

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

## **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 culture is one where you are expected work very long hours, be 'on' all the time, always have the right answer ready, and protect your boss at all costs. It is understood that if something goes wrong, you are accountable rather than your boss. There is no room for mistakes. You know you are disposable. You are there to make your boss look good regardless of the personal cost to you. There are no nights or weekends off - it is a 24/7 job and you are expected to drop everything whenever that is required. Staffers also understand that there is bad behavior - from Members and Senators as well as other staffers - and you are expected to ignore it and turn a blind eye.

Female staffers warn new women or keep each other updated based on their experiences. We all knew who to avoid at night or after a few drinks, to avoid the 'meditation room' and which [REDACTED] but you knew not to sit on his lap.

### **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?**

The only factor currently in place is women looking out for each other. It was clear that sharing information was the best way to protect ourselves and each other. There was no use complaining - we all knew we wouldn't be believed or even if we were, we were disposable.

There needs to be proper reporting and investigation structures that are non-partisan. Parties cannot be allowed to investigate issues in their own party - they will never find for the victim unless the victim is a politician. There is a massive imbalance of power that can only be managed by an external party.

Training is helpful but really, if politicians and staffers are already potential or historical perpetrators no training will help. Better reporting and investigation structures, along with enforced consequences are required. When we see so many current politicians have claims against them but no action taken, it gives confidence to other perpetrators that they will also face no consequences.

**3. Based on your experiences, what are the factors that may contribute to workplace bullying, sexual harassment or sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces?**

The imbalance of power is the biggest issue. Politicians rely on their public profile for re-election and so will do anything to protect it. Staffers will always be forced to work long hours and take the fall when something goes wrong. There is no room for error - ever. This is completely unrealistic.

Late night sittings and the alcohol served at dinners during those long nights is also an issue. The imbalance of senior men and junior women also causes issues - there needs to be greater focus on female leadership within the staffer cohort.

The media needs to keep reporting incidents. For too long the media risked losing access to politicians or parties if they reported unfavorable articles. This has allowed poor behavior to continue.

**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. I was told nothing about these during my time.

**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 - and none was offered.

**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

**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.**

No

**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?**

Training is great but independent, non-partisan reporting and investigation is required. And there must be consequences for inappropriate behavior. This should apply to politicians, staffers, the media - everyone working at APH. People will behave if there are consequences - or they won't behave but will be dealt with - either is fine.

There needs to be more staff - especially in opposition offices. I worked as a senior adviser and media adviser to a high-profile opposition minister. The hours were brutal - I started at 6am and finished at midnight most days, I worked weekends and travelled during non-sitting weeks. It is an unsustainable model to have so few staff. There needs to be a better plan to allow job sharing, part time staff, staff who cannot travel. This is the only way to

get high quality staff - not just young men or men who have someone at home with their kids. None of the women I worked with had young children while nearly all the men did. The media needs to report on this more. It's great that reports are now coming out but poor behavior has been happening for years and the media never reported it because they knew they'd be blacklisted by the political party. It's in the media's best interest to ignore poor behavior to keep their access. The media has been complaisant for many years and this needs to stop - and seems to be stopping now.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]