

I am currently applying for my Tattoo Operators Licence which has currently been in the system for over 12 months.

My partner and I have been together for 27 years.
My partner is a member of a Motorcycle Club.

Since the introduction of these Laws it became very obvious that my partner was not going to be able to obtain a Tattoo Parlour Operators Licence or be permitted to have anything to do with a business that he has run for nearly 15 years. He has not done anything that would justify the governments stance on this - he is purely denied this due to the fact that he is a member of a Motorcycle Club.

So we decided that it would be better if he stood back and have no more to do with the running of the businesses and I took over. Since taking over the running of the businesses I have had the day to day stress and uncertainty of not knowing if I will be issued my Licence or if the Officers decide to shut the doors to my businesses. I have been going through this process for over 12 months now when others have been issued within two months of applying.

I believe that the reason behind my application taking so long is that they are trying to find a reason to not issue my licence purely because of who my husband is not because of anything that I have done. This is so wrong I should be judge for who I am not who I know.

Tattoo Laws were introduced to regulate the Tattoo Industry instead they seem to be all about money e.g. expensive annual licence fees and fines or breaches.

They have introduced a Tattoo Procedure Log and Licensing of Shops and Artists

I have been interviewed by the police, fingerprinted and had my shops audited twice in one month - no fines or breaches issued. I have supplied a substantial amount of additional paperwork that was requested by the police. I have followed all requirements and recommendations made by the police and the Office of Fair Trading

There have been visits to audit my shops by the police who informed my staff that in their understanding of the laws I was unable to have staff recorded at more than one shop at a time by submitting Close Associates Form 1a. After being informed of this I rang Fair Trading who informed me that the process that I had in place was the right one and informed me that he will get in touch with the officers concerned and inform them that their interpretation was wrong.

During these visits 4 police came into my shops, which had customers in the waiting room but also walked through the complex where families were present wearing their guns. I have had people and shop owners complain to me about this as they saw it as Intimidation, over the top and wondered what were they thinking as they were very concerned about their purpose for such a public display. Also on one of their visits they went to the shop next door to inquire where the tattoo shop was she has told me of her feelings of intimidation and said she was left fearful wondering if they were going to shoot someone. This is an example of them not being concerned with the general public perception of their actions. I fail to see why there would be a need for 4 officers to attend the shops purely to check paperwork is being kept in accordance with the laws and to check licences twice in one month.

These laws are of poor structure and even poorer understanding of them by those enforcing them

The Laws are being used as a blanket effect on the whole of the Industry, which means they are affecting innocent people, especially those who have always done the right thing e.g. shop owners (not backyard tattooists), keeping of records and the paying of GST and taxes.

I understand that the government thinks there is a hidden reason for owning a tattoo shop but surely with not too much effort they can easily find those up to no good. In fact backyard tattooist (those who operate from home or shed) are the ones doing wrong by the industry and this is where you should be looking if you were really interested in bettering the industry.

There is Tattooists who have left and start tattooing from home, there has also been one who I had to tell that he could not operate out of my shop due to the fact that he refused to do paperwork and I had to constantly ensure that it was filled out correctly. This is due to the fact that they don't want to have their income recorded properly to avoid paying the tax that is owed. He has since been issued with an Operators Licence and opened his own shop - something wrong with the system for him to be issued with an Operators Licence and this goes to show how flawed these laws are and how wrong the assumptions are that are made by the governing body.

Many backyard Tattooists are working from not so nice places e.g. a garages, room at house etc none of which are Health Department regulated and away from the governments watch.

Consultation with individuals who are actually involved in the tattoo industry and could have had a real input on how their industry could be better regulated and should have been conducted before these flawed laws were enacted.

To apply for a Tattoo Licence all that you are required to do is pay the fee, some were interviewed but not many, be fingerprinted, supply witnessed passport photos (I don't know why we had to supply these as the licence is only a very plainly printed A4 piece of paper) and have a criminal history search done by the police.

At no time ever has anyone had to prove they can actually tattoo or are learning to Tattoo. No request has ever been made for a current Health Certificate to be provided. These are two things that should be checked before the issue of any Licence, if the government were really concerned about bettering the industry they would have done so.

But these Laws are not about the industry they are about legal harassment and intimidation. The main thing that comes through in the process is that it is all about the government trying to find a reason to charge fees and issue fines purely to obtain more revenue.

This process has now been going on for over 12 months which leaves me unable to move forward with regards to improving my businesses as the uncertainty, stress and constant worry as to whether my licence will be issued or not.

The outcome of my licence will affect 12 families who are dependant on my licence being approved or not.

I have also been informed that the licence process when it comes time to renew will be treated the same as a new one. With interviews and fingerprints, I do not see the need to have to have your fingerprints taken again as it is my understanding the fingerprints stay on record with the police.

I believe that these Tattoo Laws are not structured in a way that is workable. No other industry to my knowledge requires annual fingerprinting, criminal checks, random visits with armed Police Officers to check paperwork and Police interviews.

My ability to run a business should not be judged on anything other than who I am not who I know. This is so wrong on so many levels.

Please restructure these laws.

Thank you for reading my submission