



SWOP

SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT



ANNUAL
REPORT
2015-2016

SWOP
SEX WORKERS OUTREACH PROJECT

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

It was an exciting year for the SWOP Executive Committee as we consolidated our role in providing guidance to the organisation. With another year of experience in our Executive Committee shoes and stilettos, we worked to expand SWOP's voice through our attendance at conferences and key events, as well as supporting SWOP's work lobbying against harmful law changes that would affect the health and safety of NSW sex workers.

SWOP Executive Committee members stood side-by-side with SWOP staff at events, including hosting a candlelit memorial for International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers on December 17 at the El Alamein Fountain in Kings Cross. Behind the scenes, we worked to improve our own skills by attending finance training for boards run by Inner City Voice. We also continued to ensure that SWOP has the full suite of policies, strategies and procedures to be a strong, independent, innovative and accountable sex worker health organisation.

“That’s where they are, all of my clients are out there in the community. Thanks to my primary partnerships, most of my time is now spent in Aboriginal communities reaching my clients. This year I’ve been doing drop-in situations everywhere from Mudgin-Gal in Redfern, to Wayside in Kings Cross. NAIDOC Week was particularly good, and I did my first workshop up on rural outreach on the Mid North Coast. Plus I have a new outreach with Mt Druiitt NSP, so it’s good the new SWOP database means I now take up less time in the office doing stats,” said Jo.

69.5%

Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders





CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

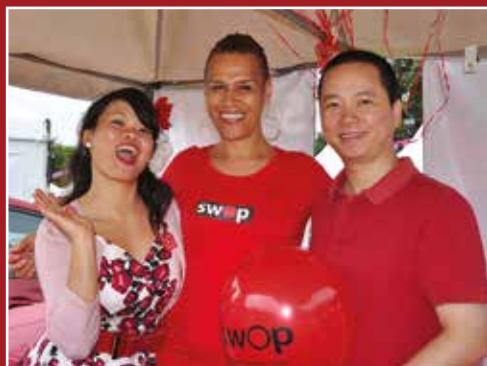
I am excited to present this summary of SWOP's last year of work to you, NSW sex workers, our organisation's key stakeholders. With no increase in funding, SWOP has, in the last year, again expanded service provision both in raw numbers, and in our range of activities. SWOP's voice is now being heard both in the media, at different levels of Government, and also within the NGO sector.

Whilst expanding our voice we have also consolidated and streamlined our operating structure. This includes making more cost effective use of social media for outreach and peer-to-peer health promotion, whilst not abandoning the tried and true face-to-face outreach of our past. We've also gained considerable efficiencies by bringing our accounts in-house.

You will find our shorter, clearer and concise Strategic Plan 2017-2020 at the centre of this Annual Report, where it will form the foundation of our ongoing work.



Cameron Cox



In response to shifts in demographics, SWOP has partly re-organised our outreach team, expanding the Community Services position to focus on community development activities (e.g. forums, workshops, campaigns) and to be available for more intensive one-to-one support. This position is also responsible for a new area of outreach providing court support, engaging with lawyers and writing support letters for incarcerated sex

workers. "Sex workers are becoming more proactive around breaking out of the isolation most private workers encounter," adds Chantell, pointing to our volunteer program success.

330%



Volunteer Hours

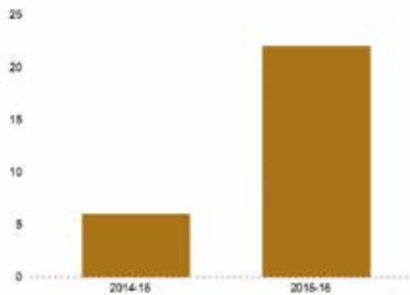
EXPANDING SWOP'S VOICE

SWOP's primary achievement in 2014/15 was to become an entirely independent, sex worker-led organisation. In 2015/16, alongside consolidating and increasing our peer education activities, we moved the organisation to a new level by establishing SWOP within the public and policy arenas as the expert organisation on all things sex work here in New South Wales.

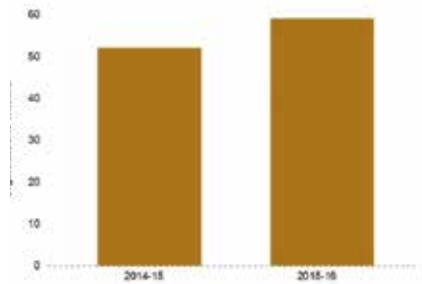
SWOP obtained a seat on the NSW HIV and STI Strategy Implementation Committee, as well as retaining our membership on the Australian Collaboration for Coordinated Enhanced Sentinel Surveillance of STIs and BBVs (ACCESS) and Blood Borne Virus Research, Intervention and Strategic Evaluation (BRISE) advisory committees, and a number of Local Health District HIV and STI Strategy Implementation Committees.

We further expanded SWOP's voice by making a number of submissions, the most successful of which was our submission and lobbying in response to the NSW Legislative Assembly Inquiry into the Regulation of Brothels. This Inquiry ultimately ruled in favour of sex workers, finding that decriminalisation should remain in NSW.

SUBMISSIONS



TRAININGS



Other submissions made by SWOP included contributing to the reviews of the NSW Public Health Act, the NSW Regulation of Drugs Act and the NSW HIV and STI Strategies; as well as submissions to 5 other inquiries. We produced 14 press releases/letters to media outlets and regulatory bodies. As a result of this work, our presence in the mainstream media also increased, with SWOP being featured in 27 media articles across the year.

While you will read about our work with NSW sex workers on subsequent pages of this report, not all of SWOP's outreach and education is aimed at our peers. This year SWOP also provided training on the NSW sex industry and sex worker sensitivity to 181 service providers from 49 different organisations.

STRIVING FOR BEST PRACTICE

In our second year as an independent organisation, SWOP held our inaugural Annual General Meeting and produced our first annual report. Under the strategic guidance of our first member-elected Executive Committee, we further developed our governance structure, implementing new policies on areas including staff conduct, human resources and client privacy. We continued to build our membership base, and are moving towards achieving Australian Service Excellence Standards (ASES) accreditation in the next year. SWOP has also continued to develop and implement a centralised, user-friendly data collection system to increase the ease of sharing organisational knowledge, build an evidence base to support our work, and free up the capacity of all staff to focus on our core work of service provision.

Increases to SWOP service provision have been achieved whilst maintaining a high quality of service, with all evaluations we did returning high scores. For example, workshop attendees stated that they all (100%) found the workshop valuable; that they would recommend the workshop to other sex workers (95.4%); and that the workshop increased their skills (100%), knowledge (100%) and confidence (100%). Other feedback we received by other means, including on SWOP's social media accounts, and via email, was also highly positive.



“Love your work, people! Keep it up. You're an invaluable organisation. Always be proud of the fact that you are GENUINELY part of the solution - not the problem.” Facebook review

Staff learning and development is continuous at SWOP, with staff attending both internal and external training, including two days of dedicated in-house training where staff members share their expertise on working with specific communities of sex workers. External experts also trained SWOP staff in areas relevant to the entire organisation (i.e. self care, avoiding burnout, Workplace Health & Safety).

Conference attendance is also part of our learning and development program at SWOP. During this period, we presented on sex work at a number of major health conferences. Our highlights this year were a plenary presentation at the HIV and Hepatitis Conference at the University of NSW, and presentations, posters and workshops at AIDS2016, which was held in Durban, South Africa.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2020

OUR MISSION:

SWOP exists to provide New South Wales (NSW) sex workers with the same access to health, safety, human rights and workplace protections as other Australian workers.

SWOP's strategic vision for the coming four years has two interlocking goals.

Our goals are to ensure optimum health, safety & human rights for all New South Wales (NSW) sex workers, whilst being the best organisation that we can be.

Without being a best-practice organisation that is self-reflective, ethical, and an opinion leader, we can't achieve our mission to ensure all sex workers across NSW achieve optimum health, safety and human rights. At the same time, improving the health, safety and human rights of NSW sex workers is our core mission, and the work we are funded to deliver.

By presenting these two goals as interlocking, SWOP is acknowledging that by employing innovation, evaluation, and advocacy across a range of areas, we can give NSW sex workers the best opportunity to achieve the same level of health, safety and human rights as workers in other industries.

By being the best organisation we can be, SWOP can serve NSW sex workers better.

Goal One:
Ensure optimum health, safety & human rights for all NSW sex workers

- Sustain continued access to health, safety and human rights for all NSW sex workers, including viral hepatitis B and C, for all NSW sex workers
- Sustain the virtual elimination of HIV transmission within the sex workers industry
- Counter social exclusion and improve the capacity and resilience of sex workers to:
 - Improve mental health
 - Reduce isolation and stigma, regional and metropolitan
 - Increase knowledge of health, safety and human rights, alcohol and other drug use
- Target and adjust services to ensure all NSW sex workers, irrespective of gender, cultural identity or language, can achieve the same health, safety and human rights outcomes as other Australian workers

**INCLUSIVE
RESPONSIVE**

**health,
rights for
workers**

**Goal Two:
Develop and implement
innovative best practice in
everything we do**

low rates of
infections (STIs),
HIV, within the New
South Wales sex industry
and the elimination of
sex work within the NSW sex

conclusion by building
resilience of NSW sex

mental health outcomes
in rural,
metropolitan settings
and knowledge about use of
other drugs

SWOP services
for sex workers,
gender identity, sexuality,
language spoken,
health, safety and
welfare as other

- Set the standard as a best practice sex worker organisation
- Be trusted and recognised as the leading voice in NSW on sex worker issues by:
 - Sex work community
 - Government
 - Policy makers and researchers
 - Public
 - Other stakeholders
- Continually evaluate and review our work to improve our practice
- Implement innovative and effective systems, policies and communication (both internal and external)
- Remove all barriers to community participation/engagement to improve sex worker wellbeing
- Promote flexible, needs-driven, and mutually educative, evidence-based outreach and programs
- Be a best-practice employer who encourages continual learning
- Facilitate positive outcomes relating to criminal and/or legal issues

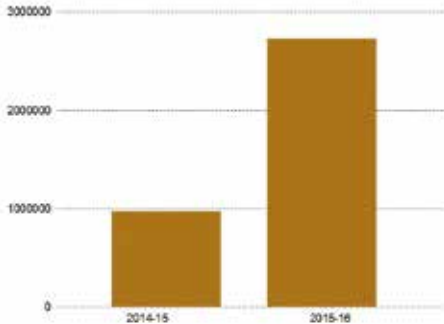
HOLISTIC

ACCOUNTABLE

SERVING NSW SEX WORKERS

In the past year, SWOP visited 579 sex services premises and had significant interactions with over 5,300 NSW sex workers. In addition to Sydney metropolitan outreach, we made 56 outreach visits to 27 regional and rural areas. We distributed over 305,000 safe sex items (including 185,976 provided free to sex workers, and the remainder sold at close to cost).

SOCIAL MEDIA



“I’ve recently become a sex worker, and your resources online have been invaluable since I started.”

Workshop Attendee

SWOP produced 11 new resources for sex workers and distributed approximately 20,000 printed resources, with most resources also available in downloadable form on our website. The website continued to be highly utilised, attracting just under 80,000 unique visitors, while our social media sky-rocketed, taking our expertise about sex work to 2.7 million people (up 181.3% on 2014/15).

SAFE AT WORK



“It’s a beautiful booklet. I give it to all the Thai workers, and they like it! I invited Thai sex workers to look at the resource on a Steering Committee, so it’s made by sex workers for sex workers.” Jum, Thai Outreach Officer

This year saw the completion of the Safe At Work project, which was partly funded by the City of Sydney under their Community Grants Program. The project produced three new resources for sex workers written in Thai, Chinese and Korean. Many of SWOP’s resources are available in four languages and we continue to employ workers focused on delivering peer outreach to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) sex workers. This year we identified a small but emerging community of Spanish-speaking sex workers (up 80% on 2014/15) and we are currently working on a Spanish-language resource.

SERVING NSW SEX WORKERS

SWOP continues to adapt our services in response to changes in the NSW sex industry, such as:

- increases in metro-based CALD sex workers working in regional/rural areas
- the impact of issues related to the biomedical prevention of HIV transmission and their possible impacts upon sex workers; particularly the effects of the current PrEP trials on male sex workers whose clients are men.



“This year I held more workshops that related to HIV, hepatitis and chlamydia, because last year Chinese sex workers reflected that this was what they wanted to learn more about. Due to economic and political changes in parts of Asia, more people were willing to travel for work, so both NSW’s population of Chinese sex workers, and SWOP’s Chinese Project grew. I worked an extra day which allowed me to attend nearly all SWOP events. I put myself out there this year, showing people what a Chinese sex worker looks like, to try to break the cycle of stigma and discrimination in this community,” said Mon.

13.9% ▲

Chinese Sex Workers

“Support me to understand STI, and more of disease and prevention.” Workshop Attendee

“This year the Thai sex workers we saw definitely had more confidence about their life experiences. They had more knowledge about SWOP, and when they had a problem, they called SWOP, or looked from the internet,” said Birdie.

“So now my outreach style is to do a sharing experience about working; the workers have many techniques they can share with me too,” explained Jum. Our Thai Project worked closely with Scarlet Alliance’s Migration Project this year, strengthening the Australian network of CALD outreach workers. This work helps SWOP better support Thai sex workers who are living in NSW and travelling interstate to work in higher numbers.



▼ **0.9%**

Thai Sex Workers

SERVING NSW SEX WORKERS

- the continued, gradual decline in street-based work, which has seen SWOP & our partner organisation, Kirketon Road Centre, reduce outreach to the Kings Cross area by one partnered outreach per month. We also began trialling outreach to street sex working sites on Saturday evenings, with the aim of accessing more street-based sex workers. This will be evaluated on an ongoing basis, with consideration for staffing impacts.
- the continued increase in private work (especially among trans women), which has resulted in us increasing private outreach to female-identified workers online, and making visits to private workers' homes and apartments.

SWOP has continued to strengthen our outreach to female sex industry workers, providing them with 4049 occasions of service in 2015/16. “The biggest breakthrough has been the opportunity to connect with workers in their homes or hotels. The interactions are so meaningful - we’re on their turf, in a comfortable environment, so it’s very relaxed, and much less clinical,” said Natalia. “Joanna and I have been doing a more regular Northern Sydney outreach. We saw it was an area that had not been contacted as often, and as I’m a worker from that area, we’ve had more success getting into some of the parlours,” said Tori.

▲ 5.7%
Female Sex Workers



“With so many trans workers now working privately, the only difference I can see is that when I see trans workers, because I am trans, we can talk in detail about specific things that affect trans workers. I’ve also been helping trans sex workers transition into private work, guiding them with issues like modern technology. My project targets private workers, and these days it’s quite even between the amount of trans and cis-female workers I see. I contact them from their online advertising and say I’m from SWOP, then straight away I out myself as a sex worker, and their tone becomes warmer,” said Natalia.

▲ 23.6%
Transgender Sex Workers



SERVING NSW SEX WORKERS



“This year I’ve been running workshops in regional areas, and increased my partnerships with other SWOP projects by collaborating with them on outreaches to regional NSW. That included working with SWOP’s Male Project, our CALD team, and our Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Project,” explained Joanna. This resulted in SWOP making 56 visits to rural and regional areas across NSW (up 27.2% on 2014/15). “I saw a couple of male sex workers in Lismore, however it’s harder to contact male regional workers now that Squirt (the main website they advertised on) no longer allows commercial profiles,” added Matt.

27.2% ▲

Rural/Regional Towns



“The Male Project has seen less workers, but that’s because I’ve only been in the role for nine months. I have recently managed to regain access to a key male parlour, which should increase our face-to-face interactions. I don’t see my role at SWOP as pushing an agenda, I want guys to know we exist, and if they need support they can contact me down the track. I’ve expanded the Project by talking to sexual health centres around NSW about why

male sex workers may not choose to disclose their work. I’ve also created a SWOP profile on Grindr and more guys have started contacting me through this app,” said Matt.

22.3% ▼

Male Sex Workers

SWOP continues to offer free counselling services to NSW sex workers by email and phone, as well as face-to-face in our Sydney office, resulting in 466 occasions of service (down 21.5% on 2014/15). This year our counselling and support service was periodically unavailable as our counsellor, Maggie, accessed her long service leave entitlements. As a result, sex workers made more use of our ‘ear with a peer’ advice and referral service, with SWOPConnect handling 1,417 queries (up 4.7% on 2014/15). The increased effectiveness of SWOPConnect has also enabled our counsellor to expand SWOP’s referral links, and provide more intensive support and care coordination to workers with complex needs, including access to justice.



THANK YOU

The extraordinary results detailed in this report would not have been possible without the enthusiastic uptake of SWOP services by sex workers and sex industry businesses across NSW. We would also like to thank our staff and volunteers, particularly those on our Executive Committee.

Thank you to The Minister for Health, The Honourable Jillian Skinner MP, and our principle funder, the NSW Ministry of Health. SWOP also acknowledges all NSW Health Districts, Sexual Health Clinics, HARP Units, and Aboriginal Medical Services, along with all the NSW Police Local Area Commands with whom we work closely.

The organisations that SWOP works with are numerous, but we particularly recognise: ACON Health, Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis & Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM), Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council, Bobby Goldsmith Foundation, City of Sydney, Darcy House, Family Planning Australia, First Step NSP, Glyde Health, The Gender Centre, HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC), Hepatitis NSW, Inner City Legal Centre, Kings Cross LAC, Kirketon Road Centre, Launchpad Youth Community, Magenta WA, Mount Druitt NSP, Mudgin-Gal, Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC), NSW Users & AIDS Association (NUAA), Positive Life NSW, Respect QLD, S-Check, Scarlet Alliance, SIN SA, The Kirby Institute, Touching Base Inc., Twenty 10, UNSW Centre for Social Research in Health (CSRH), The Vixen Collective, Weave & The Wayside Chapel.

FINANCIALS

SWOP was audited by DFK Laurence Varnay. Find a detailed report on the financial position of SWOP as at 30 June, 2016 on our website:

www.swop.org.au/annualreport2016

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