



## Participant Information Statement

Online written and audio contributions

### *Speaking from Experience: Tell us what needs to change to address workplace sexual harassment*

Speaking from Experience Project Team

Sex Discrimination Team, Australian Human Rights Commission

Email: [speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au)

#### **1. What is the Speaking from Experience project?**

The Australian Human Rights Commission invites people who have been sexually harassed at work to share their thoughts on changes that can be made in workplaces to more effectively prevent and respond to sexual harassment. Contributions will shape a set of resources that will help workers and employers understand how to make workplaces safer for everyone.

The Speaking from Experience project will also shape our understanding of different groups' experiences of workplace sexual harassment in Australia, particularly those whose knowledge and experiences are often not heard.

Taking part in this project is completely voluntary.

Please read this information sheet carefully and feel free to ask questions about anything that you do not understand or want to know more about.

#### **2. Who is running the Speaking from Experience project?**

The Speaking from Experience project is run by the Australian Human Rights Commission, Australia's national human rights institution. The Australian Human Rights Commission protects and promotes human rights in Australia, including by making workplaces safer.

You can find out more about the Australian Human Rights Commission [on the website](#).

The Speaking from Experience Project Team are part of the Sex Discrimination Team at the Australian Human Rights Commission, including:

- Dr Anna Cody, Sex Discrimination Commissioner
- Carrie Chan, Director, Sex Discrimination Team
- Erica Powell, Senior Policy Officer, Sex Discrimination Team
- Dr Claire Farrugia, Senior Policy Officer, Sex Discrimination Team
- Kate Burry, Policy Officer, Sex Discrimination Team.

- Caitlin Morahan, Communications Advisor for the Sex Discrimination Team
- Neilab Osman, Research and Engagement, Sex Discrimination Team
- Dina Luete-Wani, Research and Administration Officer, Sex Discrimination Team
- Alice Rose, Research Intern, Sex Discrimination Team

Core funding for this project was received from the Australian government.

### 3. Who can take part?

The Speaking from Experience project is open to anyone currently over the age of 18 who has experienced sexual harassment at work in Australia.

We also want to make sure that this project is right for you by confirming the following:

- We will read and document your contributions. Anonymised quotes and case studies from your contribution may be used in a set of publicly available resources to help workplaces and advocates make workplaces safer for everyone.
- We are not trained counsellors or psychologists and are unable to give you any health or psychological advice. If you think you would like to speak with a trained and registered counsellor or therapist before, during or after the process, please use the [list of support services](#) on the Australian Human Rights Commission website or contact the Speaking from Experience Project Team via the contact email to discuss support options.
- This project is not a formal complaint process or part of a conciliation process and will not involve any financial compensation. If you have not already made a complaint and would like to, please contact the Speaking from Experience Project Team via the contact email to talk about your complaint options.

### 4. What can I expect?

If you have been sexually harassed at work, you can have your say through written or audio contribution. You may want to talk about what you think *unhelpful* responses to workplace sexual harassment would look like, what you think *helpful* responses to workplace sexual harassment would look like, and what you think needs to change to address workplace sexual harassment and make workplaces safer. Because there are no counsellors linked to this project, it is not required and not recommended that you share information about your experiences of workplace sexual harassment. Your wellbeing is our primary concern throughout the contribution process. What and how much you contribute is entirely up to you. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. We invite you to consider the limits to what you would like to tell us before agreeing to contribute so that your wellbeing can be maintained throughout the contribution process.

Before deciding to take part, you will be asked:

- questions to ensure that you can participate (that you are over 18 and have experienced sexual harassment at work in Australia)
- questions about you, including sensitive information such as information about your sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, and personal health and medical information. You have the option to select 'Prefer not to say' for any question you are not comfortable answering.

If you are eligible to participate you can:

1. write your thoughts and advice about what you think helpful and unhelpful responses to workplace sexual harassment would look like, and what you think needs to change to make workplaces safer.
2. use the audio recording function on your phone or computer. You will have a maximum time of thirty minutes.

When you have completed your written or recorded contribution, you can follow prompts on the Australian Human Rights Commission's website to upload your submission. Your contributions will be sent to a secure inbox on the Australia Human Rights Commission's system that only the Project Team will have access to. After your contribution is received, you will receive an acknowledgement and follow-up email with support options you may like to access.

Before you take part, we encourage you to talk to trusted person, like a friend, counsellor, or therapist. If you want to know more about how to prepare your contribution, you can see the 'Guide to making your contribution'.

### **5. Can I withdraw once I have started?**

Yes. Contributing to this project is voluntary.

If you decide to withdraw, your decision will not affect your relationship with the University of Sydney, the Australian Human Rights Commission, or any advocates or organisations that are supporting you.

If you decide to make a written or audio contribution and change your mind afterwards, you can withdraw your contribution until 30 September 2024, when we will stop taking contributions for this project, by emailing the Speaking from Experience Project Team at [speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au).

You can let us know at the time you withdraw what you would like us to do with information we have collected about you up to that point, including deleting your information if you wish.

### **6. Are there any risks or costs?**

We recommend that you discuss your decision to participate in this project with people that make you feel safe and supported. Any form of harassment or violence is

distressing to experience and to witness. This is especially the case when experienced alone, without support and without justice being done.

While content on workplace sexual harassment can be upsetting or stressful, writing or talking about what needs to change and how can also be part of the healing journey.

If you are finding it overwhelming to talk or write about this subject, please take a break, and remember the [support services](#) you have available on the website. You can pause or stop writing or recording at any time and contact the Speaking from Experience Project Team to discuss professional support options from a counsellor or psychologist to help you to process your experience.

There are no costs associated with writing or recording and submitting your contribution. However, you will need access to a device (such as a smart phone) that you can use to create and save your voice recording, or access to a computer to write down your thoughts and advice and save it in a .docx or .pdf format. You will also need a stable internet connection to submit your written document or recording via the Australian Human Rights Commission website.

We estimate that this process will take up 1-2 hours of your time, depending on the length of your written document or recording, breaks needed, and any preparation time you require.

## **7. Are there any benefits?**

The benefits of contributing to this project include:

- having your insights heard and documented by the Australian Human Rights Commission
- contributing to much needed change can feel important, particularly when justice has been denied
- contributing to making workplaces safer, and to making sure workers and employers respond in a better way when someone is sexually harassed in the future.

## **8. What will happen to information that is collected?**

The Australian Human Rights Commission will collect the information you provide to us, including your personal information, and use it to:

- analyse and better understand workplace sexual harassment
- publish resources relating to workplace sexual harassment, including in de-identified examples and case studies
- advocate for changes in how to prevent and respond to workplace sexual harassment.

This may include sensitive information that you decide to disclose, such as information about your sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, nationality, personal health and medical

information and recordings of your voice that you provide to us. The information you provide to us may be published in aggregate reporting. It may also be published as part of a quote or a case study, however you will not be named or referenced in a way that may identify you.

If you tell us the personal information of other people in your submission, this information will also be collected by the Australian Human Rights Commission without the consent or knowledge of the other people. This information will not be used by the Commission.

- The Australian Human Rights Commission collects and handles personal information in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and its privacy policy, which is available on the Commission's [privacy webpage](#). The personal information we collect may be disclosed to third parties assisting us with the Project, such as transcription service providers.
- Information you provide that can identify you will be kept confidential, except if we are required by law to release the information. For example, if you describe instances of child abuse or neglect, threats of self-harm or harm to others.
- The Australian Human Rights Commission may disclose information, including your personal information and information provided to us in confidence, in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Cth) (FOI Act) if there are no applicable exemptions to release of the information. Wherever possible, the Australian Human Rights Commission will speak with you about any request under the FOI Act before a decision is made about releasing information.
- Information collected throughout the project will be stored in accordance with the Archives Act 1983 (Cth), the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth). Data, including audio recordings, will be stored electronically in a secure and restricted folder in the Australian Human Rights Commission's secure electronic storage system. Data that is included in publications, including case studies, will be de-identified. In accordance with Australian privacy laws, you can request access to the information about you that is collected and stored by the Australian Human Rights Commission. You can also request that any information about you with which you disagree be corrected. You can make a request by contacting us using the above email address.
- Information will be held for ten (10) years after the conclusion of the Speaking from Experience project, which ends 30 June 2025, after which it will be destroyed.

## **9. Will I see the findings of the project?**

Yes, you can see the findings of the project and any public resources that are created. In the online consent form, which you will be asked to read and accept before submitting your contribution on the website, you will be able to select whether you would like to receive a copy and which email address you would like it to be sent to.

## **10. What if I would like further information?**

When you have read this information, you can send any questions you have to the following email address: [speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:speakingfromexperience@humanrights.gov.au)

**11. What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

The ethical aspects of this project have been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) of The University of Sydney (HREC Approval No.: 2023/580) according to the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)*.

If you are concerned about the way this project is being conducted or wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the project, please contact the University of Sydney:

Human Ethics Manager  
[human.ethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:human.ethics@sydney.edu.au)  
+61 2 8627 8176

***This information sheet is for you to keep***