

## Sex Working Community RE: SEXHUM Research Project

**Scarlet Alliance, Australian Sex Workers Association, and Sex Workers Outreach Project (SWOP NSW) sincerely apologise to community members for any uncertainty, misinformation or distress experienced due to any matter arising from the SEXHUM Research Project.**

In 2017, Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW agreed to provide informal, limited support and advice to the SEXHUM Project as members of its Advisory Board. We agreed to provide this support as the research:

- Was to be based on analysing migrants' own understandings and experiences of agency and exploitation with respect to migration, sex work and trafficking.
- Involved a comparative study across four international sites/jurisdictions.
- Was to be staffed by sex worker researchers and was to use migrant sex workers and local sex work organisations for recruitment, research and advice.

Due to a number of unresolved issues with the research process, Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW have formally withdrawn their involvement from the SEXHUM Project as of March 2019. These issues included:

- SEXHUM's de-prioritisation of Australian sex worker applicants for the role of local peer researcher;
- Misrepresentation of Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW's roles in the research;
- Neglect of elements of SEXHUM's stated approach to engaging sex worker peer organisations as Advisory Board members;
- Issues and concerns raised by migrant sex worker research participants about the conduct of researchers during data collection;
- Failure to prioritise the sharing of research findings with sex workers, research participants, and peer organisations, contrary to commitments made in SEXHUM's statement of approach.

We would like to take this opportunity to apologise to members of the sex working community, and in particular those who are migrants or come from migrant backgrounds, as it has become apparent that:

- Many sex workers who have been in contact with the research project have gained the impression that the research project was a Scarlet Alliance/SWOP NSW project, or that Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW were partners with SEXHUM in this research. **This is not and has never been the case.** The role of Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW in SEXHUM has been to provide consultation and limited initial logistical support. We apologise that this was not clearly and independently communicated to sex workers.
- Some sex workers who have been involved with the research project have not felt fully informed as to their rights regarding their participation. SWOP NSW and Scarlet Alliance apologise for not providing sufficient independent support and advice to our communities regarding these rights.

As always, Sex Workers Outreach Project (NSW) and Scarlet Alliance are available to all sex workers who seek support, advice and/or advocacy.

Scarlet Alliance and SWOP NSW remain committed to the representation and leadership by migrant sex workers on any issues that affect migrant sex workers. The questions and critiques provided by members of community, and especially by members of the migrant sex working community, have been invaluable and will inform future policies and procedures regarding potential research participation and partnerships. For further information about our ethical approach to research about sex work, including migrant sex work, please see the Research sections of our websites.

[SWOP NSW](#)  
[Scarlet Alliance](#)

We sincerely thank all sex workers who provided feedback to us on these matters and wish to acknowledge the time, energy and emotional labour volunteered by individuals to support their fellow sex workers and to advise sex worker organisations on these issues.

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/thai/SEXHUM\\_Open\\_Letter\\_THAI/](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/thai/SEXHUM_Open_Letter_THAI/)

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/chinese/SEXHUM\\_Open\\_Letter\\_CHINESE/](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/chinese/SEXHUM_Open_Letter_CHINESE/)

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/korean/SEXHUM\\_Open\\_Letter\\_KOREAN/](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/korean/SEXHUM_Open_Letter_KOREAN/)

In solidarity,

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