

Wednesday 14 November 2018

More than 1 in 2 women harassed at work: Survey

More than 60 percent of women have been sexually harassed at work but less than half of those harassed have reported the incident, according to the interim results of a survey being run by the peak body for working people, the ACTU.

More than 7500 people have participated in the survey which began on September 18 and will be open until the end of November.

Of those who answered questions about their experience of sexual harassment, 61 percent of women and 35 percent of men said they'd experienced sexual harassment at work.

Forms of harassment included crude or offensive behaviour, unwanted sexual attention, inappropriate physical contact, and harassment on social media.

The survey also found that 64 percent of people had witnessed sexual harassment at work.

Despite the prevalence of sexual harassment revealed by the survey, of those who'd witnessed sexual harassment in their workplace two thirds did not make a formal complaint, and 40 percent didn't tell anyone at all. More than half feared negative consequences if they spoke up.

The survey remains open until the end of November. People wishing to take part can go to australianunions.org.au

The final results of the survey will be revealed after responses close at the end of this month.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Everyone should go to work free from the fear of harassment and unwanted sexual attention.

"For many people – mainly women – today in Australia this is not the reality. Our workplace laws have failed women who are experiencing harassment at work.

"The fact that thousands have chosen to take part in this survey in only six weeks shows how important this issue is to working people in Australia.

"The interim results show that while nearly two thirds of women have experienced harassment, very few believe that our current rules will deliver them justice.

"We need to change the rules. Sexual harassment is a workplace issue and people who experience it should be able to take it up through the workplace umpire.

"We need access to fair, effective and efficient complaints mechanisms that support people who've been harassed, not punish them."

ENDS

Media contact: Kate Shuttleworth 0447 418 726, ACTU Media: 03 9664 7315