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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 Canberra culture was ruthless and unforgiving. I was deeply impacted by the leadership change in [REDACTED]. We had to shred everything in the office and pack up our boss's personal items. Our Chief of Staff left in the early days of the change. There was no offer of counselling or support. A few of us had help to find a new job but the majority of us did not. I couldn't cope with the new office structure - new staff, new boss, old office. The stress led to a devastating turn of events. After re-employment, I resigned [REDACTED] later. Within weeks of leaving Parliament House I was pregnant and then had an abortion.

When I started in Canberra I did not have a job title or description. I moved several times in the office from the [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED] to the [REDACTED]. My supervisor changed several times. I was asked to write myself a job description a few months into the job. Drinking was common inside the office. Items such as stationery were thrown around the room by advisers.

**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?**

I would ban alcohol inside Parliament House. I would ensure counselling was talked about and easily accessed by staff. I would ban leadership changes. Employment contracts should be clearer. Job titles and descriptions should be clearer and reflect the work that is being done. Offer thorough professional training - mental health, first aid, code of conduct and sexual assault training. Create a Code of Ethics.

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

Alcohol and high stress. Senior advisers would encourage drinking and set up glasses in

common areas. It creates risk in an unsafe environment. There is a Young Liberal culture inside Parliament with young homosexual men. I don't understand the complexities of the subculture but I know bullying and harassment existed within it. Thirdly, flexible employment contracts. There is a lot of movement within offices for staffers who don't have a policy or media background. Usually they have a political background and are employed for their support of the Party. They tend to move around most and account for the staffer culture.

**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 would talk to a Chief of Staff about it or resign.

**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.**

When I was in the [REDACTED] Office, I was booked in to go to a First Aid training course. It did not go ahead - I can't recall why. On another occasion in the [REDACTED] Office, I had fire safety training. An external person came in and showed us how to operate the fire extinguisher. I had [REDACTED] but the office manager made a joke about it and I don't think I ever took it to work again.

**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. I would talk to a Chief of Staff about it or resign.

**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.**

Only the recently set up parliamentary hotline. I, and many others I knew, sought counselling, medical and psychological support externally at our own expense.

**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 mentioned above: ban alcohol, offer professional training, create a Code of Ethics, clearer employment frameworks, counselling and mental health support.

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

I feel strongly, that all staff affected, should have an apology (public or personal) from [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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