# Victorian Sex Worker Wins Discrimination Case Against Financial Provider



Matthew Roberts, a gay sex worker and advocate for sex workers' rights in Victoria, faced termination of his business banking services after disclosing his occupation to his financial provider. This issue arose in 2021 when Mint Payments, a fintech company specializing in end-to-end payments, was acquired by First Data Merchant Solutions Australia. Following the acquisition, Roberts was asked to reapply for service, but was subsequently denied due to his occupation.

In 2022, after reapplying and being rejected again, Roberts initiated a discrimination case which he won. This landmark court case, resolved in 2023, allowed him to continue accepting client payments via EFTPOS. The case also highlighted broader issues within the sex work industry about access to financial services.

Roberts' legal representation by Maurice Blackburn cited "de-banking" as a significant hurdle for sex workers in an increasingly cashless economy. Following the case, Mint Payments and First Data Merchant Solutions Australia agreed to new conditions to prevent service restrictions based on lawful sex work and committed to training their employees about equal opportunity laws. However, Roberts expressed concern that these conditions may not adequately protect individuals in related adult industries.

Similar experiences have been shared by others in the sex work industry, complicating their financial management and increasing vulnerability. Following decriminalization of sex work in Victoria, financial institutions are faced with navigating new legislative landscapes concerning non-discriminatory practices for lawful occupations.