
[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.

As someone in my [REDACTED] who has only previously worked in the private sector, with more than [REDACTED] working in [REDACTED], I have found the culture and conditions rather bizarre. I took this role as I wanted to learn more about Parliament and to a greater extent I have done that, as well as seeking better work/life balance as a working mum (on which it definitely delivered, as I rarely did more than my set hours, but this was due to not feeling inclined largely due to the poor pay). But as previously mentioned it became obvious quite quickly this was not an environment that is employee centric, and that there was little opportunity for progression or recognition, and the attitude appears to be one of 'you're lucky to have a prestigious job, so don't expect anything else'. Coming from the private sector (where I earned three times as much), where there is so much focus on engagement and retention of good people, I found that quite a shift (this is possibly due [REDACTED] leading the team, and largely being disinterested in this part of the job). I rarely got a genuine thank you or encouragement when I did things I regarded somewhat above and beyond (in my previous job this might have been called out in a company meeting, and in some instances formal recognition or spot bonuses). I also felt like I'd stepped back in time, in terms of a very hierarchical office structure [REDACTED] & [REDACTED] dictate when and how further team involvement/contributions are allowed - ie rarely!) and over time I found this very demoralising, it felt like initiative was suppressed/not valued, and even simple things like signing up for an APH online learning session for an hour during the working day, I had to seek permission from the [REDACTED] first (which given I've been an [REDACTED] in my past career, felt slightly ridiculous - I had signed up and the [REDACTED] reprimanded me and told me I must ask first next time!). My role was very 'back-office' not walk-in consti work, so I was confident I had time to fit these things in and still complete my role. Honestly at times it felt like I was working in a kindergarten for adults!

Further, when I asked to work from home [REDACTED] (as I was operating as a [REDACTED]), this was firstly met with stoney silence, then followed up with an email saying absolutely not, it would set a dangerous precedent! Again having previously had the freedom to do my work from anywhere I found this very draconian. I will add that the [REDACTED] herself works from home one day p/w for similar family reasons, so her logic in denying me the opportunity simply did not make sense. Another example, is the time I made a small mistake. To give context managing diary is not rocket science, but can be tricky as things move around a lot, and it's not usual to have 10+ engagements in one day. Over the [REDACTED] I did this job, I made one error, putting an event in for a [REDACTED] rather than a [REDACTED]. Whilst regrettable, and inconvenient for [REDACTED] (who did [REDACTED]), but it was only [REDACTED], his response was totally a total overreaction in my opinion. He was still able to attend the event [REDACTED] so did not miss it. When I was 'reprimanded' [REDACTED] (as [REDACTED] took this amount of time to sit me down and tell me, until then I had no idea it had even happened), she shared in grave tones that he wanted to give my an official warning. I was absolutely staggered and shocked, that having made one mistake (I'm only human), in [REDACTED], this was his response. Basically overlooking all of the good work I'd done previously). She talked him off the cliff, and I sent an email to apologize, which he acknowledged in passing days later (never replied). From that point onwards I knew I needed to leave, as I cannot work in a place where people are waiting for you to fail (ie make a mistake - which is inevitable at some point) and then haul you over the coals for it, whilst not acknowledging your contribution in any way. I will also add that I was off sick with the flu a few days later, and [REDACTED] had to add an event to his own diary. He actually put it in for the wrong time ([REDACTED] [REDACTED] which I found amusing, as he quickly made a mistake himself when completing a similar task. Whilst it's obviously not his role to manage his own diary, it does highlight how easy it is to make an error in this way. These are just some anecdotal examples of the culture, and how it is not matched with contemporary workplaces. I also found in my opinion, that the expectations of [REDACTED], does not align with the remuneration offered for the role which is really only just above what you would earn working in Woollies or Coles! FYI I was on a [REDACTED] contract (no ESA). I make this submission not to moan, but to implore someone to modernise the workplace for parliamentary staffers (particularly those in electorate officers), and to help upskill [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], to run more positive and rewarding workplaces. They are never going to attract or retain good people without making change.

For myself I'm going back to the private sector, where I will be treated more like an adult and given more positive encouragement for the work I do.

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?

This is hard for me to comment on. Despite the comments above, I never felt sexually discriminated against or unsafe. The respect word however, as above, I did not always feel respected professionally by [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] in workplace, despite liking them as people very much, and appreciating that they do awesome work much of the time. It's a shame they let themselves down with what would be an easy tweak to improve office culture.

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

As mentioned above I would not describe what I experienced as 'bullying' but the management style frequently made me feel uncomfortable, and ultimately made me realise I needed to leave.

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.

[REDACTED] has circulated them frequently.

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 formal training 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.

YEs

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.

Yes the EAP programme, which I did access to help deal with the issues I was experiencing with regards to the management style and culture, which at times caused me significant distress.

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?

As outlined above, the culture needs to change dramatically, and a big shift towards employee centricity needs to happen.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]