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Sexual harassment inquiry to shed light on broken workplace rules

The inquiry by the Human Rights Commission into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces will shine much needed light on a system which is failing Australian workers.

The current rules which are intended to protect workers, predominately women, who experience workplace sexual harassment focus on individual claims and settlement processes. This approach has failed and the laws need to be changed to allow for systemic action against workplace sexual harassment.

While women have lost out under the Turnbull Government's attacks on working women & essential community services, this inquiry being led by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner is a step in the right direction. Being able to explore all the compounding factors of gender inequality; insecure work, wage stagnation, equal pay and occupation health and safety practices will be critical to ensuring there are long lasting, systemic, outcomes which benefit people who experience sexual harassment at work.

Quotes attributable to ACTU National Campaign Coordinator Kara Keys:

"The rules for women in work have failed to end workplace sexual harassment. We need new approaches to this endemic problem and we hope that this inquiry will lead the way in changing the rules in this area.

"Most women, and many men, will experience some form of sexual harassment in their lifetime, and the tolerance of sexual harassment lays a foundation for other forms of gendered violence which occur at shocking rates in our society.

"Stopping sexual harassment, and giving people who experience it fast and effective avenues for recourse will not only help those directly affected, but will also send a message that workplace sexual harassment is largely experienced by women and it doesn't occur in a vacuum. All forms of gender inequality, and gendered discrimination, directly contribute to violence.

ENDS

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