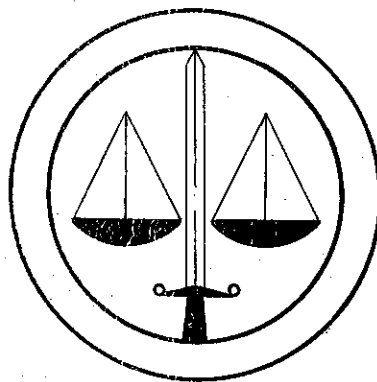
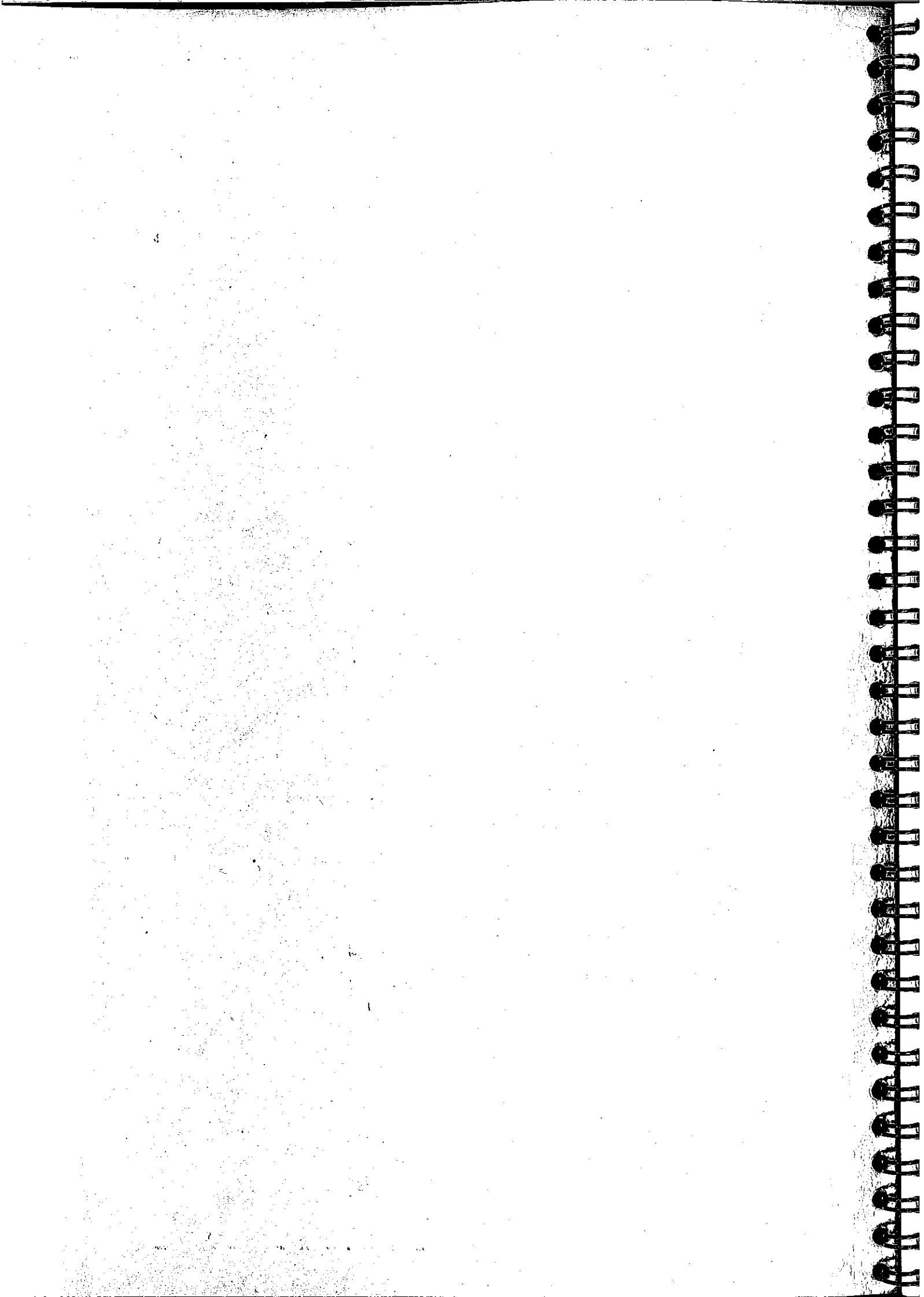


BUREAU OF CRIME STATISTICS
AND RESEARCH

SOLICITING IN DARLINGHURST



Attorney General's Department
New South Wales
April, 1986



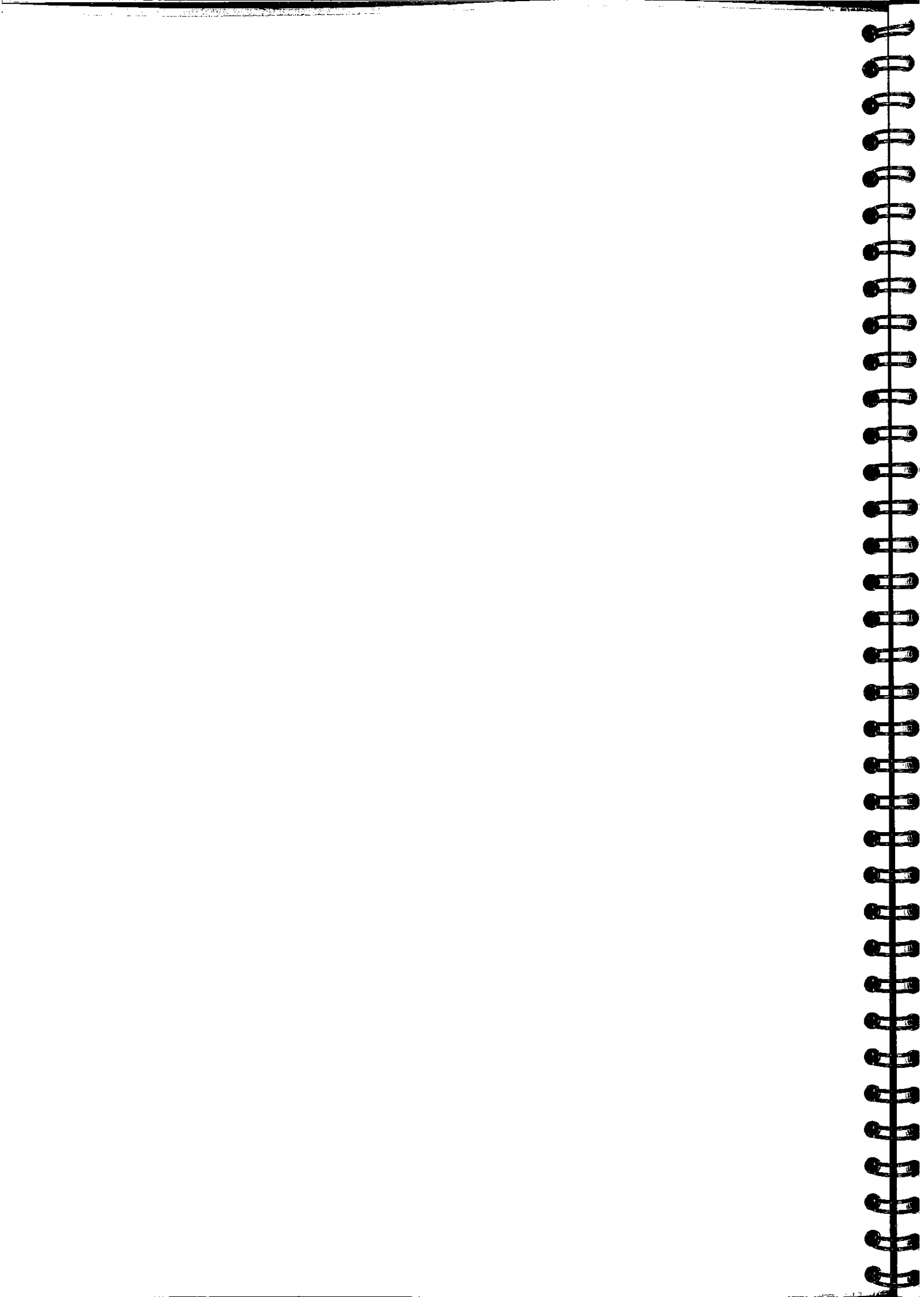
SOLICITING IN
DARLINGHURST

Female, transsexual, and male street prostitutes
talk about their work

Gail Travis

N.S.W. Bureau of Crime
Statistics and Research
Department of the Attorney-General

1986



P R E F A C E

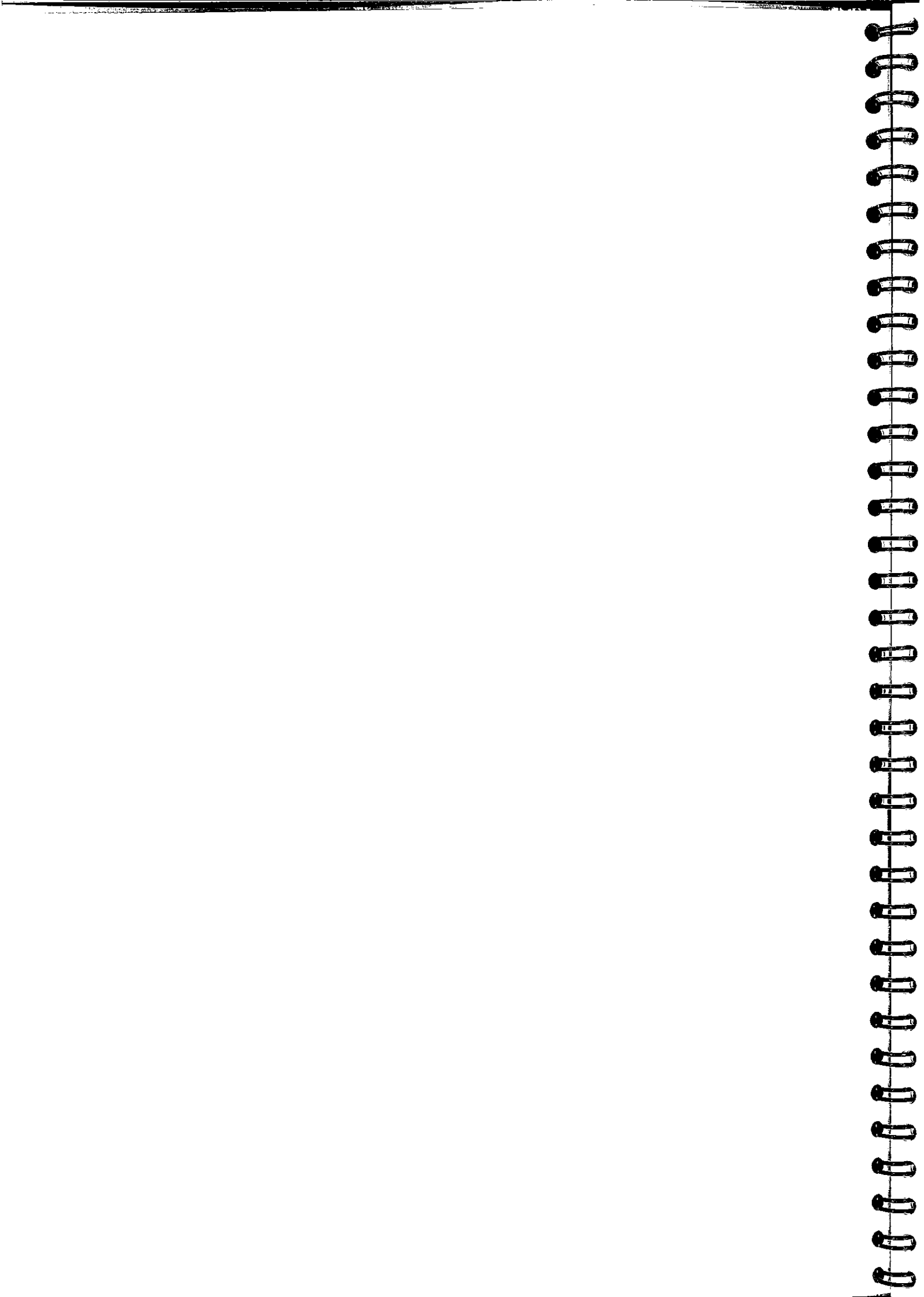
The impetus for this study, its design, implementation, analysis and ultimately the writing of the report were all conducted by Ms Gail Travis. The study represents an innovative and courageous departure from the usual Bureau report. Gail was encouraged and supported in her work by other Bureau staff.

The report is an important one, not merely because the issue is currently controversial, and one about which little empirical data was available prior to this study. The report has considerable value in informing the government and community generally about the nature of prostitution in the Darlinghurst area. It also represents a useful example of applied social research, and its detailed discussion of methodology should provide good reference material for tertiary students.

The study was commenced whilst Gail was employed by the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, but was ultimately completed during the period for which she worked as a research officer for the Select Committee upon Prostitution. The resources and support provided by that committee, and particularly by the Chairperson, Mr Pat Rogan M.P. are gratefully acknowledged.

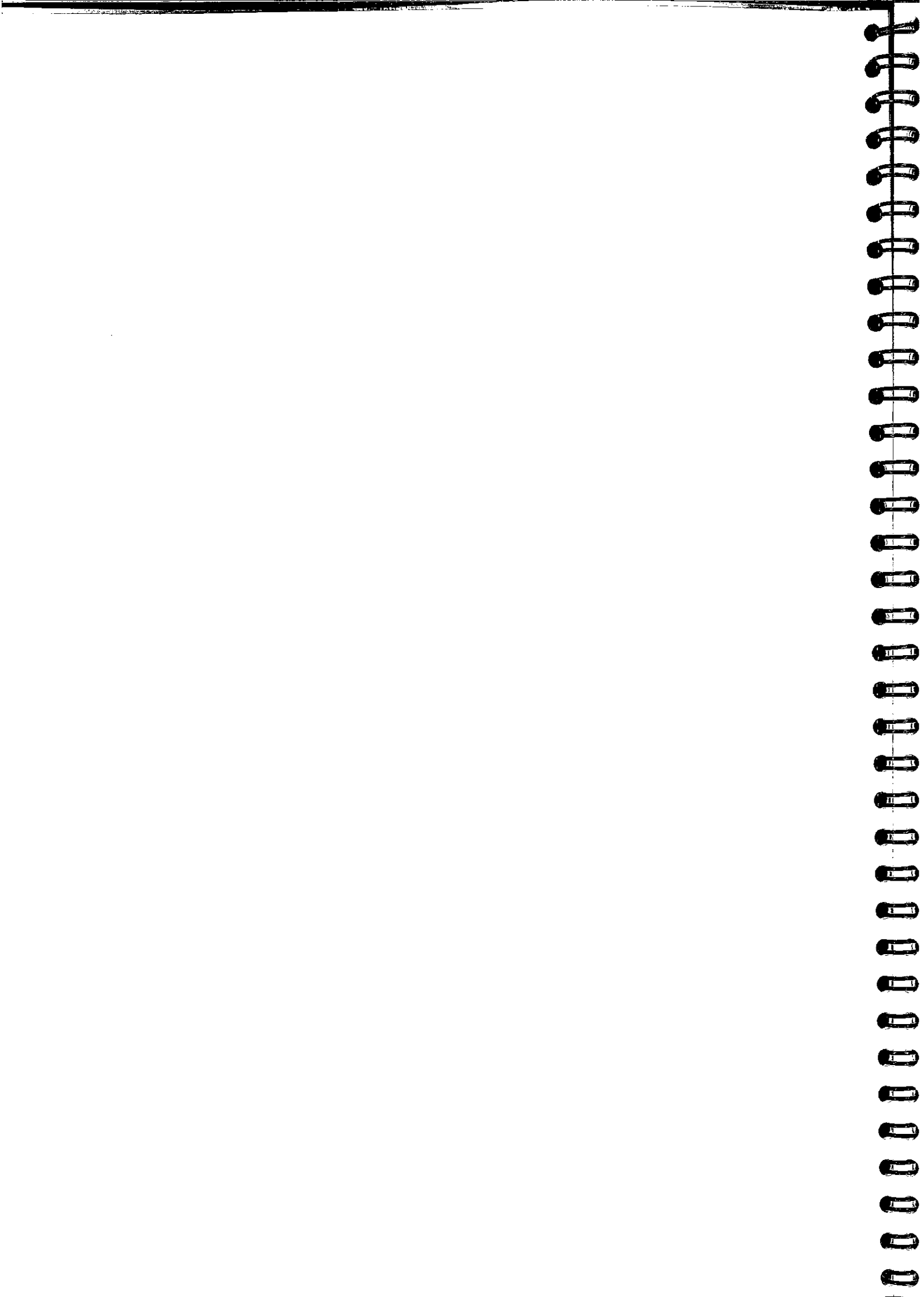
Thanks are also due to Mr Arthur Travis for his careful editing of the work.

Dr Jeff Sutton
Director.

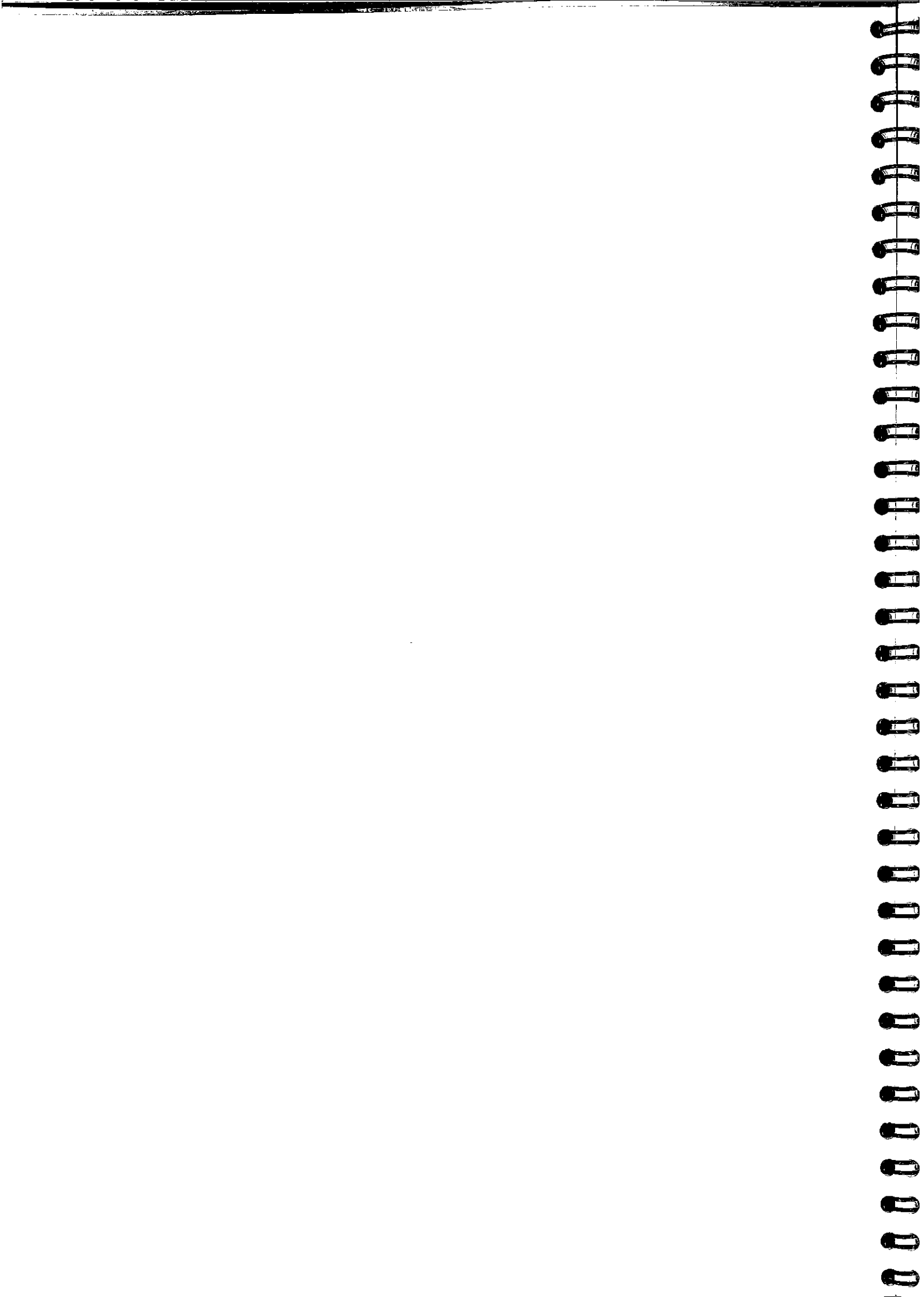


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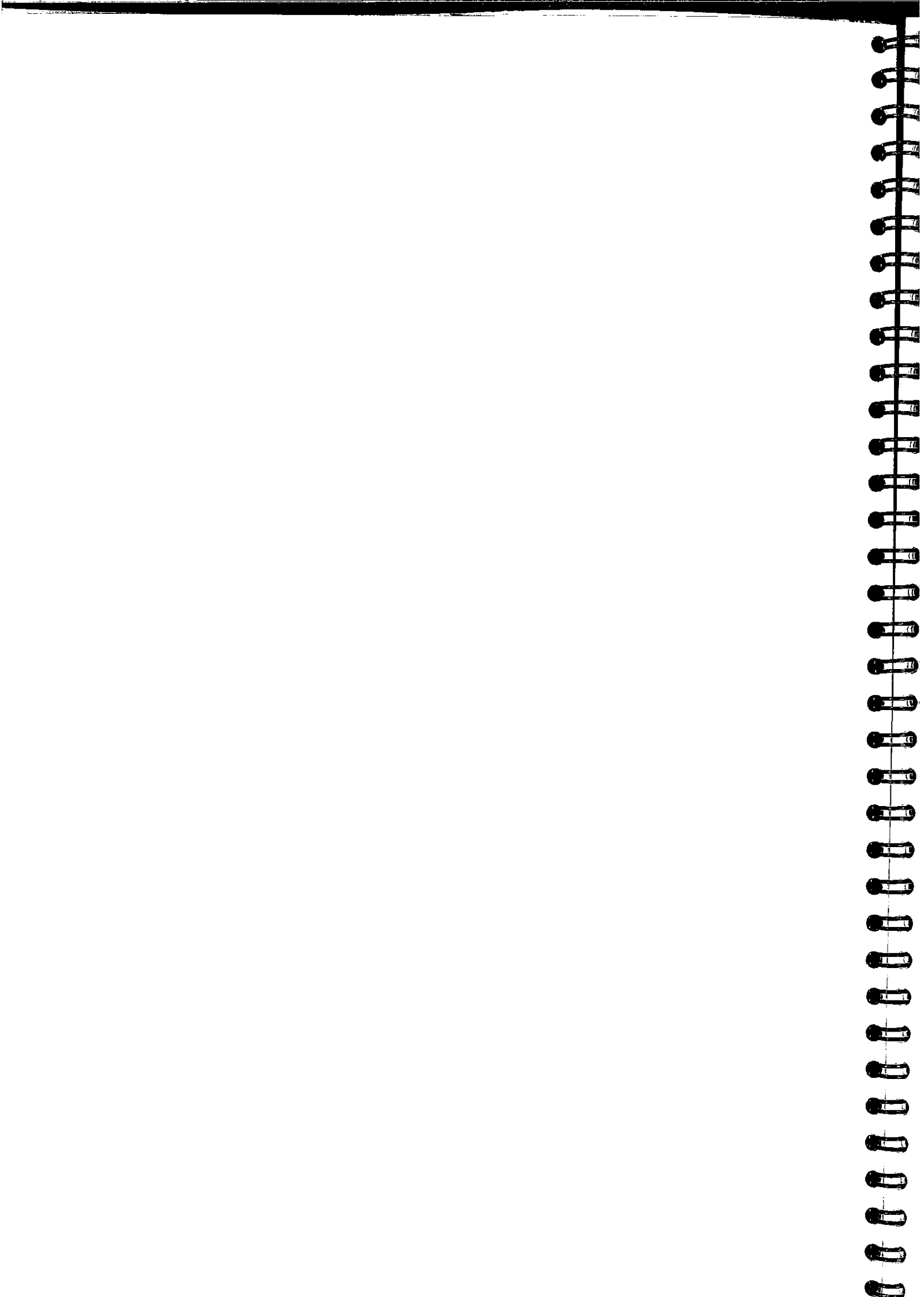
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I N T R O D U C T I O N

The N.S.W. Summary Offences Act, 1970, was repealed in its entirety in 1979 in accordance with Labor Party policy (Andrews, 1979). The Attorney-General offered 16 bills to repeal the Act. As part of this legislative change, the Prostitution Act, 1979, was assented to on 11 May that year.

Although the act of prostitution per se has never itself been illegal in New South Wales, under Section 28 of the old Summary Offences Act:

"A person who (a) for the purpose of prostitution, solicits another person who is in or near a public place; or (b) for the purpose of prostitution or of soliciting for prostitution loiters in, near or within view from a public place, is guilty of an offence.
Penalty: Four hundred dollars or imprisonment for six months."

The 1979 Prostitution Act decriminalised street soliciting. Rather, living on the earnings of prostitution; prostitution or soliciting in massage rooms etc.; allowing premises to be used for prostitution; and advertising premises used for prostitution were specified offences.

In parliamentary discussion, the Attorney-General outlined the intention of the 1979 Prostitution Act:

"The Government has taken the following basic approach to prostitution in New South Wales, namely first, that the present law discriminates unfairly against the prostitute as compared to the customer, and second, that wherever possible the law should be directed at preventing and punishing exploitation. The offence of soliciting another person in or near a public place is to be done away with" (N.S.W. Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), CXLVI, 23 April 1979: 4923).

This re-interpretation of prostitution offences is dramatically reflected in trends in prostitution and related offence appearances in state local courts. In 1977, under the Summary Offences Act, there were 2,098 such court appearances, compared with 158 in 1981 under the Prostitution Act

(N.S.W. Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research, 1979 and 1982). In 1977, 2,075 (98.9 per cent) of these offences were loitering/soliciting for prostitution appearances. By 1981, approximately one third of prostitution-related court appearances (53 appearances) were for living wholly or in part on the earnings of prostitution.

Although the decriminalisation of street soliciting cross-culturally was an unusual legislative situation which could be said to be remarkably progressive in its approach, within one year of the 1979 Prostitution Act having taken effect, there was mounting criticism of Sydney's street soliciting situation. The Opposition Leader in 1979 had predicted under the Prostitution Act "the proliferation of soliciting all over Sydney" (The Sydney Morning Herald, 12/4/79). Interestingly, the street soliciting issue centred on Darlinghurst, an inner-city Sydney neighbourhood.

Comparison between a 1978 and 1982 Australian Public Opinion Poll (the Gallup Method) conducted by McNair Anderson Associates showed overall a decrease in agreement (66 per cent to 61 per cent) of Sydneysider response to the statement "Prostitution should be made legal". Darlinghurst residents were most vocal in their objections. In an April 1981 meeting (reported in The Sydney Morning Herald on 18/9/81), for example, several hundred Darlinghurst residents criticised the then current situation of street soliciting in their neighbourhood and considered that a red-light area should be established in a commercially-zoned district and that soliciting should be prohibited in residential areas.

In March 1981 the Premier announced the formation of a 20-member Juvenile Crime Squad which would pay particular attention to child prostitution.

"The Premier, Mr Wran, announced the formation of the Squad this week following continuing criticism from the Opposition, local residents and the Police Association about the deteriorating situation... All claim that since the repeal of the Summary Offences Act the situation has grown steadily worse... Local residents have complained of sexual acts taking place on the footpath in front of their houses and increasingly open approaches by young prostitutes touting for business" (The Sydney Morning Herald, 20/3/81).

Media articles continued to discuss controversial resident grievances of sex acts being performed in public, alleged bashings and intimidation of residents and the open use of heroin in Darlinghurst. (See, for example, Daily Mirror, 18/11/82.)

In 1978 the prostitution file of newspaper clippings kept by the Information Resources Unit of the N.S.W. Parliamentary Library contained 42 articles. By 1981 the file had doubled to 85 prostitution-related articles for that year.

In August 1982 in State Parliament the Shadow Attorney-General asked the Attorney-General whether he had visited Kings Cross/Darlinghurst recently, whether he had found the Government's laws on street offences were not working and what he proposed to do about it (The Sydney Morning Herald, 27/8/82).

Six months later a Sixty Minutes television news programme, "Pros and Cons", produced by Andrew Haughton, talked about the favourable situation which had existed under the Summary Offences Act, mentioning current police frustration in relation to the presence of street prostitutes as well as resident frustration over empty beer bottles and used contraceptives and hypodermic needles found in the streets of Darlinghurst. One older prostitute interviewed said that between 90 and 95 per cent of the street prostitutes were heroin users. Residents were looking to the Police Department, to the Department of the Attorney-General and to the City Council for assistance. Responsibility for the situation was said to be a matter of "The buck keeps passing".

The present study grew out of two years of such controversy concerning the decriminalisation of street soliciting in New South Wales. In an atmosphere of imminent legislative change vis-a-vis street soliciting, the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research embarked on field observation and interviewing of female, transsexual and male street prostitutes in Darlinghurst in order to address the following three issues:

1. Descriptive material of the street prostitute population

Few studies examine prostitutes in their natural social environment. Instead, research material is based often on unrepresentative sample populations. As Jennifer James stresses in the literature on prostitution:

"Publications centered on prostitutes who were mental health patients, imprisoned, reformed, or derelict ... The information available to policymakers was, and is, based primarily on 'exposés' by journalists" (1980:102).

This project attempts to study prostitutes on the street. In Sydney, street prostitutes are a visible, identifiable group. The interviewer attempted to find out who solicits on the street, the age of workers, the number of nights a week spent soliciting, preferences of street work over massage parlour and brothel jobs, reasons why Darlinghurst was favoured over other neighbourhoods as a job site, attitudes towards customers and police, and general drug use. It was hoped that responses by street prostitutes interviewed on the street both would avoid pervasive sample biases of many previous studies and would offer policymakers information about the Darlinghurst street prostitution population.

2. Historical material

A literature review of prostitution shows that prostitution has continued to exist in spite of a variety of differing periods and reactions to the profession. On the whole, legal and police regulation studies offer intellectual rationalisation for legislative change; much debate concerning often hypothetical situations of legalising or decriminalising prostitutes; and some research based on police resources. Few empirical studies show the actual effects of any specific control strategy (Travis, 1983). As Boles and Tatro remark:

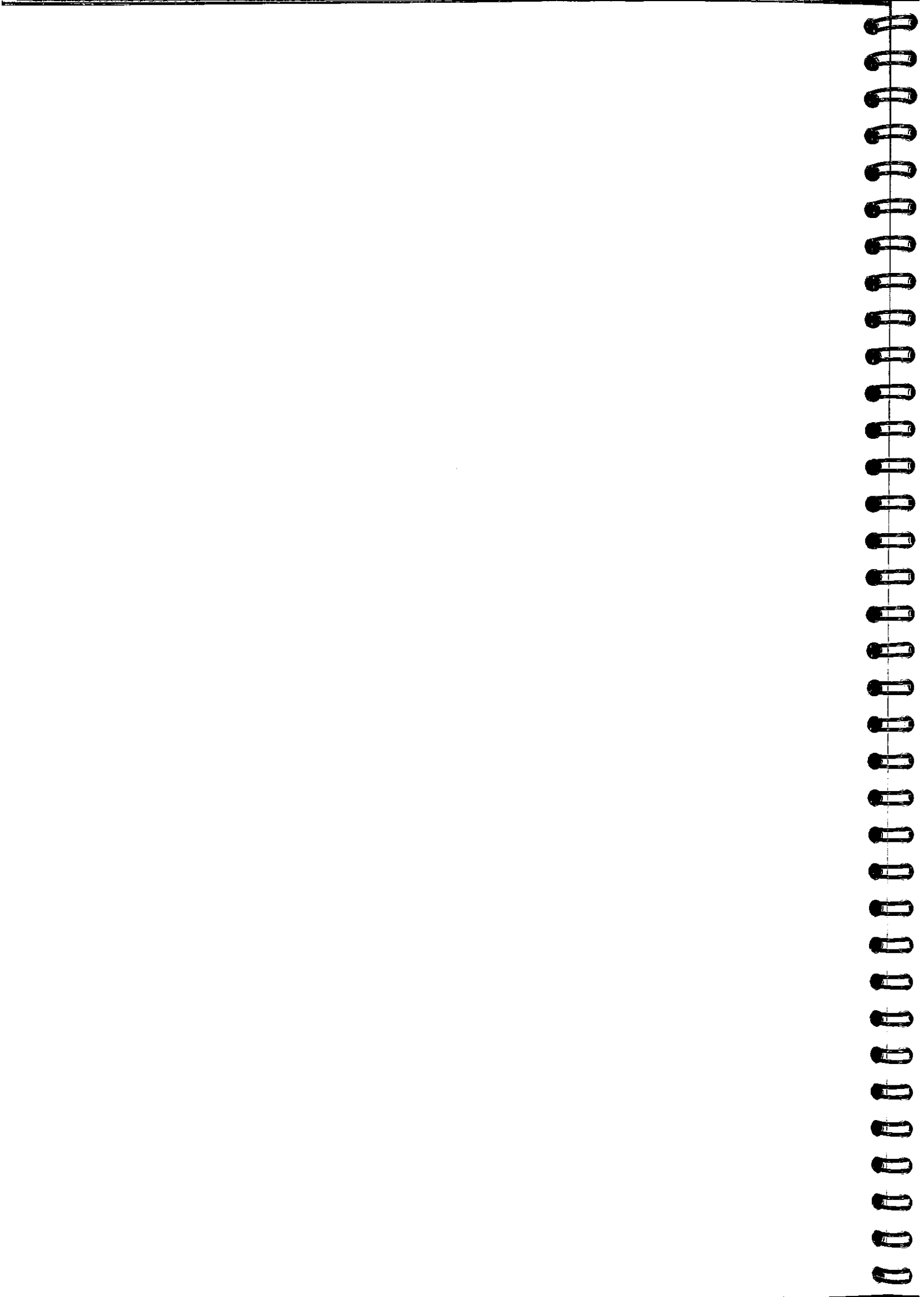
"There is a paucity of reliable data on the effectiveness of any strategy to regulate prostitution or its side effects. There are few studies of the effectiveness of any law on regulating behaviour, and it is especially difficult to study the effect of sex-related legislation on behaviour... Most countries have not attempted to evaluate systematically the effectiveness of their prostitution-related laws" (1978:72).

The present study is an attempt to demonstrate empirically, from the perspective of the street prostitute, how soliciting practices have been affected by legislation in New South Wales. Ten questions in the interview pertain to historical material. (See interview outline, questions 31 to 40 inclusive, in Appendix.) Respondents were asked about changing attitudes and behaviour among the prostitute population, police officers, customers and residents from the time they first started working in the industry. As 10 per cent of the female sample, 21 per cent of the males and 44 per cent of the transsexuals had worked in the industry at least five years, responses offer comparative insight into street prostitution under the Summary Offences Act and the Prostitution Act, 1979.

3. Hypothetical responses to legislative change material and desired changes

As legislative change of the N.S.W. street soliciting situation was imminent during the period of this study, a few interview questions were directed towards a series of situations: that public soliciting be prohibited; that soliciting in Darlinghurst and other residential areas be declared illegal; and that a red-light district be established. In general, each interviewee was asked what sort of changes he/she would like to see take place that would improve his/her working circumstances.

In total, this study of female, transsexual and male street prostitutes involved field observations and randomly-selected on-site street interviews with 73 workers (prostitutes) in Darlinghurst between December 1982 and April 1983.



M E T H O D O L O G Y

The methodology of the project was influenced by the sociological theoretical perspective of symbolic interactionism as introduced by George Herbert Mead and developed by Herbert Blumer. This interactionist perspective implies that society is created, maintained and changed by the social interactions of its members.

From this viewpoint, the individual's involvement in the social world of fieldwork is not to be overlooked, but recognised as an integral part of a total social experience. In fact, an account of the individual's subjective involvement in any fieldwork is as valuable as subsequent observations.

Field notes and discussions of the research process have been written in the first person singular as one individual's account of fieldwork in Darlinghurst. The discussion of methodology becomes painstakingly personal at times. In this way, this section departs somewhat from Bureau tradition.

It is hoped that this discussion also will encourage others to consider seriously the feasibility of studying deviant groups in their natural social environment. Too often, in studies of prostitution, researchers have relied on incarcerated individuals or on persons referred to them by other known prostitutes or agencies to gather their sample population.

In Sydney, for example, street prostitutes in December 1982 largely worked in a specified area, Darlinghurst. They were highly visible. The women, in particular, seemed approachable. And the legislative situation of decriminalisation offered a favourable legal environment where the researcher did not have to probe into illegal activity. For all these reasons, Darlinghurst in 1982 was an unusually accessible environment for research into street prostitution.

Preparing for the field: planning the interview

I began preparing for fieldwork by travelling around Darlinghurst by car.

"It is Saturday night. I leave Manly at 8.30 p.m. by car. I look at the map to study the best route to Darlinghurst. I turn on the radio and start driving to the city. There are more couples than usual walking through the street... I take the Macquarie Street turn-off after the Bridge ... I drive around a corner. A car with six young males is beside me, also waiting for the light to change. The male closest to the window glances at me. I feel nervous and look the other way. A second later I turn and look in their direction. The boys are 16, 17. I smile to myself...

"I look at the map again. I head in the opposite direction, again passing the park. I think I am in the male prostitution area. There are no women on the streets. Single males are standing in doorways. Groups of men in threes and fours are walking down the street. The scene seems quite sombre to me... Maybe it is the males dressed in deep colours. Movements appear in the shadows.

"I come to Darlinghurst Road and go down. No-one is on the street. I think about Roseanne's statement that there weren't any women on the streets on Wednesday night. [The police appeared to have increased their surveillance of the neighbourhood.] I at last see a young female with shoulder-length hair and a pink dress which just covers her crotch. As I wait for the light, two males (18?) approach her and one stops to talk with her. I drive around the corner and begin to see more women on the corners of streets. There is no question they are soliciting. Many are in shorts, all have little bags, disco bags. One woman who seems older with a harder look to her face is wearing leopard underpants on a G-string. Again the high heels and disco bag.

"Traffic is quite heavy, the drive is slow. Women on the corner are in groups of three. Along the street some are sitting by themselves on car hoods. I wonder whether the women along the street are somewhat older. The ones on the corner look 18 to 19. As it begins to rain, women run under doorways. One woman appears to be South-east Asian. Otherwise others are white... Males seem to be hanging out behind the women (pimps?). In general I do not feel apprehensive about interviewing." (Field notes, 11 December 1982.)

As I gained familiarity with Darlinghurst through kerb crawling, with time I decided to park my car and walk around the area. Each visit I walked down every street where there was soliciting. I did not stop to talk to anyone as I made my rounds. Every time I visited by foot I held a clipboard, which I felt would visually distinguish me from other women on the streets. I purposely wore no jewellery (to decrease the likelihood of being mugged), no necklace (which could be pulled from behind one's throat) and carried no handbag, only a clipboard, a pen and a 20-cent coin tucked into my clothing for an emergency telephone call. I dressed as plainly as possible to minimise any potential customer interest.

Between 11 December 1982 and 24 February 1983 these walking tours allowed me to become comfortable in Darlinghurst by night. They offered an opportunity to resolve various research questions. And, in retrospect, they allowed the street prostitutes to see me and to gain some curiosity as to why a woman holding a clipboard continued to walk around their street at all hours of the night, then got into a car and drove off.

Defining the field site

Field visits to Darlinghurst made it obvious where female, transsexual and male street workers were actually soliciting. The interview site was clearly defined by street.

Female street workers solicited in the area bounded by Palmer Street, Liverpool Street, Victoria Street and Burton Street with the exception of Burton Street between Darley Street and Victoria Street. This latter area was transsexual territory. Male prostitutes worked along "the Wall", as it is called, the wall of East Sydney Technical College on Darlinghurst Road between Burton Street and Oxford Street on the edge of Green Park.

Drawing up the interview outline

I began drawing up a semi-structured interview outline with 43 questions. (See Appendix.) It was hoped that these questions would lead to follow-up questions. I attempted to obtain descriptive material, historical material and hypothetical responses to legislative change material.

In retrospect, the interview outline should have been shorter for female respondents, although interviews with both males and transsexuals allowed for ample follow-up questions. Additionally, rather than asking about police attitudes towards prostitution, for example, it would have been helpful to have distinguished between uniformed and vice-squad officers.

Field observations had led me to believe that a variety of circumstances, not asked in the interview itself, were significant enough to note. For every person I approached, I noted the date; the day of the week; the time; the street location; whether the worker was standing on a corner or was mid-block; whether the person was by her/himself or in a group; whether there was a hovering male nearby; whether the person seemed drug-affected to me when approached; and finally, whether the person agreed or refused to be interviewed.

In addition to these notes regarding circumstances, and the interviews themselves, I decided to write general field observations for each day or evening visit to Darlington.

Defining the sample population

A review of the prostitution literature demonstrates the controversy among authors surrounding definitions of prostitution (Travis, 1983). After observations of Darlington at night, however, a working definition for a prostitute became readily apparent. I identified all stationary females in Darlington as prostitutes. As female residents and non-prostitute women in the neighbourhood, especially at night, walked at a brisk pace, this definition of a prostitute as a stationary female in Darlington was an accurate and useful one. During daytime

field visits, this definition needed to be expanded to include clothing cues in order to distinguish street workers from non-prostitute women standing on corners chatting, waiting for schoolchildren to return home, or standing resting in the midst of carrying grocery shopping home.

Finding a suitable definition for the male prostitute was more difficult as both commercial and non-commercial transactions occurred in Green Park and along the Wall. As Cohen found in his observations of visible street deviance in New York City:

"... non-commercial homosexual encounters in the street often are mistaken for transactions involving male homosexual prostitutes. Signals utilized by male prostitutes compared to female prostitutes are more subtle and discreet. Therefore they are harder to detect. Also, it is relatively difficult to distinguish the prostitute from the patron in a homosexual encounter" (1980:4).

For absence of a better definition, I decided to continue to use the stationary person to distinguish prostitute from non-prostitute males.

During field research, I approached 94 stationary females, transsexuals and males in Darlinghurst to request an interview. Two individuals responded that they were not prostitutes.

Randomly selecting the sample population

As a result of field observations, I decided to begin interviewing females as I, myself, felt least apprehensive about these interviews. I had also chosen to approach interviewees initially at "the quieter end" of my field site where there seemed to be fewer drug-affected workers and a lower concentration of visible street activity. Having defined the field site and the potential sample population, before beginning to interview I still needed to consider a method of selecting my sample.

The first night's interviewees were approached in the Palmer-Bourke-Liverpool Street blocks. Visit by visit I made my way to the opposite end of the field site. I approached every female on each street standing by herself. When women were standing in groups, I briefly observed their interaction. I then approached the group and

first requested an interview from the first person I had seen speaking, then requested an interview with the second speaker and so on. Between 25 February and 27 March, I completed 50 interviews with female prostitutes using this method.

As the transsexual and male territory was small in comparison, I spent several visits along the Wall and in the transsexual area requesting interviews from every street worker. Selection was not an issue in these short blocks.

The days of the week and hours of the day and night I went to Darlinghurst to interview varied to encompass as broad a sample of street workers as possible. On 14 March, for example, on a tour of the field site between 4.30 a.m. and 5 a.m., I interviewed a 30-year-old prostitute who told me she had been working in the very early hours of the mornings to avoid detection from friends who might frequent Darlinghurst during the evenings. Her comments, emphasising how she had been physically attacked a few times in the recent past, in part seemed to be a reflection of her isolation on the streets. At 5 a.m. there were few street prostitutes around to keep an eye on her coming and going, but a continuous stream of customers kerb crawling in cars.

Entering the field: the interview itself

As the entire study rested on getting people to agree to talk with me, I decided that there were several things I could do to improve the response rate.

I tried to approach potential respondents as though it was normal for me to be interviewing in Darlinghurst. I spent time explaining to street workers that they were part of a larger prostitution study (envisioned at that time) so they would not feel targeted in any way. I tried to explain how the interviews could benefit the workers as their responses to possible legislative change were being canvassed. And, finally, I had only eye contact with respondents' faces as I talked with them. I avoided all visual contact with people from the neck down to distinguish my role as a researcher from customer and other general public social interaction.

Although I had been preparing to interview since December, I felt very apprehensive approaching the first female street worker at midnight on 25 February on the corner of Palmer and Liverpool Streets. She was standing by herself, nodding off. (She seemed to be drug-affected.) I went through my introductory greeting and requested an interview. The woman agreed. We began the interview. The first two questions were answered when a man in his thirties approached the interviewee and asked her if she needed any help. (I defined him as a "hovering male".) She replied that she was all right and he left. I asked the third question. The woman had nodded off. I repeated the question. She did not say anything. I skipped the question and went on to number 4. When asked whether she was a hard drug user herself, she answered, "No". Questions were repeated several times. Some received "No idea" responses. When asked about the sorts of changes she would like to see take place to improve working circumstances, she answered:

"I would like to see it legalised. More residents would be getting raped. It's a community service. Why are the new people moving here if they don't like the set-up? I have been raped three times, and my friends - my girlfriend is in hospital. She was stabbed in the stomach five times [by a customer]. They [the customers] have to take it out on somebody."

The interview lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The second interviewee approached, also obviously drug-affected at the time, was a 20-year-old standing by herself on the corner of Bourke and Liverpool Streets. She agreed to be interviewed. I asked questions, sometimes repeated them. The respondent answered briefly. She seemed restless and fidgety. She began stretching her arms and rubbing her track marks. As she began doing a plié and leg-stretching exercises using a corner post as a prop, I assumed from the intense interest of slowly-passing motorists that she probably was not wearing underwear. I continued to ask questions, acting as though nothing-unusual-is-going-on-here. A few minutes later one of the cars stopped. The interviewee ran over and spoke with the driver. She returned to me and said she would be back in five minutes. I told her I would wait for her. I stood on the corner, holding my clipboard, waiting. Cars continued kerb crawling. People walked past. Two males approached and

asked me what I was doing. I didn't ask who they were. I continued with my nothing-unusual-here attitude and described the prostitution study at length. Eventually they left. Soon afterwards a car pulled up and my interviewee waved the motorist goodbye and came over to me. I continued with my questions. We got through another few (this entire time the respondent faced the kerb and I stood at her side). Suddenly, she screamed at me, "Quick! I have got to get out of here!" She began running down Bourke Street. After a few steps, perhaps realising I had not at first followed her, she turned around and told me to come quickly and follow her. I did. I ran after her. She then went into a terrace house on the street. I stood out the front, hesitantly. Excitedly she told me to come in. I did not want to lose my respondent (who in all this time had completed about two-thirds of the interview). I felt there was potential personal danger inside. I thought I would compromise and stand on the steps outside, half-way between the door and the street. There, I could see inside. The room had a few seats, but was otherwise empty. Then a few women wandered out from an inner room. My respondent was not with them. (I never finished that interview.) The women were friendly, relaxed, and did not appear to be drug-affected. As they sat on a couch, they told me to come inside. I ventured inside, but stood in the doorway, where I felt I could get away if necessary. I explained to them what I was doing and one of the women agreed to be interviewed. I began with my questions. A male left the back room and quickly walked past us out to the street. I realised I was in the sitting room of a brothel. Another woman appeared and listened in. All seemed receptive and enthusiastic about the study. I was told it was time the workers were asked for their opinions on prostitution issues. I left at 2 a.m. feeling excited. Every person I had asked to be interviewed had agreed to talk with me.

As the workers in Darlinghurst formed a small, social network, after that first night it was generally known what I was doing in the neighbourhood. When I approached the transsexuals, an appointment was made for me to speak with one of the older, established workers. After that interview, others followed. Having finished the transsexual territory, one of the transsexual workers introduced me to one of the male workers. One hundred per cent of the males approached agreed to be interviewed.

Overall, a lot of talking was involved. As 4 April field notes comment:

"It was a lot of chatting to do five interviews. I was here (on one block) from 10.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. I am 'felt out' by many. It is not just a straight interviewing situation."

Although initially I averaged about three interviews per night, later I increased them to six. With time, some workers approached me, asking to be interviewed, so as not to be left out.

Different interview issues rose for the female, transsexual and male street prostitutes. Getting women to finish the interviews was a major problem. Interruptions from customers and others were sometimes welcomed, sometimes rejected. April 4 field notes state:

"The males talk faster. It is more difficult to take verbatim notes. Many are full of information and very open."

Sections of the street along the Wall were so dimly lit, writing down responses was arduous. Hearing what was being said was an issue among the transsexuals. Owing to voice sensitivity, many seemed to whisper.

Overall, the interview situation presented many examples of friendliness towards me. I felt, in a way, that the female workers tried to impress me. They were concerned with what I thought. At times women rejected customer interruptions and told them to return in five minutes because they were being interviewed. Several women asked if they could smoke in front of me, if I would mind. Few cursed. Some talked at length. Telephone numbers were exchanged as legislative changes regarding soliciting laws grew imminent. One woman followed me for two nights to ensure I received the "correct" answers.

"Another woman has three times 'sat in' on interviews. She told one woman, 'Open your eyes when you speak with her'. When one woman answered that there were pimps, this woman interrupted and said, 'Do you mean that? Do you have a pimp?' She seems to try to give women cues for 'proper' answers. She seems quite concerned that I get the right impression. She greeted me with a hug last night. She wants to talk to me at length every time we meet." (Field notes, 24 March.)

The transsexual and male prostitutes seemed even more friendly. I, in part, interpreted this as there being fewer visibly drug-affected workers among the transsexual/male group. They seemed to have less business and therefore more time to talk. Males who did not welcome conversation simply disappeared into the Green Park men's toilet.

"Funnily, a group of males ran into the lavatory when I approached the Wall area. I turned around only to see two heads sticking out from behind the toilet door peering at me." (Field notes, 4 April.)

On one occasion a number of male workers invited me to go drinking with them after work.

My visits to Darlington presented only one outright example of hostility towards the study. One of the female street workers was rather pugnacious.

"No. 48 came over to me to ask what I was doing. She refused to be interviewed, first returned to her corner and then went up to four different women I was about to approach and pre-introduced my study. One walked away. One refused the interview. Two told her I was O.K. and agreed to do the interview. When their interviews were finished she asked me to get away as I was discouraging business." (Field notes, 12 March.)

"The same hostile woman is running around trying to convince others not to talk with me. She interrupted one interview. Again she told me to get off her street, even though she was on a different street tonight." (Field notes, 23 March.)

Interestingly, No. 61 would not answer any more questions after the hostile woman approached us. But later that evening, she had her friend, who was with her, approach me and ask to be interviewed.

"One of the women I've interviewed stopped me and said she's heard that (No. 48) was giving me a hard time. She told me to ignore her." (Field notes, 25 March.)

The following evening, on 26 March, I passed the hostile woman. There was a marked change in her behaviour. She nodded her head in greeting and remained passive. I had the distinct impression she had been told by other women to stop interfering with my interviewing.

Not only was hostility shown in this way towards the study, but the study also caused some hostility. An incident occurred between a prostitute and a prior customer after he approached us to listen in on the discussion.

"At the end of the interview, a known male approaches and he begins to ask what I'm doing. He discusses with us what I'm doing. He asks if I'm asking about drugs. The interviewee then says, 'What do you think, we're all addicts? Do you think I'm an addict?' He answers, 'Yes'. She turns away from him and runs down the block screaming at him. 'Get away! Don't you ever speak to me again!' She tells me to come with her. She turns around half-way down the end of the block and says, 'You see what I mean? I can only work three days a week. I get so upset.' ... I leave a few minutes later after apologising for causing her a problem with the customer. She says it's all right. The male is sitting down at the end of the block. He asks me what the problem is and I say, 'Nothing' and cross the road." (Field notes, 23 March.)

Assessing the validity of interviews

This study offers an alternate situation to much research into deviant groups. Rather than considering a sample population referred by a social welfare agency, for example, but interviewing in a conventional environment (in a private, quiet, one-to-one atmosphere), the interview setting was unorthodox to increase the participation of a variety of street prostitutes. Several factors may be used to assess the validity of these interviews.

Rate of acceptance

Of the 68 female street prostitutes approached, 50 (74 per cent) agreed to be interviewed. For transsexuals, 9 out of 10 individuals agreed to be involved in the study. The acceptance rate for the 12 male prostitutes approached was 100 per cent.

Effect of the street setting on informant responses

It is often stated that ideally the interviewer should talk with the informant in privacy to increase the possibility of eliciting valid responses. On the streets of Darlinghurst I was hardly ever alone with

interviewees, although, occasionally, people would suggest we find a bench, terrace step or fence away from others where we could talk. And from time to time the hour of interviewing would mean that not many others would be around. But those instances were the exception, rather than the rule.

Street interviews offered many of the advantages of group interviews. Usually, the other person who may have been listening in was a friend or fellow-worker. This seemed to increase the validity of responses as friends would react to answers given. On occasion, a woman would respond to questions and afterwards, when she found me by myself, would add information concerning drug usage or "hovering males". A few times, listeners would approach me after an interview to tell me confidentially that the interviewee had lied about her age and her drug intake. The uniformity in responses was reassuring. Additionally, as women listened in to conversations it seemed to encourage their own participation. The main problem invariably concerned self-reported drug use. And no matter where the setting, eliciting answers to drug-related inquiries would be difficult.

The street setting does offer the researcher an immediate advantage over interviews conducted indoors. Through the hours spent on the street, at the work site, there is increased awareness and understanding of working conditions and job-related problems.

Effect of heroin on informant responses

As 13 women self-reported heroin use - eight were assessed as being heroin-affected at the time of the interview and the women themselves estimated that approximately 50 to 90 per cent of female street workers were hard drug users (between February and April 1983) - one cannot ignore the questionable effect of heroin on informant responses. Personally, I assessed heroin-affected interviews as having been difficult in the sense of having repeated pauses and of questions needing to be restated two or three times owing to short-term memory lapse. But I felt that when informants did speak, the content of what was said seemed reliable and at times insightful. Heroin seemed to make the technical aspects of talking cumbersome, but did not seem to affect thought patterns.

Although research "... indicates that researchers need not concern themselves with the veracity of addict informants any more than they would with a less deviant sample" (Stephens, 1972:557), these studies did not evaluate individuals while under the influence of the drug.

Assuming that heroin use has differing effects on the individual at various periods from the time of intake, I could not differentiate these stages. This was not of concern, however, as worker perceptions and attitudes concerning largely mundane aspects of the job were of interest. Questions likely to cause discomfort (names of drug suppliers, methods of obtaining drugs, crime involvement) were avoided.

Additionally, medical evidence seems to indicate:

"There is thus general agreement throughout the medical and psychiatric literature that the overall effects of opium, morphine and heroin on the addict's mind and body under conditions of low price and ready availability are on the whole amazingly bland" (Brecher, 1972:27).

Effect of the interview on the interviewer

The effect of the research enterprise vis-a-vis the informant is sometimes evaluated. Rarely is the effect on the researcher mentioned. It is worth brief consideration.

I found the interviewing both physically and emotionally draining. Travelling to Darlinghurst at varying hours between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. while maintaining normal daytime hours is tiring. But the involvement in other people's lives, which invariably occurs with semi-structured interviewing, can be both depressing and exhausting. After completing one interview, a female worker followed me down the street to tell me how lonely she was. All the women she worked with were heroin-addicted. They talked about getting their drugs. She felt emotionally alienated. Another time a man fainted, bumping his head on the cement, in the middle of a conversation with me. After regaining consciousness, he was more concerned that I did not think he was drug-affected than he was worried about possible head injuries. Another male told me at length how he

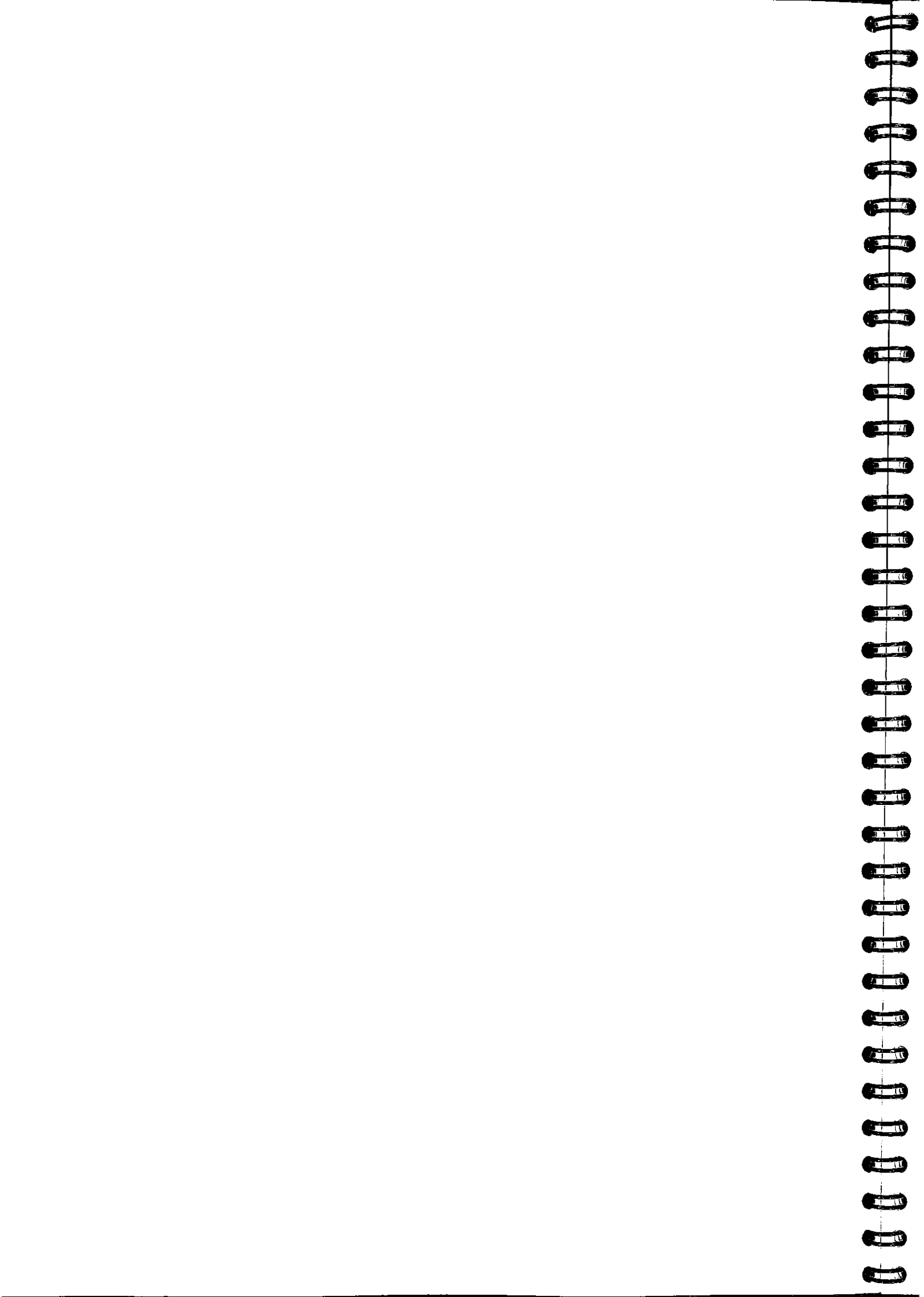
became involved in prostitution, having run away from a state institution, having been rejected by his mother, a Kings Cross prostitute, and having decided to live with a heroin-dependent sister. He said he first started working to help his sister. And then there were the Saturday nights, characterised by so-called "yahoos" passing by in cars, calling out abuse at all prostitutes, occasionally throwing empty beer bottles.

During the days, away from Darlington, personal acquaintances responded to my research in a way that confirmed to me that when one studies deviant subcultures, one is at risk of acquiring a deviant label. One acquaintance told me what I was doing was "disgusting", another greeted me with "How's tricks?" on a regular basis. One neighbour mentioned that I had been seen at the Cross at 2 a.m. and asked what I was doing there. Still others approached with questions: "What do transsexuals actually do with customers?" "Do the women have orgasms with customers?" "How many are dirty?" Quickly I found myself keeping my work and day-to-day life separate. I chose carefully who I would talk to about the prostitution project.

At first I had been concerned with the potential risks of street interviewing. Female and transsexual prostitutes warned me to be careful of men who, from time to time, would arbitrarily pick out a woman to assault before returning to their car and driving off. I was advised by one worker to run into the traffic and scream for help if a customer gave me problems. One male approached me four times in a few weeks as he picked me out as a "nice girl" who could comfort him while his wife was in the maternity ward. On two occasions, belligerent males ran up to me and demanded to know why I was writing down car licence plate numbers. (I showed them interview notes and they ran back into their cars and drove off.) During my first night of interviewing along the Wall, one man in a car drove past seven times asking for sex and interrupting the interview with offers yelled from his car. Men stopped me on the street to talk. I never knew who or what any of them were. One, describing himself as a pimp, I dismissed as a drunk larrikin. Another, hearing my American accent, began to reminisce about his gun-running activities in the United States and the time when he was held on homicide charges.

(Was he simply trying to scare me?) That same evening a small male introduced himself to me as a slave looking for a dominant woman to command him. I was offered training and a business partnership in a budding sado-masochism club. On yet another occasion the male street worker I was interviewing told me he had a knife on him. His brother had been knifed in the stomach the night before. He was waiting to avenge the assault.

Even though these incidents pointed to potential personal danger, I felt that as long as I was not alone with customers, I would be all right. But at the same time I did develop a constant alertness, a constant tension of not being able fully to relax with the realisation that customers responded to women on the streets in Darlinghurst at night as fair game. With time this aspect of potential risk became significant to me. I understood risk as being part of the prostitute's street experience in a way that the literature or indoor interviews could never suggest.



THE FEMALE WORKERS

Descriptive material of the street prostitute population

Place of birth

It has been alleged that when street soliciting was decriminalised by the New South Wales government in 1979, prostitutes came to work in Sydney from all parts of Australia.

Even if this was the case initially, by 1983 of the 50 women interviewed, half were born in Sydney (see Table 1) and the majority (56 per cent) were from the state of N.S.W.

Table 1. Place of birth of female workers

Place	Number	Percentage
Sydney, N.S.W.	25	50
Country, N.S.W.	3	6
Queensland	2	4
Tasmania	1	2
Victoria	2	4
Australia, not specified	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total, Australia	34	68
England	5	10
Germany (West)	2	4
Italy	1	2
New Zealand	5	10
Scotland	2	4
Sweden	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total, Overseas	16	32
Grand Total	50	100

Compared with the 1981 Census of Population and Housing for the Sydney Statistical Division, the female sample has a higher proportion of overseas born. The census describes 26 per cent of the total population being from overseas as opposed to 32 per cent in the female street-worker group.

Place of residence

Although females came from as far as the Seven Hills Electoral District to work in Darlinghurst, the largest group (20 per cent) lived in the general vicinity (Table 2).

Table 2. Place of residence of female workers

Area	Number	Percentage
<u>State Electoral District</u>		
Auburn	1	2
Balmain	3	6
Bligh	10	20
Cronulla	1	2
Davidson	2	4
Elizabeth	9	18
Manly	2	4
North Shore	3	6
Seven Hills	1	2
Vaucluse	6	12
Wakehurst	2	4
Waverley	3	6
<u>Interstate</u>	1	2
<u>No fixed address</u>	1	2
<u>Not specified</u>	5	10
Total	50	100

Age

Table 3 shows that the modal age of respondents interviewed was 21 years. The average age of female streetwalkers was 23 years.

Table 3. Age of female prostitutes

Age	Number	Percentage
17	2	4
18	1	2
19	6	12
20	5	10
21	8	16
22	6	12
23	2	4
24	2	4
25	5	10
26	4	8
27	2	4
28	0	0
29	2	4
30	2	4
31 and over	3	6
Total	50	100

Number of years in the prostitution industry

When asked the length of time they had worked as a prostitute, many women commented that prostitution is something one does "on and off", rather

than as a continuous career. Table 4 indicates how many years female prostitutes have been working in the industry from the time of their first prostitution job.

Table 4. Number of years female prostitutes have worked in the industry

Number of years	Number	Percentage
Less than 1	15	30
1	5	10
2	4	8
3	6	12
4	5	10
5	2	4
6	5	10
7	1	2
8	1	2
9	0	0
10	1	2
11 or more	2	4
Unknown	3	6
Total	50	100

Time varied from extremes of having been interviewed on her first night working in the industry (1 respondent) to having been involved in prostitution 14 years (2 respondents). Approximately one third of the women (30 per cent) had been prostitutes less than one year.

Although 35 respondents (70 per cent) had become prostitutes since 1979 when the Prostitution Act took effect, data do not clarify whether this is simply a reflection of age (that as the average age of women was 23, most had become involved in prostitution in their late teens), of economic times or of legislative change in prostitution laws.

Prior prostitution-related job experience

Women were asked whether they had been involved in other aspects of the trade besides streetwalking. Thirteen women (26 per cent) responded that street soliciting was their first job in prostitution. Of the rest (37 respondents) who had job experience, most of these women (67.9 per cent) had worked in a brothel or parlour. One had worked as a receptionist for an escort agency. Two had been managers of establishments. Ten (18.9 per cent of those with prior experience) had been escorts (Table 5).

Table 5. Prior prostitution-related job experience
of 37 female prostitutes

Type of work	Number*	Percentage
Administration	3	5.7
Bondage & discipline specialist	1	1.9
Escort	10	18.9
Model	1	1.9
Parlour/brothel**	36	67.9
Stripper	2	3.8
Total	53*	100

* As respondents may have had experience in more than one area, each prior job is accounted for.

** At times the term parlour is used to describe establishments others might call brothels. To avoid confusion, parlours and brothels have been combined into one category. Of this total category, only two women specifically stated that they had had brothel experience.

If a social hierarchy in prostitution exists (presumably with streetwalking at the bottom), there is a lot of vertical mobility within that structure. Unlike typical career patterns in other industries where there is gradual ascent within an occupation over years, Table 5 implies a high degree of upward and downward mobility within the prostitution industry which is comparatively unusual. For the majority of women, the decision to work as a streetwalker represents a downward change in status, although simultaneously it often results in an increase in income earned.

Reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

The reasons why one becomes involved in any occupation are not often evident. Prostitution is no exception.

Although it was felt that it would be too personal and unrealistic to expect women to discuss initial reasons for their involvement in the industry, it was felt that understanding reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work would be useful.

Table 6 shows that the majority of women (60.7 per cent) chose streetwalking over other work for financial reasons.

"Parlours take half your money ... If you're late they'll fine you."

"I have a mortgage and two children. The parlour takes 50 per cent."

"I needed the money."

"Here you pay \$40 a night for a room. The rest you make for yourself."

"Parlours take half the money, which is not fair when you're degrading yourself for the money."

Table 6. Stated reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

Reason	Number*	Percentage
Difficulties with other jobs	3	4.9
Had to start somewhere	1	1.6
Knew someone already working on the street	6	9.8
More freedom	12	19.7
More money	37	60.7
Part of parlour work	1	1.6
No response	1	1.6
Total	61*	100

* As respondents may have stated more than one reason, each reason has been counted.

Some women stated outright that by streetwalking they earned more money. Others resented the 50/50 split of a woman's gross earnings with parlour/brothel management at the end of each shift.

Data do not indicate the financial circumstances of women at the time they chose streetwalking. Jennifer James has discussed this aspect in a recent article concerning prostitution in the United States:

"In one recent study of 136 streetwalkers (James, 1976), 8.4% of the subjects claimed to have started prostitution because of the economic necessity, while 56.5% were motivated by a desire for money and material goods - a desire which, due to sex-based economic discrimination, they saw no way to fulfil other than by prostitution. A typical comment by a streetwalker in that study referred to 'the excitement of buying whatever you wanted without asking anybody ... of having big sums of money that you never had before.' Once accustomed to a higher income, as another subject of that study noted, 'It would be pretty hard to go back to less money'" (1978).

Twelve of the women interviewed (19.7 per cent) stated that they chose streetwalking as it offered them more freedom than other types of prostitution-related work. Put simply, as one woman explained, "I'm my own boss." This finding, a desire for independence among street workers, conforms with other research findings.

"Data from the recent study (James, 1976) mentioned earlier support the assertion that independence is highly valued by many of the women who choose prostitution. When asked 'Why did you leave home?' the largest category of responses by the subjects in that study was 'desire for independence' ... Another question in that study, 'What are the advantages of being a prostitute?', also revealed the value that independence has for these women. Although the economic motivation overwhelmed all other categories in the first responses, in the second responses, independence had first place" (James, 1978).

The third most common reason offered for streetwalking among respondents was that they knew somebody already working on the streets:

"I had no idea how to get in, but my sister was here, so I got in with her."

"I have a girlfriend working here."

One woman replied that parlour management had instructed her to solicit. When indoor business was slow, she was told to bring customers from the street back to the parlour.

Where women solicit and reasons for the chosen market place

Female prostitutes were asked whether they go to other parts of Sydney, outside Darlinghurst, to solicit (Table 7). Ninety-two per cent of respondents said they restricted soliciting to the area (although further comments showed that a few women treated the question as whether women go outside the Darlinghurst/Kings Cross area to work). Three women claimed they solicit outside the vicinity (in the Cross, Surry Hills, Woollahra, Kingsford).

Table 7. Number of women who solicit outside Darlinghurst

Solicit outside Darlinghurst	Number	Percentage
Yes	3	6
No	45	92
Unknown	1	2
Total	50	100

A variety of reasons were offered as to why prostitutes choose Darlinghurst to work:

"Darlinghurst is the place to work. It has been for years."

"I just heard Kings Cross has too many people. Darlinghurst is not as busy as the Cross. There are no bright lights."

"I have been living here six years, even before I started working."

"This is the only spot I know. I'm trying to be discreet."

"This has always been the red-light area."

"Why should I go [somewhere else] when I stand here and everyone comes to me? I wouldn't want to stand anywhere else. You just don't go and stand somewhere."

"It's not allowed [in other parts of Sydney]."

"There is no money anywhere else."

"It's an established area. Whether you're straight or not, guys pull up and ask how much."

"I feel secure here."

These reasons have been grouped in Table 8.

Table 8. Reasons for Darlington as a favoured place

Reason	Number*	Percentage
Darlington is convenient as it is where other women work and houses are set up	2	3.9
Darlington is a known area for street prostitution	30	58.8
Working in Darlington is not as busy or as rough as working in the Cross	2	3.9
Other	13	25.5
No response	4	7.8
Total	51*	100

* As women may have offered several reasons for their choice of Darlington as a work place, each reason has been counted.

Most women (58.8 per cent) considered Darlington to be the known area for street soliciting and therefore the favoured work place. In turn, this meant the neighbourhood was the place where customers went, where money could be made.

Number of years working in Darlington

The amount of time prostitutes have worked in Darlington has been a source of conflict between the workers and the neighbourhood's residents. The residents describe the situation as prostitutes arriving in large numbers as a response to the 1979 Prostitution Act which decriminalised street soliciting. Many prostitutes, on the other hand, argued that prostitutes had been working in the neighbourhood before many of the present-day residents had moved in. One prostitute claimed that workers had been in Darlington over 70 years, since 1910, whereas Kings Cross changed from a bohemian place to a place for prostitution only

during the American R & R days. Prostitution, as she described it, existed in Palmer Street (Darlinghurst) before moving to the Cross. The issue requires further research.

Data do not clarify which came first to Darlinghurst - the residents or the prostitutes. But interviews do show that women have been working in the neighbourhood at least since 1969. On the other hand, as indicated in Table 9, 88 per cent of those female prostitutes interviewed came to Darlinghurst in the past four years, since 1979. Almost half the respondents (44 per cent) had been working in Darlinghurst less than one year.

Table 9. Number of years female prostitutes have been working in Darlinghurst

Number of years	Number	Percentage
Less than 1	22	44
1	9	18
2	7	14
3	2	4
4	4	8
5	1	2
6	1	2
7	1	2
8 or more	2	4
No response	1	2
Total	50	100

Number of hours soliciting

Women were asked whether soliciting was a full-time or part-time job for them. Fifty-six per cent of streetwalkers considered their work

full-time. Forty-two per cent considered it to be part-time. (One woman did not offer any response.)

More specifically, women offered the number of nights per week (in the month prior to being interviewed) as well as the number of hours per night they worked, as in Table 10. Women worked a wide range of hours (from 3 to 95 per week). Forty-eight per cent worked between 1 and 35 hours, while 46 per cent solicited 36 or more hours. It is interesting to note that one woman working 42 hours considered her job part-time while another soliciting on average of 15 hours per week described her job as full-time.

Table 10. Number of hours per week females solicit

Number of hours	Number	Percentage
1-10	6	12
11-15	4	8
16-20	5	10
21-25	4	8
26-30	4	8
31-35	1	2
36-40	4	8
41-45	3	6
46-50	2	4
51-55	2	4
56-60	1	2
61-65	2	4
66-70	5	10
71 and over	4	8
No response*	3	6
Total	50	100

* These respondents commented that they worked however long it took them to earn a pre-determined amount of money and did not offer any specific number of hours.

Presence of "hovering males"

Overseas literature on prostitution often discusses the pimp-prostitute relationship. The part the pimp actually plays in recruiting women into prostitution has been the subject of debate. In the United States, for example, Decker writes "... pimps are often blamed for being the chief cause of prostitution among women ..." (1979:238). James' study of streetwalkers, on the other hand, shows:

"... that the influence of 'girlfriends' was more than equal to the influence of pimps, that more than twice as many women reported choosing prostitution solely on their own initiative, and that our field experience leads us to agree with Gray that the pressure applied by pimps in recruiting women is generally minimal" (1978:188).

The present study primarily was interested in finding out the prevalence of streetwalkers with pimps. These individuals often are referred to as "hoons" in New South Wales. The interview questions did not define or clarify the type of relationship that may exist between prostitutes and such males. As Decker explains:

"Indeed, the term 'pimp' itself carries with it differing connotations... At the one extreme, any person who simply lives off the earnings of a prostitute, in whole or in part, is deemed a pimp. At the other, an individual is not considered a pimp unless he draws another into prostitution and thereafter dictates daily activities, supervises the manner of operation, solicits customers, expropriates and spends virtually all earnings, and otherwise commands influence over that person's life ... A pimp is basically thought of as the male who inflicts a dependency relationship upon the woman prostitute" (1979:238).

This study attempted a very crude appraisal of the existence of hoons. As each woman was approached to be interviewed, it was noted whether "a hovering male" was visible.

At times these hovering males would appear after the women were asked if they were all right, if the interview was bothering them, if they needed help. It was assumed that these males probably had a pimp-type

relationship with the women. Of the 50 women interviewed, a hovering male appeared during six (12 per cent) of the discussions.

Women were directly asked the question: "Working women tell me pros in Darlinghurst have never had pimps. Would you agree?" Field notes from 11 March 1983 comment upon the sensitivity of the question:

"It is interesting that the aspect about pimps seems to be more secretive than the drug aspect, which is fairly open."

On one occasion, a worker waited until she was alone with me to tell me her reply.

Table 11 indicates the division among women over whether Darlinghurst prostitutes have ever had pimps. Most (38 per cent) said they had never had such a relationship with males:

"I've never had a pimp."

"It's garbage. We rent rooms off the guys for \$40. There's no such thing as a pimp."

"Not as far as I know. Some support boyfriends. You get protection from your sitter."

Table 11. "Working women say that pros in Darlinghurst have never had pimps. Would you agree?"

Response	Number	Percentage
Yes	19	38
No	15	30
No response	16	32
Total	50	100

But 15 women (30 per cent) disagreed. One respondent made a historical distinction, saying workers did have pimps under the Summary Offences Act, but no longer do:

"Bullshit. Before it became legal there were pimps. Now, no, not individual protectors. There is a sitter. He gets a wage every day. He collects the rent for the house. I suppose his wage comes out of what he collects."

It was also suggested that the pimp situation is minimal in Darlington compared to Kings Cross. March 25 field notes read:

"One woman told me that Kings Cross prostitutes have pimps. Unlike Darlington, where you can work anywhere, she said that in the Cross women have to pay for their place to stand. And, if you stand there, you'll get your head smashed in."

Additional comments distinguished between a boyfriend and a pimp:

"I think a boyfriend is a pimp. Most users have a boyfriend and the girls support both habits. That's a pimp."

"What way do you mean 'pimp'? Forcing? No, unless it is a boyfriend. Living off them, yes, there are a lot of cases."

One remark was a comment on the police:

"The coppers are pimps themselves."

Another woman strongly disagreed with the question, saying that the traditional prostitute-pimp relationship does exist in Darlington:

"I have stood and watched and some girls were forced to work one night, but by whom I don't know ... There are men who get young women and force women out. They addict women to a drug and they have a habit and have to work. One woman I know had a job in a bank. She had a habit and had to go onto the street. It is psychological mostly. It's happening more and more. There is no way I'd go out and work for a man."

The remaining responses attempted to put an estimate on the prevalence of pimping:

"Ninety-nine per cent haven't."

"Not many, I know one or two."

"There are pimps for two to three workers [in our house]."

"In this house where I work, three to four girls out of about 22."

"There are pimps around, about 25 per cent."

"Half have them, half don't."

In sum, the aspect of pimps is a controversial one which requires further refinement. Research does indicate that many women at the present time rely on a sitter in houses where customers are taken from the street to have sex. There is also indication that drug-dependent workers are sometimes financially supporting drug-dependent boyfriends. On the whole, pimping in Darlington is described by some women as less than what it used to be and less than the present situation in Kings Cross.

Drug use

As with "hovering males", drug usage among female prostitutes in Darlington was a difficult area to research. A subjective appraisal of the drug state of individuals was made upon request of an interview. At that time, the researcher personally assessed eight women (16 per cent of the female respondent population) to be drug-affected. As seven of these individuals were nodding off, it was assumed they were heroin-dependent. One female seemed to be under the influence of another, unknown substance.

During the interview, women were directly asked whether they, themselves, were hard drug users (Table 12). Thirteen workers (26 per cent) were self-reported heroin users.

Table 12. Self-reported heroin use
by female streetwalkers

Heroin use	Number	Percentage
Yes	13	26
No	33	66
Used to use, but not anymore	1	2
No response	3	6
Total	50	100

Two of the visibly-affected heroin-dependent individuals said that they were not heroin users. Assuming this is not correct, 30 per cent of women were either affected by heroin at the time of interview or were self-reported heroin users.

A few women commented on their addiction:

"I am an addict. I had a seizure Saturday night at work".

"I do have a taste once in a while. I did tonight. Some workers can make 200 dollars in a weekend and then have to borrow to get cigarettes and spending money. It's sad."

Perhaps a more objective appraisal of heroin use among streetwalkers is their response to the question: "What percentage of women do you think are regular hard drug users?" (Table 13).

Table 13. "What percentage of women do you think are regular hard drug users?"

Percentage said to be heroin-dependent	Number responding	Percentage
Under 50	4	8
50-60	10	20
61-70	4	8
71-80	3	6
81-90	11	22
91-100	7	14
No response	<u>11</u>	<u>22</u>
Total	50	100

Even though 11 women (22 per cent) did not offer a numerical percentage of estimated heroin users among Darlinghurst streetwalkers, nevertheless several comments were made:

"I admire them for working rather than committing other crimes."

"It's mainly the young girls under 20. Their boyfriends use drugs. The older girls are more sensible."

"I don't know. I'm shaking like crazy. My nerves are shattered. It's hard."

The largest group of respondents (22 per cent) felt that between 81 and 90 per cent of streetwalkers were heroin-dependent. This would indicate a vast under-reporting of individual heroin use.

The literature on non-medical drug usage deals with the relationship between first drug use and initial involvement in a deviant or criminal occupation. As Goldstein writes concerning his research:

"It was found that among the twenty-seven women who were both addicts and prostitutes, addiction was only slightly more likely to pre-date prostitution than vice versa. However, addicts tended to become prostitutes almost twice as quickly as prostitutes became addicts.

"The relationship between prostitution and addiction varied, depending upon the level of prostitution engaged in. Among high-class prostitutes, prostitution was most likely to precede addiction, and the most common addiction was to stimulants ...

"Among low-class prostitutes, addiction tended to pre-date prostitution. The most common addiction was to heroin. The causal linkage between addiction and prostitution was most likely to be based on economic necessity" (1979:145).

In a crude way, those who admitted heroin use were asked in the present study which came first for them, involvement in drugs or involvement in prostitution. Again, the question was rephrased for all respondents: "In your opinion, which comes first for most women - involvement in drugs or involvement in prostitution?" (Table 14).

Table 14. Which comes first - involvement in drugs or involvement in prostitution?

Response	Number of self-reported users	Number of non-users	Total
Drugs	10	8	18
Prostitution	2	9	11
Either way	0	11	11
No response	<u>1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	13	27	50

Ten of 13 self-reported heroin users stated that, for them, drugs pre-dated their involvement in prostitution. One woman explained that when one is addicted, "You either work [as a prostitute] or deal."

Among self-reported non-users, however, approximately one third of this group felt it could go either way. Significantly, almost one quarter stated that prostitution probably came first for most women:

"A lot of girls say, 'I can't work straight'. It's a vicious circle."

"A lot of my friends take the drugs to make it easier. Then they get a habit."

Prostitution is thereby described as the type of occupation that could lead one to use drugs.

The 13 self-reported heroin users were asked specific questions about their drug use. As Table 15 indicates, 23 per cent had been taking heroin for 10 years at the time of their interview. Rather than interpreting such extended heroin use as being typical of Darlington

Table 15. Number of years self-reported heroin users state they have used heroin

Years	Number	Percentage
Less than 1	2	15.4
1	0	0
2	0	0
3	0	0
4	0	0
5	2	15.4
6	1	7.7
7	1	7.7
8	2	15.4
9	0	0
10	3	23.1
No response	<u>2</u>	<u>15.4</u>
Total	13	100

streetwalkers, however, such long usage is more likely the reason for self-admitted heroin-dependence. It may be that long-term addicts are more truthful in admitting drug use.

The amount of time between involvement in drugs and involvement in prostitution varied for self-reported addicts. One woman stated that there was a two-month lapse between heroin use and prostitution work. At the other extreme, one woman said she was heroin-dependent for nine years before she became a prostitute. Most typical, however, was a one-year time span between heroin use and prostitution.

Of these 13 self-reported heroin users, five said they had solely used heroin in the week before the interview. Four had additionally used marijuana and three said they had also taken pills. In total, six of the 13 women described themselves as polydrug users.

Customers

"A young boy by himself passes by us on Forbes Street and Darlinghurst Road. The worker I'm talking with asks me how old I think he is. I say maybe 12, 13 or 14. She says, 'Maybe 14. Kids like that come around here with \$20, sometimes \$60 in their pockets'."
(Field notes, 11 March 1983.)

Overseas literature discusses the range of males using prostitute services as well as possible reasons for them doing so. There is little information concerning the Australian customer.

For this reason, female workers were asked to describe their customers (by age and area of residence), their customers' sexual habits (whether they use the services of different types of prostitutes or restrict themselves to streetwalkers) and their general attitude towards their customers as a group.

Customers were usually described as varied in age, ranging from 15 to 80 years old. Within this spectrum, men in their 30s and 40s were mentioned most often.

Knowledge about customers' area of residence clarifies whether Darlinghurst clients were local residents or whether men travelled to the

area for prostitution. Most women emphasised that customers came "from everywhere, from all over". Only one respondent specifically referred to local residents as customers:

"On week nights they are locals, on weekends from the suburbs and on long weekends from all over Australia."

Three women commented on the large number of ethnic customers they have. Nine women described clients as mostly coming from the Western Suburbs:

"My assumption on Friday and Saturday nights is they are from the Western Suburbs."

"They are from the Western Suburbs, quite definitely."

Workers were asked the percentage of their customers they thought go only to streetwalkers (compared with other types of professional women) for sex. Rather than answering with a numerical figure (which varied, incidentally, from 30 to 99 per cent), the majority of streetwalkers offered reasons why they felt customers preferred street prostitution to other types of prostitution. Several women responded that it was less expensive for a customer to use street prostitutes:

"The only reason they come to streetwalkers is it's a bit cheaper. Pleasure they can get anywhere."

"The majority here couldn't afford escort agencies."

"We are cheaper. They are not just paying for the house. They have their regular girls."

That the transaction took little time was similarly said to be a consideration:

"It is quick. They can choose from their cars."

"The ones I see only come to Darlinghurst. If the company pays they'll go to a parlour. Otherwise they'll come here."

"Here

1. They see what they're getting.
2. It's cheaper.
3. It's quicker."

That customers were at times too embarrassed to go to a parlour was mentioned:

"They feel they're being peered at in massage parlours. It's embarrassing for them."

"... The guys like seeing girls on the street. Parlours are embarrassing. There are a lot of girls sitting there. They have to pick one out. Here they can stop and talk to a girl."

Whether the parlour or street situation was more discreet for customers was discussed. Two women stated that Darlington prostitution could be discreet:

"Customers can come in and out [of Darlington] and not be seen."

"They don't like parlours. They are worried they'll see someone there."

The opposite view was also offered:

"More guys go to parlours as it's more discreet."

One suggestion was that street prostitution offered a more personal service than a parlour would:

"A lot are here for the first time. They go to the first person. Parlours have showers. It's like a business contract (in the parlour, men are told what to do). No one else is involved here."

And, finally, one respondent replied that customers came to Darlington in response to media publicity:

"A lot of guys say, 'We want to see the fuss on radio and TV'. I have been with guys who say they want to find out what it's about."

Table 16 shows female workers' general attitude towards customers. Although attitudes were mixed, one third (32 per cent) were primarily negative in their appraisal of customers:

"I don't think much of most of them. Most treat you like nothing."

"Yuck."

"Revolting."

"The majority are bastards."

"Dirty old men."

"You can get really nice ones and real bums. One guy put a sledgehammer to my head. Some are real bummers."

"The regulars are nice. There are a few assholes. The weekend yahoos are pains in the ass. They drive past you and insult you, drunk."

"Most try to humiliate me. Most are pigs."

Table 16. Female workers' attitude towards customers

Attitude	Number	Percentage
Positive	14	28
Negative	16	32
Neutral	14	28
No response	<u>6</u>	<u>12</u>
Total	50	100

Fourteen women (28 per cent) were primarily positive in their appraisal of customers. Four people from this group simply saw customers as money.

"I am polite to them, ask them their name, etc. Then I see a little money and shine up. I would like him to get his rocks off, but so many are drunk."

Many customers were described as pleasant people:

"Most are nice if you choose them and they don't take too long."

"Ninety-five per cent are nice."

"A good 90 per cent are O.K. I have never had any trouble. If you're O.K., they're O.K."

"Really nice."

"Mostly it depends on how you treat them. Most are nice people, friendly. Customers in parlours expect more as they pay for the establishment and they feel they own you. Here you come first."

"They are intrigued by me. I don't give them cheek. They ask a lot of questions."

"Nine out of 10 are good. I've only heard of one trouble in two years. You have to be careful before hopping in cars. I've had a few knives pulled on me. I tell them I have someone who takes number plates. I tell them they'll give it to the police."

An additional 28 per cent of replies concerning clients were neutral:

"They are all different."

"Human beings."

"Average men, mostly married."

"Most don't mean nothing to me. They're all the same."

"They're ordinary people."

"When I get a guy to do my work they must need a relief."

In sum, general attitudes towards customers were mixed.

Police

Women were asked to describe what contact they had had with the police in the six months prior to their interview. Eight women did not offer any response to the question. Twenty-two workers (44 per cent) said they had not had any police contact.

Twenty (40 per cent) said they had. Several women explained that being heroin-dependent increased the likelihood of police contact:

"If you're deteriorating on the street, then they'll pick you up."

"I was busted tonight. I've had seven charges in six months. It was use of an illegal drug tonight."

Another three workers contacted the police owing to client problems.

"I got attacked and reported it. They responded well."

One person was charged in response to a resident complaint:

"A resident rang the police and I was pointed out by mistake. The two that picked me up were real smart. They knew they had the wrong person. I was still charged with serious alarm. So I went and knocked on the door and I was abused by the resident. I was nearly in tears. A couple in the station were really good."

Two respondents had police contact either as a result of giving information or trying to get it:

"I rang tonight to ask if it's legal on the street and they said 'Yes, if you don't have a pimp'."

"They stop me and ask if there's trouble."

Two women described how they were friendly with police.

"I'm always in contact, waving. The mounties are friendly, out of this world."

One worker commented that in the past six months she had had contact with police as customers.

Table 17 indicates how the workers perceive the police attitude to prostitution. In part, answers to the question: "How would you describe the police attitude towards prostitution?" elicited comments concerning police treatment of prostitutes. It also revealed workers' attitudes towards the police.

Table 17. Female streetwalkers' perceptions of the police attitude to prostitution

Police attitude	Number	Percentage
Positive	23	46
Negative	15	30
Neutral	7	14
No response	<u>5</u>	<u>10</u>
Total	50	100

Almost half (46 per cent) of the respondents thought police had a positive outlook on prostitution, although three comments did differentiate between uniformed men and detectives:

"The uniforms wave. The detectives drive past."

"The detectives are awful. The uniforms are great. It's good to have them around, sometimes."

Other positive responses discussed the police in general.

"They are friendly, doing their job."

"The ones I've spoken to seem to be on our side. They say there should be a red-light district."

"Most police are polite to me."

One worker said that police have a positive attitude to prostitution, but for corrupt reasons:

"They've tied it up. They take money every week. They take money from the parlour."

Thirty per cent of answers indicated police had a negative attitude to prostitution. Among reasons offered, four responses concerned corruption. One woman suggested police payoffs occur among streetwalkers at the present time:

"They are criminals themselves. I've heard they

have some girls who are paying them not to get busted."

Another commented that payoffs decreased when street soliciting was decriminalised in 1979:

"When it was illegal we were a source of money."

Still another reply talked about corruption in the parlours:

"Every parlour pays the coppers."

It is significant to note that although 10 per cent of responses commented on police corruption, only one remark suggested that it occurs at the present time among streetwalkers. And that allegation was said to be based on hearsay.

Other negative comments concerning the police attitude were more general:

"Coppers are mugs. They look down on us, that's natural. They see the whole scene. They're a part of it as much as I am. They're men. They're as attracted as others, trying to get us to go on dates."

"They are pretty hard on the girls."

"Some police treat you like dirt. Some are smart asses."

"Most cops think of us as dirty, rather than as a job. Some girls have sex for nothing. We make money."

Jennifer James has commented that such negative attitudes to the police influence the decision of whether or not to report crime officially.

"This lack of respect and concern on the part of law enforcement personnel towards prostitutes also prevents prostitutes from seeking legal help when they are abused or assaulted by customers, which is not an uncommon occurrence. Faced with the attitude that she was 'asking for it', or at least 'had it coming to her', a prostitute who reports abuse from a customer or her pimp to the police is liable to feel more victimized by the discrimination of the legal system than by the violence of individual men" (1978:190).

Street location

Street location within Darlinghurst is the final category which offers descriptive material of the street prostitute population. Interviews and observations have indicated variety within the female sample. Women working on the same block indicated similarities and hostility to workers on other blocks. Field notes from 12 March 1983 state:

"There are street differences to some extent. The Victoria and Hardie Streets women are older and curse more in their speech. There are some drugs, but they call themselves 'the clean end'. They refer to French letters. They seem like streetwise independent types. They charge 20 dollars."

Descriptive material of the female population indicates common characteristics. A closer examination of these similarities shows the significance of street location within Darlinghurst, that norms exist for different blocks. Of the seven women who were subjectively appraised to be heroin-dependent, for example, one woman was standing on Bourke Street between Liverpool and Burton Streets, and the remaining six were standing on Liverpool Street at points between Palmer and Hardie Streets. A woman approached me on Victoria and Liverpool Streets to say:

"This is the nice clean little end. The problem is the car girls, the garden girls on Forbes and Bourke. Pass it along to clean them up. Let us legit. girls work."

On 10 April I stopped to talk with some streetwalkers on Victoria Street. Notes indicate:

"The women on Victoria say the brothel 'up the hill' (one block away) and the 'drag' queens (on Burton) are the cause of the Darlinghurst problem."

Often I was told about "the cause of the Darlinghurst problem". From the female worker perspective there was little finger-pointing at the police. There was tremendous hostility to residents in the area. There was some hostility to the workers on other blocks, a "We are clean, but they take drugs" approach. As field notes explain:

"I am beginning to see Darlington by night as a social network where there are 'the girls' and 'the cops' who are usually amicable under present legislation unless drugs are used. The male prostitutes are separate. The transsexuals are now intermingled with the girls after having been chased off Darley Street. The residents are definitely the out-group with more hostility shown towards the residents than the police. And customers are the reason for being there, so to speak."

Historical material

Descriptive material (Table 4) has shown that 12 streetwalkers have worked in the prostitution industry between 5 and 14 years. Discussion with these women indicates changes in the trade from the time of the Summary Offences Act.

A few women discussed the changes in heroin use from the time they began working. One female said that heroin use had not changed while another three commented upon a visible increase in drug use.

One third of respondents (four people) could not say whether police practices were different now from the time these women entered prostitution.

"I can't say as I didn't have too much to do with the police or girls."

"I couldn't say as I was young and on booze at that age. I don't know. I was too young."

One third felt police practices have not changed.

"The laws have changed, not police."

One third stated that police practices have changed.

"There is less corruption, much, much less, a little bit. I know when it became legit. to work you can't pinch someone and you can't put it on them for pay. Now because it's legit., with the crap from the residents, if they can't grab you on prostitution, they'll find some charge. You can't beat the establishment."

Women are similarly divided on the issue of customers. Five females stated customers have not changed over the years.

"They are the same - still assholes."

Six respondents, on the other hand, felt there were differences. Two of these replies concerned financial differences.

"They were better payers."

"Financially they had plenty. They could afford to spend. Now half a million are out of jobs in Australia."

Two females said customers are less wary now:

"They used to be wary and unsure. Now they're open and they don't care what they say. Especially young guys used to be scared to approach, but now they are not."

"They are different. They seemed to be a lot quieter then."

One commented that customers as a group have aged. And, finally, one person talked about how customers' behaviour has deteriorated:

"(Then) They'd knock you for 20 cents. They are a different breed of scum now. Now they're worse. You have to be so careful, so good at sussing them out if you do car jobs. It doesn't mean you won't be knocked. Friday and Saturday they are a bunch of lairs from the Western Suburbs. They have no breeding. They are absolute scum. They hassle the workers. You wonder why they get a kick out of it."

Although only seven women offered discussion concerning the ways residents may have changed from when they began working, six of this group agreed that residents have changed. Their attitude to prostitution was said to be different:

"They say things we don't do. One lady throws water over us. We have eggs thrown at us."

"They didn't take notice then."

"Now they are upset by it all."

"They put down the workers, but the workers ask for it."

It is interesting that five of these 12 women stated they did not know whether male or transsexual prostitutes had changed over the years. This is indicative of the fact that even though males, females and transsexuals all work as prostitutes within a confined area, there appears to be minimal social interaction between groups.

One respondent declined to answer. Three stated there had not been any change among male and transsexual workers. Three said there had been changes. They had increased in number and had become "a lot more open".

In sum, historical material offers a preliminary crude appraisal of workers' perceived changes from the time of the Summary Offences Act. Without analysing the women's varying circumstances, responses indicate general trends. There was little agreement over the issue of whether the level of drug use had changed or whether police practices, residents, customers, male or transsexual workers were different in behaviour. Overall comments indicate an increase in resident dissatisfaction with prostitution legislation.

Hypothetical legislative change

Interviews in Darlinghurst considered aspects of legislative change. Women discussed hypothetically how they thought their working practices would be affected by differing changes in the prostitution legislation (Table 18).

Specifically, women were asked: "If public soliciting were made illegal, how do you think your working practices would change?" Forty-six per cent of respondents (23 women) said they would continue to solicit, although two of this group said they would leave Darlinghurst to do so.

"I'd move somewhere else where I can do it."

Table 18. Hypothetical reactions to the prohibition of street soliciting, as stated by female workers

Response	Number	Percentage
Would continue to solicit	23	46
Would not solicit and does not state alternative work choice	9	18
Would not solicit, but would continue to work in the prostitution industry	12	24
Other	3	6
No response	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
Total	50	100

Others who stated they would continue soliciting envisioned that police corruption vis-a-vis the street scene would increase to a situation similar to that under the Summary Offences Act.

"If it is illegal we will pay the coppers. They don't pinch us [now]. The houses pay the coppers."

"I'd get pinched again and again. Everyone would start paying the coppers off as they used to."

"I would have to pay the pimps or the police."

"It would mean paying police for protection as they used to do so as not to get busted more than one time a week."

On the other hand, 42 per cent (21 women) stated they probably would not solicit if it were illegal to do so. Of this group, 12 people said they would simply change prostitution practices.

"We would have to work from parlours."

"I'd do car jobs."

"I'd never, ever go back to a parlour. I'd have to work from my own place."

One woman did not directly answer the question of what she would do. Rather, she offered a suggestion to the government:

"Why not legalise brothels? They get money from payoffs and a lot of money is involved."

From responses, there is indication that if street soliciting were to become illegal, only a minority of women would leave prostitution. The level of prostitution would not decrease significantly. The majority say they would either continue to solicit or find another means to work within prostitution.

Similarly, when women were asked how their working practices would change if it were made illegal to solicit in Darlington and other residential areas, the largest group, 46 per cent of respondents, stated that they would continue to solicit.

Women were equally divided on the hypothetical establishment of a red-light district. Forty per cent of respondents said that such a district would either work or be better than the present situation. Those that thought it favourable stated improved organisation, improved safety from customers and a decrease in residents' complaints as reasons for their support of such an area.

"It would be safer for women. There would be a set standard. We try to create a standard by using French letters, but they are 20 dollars over the hill which creates animosity. That f___ the whole thing."

Forty per cent also thought such a district would be no different from the present situation or worse, that it would not work. Reasons for opposition included increased competition owing to a concentration of workers, a decrease in money earned because of such competition and the likelihood that rented rooms in a red-light area would cost more than at present. It was thought clientele would probably drop.

"I wouldn't take as much money. There'd be a lot of girls out there."

Others similarly opposed an established district on the grounds that it would be no different from Darlington.

"This is supposed to be a red-light district. Why did people move here?"

"It wouldn't be much different from this area."

"There'd be no change at all."

Desired change

Women were asked what type of legal change they would like to see take place that would improve their working conditions. Respondents treated the question in a general way and spoke, frequently at length, about working conditions, professional standards, interpersonal relations, attitude to work and career options. In fact, of the 108 items mentioned that could improve working conditions, only 21 (19.4 per cent) concerned suggested legislative change (Table 19).

Table 19. Areas of concern as stated by female street workers

Area of concern	Number*	Percentage
Attitude to work	6	5.6
Being discreet	2	1.9
Career options	5	4.6
Job discrimination	1	0.9
Job recognition	11	10.2
Legislation	21	19.4
Market place	5	4.6
Professional standards	10	9.3
Wages	3	2.8
Women as managers/owners	1	0.9
Working conditions	35	32.4
Other	1	0.9
No desired change	3	2.8
No response	4	3.7
Total	108*	100

* As women may have mentioned several areas of concern, each one has been counted as a separate item.

Street prostitutes talked about being "workers" in "the industry". One woman commented:

"It's a job. It's good money. We consider it a job. You are out there to do a job. Say I'm a secretary. I could be. This is a job like any other job."

Discussion of working conditions, however, did not support this attitude of street prostitution being like any other job. Almost one third of the women (32.4 per cent) stressed working conditions atypical of the majority of occupations. Eleven people specifically stated safety as a desired working condition.

"I have been raped three times. My girlfriend is in hospital. She was stabbed in the stomach five times [by a customer]."

"I've been bashed three times and raped four times. The girls in cars who don't want to pay that 40 dollars [for a room] get raped and beaten more often. My girlfriend who was German used to work on this corner. Then she was picked up in a car. She was found later mutilated."

Part of the violence against workers was seen to be related to drug problems.

"Another girl OD'd [overdosed]. The smack [heroin] was cut with Ajax. It happens so many times a week."

"In 1982 there was an article in the Undercover or The Australian that 110 were buried from the streets here."

Improved working conditions, a major consideration among workers, also included concern over resident, police and customer treatment. Basically, these groups were perceived as hassling workers. Women were most critical (12 comments) of residents:

"We get harassed by everyone."

"Leave us alone. Let us work. We won't hassle them [residents] if they won't hassle us."

"Residents are adamant. Mostly camp guys feel this way about us. One threatened me."

"They [residents] make such a big thing. We're bad. We're drug addicts and belong in the gutter. They say they find French letters in the garden. They don't have gardens. They make things up. They exaggerate things so much."

"I want the neighbours to stop hassling us. They'll never get us off the streets."

After residents, police were seen to be a cause of poor working conditions:

"The coppers should leave us alone. If they concentrated more on criminal aspects, on rapes and bashings, and not harass us, it would be better."

"I hear police in the clean-up will look for drugs in our pocketbooks. That makes us so vulnerable. We need protection against the police. There is a lot of police verbal. If a person doesn't use drugs it is degrading. Police plant drugs and we don't have a leg to stand on and that's that."

Additionally, police were criticised for not adequately following up reported incidents of violence (for example, sexual assaults) against prostitutes. Finally, although women discussed violence by customers as well as residents and others, only one comment pinpointed customers as a reason for poor working conditions.

"Our job isn't easy. You get strange, rough men who are a bit sick in the head. We have to put up with all types. There are some very cruel, sick men in the world. You learn about them."

Finally, three respondents thought that houses with rooms rented for 10 to 20 dollars (instead of 40) "with clean conditions" would be an improvement.

Secondary to improved working conditions, women discussed how possible legislative changes might improve their working circumstances. Most women who discussed legislation suggested that a red-light district might better their situation.

"A red-light district would not cause hassles."

"Darlinghurst should be made a legal red-light area with no harassment from residents of the area."

"I'd like a general red-light area where no one hassles us. The ones who want to see us can come."

"Legalise prostitution, but in a red-light district and let women be in the street or in the houses. But the problem is they would ask a lot of money to use the rooms."

"It should be made legal on the street and in parlours with police protection in a specific red-light area. It is too dangerous for some girls."

In general, a red-light district was seen as a way to recognise Darlington officially as a market place which, in turn, would decrease resident and police hassles. Others suggested that prostitution should be legalised. A few responses recommended legal brothels.

"I'd like the legalisation of brothels. I'm not sure about a red-light district. Women should be running houses. I'd like to see changes in parlours, girls getting more money. The owners are living like kings. Parlours won't take junkies. This area is raging so much people aren't going to parlours."

One woman commented that the riddance of car jobs would improve the working situation.

"It should be illegal to do it in cars in the alleyways. A lot of men want to do it in cars and it spoils the chance to do it properly. It is also dangerous."

Ten per cent of responses of how the job could be improved mentioned job recognition. Prostitution was described as being functional to society, as curbing rape, child molesting and crime in the general community. And, recognising the social service offered by prostitutes, an improved public image would uplift the working situation.

"If we weren't here more residents would be getting raped. It's a community service."

"I would stand on Darlington Road. Once a woman fell on the road. What would she have done if I'm not here? Men were around the woman. I went over and told them to leave her alone. What would have happened if I hadn't been there? ... At the time of the crackdown there were rapes then around the Eastern Suburbs and the city."

"Improve the attitude of the public so they can see our point. Prostitution is a necessary evil. I've had an admitted rapist [as customer]. They've got a problem. We have marriage split-ups."

"The only thing I want changed is to be thought of as a person, like prostitution thought of as a profession, cleaned up, not called a slut and looked down on by men. I would like that changed. People should understand more about the girls. I don't want to be looked down upon by people."

"They need us. There would be a lot of school-girl rapes."

Nine per cent of respondents felt that an improvement in professional standards would upgrade their job. They recommended that both juveniles and heroin-dependent workers be taken from the streets, perhaps be offered the necessary social welfare and drug rehabilitation services. There was discussion of how drugs were deleterious to the workers' image.

"Get under-aged prostitutes off the streets."

"Mostly I'd like to see girls on drugs into hospitals to dry out and find them work."

"I don't take drugs ... I get depressed from the pressure of heroin, from girls taking it all the time. Guys come and ask me to buy all the time."

"A lot is up to how some of the girls behave. If they acted more maturely there would be a great difference. They give us a bad name and I can't blame them [the residents]. The younger girls under 20, they think it is a big thing to do. A lot under 20 are proud of it and they let other people know as if they were a star and singer. What gets me angry is the immaturity, leaving syringe packages on the floor in public places and then they wonder why police are cracking down so much on it."

One worker (of 3 days) even advised that an overall reduction in the number of workers would improve their circumstances.

"There should be less girls. There are so many here now. There are two new girls here since I started. Five came in the last week who've never worked before."

Overall, in discussing areas of concern that could upgrade their job and possibly improve working circumstances, there were no requests for social

services or government programmes, with the exception of a few remarks concerning drug-usage needs. Instead, women largely took a "leave us alone, don't hassle us" stance. They described their work circumstance as involving hassles from residents, police, customers and fellow workers. It became apparent that heroin use was a dividing issue among women. Nevertheless they stated that what they were doing was a job. It was, at times, a dangerous job. But it was also described as a community service and workers said it needed to be recognised as such.

THE TRANSEXUAL WORKERS

During March 1983, nine transsexual street prostitutes were interviewed in Darlinghurst on Burton Street between Forbes Street and Victoria Street. As only one transsexual worker refused to be interviewed, these nine interviews represent 90 per cent of the transsexual working population in Darlinghurst at that time. Comparisons may be made with the equivalent female population. Discussion of descriptive material, historical material and desirable changes will demonstrate similarities and differences between the two groups.

During interviews, transsexuals often referred to themselves as queens. It is useful to clarify briefly some of the terms (drag queen, transvestite, transsexual) interchangeably used and perhaps misused to describe this population. As sociologist Roberta Perkins explains:

"Drag queen is a term that originates in popular culture. It is not of local derivation, but part of the terminology of world-wide colloquialism. There is, however, some degree of confusion in its application... But in the popular usage 'drag queen' refers to any male who 'cross-dresses' and appears in public, regardless of whether they are transsexual, heterosexual transvestite, homosexual transvestite or female impersonator" (1983a:2).

Perkins comments that the term "drag queen" is one that is generally thought of as objectionable by transsexuals.

Similarly, transvestites are often confused with transsexuals.

"Transvestites are people who wear the clothing of the opposite sex for excitement or sexual stimulation and not out of a conviction that they belong to the opposite sex, and do not as a rule wish to change the shape of their bodies, whereas transsexuals dress in the clothing of the opposite sex in an effort to be more convincing in their preferred gender" (Perkins, 1983b:1).

Transsexualism, on the other hand, involves "... the compulsion to be of the opposite sex, an ambition which goes well beyond a simple act of impersonation" (Perkins, 1983a:3). Perkins estimates there are about 500 transsexuals in Sydney, with approximately 40 of this group engaged in prostitution (from call girls to street workers) (1983a:25; 107).

A few of the workers interviewed for this study specifically talked about their plans for a sex-change operation. Others were not probed to find out if they sought surgery. From appearances, it was apparent that many had enlarged breasts, probably as a result of hormonal intake. Overall, this group presented themselves as females, both physically and emotionally. Thus they are referred to as transsexuals.

As Perkins explains, these transsexual street workers are part of a larger transsexual subculture in Sydney.

"The urban 'drag queen' scene consists of a number of components each coming together within the setting of Kings Cross and adjacent Darlinghurst. The transsexual subculture is the core component, with its transsexual community divided into four subgroups - showgirls, strippers, bar girls and prostitutes - and with its 'marginal participants' such as boyfriends, and other friends. More peripheral, but nevertheless essential, are the show patrons, strip club patrons, the male 'pick ups' of bar girls and the clients of prostitutes. There are other components in the scene with an even more marginal position and these include the police, residents and visitors to Kings Cross. Finally, there is the component of space, where the interactions between the different human components take place, such as the venues of the drag shows, the strip clubs, the hotels and bars and the streets" (1983a:27).

Descriptive material of the street prostitute population

Place of birth

Whereas two thirds of female workers (68 per cent) interviewed were Australian born and approximately one third (32 per cent) were from overseas (see Table 1), transsexual workers offer the opposite situation, as Table 20 shows. Three of the nine transsexual respondents were born in New Zealand.

Table 20. Place of birth of transsexual workers

Place of birth	Number of transsexuals
Sydney, N.S.W.	2
Country, N.S.W.	<u>1</u>
Total, Australia	3
England	2
Malta	1
New Zealand	<u>3</u>
Total, Overseas	6
Grand Total	<u>9</u>

In an interview with Carmen, a well-known New Zealand transsexual who has been described as a mother figure to the transsexual street workers, Perkins asks about the comparative transsexual subculture in Wellington and Sydney. As Carmen comments:

"I think in Wellington and Auckland the drag queens are more open than in Australia, but there is more acceptance in Sydney with all the drag shows, which are not found in Wellington. Sydney transsexuals are more glamorous looking and with the drag shows that are here, I would say Sydney is more advanced, up with the times ... There are quite a few transsexual prostitutes in Wellington, but I believe that recently the police have been getting very heavy on them. They pick them up for soliciting, and many of the queens are coming over here to get away from it" (1983a:122-123).

Place of residence

Compared with female workers, transsexuals were more likely to live in the electoral district where they worked (Table 21). The majority of transsexual respondents lived in the Darlinghurst vicinity.

Table 21. Place of residence of transsexual workers

State Electoral District	Number
Bligh	5
Elizabeth	1
Waverley	1
Not specified	<u>2</u>
Total	9

Age

Transsexual workers varied in age from 18 to 47 years. They were considerably older than their female counterparts (Table 22). Their modal age was over 31 years. The average age of transsexuals was 30 years, as compared with 23 for females.

Table 22. Comparative ages of transsexual and female workers

Age	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
21 and under	2	22
22	0	6
23	0	2
24	0	2
25	1	5
26	0	4
27	1	2
28	0	0
29	1	2
30	0	2
31 and over	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>
Total	9	50

Number of years in the prostitution industry

As with age, the industry profile of transsexual street prostitutes differs markedly from female workers. Whereas almost half (48 per cent) of females had spent less than three years in the industry, four respondents from the transsexual group had been involved in prostitution between three and ten years. Two female respondents had been in the industry 14 years. Among transsexuals, one had been a prostitute 18 years and another 28 years. For this reason, although one could argue that the decriminalisation of street prostitution could have been a factor in female involvement in street work (since more than half of the female sample had joined the industry since 1979), this could not be argued for transsexuals. Or, if one were to suggest that the poor recent economic climate precipitated female involvement in prostitution, one could not make the same statement for transsexuals. If one were to offer economic hardship as a motive for transsexual involvement in prostitution, one would need to consider possible individual employment discrimination of this group, for example, rather than overall societal economic problems.

Prior prostitution-related job experience

Although the transsexuals have spent a considerably longer period of time in the industry compared with females, four of the nine transsexuals interviewed (as opposed to 26 per cent of the females) have restricted their working experience to street soliciting. Table 23 outlines the prior prostitution-related job experience of those five transsexual prostitutes who have worked in other areas in the trade apart from street soliciting.

Table 23. Prior prostitution-related job experience of five transsexual prostitutes

Type of work	Number*
Administration	2
Bondage & discipline specialist	1
Escort	1
Hotel	1
Parlour/brothel**	5
Sauna	<u>2</u>
Total	12

* As respondents may have had experience in more than one area, each prior job is accounted for.

** At times the term parlour is used to describe establishments others might call brothels. To avoid confusion, parlours and brothels have been combined into one category.

Reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

Transsexuals were asked why they chose street work over other types of prostitution-related jobs. Unique to this sample, two of 10 responses were that individuals were too old for other prostitution work (Table 24).

"In my case, I am too old. Twenty-seven they say is over the hill. This is the only other alternative."

"My parlour in the Cross, it was sold to a Melbourne crowd. I tried the other parlours, but I was told I was too old."

Table 24. Stated reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

Reason	Number*
Difficulties with other jobs	2
More freedom	1
More money	5
Too old for other prostitution work	2
Total	10*

* As respondents may have stated more than one reason, each reason is counted.

The majority, however, offered "more money" as their reason for working the streets.

"I was going with a guy, but we split up. I came here [to Sydney]. I worked in one parlour, but conditions were bad with half my money going to the owner. So I joined the queens here in Darley [Street]."

"You don't pay shift money."

"I needed money."

"It's just easy. You have to work their hours in parlours. You have to make twice as much as they get half. There are no hassles here."

Where transsexuals solicit and reasons for the chosen market place

Whereas 92 per cent of females said they restricted soliciting to Darlinghurst, this was the case for the total transsexual sample. A variety of reasons were offered for staying in Darlinghurst, but seven could be conglomerated into Darlinghurst being a known area for street prostitution.

"Business would always be here even if they kicked the girls off the streets. There'd still be men looking for sex."

"This is the only area I know."

"This is where the business is."

"This is the best area to make money. This is where people come."

One respondent commented:

"I'd be nervous [to go to other parts of Sydney]. I'd rather be with people I know."

Still another remark indicated that Darlinghurst was not the preferred market place, but the one where transsexuals could work.

"We like to work in the Cross, but the girls won't let us work there. It's a hard scene to get into in the Cross. Otherwise I'd do the different streets ..."

Number of years working in Darlinghurst

Transsexuals have been soliciting in Darlinghurst at least since 1962, according to interviews. One worker commented that in 1976, when she began, there were six queens working the streets. Whereas 88 per cent of females had chosen Darlinghurst as a market place since 1979, when street soliciting was decriminalised, about half of transsexuals have worked in the neighbourhood from that period (Table 25).

Number of hours soliciting

Table 26 illustrates that the majority of transsexuals worked between 16 and 30 hours per week the month before being interviewed. It also demonstrates that, overall, transsexuals worked fewer hours than their female counterparts.

Five transsexuals stated that soliciting was their full-time job. Four considered it part-time work.

Table 25. Comparative number of years transsexual and female prostitutes have been working in Darlinghurst

Number of years	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Less than 3	1	38
3	3	2
4	1	4
5	1	1
6	0	1
7	2	1
8 or more	1	2
No response	0	1
Total	9	50

Table 26. Comparative number of hours per week transsexuals and women solicit

Number of hours	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
1-10	1	6
11-15	0	4
16-20	2	5
21-25	2	4
26-30	1	4
31-35	0	1
36-40	2	4
41-45	0	3
46-50	0	2
51-55	1	2
56 or more	0	12
No response	0	3
Total	9	50

Presence of "hovering males"

Unfortunately, the issue of "hovering males" among transsexual workers was not clarified during interviews. The majority of workers did not address the question concerning the prevalence of pimps. This was not due to their reluctance to speak on the issue, but, from error, the question was not posed. Four who did discuss the issue were equally divided over pimps. Two said they did not have such relationships. Another two said they did.

"The junkies are the only ones who work like that [with pimps]."

"Some have guys living off them. I had one living off me for nine months. None of the queens have guys living off them, but they have had at one time or another."

Table 27. "Working women say that pros in Darlingtonhurst have never had pimps. Would you agree?"

Response	Number
Yes	2
No	2
No response	<u>5</u>
Total	9

The issue needs further research.

Drug use

A subjective individual assessment of drug usage was made as workers were requested to be interviewed. Eight of the women workers were appraised as being drug-affected at the time. Only one transsexual in the sample appeared to be drug-affected. However, unlike the women, who were nodding, sometimes having difficulty standing, the transsexual worker did not show such overt signs of heroin usage. It was appraised she was under the influence of some other, unknown substance.

Only one transsexual self-reported heroin use. She said that she had been taking heroin for six years, from the age of 15 years. She was an addict for two years before becoming involved in prostitution.

Table 28. Comparative self-reported heroin use by transsexual and female workers

Heroin use	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Yes	1	13
No	6	33
Used to use, but not anymore	0	1
No response	2	3
Total	9	50

In addition to queries concerning self-reported use, respondents were asked to discuss heroin dependence among other transsexual workers. Two workers did not offer any response to the question. Of the seven who did address the issue, all agreed that heroin dependence was not as significant a question for transsexuals as it was for female workers.

"Only two to three queens do out of the group here."

"Mostly girls [use heroin], not queens. A handful do, maybe five."

"Ten per cent do."

"Four or five I know of -"

"Out of the total, maybe 10 per cent. There are only a handful of queens working here. There are only about 10 girls here."

"Twenty-five per cent are."

"A lot don't. I don't know. I stick to myself. Some do."

More than half of these responses suggested that one to two individuals from a group of about 10 were heroin users.

Customers

As was the case with females, transsexuals had mixed feelings towards customers. Two respondents from this group made positive comments about men. One worker suggested males be referred to as "guests" rather than customers.

"I am nice to my guys, but cautious."

"A lot like oral sex. Some are gorgeous guys. They're married. Their wife won't do it ... They'll drive a half-hour to one hour instead of going to a parlour. They stick to one girl. They know they're not ripped off and won't catch anything."

On the other hand, three individuals were primarily negative in their appraisal of patrons.

"They're mugs."

"There are good and bad. Once a Greek pulled a knife on me because the week before 100 dollars was taken from him. He was here to rip anyone off."

"Uch! They are dirty old men, repulsive people."

Additionally, three comments were neutral. For example:

"A lot have big cars and most are not poor people by any means. They're 'respectable'."

Customers were described as varied in age. Of the six respondents who offered specific age ranges, five commented that their average customer was in his early 20s at one extreme while the upper limit fluctuated from 30 years old (2 respondents), to 40 (1 person), to 50 (2), and 60 (1 person). Additionally, he was described as coming from "everywhere", although the suburbs (3 responses), the North Shore (1), the country (2) and interstate (1) were also suggested.

Informal conversations with transsexuals during field visits suggested an aspect of the customer-worker relationship that is unique to this group. One streetwalker described how she kept a rock in her hand to use against customers, if necessary. If they did not realise she was a transsexual after a job was agreed upon, she faced potential violence. She strictly adhered to the rule of never going in a car with two or more males. This unique problem of perhaps not being correctly identified by customers has been considered by Perkins in her work. One transsexual street worker commented to her:

" '... Mugs come into our street looking for queens or girls. Most think I'm a girl, but if they are after a queen I'll tell them I'm a queen. I missed out on a job last night when this mug said, "Oh, you're a girl", and I said, "No, I'm a drag queen", and he said, "But you don't look manly enough for me". You get all types, and I'll be whatever they want. Like, mugs say, "Are you a boy or a girl?" and I say "What do you want?" If I tell them I'm a girl I say I only do French.

"Then you get these virgins coming into the street. They're only sixteen or something and they blurt out they've never done it before, and they look at you with these big eyes, stammer and stutter and say, "You're the first girl I've ever had". And you haven't got the heart to tell them about yourself ... You think, they'll look back on you as their first girl, and you could ruin it for life for them by telling them, so you just shut up and get on with the job'" (Perkins, 1983a:112).

A recent newspaper article conveys the violence that can result from such mistaken identification.

"A transsexual, mistakenly abducted by two men, was bashed and raped after the attackers discovered their victim's gender.

"Police said the transsexual, aged 33, was dressed in a skirt and wearing make-up and long hair.

"They said he was walking home alone from Bondi Junction shopping centre last Thursday night when a man ran out of a Ford Falcon, grabbed him from behind and dragged him into the car.

"He was then driven several streets away and forced into the back seat. The driver pushed him on to his back and the other man pinned him down by his shoulders.

"When the attackers discovered their victim's gender they swore profusely, throttled him and punched him in the face and stomach. They then raped him.

"They bashed the man again and drove on, pushing him out of the moving car on to the road.

"The man was found unconscious in Illawong Avenue, Bondi, by a woman who called a taxi and took him to Prince of Wales Hospital" (The Sydney Morning Herald, 16 May 1985).

Police

Eight of the nine transsexual workers who addressed the issue of police and the police attitude to transsexual prostitution had been arrested in the six months prior to the interview. Two commented they had been arrested three times:

"I was arrested for serious alarm and affront five times last year and three times in one week this year."

Two thirds of this transsexual sample felt the police had a negative attitude (Table 29) towards prostitution. (Only one third of the women interviewed had thought this.)

"They are vile. They refer to you as a joke. They threaten you with sexual violence at the station. They humiliate you."

"They are rude, very rude. They think they can say what they want."

"They're not too bad to the girls. They're abusive to drag queens. They think we're sick, like everyone else."

"They are corrupt anyway. If they weren't making money they would have cleaned it up long ago."

Table 29. Comparative transsexual and female street workers' perceptions of the police attitude to prostitution

Police attitude	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Positive	1	23
Negative	6	15
Neutral	1	7
No response	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	9	50

One respondent indicated a neutral attitude. One worker was primarily positive in her appraisal.

"Police are pretty good. Some are pretty hard. It depends if you're being nice and polite. It depends. They are pretty good to me. Today the police are younger and more understanding. In the '60s we got hidings. It makes you hard ... I can remember '60 to '61. I got so many beatings by police. In the last six to seven years they have been pretty good to us."

In general, comments concerning the police considered individual treatment by officers. At times the police attitude to transsexuals was compared with their behaviour to women doing the same work. Invariably, they talked about discrimination. A Perkins interview highlights this perspective.

" '... They harass us transsexuals more often than the natural-borns. The only charges they get against them are for drugs, but we get "serious alarm and affront" and "procuring a male" charges all the time. The gays up the road are not picked on as much as we are either. The police tend to just tell them to move off. One of the transsexuals was gang-banged by the police; and two told me they were bashed, but it doesn't happen all that often'" (1983a:118).

Overall comparisons between transsexual and female workers

Discussion of descriptive material has clarified similarities and differences between the two groups, transsexuals and natural-borns. Both talked about money being the major reason for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work. The two groups had mixed feelings towards customers.

The differences, however, are numerous. The transsexual was more likely to have been born overseas, to be a local resident, to be older, to have worked longer in the industry, to have worked in Darlington for a longer period and to have spent more time within her prostitution career soliciting. Transsexuals indicated a higher arrest rate than women. They were twice as likely to comment negatively on police attitudes and treatment.

Two aspects which have surfaced seem to be unique to the transsexual workers. Firstly, a significant portion felt they were too old to work in any other area of prostitution. Secondly, the identification issue was part of the worker-customer relationship.

Field observations from March 1983 indicate initial impressions of this transsexual worker group:

"The queens are older, use fewer drugs and are a small, closely-knit group. Most finished the interview. This may be because they had few customers and therefore more time to talk; or, that they felt discriminated against compared with women. Many do not see prostitution as a choice as there is nowhere else to work. The impression given is that financially they need to work as pros more than most other women."

Historical material

As one respondent did not answer historical questions and two transsexuals had worked three years, six people comprise the basis for historical material. These individuals have worked as prostitutes a minimum of five years.

Although the current attitude to police is overall negative, four respondents did comment that police behaviour to transsexuals has improved from when they joined the industry:

"Before you had to have bail. Now you're just charged."

"They would bash us, rape us and told us to keep our mouths shut. You had to pay the cops."

"Now they are not so aggressive, a hint, but not so much."

One worker felt that police treatment had deteriorated in the recent past.

"It has become worse in the past three to four years as there are more queens. When I first started (seven years ago) they turned a blind eye as it was hard to find work, but with the publicity they have cracked down."

One comment was neutral, but reinforced the above statement in part.

"I had never been arrested until 1980."

Transsexuals, like women, were divided on the issue of customers. Three stated that customers have not changed over the years.

"They're always the same. They never change."

Three stated they had changed, for the worse.

"They're totally different, a new range. Clientele are now out for a pick-up. Before, they were more talkative. Now, it's business and 'get out of my car'."

"They were more generous."

"They used to be much nicer. There were less women around the streets ... not many drag queens. It was fantastic. Parlours were not even heard of."

Five of the six transsexuals felt that resident behaviour had deteriorated since they joined the industry.

"The residents were more broad-minded before."

"They have changed very much. Now they are bitter against us."

"You'd hardly see them. Some of the old ladies were nice. It's the element who have money [causing problems]. Some throw things. We never had abuse."

"We never had any problems with residents although it [prostitution] was illegal. Because there are more girls now it's more prominent."

In sum, historical material suggests that, from the transsexual perspective, since the period prior to 1979 (when street soliciting was decriminalised) police practices have improved while resident attitudes have deteriorated. There was no agreement over whether customers had changed.

Hypothetical legislative change

At the time of interviewing:

"In Sydney in the last two years a number of transsexuals working on the streets have been arrested and charged as homosexuals. The law under which they have been charged is in the New South Wales Crimes Act, No. 40, 1900 ... Subsection 81A ..." (Perkins, 1983a:137).

Accordingly, transsexuals said soliciting was currently illegal for them.

Transsexuals did comment on the establishment of a hypothetical red-light district. Four individuals felt the situation would be worse for them:

"It would be harder I suppose as there'd be too much fighting going on."

"I'd lose half my customers. Now businessmen come, no questions asked, they drive up and go."

"If it cut our money it would be terrible."

One did not respond. One individual was undecided. One person stated it would be an improvement. Two were neutral.

"A red-light area for queens? This can only come about when homosexuality becomes legal. We need a campaign to form recognition of the queens' sexual differences and some forum to be organised to look into the problem to help them. Equality should be the main aspect of the forum. If we were given formal equality, we'd have no need to come out here."

Desired change

Transsexuals discussed desired change. The two most frequently mentioned areas of concern were changes in legislation and job discrimination.

Table 30. Areas of concern as stated by transsexual street workers

Area of concern	Number*
Job discrimination	4
Job recognition	2
Legislation	4
Market place	1
More career options	1
Professional standards	2
Wages	1
Working conditions	2
No desired change	1
No response	2
Total	20*

* As respondents may have mentioned several areas of concern, each one has been counted as a separate item.

In some instances, the two categories were interrelated:

"Queens should be able to work without being arrested for doing the same thing as girls."

"I would be thrilled if it were made legal for us. We are working every night for 30 to 60 dollars a night to pay our rent. We have got to have money too. We want straight jobs too. A lot of people can't cope ..."

Others simply focused on discrimination.

"They're men trying to work in a predominantly women's area. There are less clientele for us. People don't readily go off with queens ... If we were given formal equality, we'd have no need to come out here."

"We are not doing what they say. We use the toilet at St. Vincent's Hospital. It's the drunks late at night. They wee and vomit. They try to blame us for everything."

Secondary to legislation and discrimination, there was mention of the need for job recognition, professional standards and improved working conditions. Transsexuals talked about "... servicing what needs to be serviced ...", about "doing the community a favour stopping rapes and bashing". There was mention that police should "leave us alone". One respondent said she had cancer of the throat, a presumed occupational hazard.

Wages were described as poor, barely enough to live on.

"The most I ever made on a good night was 120 dollars."

Straight jobs were said to be desired, but unobtainable.

Whereas female workers talked about the stigma of being a prostitute, transsexual workers emphasised the social and legal obstacles for transsexuals. As Perkins summarises:

"The drag queen is one of the most exploited and oppressed figures in our society. She is sexually exploited by men who, while overtly masculine and basically heterosexual, may be seen to have partly overcome an aversion to what many might consider as homosexual behaviour. She is economically exploited by owners of places of entertainment. She is psychologically exploited by those who treat her as a figure of fun, or as a freak man-woman, yet many of whom are titillated by her appearance. Among her chief oppressors are the police, whose masculine sensitivities appear to be disturbed by her presence. Her other oppressors include the majority of men who are for the most part contemptuous of her being feminine and stepping out of her given male role. Society at large scorns her for wanting to be a woman, but heaps upon her those patriarchal indignities usually dished out to the most discredited women. The legal system gives her less than due consideration so that she is often forced to see herself as a non-person. Although a sympathetic section of the medical profession offers her psychological and surgical relief, by and large the majority of the profession confuses her with other sexual anomalies" (1983a:1).

THE MALE WORKERS

Between 26 March and 18 April 1983 14 males soliciting along "the Wall", on Darlinghurst Road between Burton Street and Oxford Street, were approached. One hundred per cent agreed to be interviewed. The men were friendly and talkative. It is assumed that these interviews represent almost the entire population of male streetwalkers at that time.

Descriptive material of the street prostitute population

Place of birth

Over one third of males interviewed were born in Sydney. Eight of the 14 male respondents were Australian born (Table 31).

Table 31. Comparative place of birth of male, transsexual and female workers

Place	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Sydney, N.S.W.	5	2	25
Country, N.S.W.	0	1	3
A.C.T.	1	0	0
Queensland	1	0	2
South Australia	1	0	0
Tasmania	0	0	1
Victoria	0	0	2
Australia, not specified	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total, Australia	8	3	34
England	1	2	5
France	1	0	0
Germany (West)	0	0	2
Italy	0	0	1
Malta	0	1	0
New Zealand	2	3	5
Norway	1	0	0
Scotland	0	0	2
Singapore	1	0	0
Sweden	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Total, Overseas	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>16</u>
Grand Total	14	9	50

Place of residence

Table 32 indicates that the majority of males interviewed (ten of 14 respondents) lived in the vicinity of their work place. (This was the case for four of nine transsexuals and only ten of the 50 women which comprised the female streetwalker sample.)

Table 32. Place of residence of male workers

State Electoral District	Number
Bligh	10
Burwood	1
Elizabeth	1
Not specified	2
	—
Total	14

Age

When offering their age, several males made it apparent that their answers were not truthful. "Put down 19" one individual replied, with amusement. If anything, the male respondents were younger as a group than their given ages indicate. One respondent commented that about 30 per cent of the males were either 16 or 17 years old.

Table 33 indicates the average "given age" for males was 20 years (compared with 23 for females and 30 for transsexuals). Of the three samples of street prostitutes, the males were the youngest.

Table 33. Comparative ages of male, transsexual and female workers

Age	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
16	1	0	0
17	0	0	2
18	2	1	1
19	2	0	6
20	1	0	5
21	3	1	8
22	0	0	6
23	2	0	2
24	1	0	2
25	1	1	5
26 and over	0	6	13
Unknown	1	0	0
	—	—	—
Total	14	9	50

Number of years in the prostitution industry

From the time of their first prostitution job, males had been involved in the industry from 2.5 weeks at one extreme to 10 years at the other. Fifty per cent of these respondents had worked as prostitutes one year or less. It is significant, however, that four of 14 men in this sample, the youngest of the three groups of workers, had been involved in prostitution six years or more. Figures indicate a greater likelihood of prostitutes as juveniles for males than for females or transsexuals (Table 34).

Table 34. Comparative number of years male, transsexual and female prostitutes have worked in the industry

Number of years	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Less than 1	3	0	15
1	4	0	5
2	0	0	4
3	2	2	6
4	1	0	5
5	0	0	2
6	1	0	5
7	1	2	1
8	1	0	1
9	0	0	0
10	1	0	1
11 or more	0	4	2
Unknown	0	1	3
Total	14	9	50

Prior prostitution-related job experience

Six of the 14 males interviewed said that street work was their first job in the prostitution industry.

Of the eight males who claimed prior prostitution job experience, five had worked in parlours/brothels and five had been involved in escort work. Compared with women and transsexuals, male streetwalkers have had limited exposure to other parts of the industry. (See Tables 5 and 23.) This may be a reflection of reduced job openings for males in comparison with females, but is more likely a result of the youthfulness of the male sample. In some instances, prior job experience would have entailed prostitution work as juveniles.

Reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

Males discussed both the reasons for choosing streetwalking as well as the disadvantages of their work. As with both women and transsexuals, that street work was financially more lucrative than other prostitution jobs was the main stated reason for soliciting. However, whereas 60.7 per cent of the female sample and half of the transsexual sample had said this, "more money" was by far the principal reason for males (11 of 16 stated reasons).

"I was desperate for money."

"In the streets I know I'll get money, in brothels half or one-quarter. Here I can keep regular clients. In the brothel, I'd have to share. So it's mainly money."

"You get all the money."

"Before, I'd work eight hours a night. From the five jobs charging 40 dollars, I'd get 20 dollars [each]. Now I get double money."

Table 35. Stated reasons for choosing streetwalking over other types of prostitution-related work

Reason	Number*
Can work alone	1
Difficulties with other jobs	1
Less pressured than brothels	1
More freedom	1
More money	11
Unemployed	1
Total	16*

* As respondents may have stated more than one reason, each reason is counted.

Additionally, while females and transsexuals discussed substantial secondary reasons for soliciting (that it offered more freedom than other prostitution work, that workers were too old for other jobs, for example, as in Tables 6 and 24), this was not the case for males. "More money" was essentially the sole reason for street work.

Males also considered the disadvantages of soliciting. Their major concern was physical safety:

"It's pretty dangerous. Every car you go in you risk your life."

"There is a bigger risk of bashings. My brother was knifed."

"You can't be sure of clientele. A lot are crackers, loolooos. A lot are suffering from psychoses. Some are women-haters and release their tension with anger."

"There is a danger of being on the street. Yabbos attacked us."

Secondary to potential violence, males mentioned the stigma attached to their job as another disadvantage of soliciting.

"...I'm missing out good times (dinners). I have to go to the clinic twice a week. Having a bad name is my main thing."

"Socially the male pro is an outcast. Gay people don't accept 'commercials'. It's draining. It's hard to maintain friendships. You become saddened about life. It's hard to handle if you're not prepared."

Where men solicit and reasons for the chosen market place

Respondents said that the Wall (Darlinghurst) and Fitzroy Gardens (Kings Cross) were the two main beats for male streetwalkers, although there was work in Liverpool Street and Ruschcutter's Bay. The majority of the male

sample (11 of 14) restricted work to Darlinghurst, as did all transsexuals and 46 of 50 female respondents.

"Where else is there? I was told to go to the Hilton, but I was not interested."

"There is Kings Cross, but it's mainly rough and dangerous."

"On this street, I know people. They are reasonable, educated, nice people, not heavy. It's not a heavy scene. For prostitution it's light."

"There are too many criminals in the Cross."

"It's too risky elsewhere. Here and the Cross are known. There are regular police patrols. They stop muggings. I once had a flick knife pulled on me."

Table 36. Comparative number of men, transsexuals and women who solicit outside Darlinghurst

Solicit outside Darlinghurst	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Yes	3	0	3
No	11	9	46
Unknown	0	0	1
	—	—	—
Total	14	9	50

The three males who solicited outside Darlinghurst all worked in Fitzroy Gardens.

Number of years working in Darlinghurst

Table 37 indicates that a greater portion of the male and transsexual samples have spent more time (years) working in Darlinghurst. Five of 14 males had solicited in the neighbourhood four or more years (compared with five of nine transsexuals and only nine of 50 women). Males had been streetwalking along the Wall anywhere from 2 weeks to 10 years.

Table 37. Comparative number of years male, transsexual and female prostitutes have been working in Darlinghurst

Number of years	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Less than 1	6	1	22
1	1	0	9
2	0	0	7
3	2	3	2
4	2	1	4
5	0	1	1
6	1	0	1
7	0	2	1
8 or more	2	1	2
No response	0	0	1
	—	—	—
Total	14	9	50

It is significant to note that, in comparing stated age and number of years having worked in Darlinghurst, 50 per cent of the male sample had been streetwalking in the neighbourhood as juveniles. One male began at 13 years old, two at 14, three at 16 and one at 17 years of age.

Number of hours soliciting

Ten men stated that they considered soliciting their full-time work.

In the month prior to the interview, male respondents had averaged anywhere from 7.5 to 168 hours per week working. As the man working the maximum hours explained,

"I did a job for six weeks. I went on holiday [with a customer] and worked every night and day."

Table 38. Comparative number of hours per week men, transsexuals and women solicit

Number of hours	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
1-10	3	1	6
11-15	1	0	4
16-20	1	2	5
21-25	1	2	4
26-30	1	1	4
31-35	2	0	1
36-40	2	2	4
41-45	0	0	3
46-50	0	0	2
51-55	0	1	2
56 or more	3	0	12
No response	0	0	3
Total	14	9	50

Approximately one fifth of the male sample worked 10 hours or less. One fifth worked 41 hours or more. In general, more males worked longer hours than transsexuals, but proportionately fewer hours than females. One man attributed the comparative fewer hours worked by males as one reason for their relative minor use of heroin.

"We don't have enough income coming in to support a habit. A girl can work 24 hours per day."

Drug use

When approached to be interviewed, no male was visibly affected by heroin. (One male was assessed as having recently smoked marijuana.) Only one male in the sample self-reported heroin use. (This compares with 26 per cent of the female sample.) In his case, prostitution came before heroin use.

Men were asked: "A long-time pro was on 60 Minutes recently claiming that a large number of female streetwalkers in Darlinghurst are hard drug users. Do you think this is true for the males as well?" Twelve of 14 males said that heroin dependence was a lesser issue for males, compared to females. But simultaneously, respondents talked about multiple drug usage.

"Hard drugs, no. A lot of gay people do drugs. We all take a lot of drugs, but we're not into smack. We smoke regularly, use coke and LSD."

"We take drugs, but we're not addicts."

"I don't know one guy who's a hard drug user. We use grass. There isn't the money to make in the guy's side. We can't support it."

"Not as much [as women], a little bit. Of the young ones, about 33 per cent."

"Not one guy I know uses smack. Grass and tripping, yes. One uses coke... Males know they can't last as long in years as females. They [customers] like us young, from 16 to 25 if we're lucky."

"No for here [Darlinghurst]. Kings Cross, yes."

One respondent explained the different levels of heroin dependence among men and women as a reflection of diverse attitudes to prostitution and their work. It was assumed that female drug use followed prostitution involvement.

"They [women] do it [heroin use] as they are forcing themselves. They feel more violated than we do. Women hold sex more sacred. Men feel differently."

The two respondents who said males were just as involved in heroin as females estimated that between 60 and 90 per cent of males were heroin users.

Customers

The age difference that characterises many male streetwalker-customer relationships is apparently unique to this sample. As one respondent commented:

"It's hard for children coping with adults. A lot are 16 or 17, about 30 per cent, and it's difficult for them to manipulate those who are older."

Workers offered a wide spectrum of ages ranging from 16 to 60 years to describe customers. However, the average age for men in this group seemed to fall into the late 30s.

Whereas nine women had described their customers as mostly coming from the Western Suburbs, males discussed their clientele as principally living in the inner-city, North Shore and Eastern Suburbs areas of Sydney. Women also talked about customers coming from "all over, everywhere". Men, on the other hand, portrayed their customers as more likely to live within these limited areas. Male workers also referred to these neighbourhoods as "high class areas" or "posh areas".

Of the three groups of workers, males were most critical of their customers. Over half the sample described patrons in a negative light.

"Bastards."

"Repulsion."

"They're mostly lonely. They have too much money to spend. They think they can hire a slave boy for awhile, that they're boss."

"What's wrong with them? They average earnings of 30 to 40 dollars a day for unfeeling sex."

"They are mostly difficult people who have lost self-respect. They cannot enjoy the time with you. For them and you it is unpleasant... They treat you as though there is something wrong with you."

"I don't like the idea of doing it."

Table 39. Male workers' attitude towards customers

Attitude	Number
Positive	1
Negative	8
Neutral	5
	—
Total	14

Five comments, on the other hand, were neutral.

"Some are friendly. Some ask you to live with them. Some aren't."

"They jump into a car and take off."

"It depends on the person. If they're the young age group, I'd melt. Other times it's 'Here we go again'."

"They are out here. They can't get sex anywhere and we're providing a service. There'd be more male rape. This place is for older ones, Oxford Street for younger ones."

"Straight men are not as fussy as gay men. Gay men are not married. They can have a lot of people."

"They're lonely people with marital problems searching for something..."

Only one remark was positive:

"I pick up regulars and treat them as friends."

Police

Three of 14 male workers had had police contact in the six months prior to the interview. (This compares with 100 per cent of the transsexuals who responded.)

It is not surprising that men assessed the police attitude to prostitution in a more positive way than transsexuals did. Nevertheless, six of 14 individuals were still critical of the police attitude and behaviour:

"They hate us as they come up and bash us. They bash us in the cell... A few aren't too bad."

"It's horrific, really heavy against gay prostitution. They pick up the guys, are more agro. We're being harassed and strip-searched for drugs. Gays cop it heavier."

"Smug. They use it as an opportunity to take out their aggressions. I haven't heard of someone not being bashed and degraded."

"They come past and go 'Meow' out the window and tell you to f... off. They are nasty about it."

Table 40. Male streetwalkers' perceptions of the police attitude to prostitution

Police attitude	Number
Positive	3
Negative	6
Neutral	4
No response	1
	—
Total	14

Three respondents felt, on the other hand, that the police were positive in their behaviour:

"They don't care about the boys. They tolerate it. They only take action if it's necessary. But they harass the females."

"Some are O.K. They cruise by. They don't hassle us. We don't hassle anyone. It's a business."

"They are reasonably understanding as long as you're discreet."

Overall comparisons between male workers and transsexual and female samples

Descriptive material has shown the males soliciting along the Wall to be the youngest of the three groups of streetwalkers working in Darlinghurst. They are most likely to live in the immediate vicinity. Also, data suggest a higher probability of them having worked in prostitution as a juvenile. Half of the sample started soliciting in Darlinghurst when 17 years old or younger. Financial concerns, to make more money, was the prime reason offered for involvement in streetwalking. Problems of safety and social stigma were cited as occupational disadvantages. Although data revealed only one self-reported heroin user, males discussed polydrug use, some equating such usage as correlating with that of the gay subculture. Age differences between male workers and many customers suggest a greater imbalance in this relationship than for females or transsexuals. Males were most negative to customers. Finally, they were more likely than either females or transsexuals to work outside Darlinghurst. A few frequented Fitzroy Gardens in Kings Cross to find jobs.

Males presented themselves as a small, closely knit group. They socialised after work, frequenting gay bars in the city. One male commented that the workers have developed their own language. Although he could not think of examples, he did say:

"We leave out words. In all small communities there is a different kind of language... Three years ago I didn't talk their language."

From time to time, male workers related their situation, drug usage, police harassment, and customer circumstances, for example, to the larger

gay scene. Comments suggested that many workers identified with gay males and the gay subculture. Perhaps it is this identity or maybe their youthfulness and enthusiasm to be interviewed that left the impression of male prostitutes as, overall, most accepting their work as hustlers.

Historical material

Four males comprise the sample offering historical insight into male prostitution. These men have worked in the industry between 6 and 10 years.

Two commented that police practices have not changed:

"They were more obvious then. They used obvious means of prosecution. They'd yell at you, suss you out. Now they use smoke bombs, book you and bash you."

Two felt police behaviour regarding male prostitution had deteriorated:

"They were not so heavy. They left us alone a lot."

Three of four respondents felt customers had not changed.

Three of four males described residents as "people I don't come in contact with":

"We don't do anything with them. They're not annoyed by us. The people in hospital wave and smile at us actually."

"I don't come in contact with them. But they squeal more with their late 70s liberal attitudes and now more middle-class attitudes. Now people associate other crimes with prostitution when the girls came closer to here and hoons were having it out with them. There is no one but workers here."

In sum, males were the smallest historical sample and least verbal concerning changes. It was debatable whether police practices had deteriorated or not. Customers were said to be the same. Male workers continued to be isolated from residents. While disagreement over

historical issues characterised both female and transsexual samples, it seemed that males had least to say on historical issues.

Hypothetical legislative change

Five of 14 male respondents felt that an established red-light district would prove to be worse for their circumstances than the present situation along the Wall:

"Business would go down as people would be afraid to be seen in the area."

"It would institutionalise it and become a focal point for illegal activities. Guys here independently earn their income so they're not pushed as much. The girls in the Cross have to cover the hoons' costs. There has never been an attempt for males to control or run it [male prostitution] in 10 years."

"I would prefer to be a loner, take syrapax to relax and do this."

Five felt such an area would not offer any change. Three stated a red-light district would be better. One respondent was undecided.

Males did comment that it was currently illegal for them to solicit in Darlinghurst. They were occasionally arrested under the Crimes Act, 1900. For this reason when asked, "If it was made illegal to solicit in Darlinghurst and other residential areas, how do you think your working practices would change?", the question was treated somewhat differently by males than it had been with females. Still, the overwhelming majority of males (12 of 14) stated that they would continue to streetwalk. Two of these respondents envisioned working in the Cross instead. One person thought he would temporarily quit, but would return to work at a later time:

"I'd be forced to defy the law and made a criminal. They'd be committing a grave error. It would up the rate of doing toilet blocks and things. It would push it to the suburbs."

"It would turn to other parts of Sydney."

"It depends. I would go to Kings Cross, but it's not a decision I'd like to do."

Table 41. Hypothetical reactions to the prohibition of street soliciting in residential areas as stated by male workers

Probability response	Number
Would continue to solicit in Darlington	9
Would move to other area in city to solicit	2
Would leave soliciting temporarily	1
Would leave soliciting but stay in the industry	1
Undecided	1
Total	14

Desired change

It is possible that when male prostitutes were asked "What sorts of legal changes would you like to see take place that would improve your working circumstances?" they interpreted the question more literally than other groups. Or perhaps legislation issues were of greater concern to men. In any case, almost half of suggested changes involved recommendations to legalise male prostitution and homosexuality.

It should be noted that since the time of interviewing, the Crimes (Amendment) Act, 1984, No 7 was assented to in May 1984. The practical ramifications, if any, on male prostitution are yet to be determined. As workers stated, for example:

"Prostitution should be legalised. Gays have to be legalised."

"Legalise prostitution, but not a red-light district."

Table 42. Comparative areas of concern as stated by male, transsexual and female street workers

Area of concern	Number of men	Number of transsexuals	Number of women
Attitude to work	0	0	6
Being discreet	0	0	2
Improved health care	2	0	0
Job discrimination	0	4	1
Job recognition	3	2	11
Legislation	13	4	21
Market place	4	1	5
More career options	0	1	5
Professional standards	2	2	10
Wages	0	1	3
Women as managers/owners	0	0	1
Working conditions	7	2	35
Other	0	0	1
No desired change	0	1	3
No response	0	2	4
Total	31*	20	108

* As men may have mentioned several areas of concern, each one has been counted as a separate item.

It was also suggested that improved legal status for male streetwalkers would, in turn, improve their working conditions. Seven suggestions called for better working conditions. It is significant that in the case of women, where street soliciting was decriminalised, almost one third of that sample still discussed working conditions. Men mentioned fear of their safety, being hassled in general, being hassled by police and being hassled by heterosexual men, by "straights", as areas of concern.

C O N C L U S I O N

Since field work, there have been legislative changes (the Prostitution (Amendment) Act, 1983 and the Crimes (Amendment) Act, 1984) as well as increased concern in the community over the spread of AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) which have had their effect on the prostitute population. Indeed, this study may be seen as a historic glimpse into streetwalking in a period when soliciting was totally decriminalised.

Between December 1982 and April 1983, 73 female, transsexual and male streetwalkers talked about their work. A high percentage of these individuals did, in fact, restrict soliciting to Darlinghurst. Distinctions were made between working there and in other neighbourhoods, such as Kings Cross. As a result, it is felt that research results characterise the Darlinghurst streetwalker scene.

The discussion has centred around three areas of concern. First, and perhaps most successfully, interviews have offered detailed comparative descriptive material of female, transsexual and male workers. Material demonstrates that although these three groups are doing the same job, they have distinct identities. There is minimal social interaction between them. They keep physically separated from one another. They each have their own market place. And although they have common concerns, there are working problems unique to each group. In addition to detailed descriptions of varying ages, hours worked, reasons for soliciting and the like, descriptive material emphasises the need for policymakers, in their decision-making, to consider females, males and transsexuals as distinct groups.

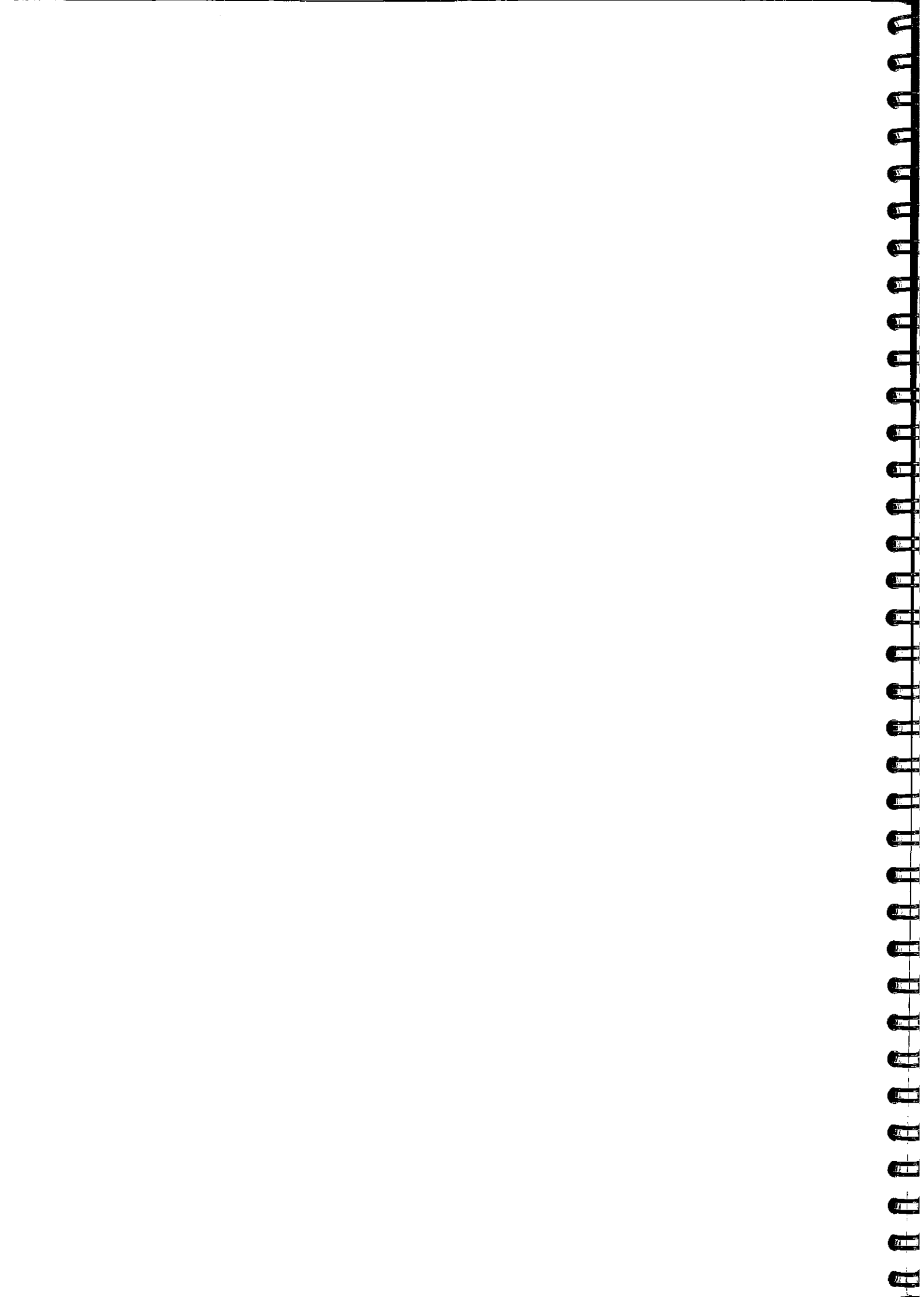
Secondly, historical material has been discussed to assess the comparative situation of street prostitution under the Summary Offences Act, 1970, versus the Prostitution Act, 1979. Comments offer a preliminary, crude appraisal of workers' perceived changes. Females and transsexuals agreed that there has been an increase in resident dissatisfaction. (Males commented they had minimal resident contact.)

Females discussed a significant decrease in police corruption. Transsexuals stated that police practices had improved, although the current attitude to police has remained overall negative. A few females talked about the replacement of the pimp as individual protector by the sitter as group protector in houses where rooms were rented to service clients. All three groups were divided on the issue of customers. From discussion it appears that the decriminalisation of street soliciting had the greatest impact on females as, at the time of interviewing, transsexual street workers and male prostitutes were being arrested under the Offences in Public Places Act as well as under the Crimes Act, 1900.

Thirdly, material concerning hypothetical legislative change demonstrates that regardless of such change the majority of workers would continue to solicit or would continue to work in some other part of the prostitution industry. On the one hand, street prostitution was portrayed as an occupation with definite advantages (offering comparatively favourable earnings, flexibility and independence). On the other hand, discussion of desired change illustrated horrific working conditions, safety problems and concern over resident, police and customer treatment.

Finally, it is hoped that the methodological feasibility of this study will encourage others to consider the work place as a favourable research site.

A P P E N D I X



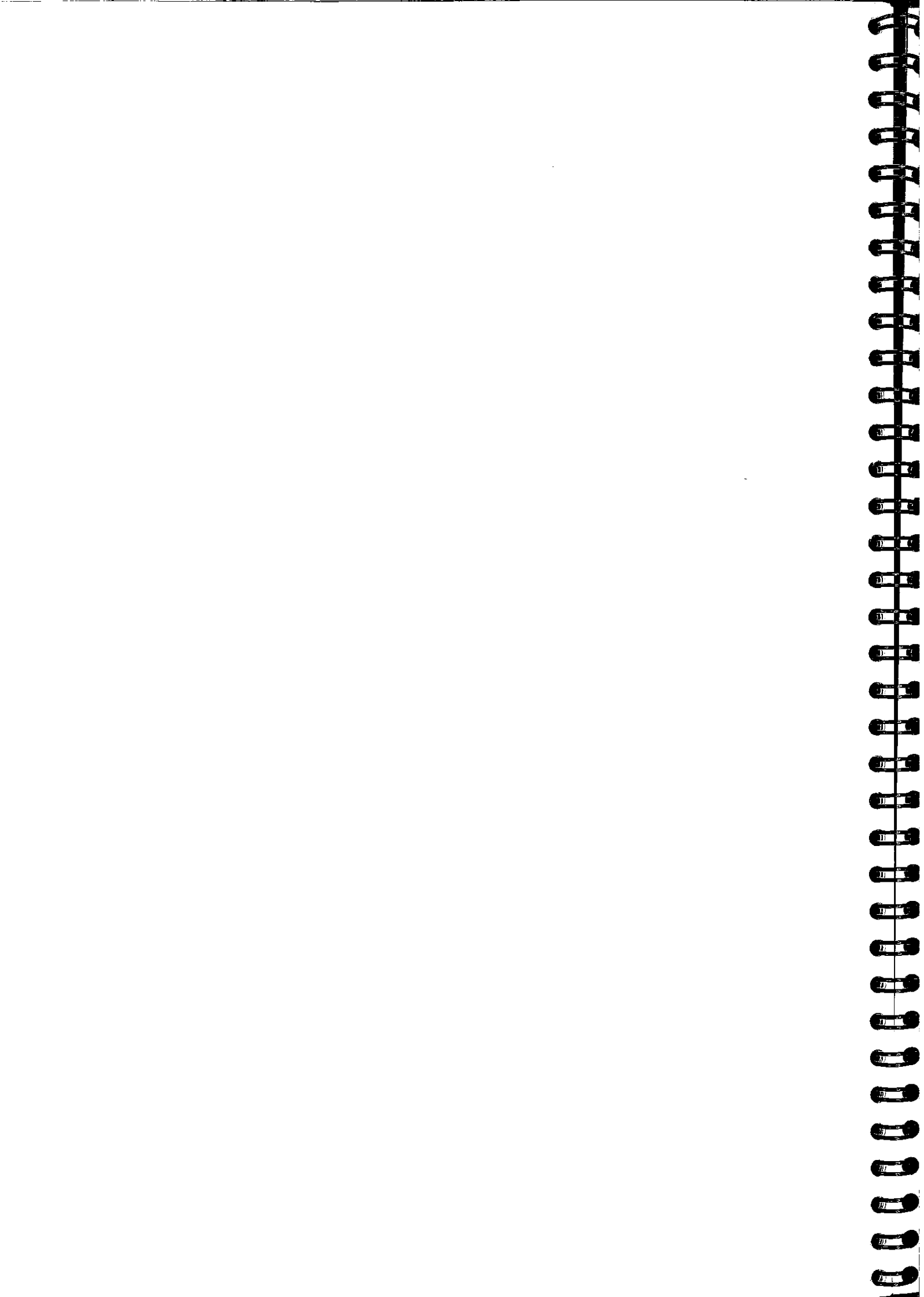
I n t e r v i e w O u t l i n e

The following was used for female workers. Questions were adjusted accordingly for transsexuals and males. Follow-up questions are not listed.

1. Which city were you born in?
2. How old are you?
3. When you are not working, in which neighbourhood do you live?
4. Is this a part-time or full-time job for you?
5. In the past month, about how many nights a week would you work?
6. On the average, in the past month, about how many hours per night do you work soliciting?
7. Have you been involved in other aspects of the trade besides streetwalking? What?
8. How did you come to choose streetwalking over, say, working in a massage parlour or a brothel?
9. Do you go to other parts of Sydney to solicit?
Yes - Where? No - Why not?
10. Why do you come to Darlinghurst to work?
11. How long have you been coming here?
12. Has the number of working women on the streets in Darlinghurst changed much in the past six months? Has there been an increase, decrease or has it stayed the same? How would you explain this change?

13. Do you think the number of working women on the streets in Darlinghurst has changed much since 1979 when soliciting was legally allowed? Since then has there been an increase, a decrease or has it stayed the same? How would you explain this change?
14. If public soliciting were made illegal, how do you think your working practices would change?
15. If a red-light district were set up, how do you think your working practices would change?
16. If it were made illegal to solicit in Darlinghurst and other residential areas, how do you think your working practices would change?
17. What would you say is the average age of customers?
18. Where in Sydney do you think most live?
19. In general, how would you describe customers as a group?
20. What percentage of your customers do you think only go to streetwalkers (compared with other types of professional women) for sex?
21. How would you describe the police attitude towards prostitution?
22. What contact have you had with police in the past six months?
23. A long-time pro was on TV recently claiming that a large number of streetwalkers in Darlinghurst are hard drug users. Do you agree?
24. What percentage of women do you think are regular hard drug users?
25. Are you a hard drug user yourself?
26. What types of drugs have you used in the past week?

27. How much of these have you used in the past week?
28. How long would you say you have been taking hard drugs?
29. Which came first for you - involvement in drugs or involvement in prostitution?
30. In your opinion, which comes first for most women - involvement in drugs or involvement in prostitution?
31. When you first became a pro, would you say the same percentage of working women were hard drug users? How has it changed?
32. How long have you been a worker?
33. When you first started in the business, were you soliciting in Darlinghurst?
34. What year did you first come to Darlinghurst?
35. From your experience, were police practices different from what they are now?
36. Were customers different then from how they are now?
37. Were residents different then from how they are now?
38. Were male workers different then from now?
39. Were transsexual workers different then from now?
40. How would you generally explain these changes?
41. Working women tell me pros in Darlinghurst have never had pimps. Would you agree?
42. What sorts of legal changes would you like to see take place that would improve your working circumstances?
43. Is there anything else you would like to add?



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