

Tuesday 7 December 2021

Half of women experience sexual harassment while Morrison refuses to act

53 per cent of women and 25 per cent of men in Australia have experienced sexual harassment, according to data released by the ABS today, emphasizing the critical need for the Morrison Government to implement all recommendations of the Respect@Work report, and the 28 recommendations of the Set the Standard report on systemic workplace issues in Parliament House.

Those who have difficulties meeting basic living expenses are more than twice as likely to experience sexual harassment, and the prevalence of sexual harassment for both men and women has increased since 2012.

The Morrison Government was presented with a comprehensive list of recommendations to address sexual harassment at work almost two years ago and of the 12 legislative changes recommended, only six were made into law.

If the Morrison Government is serious about addressing the systemic issue of sexual harassment in workplaces, they must immediately implement all the recommendations including:

- Amend the Sex Discrimination Act to place a positive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment at work
- Expressly prohibit sexual harassment and introduce a new quick and easy complaints process in the Fair Work Act
- Empower the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to initiate her own enquiries into systemic sexual harassment and sex discrimination
- Develop a WHS Code of Practice on preventing sexual harassment at work

The Morrison Government must also protect workers by introducing 10 days Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O'Neil:

“This data shows the reality that millions of Australian women face in their workplaces and their lives. The Morrison Government has the power to act to make workplaces and society safer for women, but has refused to do so.

“Rates of sexual harassment have increased under this Government. Women are less safe in their workplaces and in our community than before this Government came to power.

“The federal government has immense power to address these issues and this Government has been presented with multiple reports and dozens of recommendations. Australian women deserve a government which is willing to act to improve their lives.”

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