

CENTRAL SYDNEY


City joins with AFP and immigration to crack down on illegal sex trade

THE City of Sydney will crackdown on illegal brothels — with one reported per week over the last five years — with the help of the Department of - Immigration and Border Protection and the Australian Federal Police.

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 In the past five years about 290 reports were received by the City alleging sex was being offered illegally on premises.

THE illegal sex trade is facing a major crackdown after the City of Sydney vowed to take action by collaborating with leading national protection agencies.

The move follows the release of new figures which reveal in the past five years about 290 reports were received by the City alleging sex was being offered illegally on premises, in breach of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act — an average of more than one a week.

[As revealed by Central Sydney](#), in the 12 months to June the City had received at least 80 complaints relating to 49 premises allegedly carrying out illegal activity.



 The City of Sydney said it finds it difficult to stop the illegal sex trade because of the cost of carrying it out.

Despite evidence available through simple internet searches that multiple premises are offering unauthorised explicit services, just seven prompted investigation with one search warrant issued.

The City has maintained it is hamstrung when it comes to carrying out decisive action due to the burden of evidence needed and the need to justify the cost of carrying out an investigation.

The City is currently in negotiations with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, NSW Police and the Australian Federal Police to develop strategies to combat the level of illegal sex crime in the local government area.

“The City is developing a new strategic approach to disrupt the business model of massage parlours offering illegal sex services,” a City spokeswoman said.



📷 Councillor Craig Chung said the City needed to prove they were serious about stopping the illegal sex trade. Picture: Rohan Kelly

While there are no further details on when the strategy would be put in place or what form this will take, the City revealed it would work closely with the industry to educate sex workers.

Liberal councillor Craig Chung welcomed the crackdown which he said should have been introduced earlier.

“I’m pleased the City says it is taking action but the proof will be in the pudding whether they follow through with their promises and deliver real outcomes to communities living with illegal brothels in their suburbs,” Cr Chung said.

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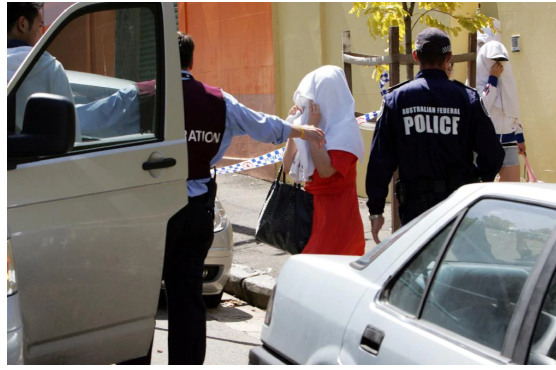
📷 The AFP and Immigration routinely work on busting organised sex trafficking syndicate. AFP’s Glen McEwen and DIAC’s Lyn O’Connell at a press conference back in 2008.

Of the 290 reports of sex being offered illegally in the LGA in the past five years no prosecutions were commenced and just one court action taken to enforce a cease use order.

“I find it very hard to believe the City has not been able to prosecute and shut down these premises when there has been at least one report a week (for the past five years),” Cr Chung said

The City does not have a program of proactive inspections of massage premises and instead conducts inspections when complaints are received, a policy Cr Chung said should be changed.

“The proliferation of massage parlours, and some operating as illegal brothels, means it’s obvious that we need to have regular inspections of high-risk premises — meaning those operating late into the evening in residential and densely retail areas,” Cr Chung said.



A sex worker with an immigration official outside of a brothel in Crown Street, Surry Hills.

As previously reported by *Central Sydney*, the City is also considering new requirements for all future applications for medical or therapeutic massage businesses to ensure the parlours are not able to change their focus to sex services.

The City is looking to request proof that operators and staff have remedial massage qualifications such as diplomas or certificates and evidence that the operator is accredited with at least one recognised health fund as a registered health provider.

In order to prevent physical conversion of premises to accommodate illegal sex services, controls will be in place for any DA restricting the addition of solid wall partitions.

BROTHER BECOMES ‘LUXURY SEX RESORT’

A spokesman for the Department of Immigration and Border Protection said it did not comment on specific details of ongoing operations but said it worked closely with a number of partner agencies to investigate allegations of visa fraud and exploitation of foreign workers and to take action.

“Individuals found guilty of an aggravated criminal offence [slavery] can face penalties of up to 5 years’ imprisonment and/or fines of up to \$63,000 per breach for an individual or \$315,000 maximum for a business,” the spokesman said.

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