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Part C- Questions (Optional)

The following questions are focussed on your experiences and expectations of Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

These questions are a guide and you do not have to answer these questions. You can answer some or all of the questions. You can also make a submission by emailing your submission to the Review Team at CPWReview@humanrights.gov.au.

- 1. How would you describe the workplace culture(s) of the Commonwealth parliamentary workplace(s) where you work/have worked? Please outline specific strengths and/or weaknesses in terms of workplace culture(s), based on your experiences, as appropriate.**

Regarding workplace and industrial, akin to a small business x the number of MPs and Senators offices in the Parliament. Completely asymmetrical power relationship. The employing Senator/MP and their CoS have all the power to determine the industrial and workplace culture. Staff have none other than their potential to embarrass or frighten their employer where wrongdoing has occurred. The MoPS EBA is weak, ill defined and part of the problem. [REDACTED] doesn't have any muscle or particular role to enforce the MoPS EBA and [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] lack of capacity to compel employers to reimburse employees where underpayment and/or unfair dismissal, for example, have occurred is part of the problem. The competitiveness between staffers to win favour with their Senator/MP is part of the problem as is the lack of widespread union membership, in my experience, among staffers.

- 2. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that already do, or could contribute to a safe and respectful environment in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

The availability of a union for staffers. An Award that could be toughened up, made more detailed and explicit. The potential to have an independent industrial arbiter could contribute to improving the situation.



3. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that may contribute to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?

These behaviours, in my opinion, are an extension of inadequate industrial protections, too much power being wielded by each individual MP/Senator and their chiefs of staff over working conditions, a wide spread practice across the parliament (regardless of political party) of highly exploitative employment arrangements, competitiveness between and lack of unity amongst staffers, no agency/authority within Parliament to whom staffers with grievances can go for redress, few redress powers by Fair Work Australia, low levels of union membership, inflated egos all over the place combined with a sense of 'anything goes' entitlement by MPs/ Senators and senior staffers, and no sense or practice of accountability when it comes to employment and work conditions related matters. The prevailing workplace culture is that Senators/MPs are doing staff members a favour despite the quite horrendous demands and modest pay arrangements.

Are you familiar with any Commonwealth parliamentary workplace policies, processes and/or practices in relation to staff and worker safety and wellbeing, workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If so, please outline your understanding of how these policies, processes and/or practices operate.

Other than the MoPS Award, no, but I imagine they are the same as Territory/Federal arrangements that pertain to every other workplace in the ACT – minus a culture of reporting, enforcement, compliance and punishment if breached.

During your time working in a Commonwealth parliamentary workplace(s), have/did you receive any education or training in relation to worker safety and wellbeing, and/or how to prevent or respond to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If yes, please outline your experience of the training and whether it was useful in increasing your knowledge and/or skills in relation to preventing and responding to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault.

No, none.



Are you aware of how you and/or other people working in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces can report workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault (either formally or informally)? If yes, please specify what reporting options exist, and outline your experience with accessing and/or using those reporting options if applicable.

I was on the receiving end of being employed 5 days per fortnight yet worked fulltime. This creating a situation of underpayment and, when I raised this [REDACTED], I was [REDACTED] dismissed [REDACTED] without any notice. The manner of dismissal was an episode of unfair, unpleasant bullying coupled with a hefty underpayment amount still owed me. I went to the [REDACTED], they said they had no powers to compel [REDACTED] I went to [REDACTED] and they said the same, all they could do was speak to [REDACTED] and, on the bluff principle, try to persuade settlement of the matter. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] So it was that via bluff the matter was sorted. If that had failed, there was no other means of redress.

Are you aware of any supports available in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces to people who experience workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If yes, please specify what supports exist, and outline your experience with accessing and/or using those supports if applicable.

Only via the CPSU, if one cares to join.

Based on your experiences, do you have any suggestions or recommendations on how to improve the prevention of and responses to workplace bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?

MoPS EBA needs to be clarified, toughened with distinct accountabilities, including a reporting, conciliation and arbitration arrangement on all workplace matters; banning of alcohol and drugs in the workplace; drug and alcohol testing; bipartisan encouragement of all staff members to join the CPSU.

4. Is there anything else you would like to tell the Commission?



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