

# Media Release

**Ingrid Stitt MP**  
Minister for Workplace Safety  
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## PROTECTING VICTORIAN WORKERS FROM SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Victorians will be better protected from sexual harassment in the workplace under leading reforms which will change the way employers must deal with this disgraceful behaviour.

Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt today released the recommendations from the Ministerial Taskforce on Workplace Sexual Harassment, along with the Government's response.

According to the Australian Human Rights Commission, one in three people have been sexually harassed at work in the past five years – highlighting the urgent need to stamp out this pervasive workplace health and safety risk.

In an Australian-first, the Andrews Labor Government will begin work to restrict the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) for workplace sexual harassment cases in Victoria, which are often misused to silence victim-survivors, protect employer reputations, avoid full liability and hide serial offending.

This will require close consultation with victim-survivors, unions, business and the legal profession to develop the appropriate model and scope of the restriction before introducing legislation – as this complex reform has never before been attempted we need to ensure we get it right.

The Government also accepts the recommendation to treat sexual harassment as an occupational health and safety issue and will help WorkSafe build its capacity to tackle sexual harassment with almost \$7 million over three years in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*.

This will allow WorkSafe to expand its WorkWell program and dedicate part of it to preventing workplace sexual harassment. The WorkWell program provides employers with access to resources and funding opportunities to prevent mental injury and promote safe and mentally healthy workplaces.

The Government's plan to tackle sexual harassment in Victorian workplaces includes introducing de-identified employer reporting to WorkSafe on workplace sexual harassment, as part of proposed new psychological health regulations.

The Taskforce was co-chaired by Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety Bronwyn Halfpenny and experienced workplace injury lawyer Liberty Sanger. It included representatives from unions, employer groups, legal professionals, and vulnerable workers.

The report and the Government's response can be found at <https://www.vic.gov.au/ministerial-taskforce-workplace-sexual-harassment>

### Quote attributable to Minister for Workplace Safety Ingrid Stitt

*"A workplace that is not free from sexual harassment is not a safe workplace. These reforms will ensure employers understand they have clear occupational health and safety obligations to protect workers from sexual harassment."*

### Quote attributable to Minister for Women Natalie Hutchins

*"It has taken the strength of many women who have spoken out, shared their experiences and continued to fight for a better culture to arrive at these recommendations. Today we're taking further steps towards ensuring all workplaces are safe."*

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**Quote attributable to Taskforce co-chair Liberty Sanger**

*“Our recommendations will place Victoria as the leader when it comes to preventing and responding to work related gendered violence and sexual harassment through greater awareness, accountability and tougher enforcement.”*

**Quote attributable to Parliamentary Secretary for Workplace Safety and Taskforce co-chair Bronwyn Halfpenny**

*“The reforms in response to our recommendations will equip workers, employers and their representatives with the tools to better prevent and respond to workplace sexual harassment.”*