

13 February 2019

SDC Historic Inquiry into Sexual Harassment
GPO Box 5218
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Ms Jenkins

RE: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australia Workplaces

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland (CCIQ) expresses its support of the Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's (ACCI) submission to the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australia Workplaces and the recommendations contained therein. CCIQ wishes to expand on the following recommendations made in ACCI's submission.

Recommendation 3: Encourage further industry led initiatives and Recommendation 12: Harness the Power of SME Representatives


- Many Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) lack the resources to properly address sexual harassment in the workplace. Support from industry associations is therefore crucial in guiding SMEs with the correct procedures of sexual harassment incidences;
- CCIQ provides a Human Resources (HR) hotline service to its members that allows for members to phone in and receive advice on how to address a sexual harassment claim. This service should be extended beyond its members to all SMEs and have a dedicated hotline;
- It is important to stress that employers need to be encouraged to get support before termination of a sexual harassment perpetrator takes place as this helps to ensure that the correct processes are being followed. Based on the experience of CCIQ's HR team, more issues occur due to the incorrect procedure being followed as opposed to the merits of the case and it is thus critical for businesses to be advised before acting – especially when they do not have a company policy on sexual harassment in place;
- Another service provided by CCIQ is employee training on sexual harassment. This training should be mandatory for all businesses and facilitated by industry associations.

Recommendation 9: Research Report on SMEs and Sexual Harassment

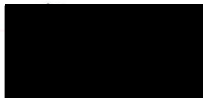
- Understanding and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace requires further research and profiling into sexual harassment perpetrators so that the risks can be managed. There is a plethora of statistical analysis of the victims, but equal research needs to be conducted into the perpetrators.
- It would also be helpful to know the incidence of sexual harassment in SMEs compared to large enterprises.

Experience has found that businesses tend to come off worse when there is a sexual harassment incidence in their workplace. Out of fear of litigious consequences, many businesses dismiss the sexual harassment perpetrator with more weeks pay than what's required to ensure there are no unfair dismissal claims. Further, even though a sexual harassment claim may be covered by work cover, business premiums may increase leaving businesses worse off – despite having followed the correct steps.

As sexual harassment in the workplace is not only a workplace issue but stems from broader societal problems, businesses are at the mercy of policy makers to be able eradicate this from their workplace without fear of adverse consequences.

Should you have further queries, you are welcome to contact CCIQ 

Yours sincerely,



Olivia Van der Wagen

Policy Advisor

Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland