on the phone, and all these kinds of ... And you just pick it up. Like, you know.” (34, gay, Brisbane).*

Although only about one in five had used sex worker or HIV organisations, those who did so mostly reported satisfaction with those services.

<i>Recent sex workers</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b>Used services</b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)
Local HIV organisation	13 (20.4)	4 (11.1)
Local sex work organisation	15 (23.4)	4 (11.1)
Private doctor	36 (56.3)	21 (58.4)
Sexual health centre	33 (51.6)	15 (41.6)

When they did use the services of HIV, gay, or sex work organisations, the male sex workers tended to speak positively of that experience:

*“I’d know where to go if I needed either them or the services [SWOP], or, or ... And, look, they were, they were fantastic. They were like, ‘This is where we are. If ever this situation occurs, always come across to us. We’re over at this ...’ They were, they were obviously really trying to basically make it as easy an experience as possible in a fairly what would have been, hypothetically, a fairly uncomfortable [Yeah] time given, you know, if you thought you were exposed to something.” (36, gay, Sydney).*

Some men indicated that sex worker organisations were particularly needed by those who are engaged in sex work for lack of other options:

*“I think, I think it is good because probably they have a lot of supports to people who is doing escorting, like both psychologically as well. So, and probably, as I said, not many people are happy to be escort because they have to be or because they have to make money. They, you know, it’s easier for them because they can’t do other jobs, you know. So, so people do that. So everyone has their own reasons, so I think it’s good for a lot of escorts, yeah.” (30, gay, Brisbane).*

Men appeared to obtain condoms from a variety of sources, with most men indicating that they sometimes purchase them and sometimes obtain them for free. Nearly a quarter *always* purchase condoms themselves: 23.4% of NSW recent sex workers and 22.2% of Queensland recent sex workers. Less than one in five ever obtain condoms through HIV or sex work organisations. About a third report obtaining condoms at sex-on-premises venues. There were few differences between sex workers and non sex workers in how they obtained condoms, except that the NSW sex workers appeared to be more likely to obtain condoms for free.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Ever gets condoms by</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Purchase them	38 (59.3)	16 (44.4)	50 (53.2)	29 (52.7)	241 (63.9)	136 (69.8)
Given them for free	37 (57.8)	11 (30.6)	54 (57.5)	18 (32.8)	169 (44.8)	79 (40.5)
From local sex work org.	5 (7.8)	1 (2.8)	6 (6.4)	1 (1.8)	0 (0.0)	3 (1.5)
From local HIV org.	12 (18.8)	2 (5.6)	21 (22.4)	3 (5.4)	47 (12.4)	4 (2.0)
At work	7 (10.9)	2 (5.6)	10 (10.7)	3 (5.4)	13 (3.5)	4 (2.0)
Gay venues	23 (36.0)	11 (30.6)	30 (31.9)	20 (27.2)	117 (31.0)	50 (25.6)

The male sex workers in this sample appeared to have multiple sources of personal support. Indeed, they tended to have more sources of support available to them than was the case for the non sex workers. While less than half indicated receiving personal support from a boyfriend, among those who reported having a boyfriend this was their most commonly cited source of support. Both friends and family were often cited as sources of support. Only a minority cited community organisations as sources of support. This is not surprising as, presumably, only those in direct need would seek support from such organisations. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that about one in five male sex workers report having received support from community organisations, levels that are much greater than among the non sex workers. This suggests either that some male sex workers are more likely to have such a need for support than are non sex workers, or that these organisations are more likely to provide supportive services to male sex workers simply as a consequence of the way they conduct and target their activities.

	<i>Recent sex workers</i>		<i>Any sex work ever</i>		<i>No sex work ever</i>	
	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>	<i>NSW</i>	<i>Qld</i>
<b><i>Received some or a lot of personal support</i></b>	N=64 (100.0)	N=36 (100.0)	N=94 (100.0)	N=55 (100.0)	N=377 (100.0)	N=195 (100.0)
Regular partner/boyfriend	22 (34.4)	18 (50.0)	35 (37.3)	24 (43.6)	157 (41.7)	65 (33.3)
Gay friends	40 (62.5)	26 (72.3)	63 (67.1)	36 (65.4)	210 (55.7)	93 (47.6)
Straight friends	44 (68.8)	24 (66.7)	66 (70.2)	39 (70.9)	224 (59.4)	113 (57.9)
Family	42 (65.7)	22 (61.1)	61 (64.9)	33 (60.0)	201 (53.3)	89 (45.6)
Work colleagues	25 (39.1)	17 (47.2)	42 (44.7)	25 (45.4)	126 (33.4)	70 (35.9)
Male sex workers	13 (20.3)	8 (22.2)	14 (14.9)	8 (14.6)	6 (1.6)	5 (2.6)
Doctor/Nurse	23 (35.9)	11 (30.6)	32 (34.1)	17 (31.0)	74 (19.6)	35 (17.9)
Counsellor	14 (21.9)	5 (13.9)	18 (19.2)	7 (12.8)	38 (10.1)	18 (9.3)
Gay organisations	14 (21.9)	7 (19.4)	22 (23.4)	11 (20.0)	30 (8.0)	17 (8.8)
HIV organisations	14 (21.9)	5 (13.9)	20 (21.3)	7 (12.8)	29 (7.7)	16 (8.2)
Sex work organisations	15 (23.5)	6 (16.6)	17 (18.1)	7 (12.8)	5 (1.3)	3 (1.5)

## **MENTAL HEALTH**

Respondents were asked questions on three separate mental health measures. On the measures of self-esteem and distress, there was very little difference between those who had engaged in male-to-male sex work and those who had not. However, on the measure of sexual sensation-seeking, which has commonly been associated with sexual risk behaviour and HIV infection among gay and bisexual men, male sex workers scored significantly higher than did men who had not engaged in sex work ( $p < 0.001$ ). There was little association between sexual sensation-seeking and either self-esteem or distress. On the other hand, men who were more socially engaged with gay men in general were less likely to experience distress ( $p = 0.007$ ), had higher self-esteem ( $p = 0.001$ ), and scored higher on sexual sensation-seeking ( $p = 0.007$ ). Similarly, men who were more open in discussions with others about having sex with men were less likely to experience distress ( $p = 0.002$ ), had higher self-esteem ( $p = 0.002$ ) and scored higher on sexual sensation-seeking ( $p = 0.001$ ); however, while the trends were the same for being open about doing sex work, this was not statistically significant.

The male sex workers in this sample generally appeared to be relatively self-accepting and showed little evidence of poor mental health due to their involvement in sex work. Indeed, both in NSW and in Queensland, the sex workers had similar scores on the measures of self-esteem and of distress to those of the non sex workers in each state. On the other hand, in both states, the men who had engaged in sex work, whether recently or not, scored higher on the measure of sexual sensation-seeking, indicating they were more likely to participate in sexually adventurous subcultures (Hurley and Prestage, 2009; Grosskopf et al., 2011; Kalichman, 2014). In NSW, the mean score among sex workers was 23.03 (SD=5.20) and among non sex workers it was 19.13 (SD=5.62);  $p < 0.001$ . In Queensland, the mean score among sex workers was 22.89 (SD=5.83) and among non sex workers it was 18.38 (SD=5.97);  $p < 0.001$ .

Some men described sex work in quite positive ways, suggesting that the sex work itself made them feel good:

*"Feeling powerful and desired, enjoying the sexual dynamic and the act of sex, getting paid handsomely for something I enjoy doing."* (30, bisexual, suburban Sydney).

*"The financial independence and feeling of being desired from escorting really changed my life for the better. I used to be a love addict always trying to maintain flawed relationships or date incompatible people. Now, though my clients aren't men I would date, I do enjoy our time together and like a lot of their company. I'm over dating for the hell of it and I have savings, cool things and lovely clothes and eat really well."* (36, gay, inner Sydney).

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that while sex workers in general showed no sign of low self-esteem or elevated distress compared with gay and bisexual men generally, those male sex workers who engaged in sex work for specifically economic reasons had lower self-esteem than did those who had other reasons for engaging in sex work ( $p=0.002$ ). This was not associated with scores on sensation-seeking. Sex workers who specifically identified themselves as sex workers had higher self-esteem scores than those who distanced themselves from identifying this way ( $=0.016$ ). Also, sex workers who indicated that they felt good about doing sex work were less likely to experience distress ( $p<0.001$ ) and had higher self-esteem ( $p<0.001$ ), and, similarly, those who felt that sex work was pleasurable were less likely to experience distress ( $p=0.003$ ) and had higher self-esteem ( $p<0.001$ ). On the other hand, those who found sex work to be stressful were, unsurprisingly, more likely to experience distress ( $p<0.001$ ) and had lower self-esteem ( $p<0.001$ ).

Feeling good about doing sex work was, for some men, something they learned over time, as they dealt with some of their earlier attitudes and beliefs:

*"I know I'm comfortable with sex work now and I think maybe I had some like residual catholic guilt about sex before. And, yeah, I'm very happy having sex now."* (23, queer, Sydney).

Some men also insisted that any mental health issues they had experienced were due to issues other than sex work:

*"My depression has got nothing to do with my work. It's just basically, yeah, since I was a child, I always had a little bit of depression. And it's, it came back after I broke up as well so, yeah."* (30, gay, Brisbane).

Overall, these associations with the mental health measures suggest that having positive feelings about one's own sexuality and about doing sex work, and freely choosing to do sex work rather than doing so only for lack of options, are more important factors in understanding the mental health of sex workers than is sex work itself.

## **DISCUSSION**

The male sex workers in this sample were similar in most respects to gay and bisexual men in general, both demographically and behaviourally. Also, for the most part, they appeared to be well-connected to information and support, and, mostly, did not engage in behaviours that represented a risk for HIV transmission. Nonetheless, some male sex workers in this sample were not so well-situated, in several respects. Also, in general, there appeared to be some differences between male sex workers in NSW and in Queensland that would suggest that male sex workers in Queensland are somewhat more vulnerable than those in NSW. Overall, though, while most male sex workers in this sample do not appear to be at particularly increased risk (in general, or for HIV in particular) compared with gay and bisexual men in general, there are several issues that need to be addressed, and the particular circumstances of male sex workers need to be taken into consideration in the development of HIV and other sexual health services.

Male sex workers in this sample reported solid social engagement (more so in NSW than in Queensland). Also, most reported having regular health checks – two thirds of the men reported that they had regular health checks every three months.) Most of the men in this sample also reported having ever been tested for HIV. They were also more likely to consider specific issues around healthcare (such as confidentiality, the ‘gay friendliness’ of the doctor or services they chose, and the expertise of their physician) than gay and bisexual men in general.

Sex work among gay and bisexual men in this sample was not directly associated with sexual risk behaviour or mental health. Nonetheless, most male sex workers reported multiple male sex partners over the previous year, with many reporting over fifty. Clients would account for some portion of this number. They were also more likely to have engaged in group sex than were non sex workers. In both NSW and Queensland, the men who had engaged in recent sex work scored higher on the measure of sexual sensation seeking than did non sex workers. This is a key measure that has been used to indicate men who are relatively more sexually adventurous, and which has consistently been associated with both behavioural indicators of participation in sexually adventurous subcultures, and with sexual risk behaviour and HIV infection (Kalichman, 1994; 2002). So, some male sex workers appear to be very sexually active in general, and somewhat sexually adventurous. Group sex, sensation-seeking, and being highly sexually active are all key elements of participation in sexually adventurous subcultures, which is a key indicator of sexual risk among gay and

bisexual men in general (Kippax et al., 1998; Prestage et al., 2009; Hurley and Prestage, 2009).

Additionally, an assumption that gay and bisexual men who are paid for sex mostly do so to address financial necessity may be inaccurate, or at least an insufficient explanation. While many engaged their most recent client for financial reasons, about a third of them also reported that they did it for fun. Interestingly, less than half even identified with the term 'sex worker'. Only a small proportion reported sex work as a sole or primary form of income, and there was a tendency to have engaged with sex work long-term, even if only casually. Also contrary to what is commonly characterised about sex work, our sample expressed good feelings about doing sex work, and the majority did not express any stress from doing sex work. Over half of male sex workers in the study also say they speak openly about their sexuality, which was considerably more than the non sex workers in the sample. Aspects of men's own sexualities may also be factors in whether some men make the choice to do sex work. About half found it at least somewhat pleasurable, and the majority found it at least slightly 'kinky' or adventurous to do sex work. While material circumstances may be the main motivator for some men, for many male sex workers in this sample such a choice may not be particularly uncomfortable, or have significant emotional or practical impact.

However, for some men who engage in sex work with few other options, but who do not feel comfortable about it, or themselves, mental health issues do appear to be an issue, as they would be for anyone in a situation where they need to work in a job (or engage in any behaviour) that they do not enjoy, or which makes them uncomfortable. In the case of sex workers, this may be exacerbated for some due to the stigma they face, as sex workers, from their own personal networks and from the community at large. Additionally, sex work as a profession (and unusual among professions for this reason) faces the additional burden of a generalised sex phobia, as well as an inconsistent, and not generally favorable, legal framework. Plus, of course, for some male sex workers, homophobia is an additional factor; and some are also relatively isolated from the kinds of social support that gay community engagement can provide to counter the effects of stigma. In this context, it is probably not surprising therefore that some male sex workers feel less than comfortable about doing sex work, and suffer some mental health issues as a consequence. Perhaps what is more surprising is that so many – apparently most – male sex workers seem to enjoy their work and show little evidence of negative mental health consequences.

The men in our sample found clients in ways that reflect what might be expected from the social media and dating platforms available currently. Online cruising sites for gay and bisexual men were the most common method reported as being used to find clients, with personal referrals also reported about a third of the time.

Most sex work reported was comprised of mutual masturbation, massage and oral intercourse, as well as anal intercourse. When anal intercourse was involved, there was little indication that sex workers restricted themselves in the positions that they chose. They were less likely to engage in condomless anal intercourse during sex work than they were during sex with non-commercial partners, whether those were casual or regular partners. There was also little evidence that in those unusual circumstances where they reported condomless sex with clients, that the male sex workers engaged in any other form of risk reduction. Or, at least, that they employed strategies to reduce the risk to themselves. There is some suggestion that the sex workers were more willing to take some risk themselves than they were to place their clients at risk. They were a little more likely to be the receptive, rather than insertive, partners in these situations. In regard to the possibility of PrEP, while the male sex workers in this sample were generally skeptical about this method of HIV prevention, their reluctance to use PrEP in the context was often couched in terms of a desire to continue to maintain maximum protection for their clients, including with regard to STIs other than HIV. Nonetheless, a few male sex workers reported some reluctance to knowingly take HIV-positive clients. On the other hand, some HIV-positive sex workers specialise in working with HIV-positive clients.

Also, very few male sex workers reported any direct problems with clients. Few incidents of physical assaults were reported, although this was slightly more common in Queensland male sex workers than in NSW. Less than one in ten reported more than one such incident. Refusal to pay was more common, again with Queensland reporting twice the rate of non-payment for services that NSW did, and also reporting twice the rate of *repeated* cases of non-payment. Less than a third of the male sex workers in NSW and Queensland reported any pressure to engage in unsafe sex practices, and a very small number of those reported that it had ever happened more than once.

In their private relationships, male sex workers tend to have younger sex partners than non sex workers (this applies to casual partners, fuckbuddies, and regular partners such as boyfriends or lovers). This is most likely because the sex workers were themselves generally younger than were the non sex workers.



The NSW male sex workers were also more likely to have direct knowledge of their regular partners' HIV status than were the non sex workers in NSW, but Queensland sex workers tended to rely more on a belief that their partners was HIV-negative. Overall, though, male sex workers had similar knowledge of the HIV status of their fuckbuddy and casual partners as did non sex workers, in both NSW and Queensland.

Male sex workers tended to find sex partners in the same sorts of ways that gay and bisexual men generally report finding partners, including beats (especially in Queensland) and attending sex on premises venues. Unsurprisingly, almost all of the male sex workers reported using online cruising sites and mobile applications: This is the most common method gay and bisexual men in general use to meet sex partners (Prestage et al., 2015), and it was also the most common method that sex workers used to find clients, so it would be unsurprising if male sex workers would also meet their non-commercial partners in this way as well. In particular, though, male sex workers were far more likely to use mobile apps to meet partners than was the case among non sex workers.

When not engaging in sex work, slightly more than half reported condomless anal intercourse with a regular partner, and less than half reported it with casual partners or fuckbuddies. Nonetheless, these rates of condomless anal intercourse among the sex workers were higher than was found among gay and bisexual men generally. It has been previously identified that sex workers – both male and female – are more likely to engage in condomless sex with non-commercial partners than they are with their clients. It seems unlikely that this condomless anal intercourse with their non-commercial partners was due to being involved in sex work itself, and possibly reflects the fact that some male sex workers are more sexually adventurous in general than has been found among broader populations gay and bisexual men. In this respect these male sex workers may be at increased risk due to their likelihood to participate in sexually adventurous subcultures rather than due to doing sex work. Being sexually adventurous, particularly as expressed by high scores on the measure of sexual sensation-seeking, is one of the most consistent factors associated with sexual risk behaviour and with HIV infection (Kippax et al., 1998; Hurley and Prestage, 2009; Newcombe et al., 2011).

As might be expected, information about sex work and safe sex was primarily accessed through the internet. Some male sex workers said that other sex workers and clients provided them with information, or they simply relied on trial and error. Of the sex workers who indicated that they received information from sex worker or HIV organisations,

most said that they were satisfied with the information they obtained. Most male sex workers indicated that they sometimes purchased condoms and sometimes obtained them for free.

When seeking personal support, male sex workers indicated more sources for that support than non sex workers did, and those who indicated that they were in a relationship indicated that their partner was their primary source of support. Although community organisations tend not to be a major source of support for people, some male sex workers nonetheless indicated having ever received support from a community organisation, but only a small number cited them as a regular source for that support.

Male sex workers reported higher rates of drug use than did non sex workers. Although amyl and marijuana were the most commonly reported drugs, the rates of crystal and GHB use were significantly higher than those found among gay and bisexual men in general: Around a quarter of sex workers reported crystal use overall and about one in five reported GHB use, with the rates in NSW slightly higher than those found in Queensland. Injecting drug use of any sort was also reported at higher rates among male sex workers than among gay and bisexual men in general, with NSW once again reporting slightly higher rates than those reported in Queensland. These rates of drug use among male sex workers appear to be similar to rates previously found among more sexually adventurous gay men (Prestage et al, 2007b). Also, the proportions of male sex workers who reported drug use during their most recent sex work encounter were similar to the proportion of gay men in previous studies who have reported drug use on their most recent occasion of condomless sex with casual sex partners, again suggesting some similarity with more sexually adventurous gay men in general (Prestage et al, 2005) and participation in intensive sex partying (Hurley and Prestage, 2009).

The key question for HIV prevention is whether interventions should target male sex workers as such. It is likely that the sexual risk behaviour of some male sex workers has less to do with being paid for sex than with their participation in sexually adventurous networks. While the context of sex work may provide an opportunity for such interventions, it may be that the content of these interventions would be more effective by targeting sex outside the context of sex work. These data, however, suggest that male sex workers may face a range of issues, not all of which are associated with HIV prevention, and, indeed, not all of them directly resulting from their involvement in male-to-male sex work.

The Hook Up study was a cross-sectional survey, supplemented by in-depth qualitative interviews. So, the findings are limited by the sample size, and causative associations cannot be determined. While we recruited a substantial number of men who were engaged in male-to-male sex work, this was a lengthy process, and, of course, the actual numbers involved necessarily limited the level of detail that was possible in analyses. Many male sex workers expressed reluctance to participate, stating concerns about the purpose of the study and how the findings might be used against the interests of men engaged in sex work. This sort of mistrust is to be expected within a population that has commonly, and historically, been highly stigmatised and marginalised. An additional limitation in terms of numbers and representativeness is that this sample included very few men who worked in parlours or escort agencies. With a larger number of such men we may have been able to provide more detailed, and different, information about working in that context. Finally, while we have clearly found some associations with male-to-male sex work, we cannot determine decisively whether these were indicative of reasons for men engaging in sex work or were the consequences of them having done so.

## **Conclusion**

The overall impression of male-to-male sex work that emerges from these data suggests that it is a far more complex phenomenon than is commonly believed. For the most part, the men engaged in sex work in this sample are not the unfortunate victims of circumstance forced to engage in unpleasant and 'disreputable' activity to survive, as they have often been portrayed in the past. They are often thoughtful and well-educated men who have made considered decisions about the taking of payment for sex and how that fits into their lives more generally. This is not to say, however, that sex work is without any problems or that the men engaged in sex work have always been able to make these decisions freely, or even appropriately. For some men, albeit probably a minority, sex work is not a preferred option and they feel uncomfortable about it, and for a few, they have only engaged in sex work due to economic necessity. While mental health is complex and can reflect many factors, lack of options, and making uncomfortable work choices under financial necessity, is always an important consideration. Male sex workers who are specifically in these circumstances appear to have some issues related to self-esteem and distress, which may either explain their apparent lack of choice, or be a consequence of it. Also, sex work itself carries some risks, including potential violence, stigma, and sexual health, all of which most likely exacerbate any mental health issues. Nonetheless, most of

the men in this sample appear to have put in place protective measures to protect their health and safety, and the majority of men who report male sex work express a generally positive attitude toward that work.

Despite the generally positive picture for the majority of male sex workers, male-to-male sex work must remain a key focus for sexual health, and HIV, strategic responses. The minority of male sex workers whose choices around sex work are more constrained by circumstance require specific guidance and assistance. Also, while most men engaged in male-to-male sex work may have made well-considered decisions about this, and may be relatively proactive in protecting their health and safety, they are nonetheless challenged by the specific risks that are involved in this type of work. In addition to the risks that are associated with sex work, men engaged in male-to-male sex work appear to be at increased risk in their personal lives. They are more likely than gay and bisexual men in general to engage in sexual risk behaviour as well as being more sexually active in general, thereby putting them at increased risk of HIV and other STIs. They are also more likely to use illicit drugs than are other gay and bisexual, putting them at risk of the negative health consequences and associated harms that can accompany illicit drug use.

It is also notable that while the male sex workers in this sample were generally unlikely to engage in risky behaviour with their clients, and indeed, often appeared to be protective of their clients' health and well-being, there was some suggestion of inadequate information and resources in some key areas. Some sex workers appeared to be under the impression that they would be aware of having an HIV-positive client, and that they would be protected themselves by refusing to work with such clients – though they often wanted to do so without causing offense. This suggests some misunderstanding of the likelihood of disclosure, but more importantly, that some sex workers were unaware of the impact of treatments on HIV transmission or of the elevated risk of HIV transmission during sex with partners who have a recent, and undiagnosed, infection. Nonetheless, some male sex workers may be reluctant to verbally direct use of condoms with clients. Contact with other male sex workers and sex work organisations could help with developing negotiation skills and other tips for ensuring condom use in discreet ways

Similarly, when asked about PrEP, they were not particularly well-informed about this method of HIV prevention, as is the case among most gay and bisexual men in general, and several men expressed uncertainties about its relative effectiveness and the likelihood of experiencing side effects. While some men could see some possibility for using PrEP to

reduce their risk, others were cautious about it and were not convinced it would be a useful tool for them.

The findings from this study suggest that some of these men would continue to benefit from services provided through sex worker-specific organisations, while others benefit mainly from services provided through gay community organisations. The ongoing development of such services needs to be undertaken through a process of collaboration between both types of organisations, and in a way that purposefully identifies these men as a specific target population. Such work is already currently being undertaken by most of the relevant community organisations, and these findings reinforce the necessity to maintain and expand that work. In particular, many of the key sexual health issues identified in these data relate to these men's personal lives rather than to their involvement in sex work directly. Indeed, for some, it appears that their involvement in sex work is an extension of aspects of their own sexualities, and their private sexual behaviour. The provision of services, information, and support to address these issues may sit more comfortably within a broader health promotion and service provision framework targeting gay and bisexual men in general. Nonetheless, these issues need to remain a consideration for sex worker organisations, while gay community-based organisations, and health services more broadly, need to be cognizant of the role of male-to-male sex work as one element in their considerations for targeting risk behaviours. While both sex worker organisations and gay community-based organisations may seek to make themselves available to male sex workers, the experience of male sex workers may be different. Some, but not all, may be aware of these organisations and what they have to offer to them, as male sex workers or as homosexually active men. Others may explicitly avoid these organisations, either for their own reasons or based on previous experiences. Regardless, given that male sex workers are a priority group for HIV-prevention and for reducing STIs in general, both types of organisations need to be properly and adequately resourced to ensure that these men receive the information and resources required.

Separate to issues around provision of services addressing health needs, these data raise some broader conceptual issues in the approaches to service provision. Many, if not most, of the male sex workers in this sample appear to be fairly self-confident individuals who make considered decisions about their lives, their sexuality, and their health. For the most part, gay community-based and sex worker organisations take a sex-positive approach to their work and regard sex work as a legitimate and authentic choice that should be

available to those who choose to do so, free of stigma and unnecessary legal constraint. However, this is not usually the case for other, more mainstream, organisations and health service providers where the assumption tends to be that sex work is inherently problematic and not a preferred choice. It seems unlikely that the majority of the male sex workers in this study would respond favorably to targeted services or health promotion that appeals to them on the basis of such perceived vulnerability. For those who are less satisfied with their involvement in sex work, or who face greater difficulty in doing sex work, this focus on vulnerability may be appropriate, and appealing. However, other male sex workers who nonetheless face many of the same challenges in doing sex work, or are at increased risk in other aspects of their lives, a more positive approach may have greater appeal.

For some men who engage in male-to-male sex work, their identity as sex workers, even if temporary, provides a clear basis for the provision of services and the development of specifically targeted information. However, other male sex workers do not identify in this way, and their engagement with male-to-male sex work may be far less consistent, or, indeed, meaningful. For these men, targeted information and services that prioritise their identity as gay and bisexual men, possibly referencing their (occasional) involvement in situations where they are paid for sex, may be more sensible. In either case, though, there are clearly issues regarding sexual risk behavior (mainly outside the context of sex work) and drug use that affect male sex workers at disproportionate rates. Also, there are minorities of male sex workers who face issues of isolation, access to services, and support, but it is important to put this into context: Most men who engage in male-to-male sex work are not 'unusual' in any meaningful sense. Most are broadly similar to gay and bisexual men in general, and the experience of sex work, in itself, is only problematic for those men who have not chosen to do sex work but rather they lack other options.

## ***IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTION***

Future research issues:

- Age and length of time engaged in sex work: Most, though not all, male sex workers commence doing sex work when they are relatively young. It also appears that the experience of sex worker changes, often positively, over time, possibly as the men involve grow older, or possibly with greater experience of sex work. It may be that many of the negative associations with sex work that have commonly been described previously may be due to a focus on younger and less experienced men who engage in sex work. A detailed study that focuses on the issues of age and experience in relation to male-to-male sex work may identify more appropriate ways to target services and information suitable to men with differing levels of experience with sex work.
- Party n Play and Intensive Sex Partying: For some male sex workers, drug use appears to be a common feature in their lives, and a few men in this study have described circumstances where they have come to rely on sex work to pay their drug use, although it has commonly also been suggested that some sex workers use drugs as a way to enhance their capacity to engage in sex work. The data in this study cannot really address possible causative associations, nor could we capture the interplay between party n play subcultures and male-to-male sex work. Further research that explores this interconnection would be valuable.
- Mental health: While there is little to suggest from these data that mental health is an issue for most male sex workers, there is some suggestion that the minority of men who lack options in their decisions regarding sex work may be at somewhat greater risk, as would apply in any work situation. It may also be that men lacking other options for earning an income are more vulnerable in a material sense in other aspects of their lives. In these contexts, the effects of stigma directed at sex work in general, and homophobia, may exacerbate the situation for these men. Research that focuses specifically on men in these more vulnerable situations and compares them directly with men who have self-consciously chosen to engage in sex work may more usefully explore mental health issues among male sex workers than has been the case in the past.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **For policy and program development**

- Maintain existing services and programs targeting male-to-male sex workers, and ensure that all sex worker and gay community-based organisations acknowledge male sex workers as a specific priority population in their HIV/STI prevention programs.
- Develop and implement in-service training for staff in relevant health and community agencies to address misconceptions and assumptions about male-to-male sex work.
- Ensure effective distribution of guidelines and information resources clarifying legal status of male-to-male sex work for those commencing sex work and for the gay community broadly to ensure that men who engage in incidental or opportunistic sex work have access to this information. In particular to ensure that such resources provide information about how male sex workers can engage in sex work legally and how they can minimise the risk of suffering legal sanctions where appropriate.
- Adapt existing resources providing information about safe party n play specifically for male sex workers, to ensure that they have access to information to minimise drug-related harms and sexual risk behaviours during party n play sessions, as well as minimising any potential impact on their capacity to effectively deliver sex work services.
- Develop and implement HIV-prevention resources and programs, specifically tailored to the needs of male sex workers, to address knowledge gaps in the changing evidence for, and role of, biomedical prevention, particularly with regard to Treatment as Prevention, Pre-exposure Prophylaxis, and the risks involved in undiagnosed infection.



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