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## **PART C: Submission**

**1. How would you describe the workplace culture(s) of the Commonwealth parliamentary workplace(s) where you work/have worked? Please outline specific strengths and/or weaknesses in terms of workplace culture(s), based on your experiences, as appropriate.**

- the power balance between MPs and journalists is fraught
- I once had a Senator place his hand on my leg at a dinner with a number of journalists and politicians and tell me I was too skinny and I needed to put some weight on
- This was at a dinner that was expected [REDACTED] to get to know politicians
- The Senator then sent me a bottle of wine with a hand written note that we should 'work [REDACTED] together' and that we 'would be a great team'
- I was a 26 year old woman and there was no where to go to complain
- [REDACTED] also put me in a compromising position at an [REDACTED] party. The name of the party speaks volumes.
- He cornered me and leered down towards me, until a colleague had to intervene and rescue me

- I have found people in Parliament House to be a lot more cordial to me, which I think is based on my pass and my new position
- But the power structure within my office is very fraught
- My MP has yelled, screamed, swore and been awful to work for on many circumstances
- [REDACTED], there is no where to complain
- Her treatment of us is as though we are her slaves and her expectations are so high that when we cannot meet them she treats us with disdain
- I have seen her bully many colleagues. It's a horrible thing to watch, because in one sense you feel relieved it is not you, but you also feel helpless as you witness her treatment and her disgusting behaviour.

**2. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that already do, or could contribute to a safe and respectful environment in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

There needs to be an independent HR Department that is completely out of politics where people feel safe to complain, but also there are real ramifications for bullying, sexual harassment and generally bad behaviour. The current system is broken.

**3. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that may contribute to workplace**

**bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

There is no accountability for the person committing these actions. My MP can yell and swear as much as she wants, but there is no warning that will be given, no sense that what she is doing is both wrong and unprofessional.

Likewise, [REDACTED] were not very interested in accounts by women of men being inappropriate. The general view was "well it was your decision to go out with these people".

**4. Are you familiar with any Commonwealth parliamentary workplace policies, processes and/or practices in relation to staff and worker safety and wellbeing, workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If so, please outline your understanding of how these policies, processes and/or practices operate.**

No. This is also hard for our office because we have to try and suggest ways we can fix the situation but there is no outside help for this. We have asked our MP for a survey so we can talk about how we feel but this has been delayed for months.

**5. During your time working in a Commonwealth parliamentary workplace(s), have/did you receive any education or training in relation to worker safety and wellbeing, and/or how to prevent or respond to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If yes, please outline your experience of the training and whether it was useful in increasing your knowledge and/or skills in relation to preventing and responding to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault.**

No

**6. Are you aware of how you and/or other people working in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces can report workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault (either formally or informally)? If yes, please specify what reporting options exist, and outline your experience with accessing and/or using those reporting options if applicable.**

No - But I do think the culture of the [REDACTED] has changed a little since I was there. From what I see there are more female [REDACTED] and there is less tolerance for bad behaviour.

**7. Are you aware of any supports available in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces to people who experience workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault? If yes, please specify what supports exist, and outline your experience with accessing and/or using those supports if applicable.**

I have rung EAP quite a few times, but this is a counselling service that basically tells you to make a decision to leave or learn to work with bad behaviour. That is not very helpful.

**8. Based on your experiences, do you have any suggestions or recommendations on how to improve the prevention of and responses to workplace bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

MPs have huge egos. The last thing they want is to be shamed for their bad behaviour. Make it public and have serious ramifications.

**9. Is there anything else you would like to tell the Commission?**

There has been a lot of focus on men bullying, but I have seen two female MPs who I work with closely bully colleagues to bring them to tears and have breakdowns. I am sick of seeing this behaviour and their hypocrisy and actively looking for a new job out of politics.

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