

[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

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

Please see attached submission regarding [REDACTED].

Upload a file

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

Submission regarding [REDACTED]

I have been employed in the Australian Public Service since [REDACTED], when I joined an APS department as a graduate when I was [REDACTED] years of age.

At the end of [REDACTED] I attended an APS graduate Christmas event at Parliament House, which I recall was hosted by [REDACTED]. The event was open to attendance to graduates across the APS and [REDACTED] made an address.

At the end of [REDACTED] address, I left the Christmas party and was exiting Parliament House on my own when I was approached by [REDACTED]. I recall [REDACTED] introduced [REDACTED] by name (I was not, at this point, aware [REDACTED] was a Member of Parliament). [REDACTED] asked me why I was at Parliament House and I told [REDACTED] I was attending a graduate Christmas party, to which [REDACTED] responded, 'you look like SES, not a graduate.' I confirmed I was a graduate. I introduced myself and also may have indicated which department I was a graduate at.

In the following days, [REDACTED] called me at work through my department's public switchboard. I remember taking a few moments to place who [REDACTED] was, and I recall [REDACTED] prompting me that we had met at Parliament House. I also recall feeling confused about why [REDACTED] was calling me, because I was still unsure who [REDACTED] was, how [REDACTED] had located where I worked to contact me, or what work matter [REDACTED] might be contacting me about.

[REDACTED] said it had been nice meeting me and offered to give me a private tour of Parliament House. I recall trying to be polite and thanking [REDACTED], while also not giving an indication that I would want to accept the offer.

I had no interest in accepting the offer because I felt the approach had sexual undertones which made me feel uncomfortable. I did not want to put myself in a position where I would be alone with [REDACTED] because I was concerned it may create opportunities for [REDACTED] to make a sexual advance. More broadly, I felt it was inappropriate, not only because I was in a relationship at that time, but because [REDACTED] was apparently a lot older than me, I did not know [REDACTED]. I was uncomfortable about the way [REDACTED] had contacted me, and I did not know on what basis [REDACTED] had authority to give a 'private tour' of Parliament House.

Right after the call, I looked up [REDACTED] profile on the internet and saw that [REDACTED] was an MP. I went and spoke to a friend of mine, another graduate in my work area, about the call. I explained to her I felt the call had sexual undertones and I was confused about how [REDACTED] got my number or knew which department to call me at, given I didn't remember giving [REDACTED] details about where I worked. I remember discussing whether [REDACTED] had seen my full name and agency on my work pass. My friend said she thought it was inappropriate that an MP called a department directly, through switchboard, rather than going through the minister's office for our department. My friend recalled introductory training regarding the appropriate channels for ministerial contact and she thought the call from [REDACTED] violated those principles, particularly given [REDACTED] was contacting a very junior member of the department and not about a work matter.

I did not meet, hear from, or contact [REDACTED] after the call.

In the years subsequent, every time I read in the media about unwanted sexual advances in the workplace, I thought about this incident and wondered if or how I should report it. I suspected if [REDACTED] had approached me it might be part of a broader pattern of behaviour [REDACTED]. However, it was never clear to me how I would report it, particularly as I am an APS employee and am aware of the need to remain, and be seen to be, apolitical. I also was unsure whether there would be any implications for [REDACTED] but I was aware there could be negative implications for me that might affect my career (e.g. whether I would be believed; whether I would be said to be exaggerating;

whether [REDACTED] given [REDACTED] position of power, would say I misinterpreted or made it up; whether others would not view this as a serious enough incident to report or for me to feel uncomfortable about; whether I would be asked why I didn't raise it earlier; etc).

Recent reports about [REDACTED] as well as constructive dialogue around examining culture at Parliament House, has made me feel encouraged to raise this incident. I believe we need to change the culture so [REDACTED] MPs do not feel they are able to use their positions to establish personal relationships [REDACTED] in the APS or in Parliament, which may not be welcome. I feel a culture where [REDACTED] feel free to make unsolicited personal approaches [REDACTED] [REDACTED] can lead to serious violations and discrimination [REDACTED] in parliamentary workplaces. This culture also affects staff in the APS.