

Media Release

Ingrid Stitt MP
Minister for Workplace Safety
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TAKING ACTION ON WORKPLACE SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Victorians are encouraged to have their say on how to better prevent and respond to workplace sexual harassment.

Consultation on sexual harassment in the workplace starts today, with submissions encouraged from the community, businesses, workers and organisations on how to help shape the Victorian Government's upcoming reforms.

Victorians can provide feedback on a range of issues – from prevention and raising awareness, through to supporting workers to make reports and enforcement action.

Feedback is also being sought on ways to remove the burden on victims of sexual harassment to report inappropriate behaviour, instead looking at what employers can do to create harassment-free workplaces.

The launch of the consultation paper coincides with the third meeting of the Ministerial Taskforce on Workplace Sexual Harassment, responsible for exploring ways to strengthen the state's occupational health and safety framework to address sexual harassment.

Taskforce co-chairs Bronwyn Halfpenny MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety, and experienced workplace lawyer Liberty Sanger are joined by a broad cross-section of industry and community representatives including union and employer stakeholders, legal representatives and advocates of at-risk groups.

A key initiative of their work will be considering a model for mandatory reporting that would require employers to report incidents of workplace sexual harassment to WorkSafe.

The Taskforce will also consider measures to prevent the misuse of non-disclosure agreements in sexual harassment matters – better supporting those who experience or witness unacceptable behaviour to speak up.

Advice from the Taskforce along with community feedback on the consultation paper will help inform Victoria's workplace sexual harassment reform agenda.

Submissions for the consultation paper are open until 26 July 2021 via engage.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

"We want to hear from all Victorians about how we can prevent and better respond to sexual harassment in our workplaces."

"People who experience workplace sexual harassment can be left traumatised and their careers cut short – that's why we're taking action to stop this abhorrent behaviour."

Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety Bronwyn Halfpenny

"We're working to make sure that the burden is not solely on victims to make a complaint – instead we want workplaces to take proactive steps to create a safe working environment."

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