

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **PART C: Submission**

**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.**

The workplace culture can be very mixed, and vary or swing dramatically within an office and within a day. Clearly the Minister (or equivalent head of office) has a significant impact on setting the culture but is not the only determining factor. Some Ministers are very hands off in the running of the office, only deal with advisers individually and deliberately or through benign neglect, play no role in the culture and running of their office, leaving this to a CoS.

I don't believe Ministers (or MPs/Senators) are given support, training or any guidance for the effective running of an office and for the most part, except in extreme circumstances (i.e. a crisis) they are not held accountable. There is no expectation placed on them - they are 'given' staff and/or select staff (often with little thought as to what roles they want them to play) and kind of close their eyes and hope for the best. For all the projection on to them as 'leaders' they are not seen as, or held accountable for, being leaders of an office and team.

**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?**

Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces have to be seen as, presented as, and expected to be, modern, accountable, workplaces with WH&S standards. This goes to the proper management of work hours, accountabilities, job descriptions, performance management, annual reviews, sick leave, annual leave and work-placed stress - amongst other things. In my observation, for too long, all these 'basics' are thrown out the window when you step in a Minister's office and it's just 'run run run' from one crisis to the next, creating an environment that is prone to exceptionalism and excuses. It doesn't support the development of junior staff, it doesn't enable the best from senior staff and leaders.

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

Alcohol in the workplace, long hours, long periods away from 'home' (partners, families, children), lack of accountability for workplace standards, artificial 'divides' between political staff and public servants (or subject matter experts) - creating an 'us/them' culture. In particular on the latter, a disrespect of public servants ("idiots") vs. political (we really 'know' and our view will always be right) which equates to power differentials, undoubtedly only heightened with it includes a gender and/or age differential.

**4. 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.**

To my shame, in two instances of working at Parliament House, including one as [REDACTED], I did not have familiarity with such policies. As a public servant on secondment in the second period [REDACTED] I drew on public service policies and standards and applied those to my workplace. I did draw on some support from the MOPS unit at Department of Finance but in on particularly difficult/acute situation found it to be impractical and unhelpful.

**5. 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. Not even offered or suggested.

**6. 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.**

No - other than through a call to MOPS unit at DoF.

**7. 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.**

No.

**8. 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?**

There have to be processes, policies, protocols - as per those you might expect to exist a la questions 4, 5, 6, and 7 above. Moreover, these have to be well known and promoted - training should be compulsory within a period of time and enforced. There should be reporting by Chiefs of Staff and Ministers on the 'state of the office'. There needs to be guidance about alcohol use in the workplace - by exception. There needs to be proper processes as per my points in response to Question 2.

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

The problems, as reported publicly, are real. And pervasive. And in my observation little changed over the last [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]