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NEWS

Sex workers in training

By Sarah Bacon

In a world first, a number of sex workers in NSW have completed an innovative training program that focuses on working with people with disabilities.

NSW Democrats member of the Legislative Council, Dr Arthur Chesterfield-Evans, presented awards last Friday at Family Planning Association (FPA) at Ashfield. "This is a sensitive and controversial issue," he said. "But we must be mature and recognise that courses like this will set a framework for ethical behaviour. It's an important milestone in rights for the disabled."

Professional Disability Awareness Training was aimed at providing professional development skills to sex workers, and topics included communication and medical aspects of disability. The training course was designed to assist sex workers in their dealings with disabled clients and give an affirmation to the work the sex workers admit had been part of their duties for a considerable time.

"Let's face it, we've worked with people with disabilities for years and years," says Donna (a Darlinghurst-based transgender sex worker). "But this course helps us help people in the right way. It awards the recognised skills we need to really help them."

The training program was the result of a partnership between FPA Health and representatives from People With Disabilities, the Spastic Centre, Access Plus, the Spinal Unit at Royal North Shore Hospital, the Sex Workers Outreach Project and individual sex workers and people with disabilities.

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