

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **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 never had any issues dealing with Parliamentarians or their staff.

There were major issues within the [REDACTED]. While staff were generally highly committed to serving the Parliament, bullying and harassment was rampant (and encouraged as a means of inducing people to leave), there were numerous instances of recruitment being used as a vehicle to groom prospective sexual partners by certain senior staff, ethical standards were inverted (meaning that seeking to require adherence to those standards got oneself threatened with the conde of conduct or ostracized), and there was no effective scrutiny or oversight. Basically, it was toxic.

This created a combative, pugilistic environment that required constant hypervigilance.

**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?**

No effective oversight of the [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] are basically outside any governance system, meaning that [REDACTED] and senior staff basically do whatever they please. Even where there are rules, such as those in the [REDACTED], discrimination laws or even the criminal law, they choose whether or not they are going to comply with those. There are no consequences for non-compliance, so this builds a culture of outright unlawful behavior. Participation in that unlawful behavior is lauded, not discouraged.

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

In relation to bullying and harassment, the total lack of ethical standards, zero management (or managers that are bullies themselves), no effective reporting mechanism, and a desire to hide issues contribute.

The sexual harassment I experienced and observed in Parliament was caused (somewhat perversely) by the concept that permeated within the [REDACTED] that Parliament was a "safe space" for LGBTI+ people. This meant that one [REDACTED] was free to sexually proposition [REDACTED] in the workplace ([REDACTED] did this to me), recruit numerous [REDACTED] had met in social contexts with a view to developing a sexual relationship with them, and spend most of [REDACTED] notional work time socializing (and who knows what else) with [REDACTED] etc within the building. This behavior was condoned by more senior people, such as the [REDACTED] and other [REDACTED] in the [REDACTED], as it was taken to reflect how tolerant or "woke" the [REDACTED] was. When [REDACTED] advances were spurned, [REDACTED] engaged in reprisals against staff, including by using the [REDACTED] within senior roles in the [REDACTED] generally to destroy people's professional advancement in other departments such as [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] did this to me. This behavior, again, was tolerated and encouraged, it seems, on the grounds that Parliament was tolerant for LGBTI+ people, and making sure only LGBTI+ people or people who would enable behavior such as that demonstrated by [REDACTED] should have career/future in the [REDACTED] was therefore legitimate.

I have not experienced sexual assault in Parliament.

**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.**

I know that there are legal requirements in work health and safety legislation, the [REDACTED], the criminal law, anti-discrimination law etc that apply in Parliament House.

In practice, none are complied with, there is and (based on my own experience) if you seek to invoke them you are targeted and victimized.

**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.**

In relation to work health and safety, there was one session which, bizarrely, mostly involved [REDACTED]. It was organized at short notice only because almost no staff had undertaken the mandatory training, and Senate estimates was approaching so it would look good if the [REDACTED] could say more people had done it.

There was no training on workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault.

**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.**

In effect, there are no reporting mechanisms. I tried to report some matters once, and the HR area said they did not receive reports, and that they needed to be provided within line areas. But line areas said they didn't deal with such issues and they needed to be raised with HR! For reporting issues, I was threatened with the code of conduct.

Backgrounding a Senator in the hope a matter will be raised in Senate Estimates is the only feasible reporting mechanism.

**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, nil.

**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?**

Independent Parliamentary Service Commissioner who can deal with the unique parliamentary environment, not simply the [REDACTED] wearing another hat part-time.

Complaints process, that has real consequences for people who do not comply with the existing legal requirements. Having been adversely affected should not be a requirement for making a report; if someone's behavior is unacceptable or unlawful you should be able to report it regardless of whether you have been affected.

Consideration should be given to a wholesale spill and fill of senior positions within the [REDACTED]. The current management does not have the capacity for reforming itself.

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

Nil.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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