

NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE 1



Respect@Work
COUNCIL

Welcome to the Respect@Work Council Newsletter

Thank you for your interest in the Respect@Work Council and the work that is currently underway to address and prevent workplace sexual harassment.

This newsletter will provide you with important updates on the work of the Respect@Work Council and highlight opportunities for future engagement.

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About the Respect@Work Council

The Respect@Work Council is committed to improving coordination, consistency and clarity across existing legal and regulatory frameworks and creating meaningful change in Australian workplaces. It brings together leaders from key government regulators and policy makers who are responsible for sexual harassment policies and complaints.

By working together, the Respect@Work Council is taking action to promote safer workplaces in Australia. The Council is doing this by supporting the implementation of key commitments in the Australian Government's response to the Respect@Work Report, the [Roadmap for Respect](#).

The Respect@Work Council consists of the following core members:

- Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Australian Human Rights Commission
- General Manager, Fair Work Commission
- Fair Work Ombudsman
- Chief Executive Officer, Safe Work Australia
- Chair, Heads of Workplace Safety Authorities
- Chair, Heads of Workers' Compensation Authorities
- Chair, Australian Council of Human Rights Authorities
- Director, Workplace Gender Equality Agency
- Deputy Secretary, Integrity and International Group, Attorney-General's Department.

The Respect@Work Council also brings together groups that represent employers and workers as associate members of the Council. The current associate members of the Council are:

- Chief Executive Officer, Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Chief Executive Officer, Ai Group
- Director, Kingsford Legal Centre
- Executive Director, JobWatch
- President, Australian Council of Trade Unions
- Commissioner, Australian Building and Construction Commission
- Chief Executive Officer, Council of Small Business Organisations Australia.

You can read more about the Respect@Work Council's membership and objectives in its [terms of reference](#).



For more detail on the Council meetings to-date, you can read the [Respect@Work Council meeting outcomes](#).

Respect@Work Council meetings and priorities

The Respect@Work Council has met three times this year (in March, May and July). At these meetings Council members have provided advice to stakeholders to drive the implementation of Respect@Work reforms.

Council members have committed to taking action on two key areas, as a matter of priority, to promote safer workplaces in Australia:

- improving the consistency of data collection by members, and ways to share that data (Recommendation 3)
- developing consistent guidelines on the pathways available to people that may have been affected by workplace sexual harassment, to assist both employers and workers to understand their rights and obligations (Recommendations 51-52).

The Respect@Work Council is also working with its members and key stakeholders to support the implementation of other recommendations from the Respect@Work Report. To date, the Council has consulted with:

- the Australian Human Rights Commission on the development of the Respect@Work website (Recommendation 48) and a suite of training and education resources (Recommendations 9, 34, 36, 37, 40 and 52)
- the Australian Institute of Company Directors on their 'Inform, Engage, Educate' framework for strengthening governance approaches to sexual harassment (Recommendation 41)
- Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety on the development of a National Sexual Harassment Research Agenda (Recommendation 4)
- the Fair Work Commission on their preparations for the extension of the anti-bullying jurisdiction to include 'stop sexual harassment orders' (Recommendation 29), and
- the Workplace Gender Equality Agency on ways to improve methods for measuring and reporting on workplace sexual harassment, and on public-sector reporting on gender equality indicators (Recommendations 42 and 43)

and continues to provide these stakeholders with advice and feedback.

Meet the Chair – Kate Jenkins

*“Commissioner
Jenkins drives the
implementation of
Respect@Work
recommendations
directed to the
Respect@Work
Council”*



Respect@Work Council Chair and Australia’s Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, led the *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces Report* (2020).

In her role as Chair, Commissioner Jenkins drives the implementation of Respect@Work recommendations directed to the Respect@Work Council.

As Sex Discrimination Commissioner, her role is to advance gender equality, consistent with the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

Separately, Commissioner Jenkins leads a number of other projects including the Australian Human Rights Commission’s collaborative project on cultural reform with the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police, the Independent Review of Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces and she is also an Ambassador for the FIFA2023 Women’s World Cup.

Prior to joining the Australian Human Rights Commission, Commissioner Jenkins spent three years as the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commissioner, and 20 years as lead equal opportunity partner with Herbert Smith Freehills.

Spotlight – Australian Institute of Company Directors and Recommendation 41

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) presented their 'Inform, Engage, Educate' framework to the Respect@Work Council at its 16 July 2021 meeting. The framework includes a range of resources to support businesses to strengthen their governance approaches to workplace sexual harassment.

This work implements Recommendation 41 of the Respect@Work Report, which recommended that the AICD and the Governance Institute of Australia develop education and training for board members and company officers, in consultation with the Respect@Work Council.

The AICD has developed a range of targeted resources to help directors drive change on workplace sexual harassment from the boardroom, including:

- [a director's guide to preventing and responding to sexual harassment at work](#) – a tool that directors can use to strengthen their approach to preventing sexual harassment in their organisations. It outlines context, practical insights and questions for boards to ask, including on setting clear expectations on culture, modelling appropriate behaviour, policy review and reporting
- Governance Snapshots reflecting good practice for directors in the [prevention](#) and [response](#) to sexual harassment, and
- a [practical roadmap](#) developed by Clayton Utz for the AICD that outlines board-level and legal considerations in supporting greater transparency and a complainant-centred approach in responding to workplace sexual harassment complaints.

Further resources including two targeted webinars and the special June edition of *Company Director* magazine can be found on the [AICD website](#).

Other resources from Respect@Work Council members

Safe Work Australia has released [national guidance](#) on workplace sexual harassment. These are supported by a series of [infographics](#) to assist businesses of all sizes to understand what sexual harassment is, and what practical steps they can take to prevent it.

Comcare has also [released practical guides](#) for workers, managers, supervisors, employers and regulators on how they can prevent and respond to sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

National Summit on Women's Safety

The [National Summit on Women's Safety](#) took place over 6 and 7 September 2021.

The Chair of the Council, Commissioner Kate Jenkins and the Director of the Workplace Gender Equality Agency, Mary Wooldridge participated in the 'Roadmap to Respect@Work' panel at the National Summit. They were joined by Natalie Walker, Founder and Managing Director at Inside Policy and Sian Lewis, Group Executive, Human Resources at the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The panel discussion focused on sexual harassment within the context of violence against women and the development of the next National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children.

If you or anyone you know needs help:

If you have experienced sexual assault or sexual harassment and feel you would like to speak to someone for support or information [1800RESPECT](#) (Phone: 1800 737 732) can provide counselling 24-hours a day, 7 days a week.

You may also wish to contact the following support services, as appropriate:

[Lifeline](#) on 13 11 14

[Beyond Blue](#) on 1300 224 636

[Headspace](#) on 1800 650 890

[Kid's Helpline](#) on 1800 551 800

[Suicide Call Back Service](#) on 1300 659 467

[Fair Work Commission](#) on 1300 799 675

[Fair Work Ombudsman](#) on 13 13 94

[Comcare](#) on 1300 366 979.

Support services specific to your state or territory can be found on the Australian Human Rights Commission [List of Support Services](#) webpage.

Support the Respect@Work Council's work

If you would like to support the Respect@Work Council in preventing and addressing workplace sexual harassment, or would like to be kept up-to-date about the Respect@Work Council's activities, you can subscribe to be part of the Council's register of interested stakeholders at the [Respect@Work Council webpage](#).

Respect@Work Council Secretariat

Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department

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W [Respect@Work Council webpage](#)

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of Australia and celebrate their ongoing culture and contribution to society. We pay our respects to the people, culture and the elders past and present.

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