

Thursday, 5 March 2020

Morrison must act on sexual harassment report recommendations

The ACTU calls on the Morrison Government to act immediately on the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's new report, which finds that sexual harassment at work is rife and our current laws are failing to keep workers safe.

Kate Jenkins' important report, 'Respect@work', confirms that the right of workers to be free from sexual harassment is a workplace right and a health and safety right, as well as a human right. Her report finds that our laws are failing to keep workers safe and makes 55 recommendations for reform, including:

- Stronger work health and safety laws to make sure that employers are obliged to tackle the underlying causes of sexual harassment at work;
- Better access to justice for workers through a quick, easy new complaint process in our workplace laws;
- Stronger powers for the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to investigate industries which are rife with sexual harassment, such as retail and hospitality, and positive duties on employers.

Sexual harassment happens because gender inequality is ingrained in our workplaces. This report shows that urgent action to prevent sexual harassment and to tackle the underlying causes of sexual harassment and gendered violence is needed.

The ACTU joins with the #Power2Prevent group of over 100 community organisations to call on the Morrison government to implement the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's recommendations in full.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"Over 10,000 workers bravely came forward to tell their stories to the ACTU. Two in three women, and one in three men, have been subjected to sexual harassment at work. Forty per cent of workers tell no one about their experiences and only a quarter made a formal complaint, because they know the current rules will not deliver them justice.

"Work shouldn't hurt. Australian unions will continue to hold employers to account to prevent sexual harassment and other forms of gendered violence at work.

"The Morrison Government must commit to urgently implement this report's recommendations.

"Union workplaces are safer workplaces. Join your union now and get involved in our campaign to make workplaces healthy, safe and respectful for all.

ENDS

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