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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.**

I'm a former staffer of a number of years (working at a point inside [REDACTED] to [REDACTED] who has worked across multiple offices, with multiple MPs holding varying roles [REDACTED]).

My experience working in the most significant and important workplace in the nation, is akin to working in the 1990s/early 2000s on Wall Street, (think movie Wolf of Wall Street, yes the Leonardo De Caprio one).

It was wild, untamed and the most unprofessional workplace I've ever seen. The drugs (staffers, never saw an MP do drugs to be clear, but heard about ones that do) and alcohol, the infidelity shockingly between married MPs (even ones on opposite sides of party lines, some sort of weird extra layer of married opposites attract?), flowed down to staffers and crossed over into that dangerous realm of staffer/MP relationship as well.

It was an absolute madhouse. It was awfully toxic and created an incredibly drunk and senses impacted environment of a night time after high stress, 16 hour days, where you'd want to hope you're surrounded by people decent enough to take care of you if it was your turn to have one too many and completely lose yourself. The amount of sex going around in this workplace make the big law, accounting and consultancy firms look PG13.

You had events with unlimited bar tabs put on by lobbyists where staffers and MPs would drink to disgusting excess during sitting weeks, take drugs and sleep together.

I can't even begin to describe how this impacts the mostly young 20s who get employed in those junior staffer positions for their political work and loyalty to boss. It shatters your dream of the workplace. It shatters your dream of marriage to see these pillars of relationships and attractive people older than you in senior advisory positions cheating on their partner every sitting week, to the point it's so entrenched they're just flat out booking an apartment together for their stay.

Romping across Parliament and back in Electorate Offices. It was heart breaking, it left you with no soul, no ability to see the good in the world and no hope for yourself that you just get sucked in like a vortex and all of a sudden your years of work at High School and in Uni to resist drugs, infidelity on partners and drinking to excess on an almost nightly basis during sitting weeks as a norm. You lose yourself. And you can't snap out. Nothing can touch you. No one can help you. You work in the place that rights laws and is the highest institution in the land for politics and they're the problem. They're the ones you want to complain about. They're the ones you want to scream for help out but you can't because you don't have a voice and you're already sucked in getting overpaid and undervalued, stressed and doing ridiculous hours that only an addiction can get you through. So you pick your poison and lie in your bed. No one talks. Snitches get stitches. You don't mention how messed up it is. You don't mention the blatant debauchery that occurred the night before, you rock up on 3 hours of sleep and rely on your addiction to get you through the working day before you can go out and do it all again.

It sucks you in, eats people up for years and then spits you out when you finally crack. It's all weakness in terms of the workplace culture, apart from the 'strength'/empowerment it gives you to be in the tent, or on the deck of the ship, with everyone else getting sucked into the wormhole and no sign of shore. No way out, no help, just black it out the only way you know how.

**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?**

Nothing already, but some good starts:

- Random Drug and Alcohol testing for staff & MPs.
- DPS mandatory in person induction for all staff, including electorate officers, to go through help and support options, call lines, where to go for help, standards applied to your bosses, what's not ok session - kind of like WHS induction, but for what you can't be asked to do, hours overtime stress alcohol awareness etc.

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

The culture I've described above was horrific and crushing for me. A white, tall, heterosexual male. I can't even begin to think how intimidating it was for young females. Hearing about Brittany was a horrible wake up call. A wake up call to what our silence and compliance lead to while we stood on the deck of that ship called Parliament and just kept abusing substances and alcohol to get through it. The culture we contributed to that could allow for a situation like has been reported. I feel guilty. I am guilty. And it's time to get hard on these mandatory measures to draw a crystal clear line in the sand and say ENOUGH.

**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 idea. Can't even remember getting them when I first started employment. Apart from the generic counselling APS email once every year.

**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.**

I can't recall a single induction document, course, email or resource addressing any of this.

**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.**

As above.

**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.**

As above.

**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?**

Mandatory state by state induction sessions held by the department within 6 months of starting where DPS staff go through, in person to ensure attendance and engagement on all the things I spoke about above. DPS need a squad in each state doing these inductions, doing random checks on EOs, and being available and approachable in person.

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

I think I've spilled enough of my frustrations. Disappointed I couldn't book in for an interview as I feel that would've been more detailed and explorative, but this will do. Make some changes. Go hard. Don't let the standard practice of political independence from the DPS and need for control imbalance sitting with MPs stop you. Bring the whole culturally corrupt temple down on the system and rebuild it from the rubbles up.

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