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## **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.**

Description:

-Its a team v team culture. The people on your team are your mates, and the other team are the enemy. You are expected to fall in line behind your team at any cost. People will often prioritise the team over their own wellbeing and the well being of others.

-Chaotic. So much going on. No order, no structure.

-Culture of perfection. There is so much pressure on MPs that they need everything to be perfect, cant have any mistakes or errors. This pressure is placed on staff, as if there is a stuff up it will likely be the staffs fault but the MP will take the blame.

Strengths:

-Its exhilarating, important, interesting work you get to do every day. Getting to work along side the countries legislators is an experience second to none.

-It can be fun. You support others and they support you to achieve a common goal.

Weaknesses:

-No rigidity. There is no universal structure, every office is different. In some a media adviser may be 'top dog', in others it may be chief of staff. There is no system of leadership in an office.

-No where to take complaints. You can only complain to staff on the MPs team. No where else to go. What if the accusation is about them, or what if it is about their boss? Or what if it is about the culture they have created.

-Absolutely 0 introduction/training to what the job would be like. You get a photo taken for a badge and that is it. No lessons on how to contribute to a positive workplace culture, how to recognise when its not there etc. What is the workplace culture parliament even wants or strives for?

**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?**

Already does contribute to safe workplace environment: Having close, friendly relations with staff that come from the unique work you do together. Having staff that back you up, support you etc.

Could contribute to safe workplace environment:

-There needs to be an independent HR body. So essential. Something outside the politician themselves.

-The buck cannot stop with whoever's office it is. Their priority is not you, their priority is their job and their party.

**3. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that may contribute to workplace**

## **bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

Young, untrained, unexperienced staff who are often in their first professional space and are unaware of what proper conduct is. I didnt know what was acceptable and what wasn't because I had never been in an environment like it; it was my first 'proper' job. This is true for alot of young staffers, who get work at Parliament through word of mouth, young lib/labor, community organisations etc. Things would happen that I just assumed were normal. It wasnt until I rang my parents and told them about my day that they said "that seems a bit off, sounds a bit like sexual harassment"

Also the heavy drinking. There is always alcohol or a way to get it, blurring the lines between formal and informal work settings. Also late nights, you are in the parliament at night time which means people think no one is watching them.

The expectation that you will do everything for the team. You be quiet and you cop whatever is happening to you without questioning it. If not, you are the one responsible for hurting the team.

As mentioned, the culture of perfection. The MP having to produce perfect work at all time, means that the staff bare this pressure, and when something is not exactly how the MP envisioned it (even if an entirely acceptable product), it is a breeding ground for bullying.

**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.**

No, none.

**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, none.

**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. Only going to a staff member in the office.

**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?**

An independent, well- resourced, a-political human resources body within Parliament that can provide resources/supports for all employees.

Some form of introductory 'training' for staffers, particularly young (under 25) staffers, to expose them to the type of work they will be doing and what they can expect.

Something that clearly outlines what the expectations are. If there is going to be alcohol in the building, explain this to new staffers. If there are going to be power imbalances, explain this to new staffers. Dont expect that everyone entering the building is a savvy employee with years of experience under their belt.

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

Important work being done here. Thank you.

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