

Tuesday 31 August 2021

## Morrison Government fails to act to make workplaces safe from sexual harassment.

Key recommendations from the Morrison Government's own Sex Discrimination Commissioner, which would strengthen women's rights to workplaces free from sexual harassment, are missing from legislation being tabled today in the Federal Parliament.

The ACTU has been arguing for the Government to adopt in full the recommendations of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner's Respect@Work report.

The Government's Bill has failed to act on key issues in the report, including changes which would make it easier for women to report, and require employers to provide safe workplaces.

The Morrison Government's Respect@Work Bill, if passed, will continue to place the burden of addressing workplace harassment and violence on the shoulders of individual women.

Key recommendations the Morrison Government failed to act on include:

- Recommendations 17, 18 and 19: Amend the Sex Discrimination Act to include a positive duty on employers to take reasonable measures to eliminate sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and victimisation; supported by appropriate enforcement and inquiry powers.
- Recommendation 28: Amend the FW Act to expressly prohibit sexual harassment and introduce a new quick and easy complaints process.

The Government's response to the report is also a missed opportunity to finally include 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave in the Fair Work Act, to support women escaping violent relationships.

### Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

"The Morrison Government made big promises to women to deal with the issues of sexual harassment at work. What we see in this legislation, however, is another failure and another example of big announcements, no action.

"Violence and harassment in the workplace are a national crisis, and the Government appointed a whole new suite of Ministers to deal with it.

"But what women need is proper legislation and real action.

"The Government has not even delivered on the recommendations of its own Sex Discrimination Commissioner's report.

"A staggering number of women experience violence at home and it's critical that the Morrison Government finally listens to women and implements 10 days paid family and domestic violence leave.

"The Respect@Work Report presented a clear plan for making work safer and more equal for women. The Morrison Government has chosen not to live up to its own rhetoric and has missed yet another opportunity to make workplaces safer for women."

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