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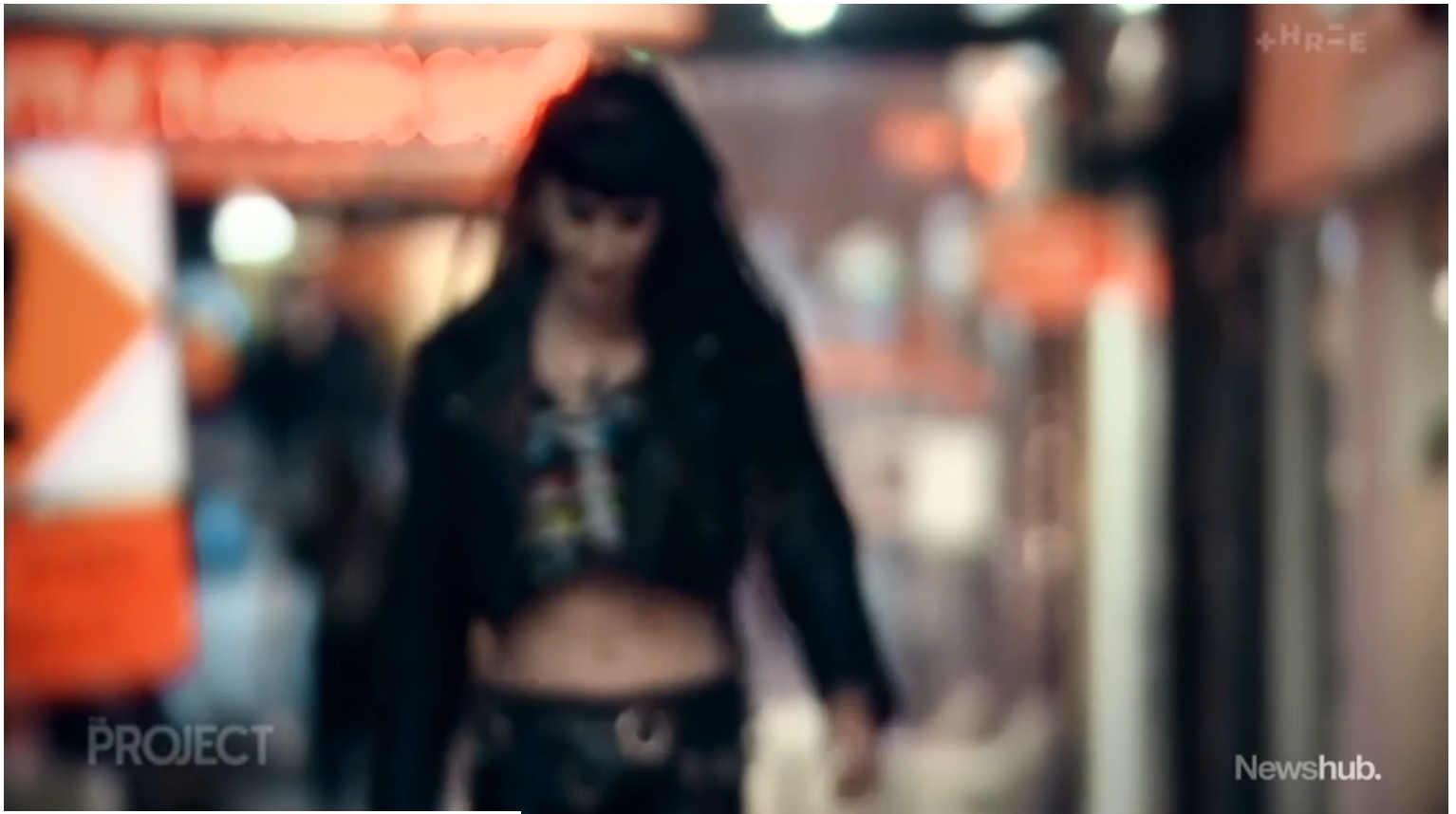
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Sex workers say COVID-19 alert level guidelines remain unclear for their jobs

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The Project

Rachel Sadler



Watch: Sex workers say the COVID-19 alert level guidelines remain unclear for their jobs. Credits: Video - The Project; Image - Getty Images

Sex workers feel confused over what the alert level guidelines mean for their line of work and say the do's and don'ts remain unclear.

They feel they've been left in the dark to figure out how they can keep themselves safe without any help from the Government.

The owner and operator of Juliette's Girls, Juliette DuPont, says they often feel left out.

"I think in the sex industry we're often not mentioned or we're not considered," DuPont told The Project.

"Hairdressers, restaurants and whatever, they've been able to go on the COVID-19 website, find themselves and know exactly what they have to do when they reopen, but for us we've not been able to do that. We haven't had any guidelines. It just would've been nice to have that information along with everybody else."

She says there hasn't been a lot of clear information from the Government that states what they can do when they work.

She says there hasn't been a lot of clear information from the Government that states what they can do when they want.

"There's been quite a lot of confusion around what we are and aren't allowed to do, and so I think owners and operators, they've had to be creative and come up with ways themselves to eliminate potential dangers."

This includes working virtually, or some sex workers have set up peephole shows.

Annah Pickering from the New Zealand Prostitutes Collective says she's taken guidance from a similar, yet very different profession.

"I think some of them felt there was no clear category for their adult entertainment. For those reasons, we compared our work and close contact to a rugby player."

Sex worker Pandora says she's introduced stricter guidelines when meeting with clients, and if they aren't prepared to follow them, she won't see them. But asking them for their real contact details has caused her booking numbers to drastically drop.

"I have actually only had one booking out of maybe 50 calls since level 2 started. Most people think 'oh you're having a laugh, I'm not giving you my real name'," she told The Project.

"My hope would be that I can just sustain the online stuff more than anything for as long as possible. Obviously that means I am not going to be getting as much business but at the end of the day peoples health and safety comes first"

DuPont says they're feeling a shortage of bookings since a lot of their clients are from overseas.

"I would say at the moment we're pretty similar to the tourism industry... We've got eight girls working for us. Obviously it's quite scary for them not being sure how much work is coming."

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