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Patron, The Honourable Justice Jacqueline Gleeson

30 July 2024

Elena Campbell

Associate Director of Research

Centre for Innovative Justice

RMIT University

Expert Panel

Federal Government Rapid Review of Prevention Approaches

Australian Women Lawyers (**AWL**) is a justice and equity champion advancing women in the legal profession and beyond. AWL’s objects include achieving justice and equity for women; furthering understanding and support for the legal rights of women; identifying, highlighting and eradicating discrimination against women inherent in the legal system and generally; and advancing equality for women in the legal profession.

AWL urgently requests that the Expert Panel recommends that the Federal Government amends model safety laws and regulations to address the primary prevention of gendered violence.

Australian Women Lawyers represents:



Women Lawyers' Association
South Australia Inc



**WOMEN
LAWYERS**
of Western Australia

Proposed amendments to safety laws and regulations

1. Manage Unlawful Conduct:

Persons conducting a business or undertaking must manage unlawful conduct related to:

- a. Discrimination (sex, race, colour, descent, national or ethnic origin, disability, age),
- b. Sexual harassment,
- c. Hostile workplace environments,
- d. Victimization related to complaints or proceedings,

2. Implement a Gendered Violence Prevention and Response Plan:

- a. Adhere to safety regulator guidelines,
- b. Identify and manage work-related gendered violence risks,
- c. Set intersectional gender equity and diversity targets for management roles,
- d. Conduct thorough consultations.

National Emergency on Women's Safety

In this national emergency on women's safety, we must urgently shift the conversation to long-term primary prevention of gendered violence. The workplace is a critical location for long-term structural reform, women's economic empowerment, and fostering a culture of respect and equality.

When the risk is serious harm or death, as it is with gendered violence, regulatory intervention is imperative. Our current safety laws and regulations remain silent on this issue. This gap leaves women, especially those from high-risk groups, vulnerable to violence both at work and at home.

Inequality in the workplace translates directly to inequality at home, fuelling the cycle of violence. It is difficult for individuals to report bullying and harassment if the perpetrator holds a position of power. Similarly, leaving a violent relationship is nearly impossible without financial independence or the means to support oneself and one's children, resulting in women fleeing violence becoming vulnerable to homelessness. Structural reform starts in the workplace.

Workplace inequality, unconscious bias, and unaddressed barriers to progression leave women, particularly those from intersectional and diverse backgrounds, susceptible to harmful behaviour at work and at home. Low worker diversity and power imbalances are significant risk factors for violence, exacerbated by racism, homophobia, discrimination, ableism, and heteronormativity.

Primary prevention strategies recognize that addressing power imbalances is crucial to combating all forms of gendered violence. By ensuring that everyone can participate in leadership roles and exercise decision-making power, we can create a safer, more equitable society for all.

AWL warmly acknowledges that the recommendation to amend model safety laws and regulations, the substance of recommendations within this letter and the accompanying submission have been drafted by Ms Sapphire Parsons, a Victorian based AWL member with expertise in workplace safety law. AWL proudly endorses these recommendations.

Please contact me if you wish to further discuss any of the matters raised above.

Yours faithfully



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