

# Communicating safety, gender equality and respect in the workplace

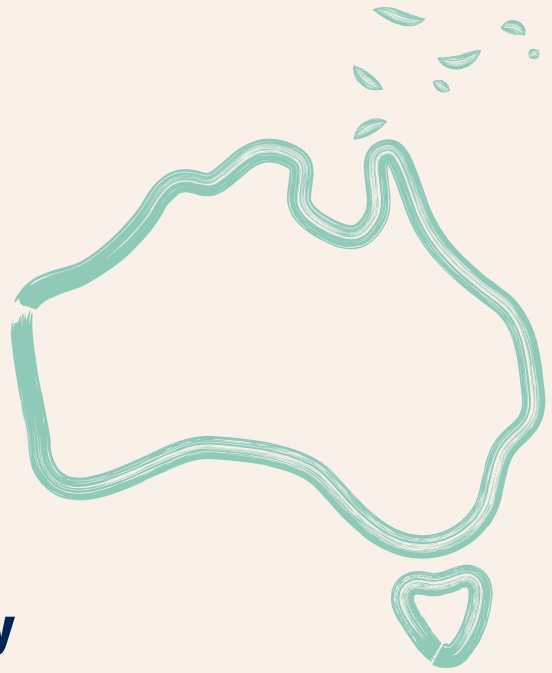
TOOLKIT



**Our  
Watch**

Preventing violence  
against women

June 2026



## Acknowledgement of Country

Our Watch acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land across Australia on which we work and live. We pay respects to Elders past and present and recognise the continuing connection Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have to land, culture, knowledge, and language for over 65,000 years.

As a non-Aboriginal organisation, Our Watch understands that violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children is an issue for the whole community. As highlighted in Our Watch's national resource *Changing the picture*, the evidence clearly shows the intersection between racism, sexism, and violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.

Our Watch has an ongoing commitment to the prevention of violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children, who continue to suffer from violence at a significantly higher rate than non-Aboriginal women. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations who continue to lead the work of sharing knowledge with non-Indigenous people and relentlessly advocate for an equitable, violence-free future in Australia.

# **Preventing violence against women in workplaces relies on effective communication.**

**This toolkit equips HR professionals, People and Culture teams, and small business providers to engage staff, clients, and stakeholders in meaningful conversations that foster whole-of-workplace commitment to prevention.**

## **Who this toolkit is for**

This toolkit is designed for anyone responsible for workplace communication. It is suitable for organisations of all sizes—from micro-businesses to large, complex workplaces. The resources support teams that are beginning their gender equality and prevention journey, as well as those looking to strengthen existing approaches.

Whether you are shaping policies, delivering training, preparing communications, or supporting culture change, this toolkit provides clear, adaptable guidance to help you communicate effectively about gender equality, respect, and the prevention of violence against women in the workplace.

## **How this toolkit fits within a broader workplace prevention project**

Skillful communication plays a key role in the success of prevention efforts.

This toolkit is designed to complement your organisation's broader work in:

- building a respectful and inclusive culture
- strengthening gender equality across structures, norms, and practices
- implementing the Workplace Equality and Respect Model
- meeting your positive duty under the Sex Discrimination Act
- developing policies, training, leadership engagement, and reporting mechanisms.

The communication activities in this toolkit should sit alongside and reinforce your workplace's broader prevention initiatives. They help staff understand why the work matters, what is changing, and how they can contribute.

**Clear and appropriate communication creates the ongoing visibility, transparency, and shared language needed to sustain cultural change.**

# How to navigate this document

**This toolkit is structured to move from foundational understanding to practical action.**

You can read it start to finish or go directly to the sections most relevant to your role. The toolkit is deliberately modular, allowing you to use the sections that best align with your goals, communication channels, and organisational maturity.

| PART     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | PAGE      |
|----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Understanding the issue</b><br>Builds a shared foundation by explaining what violence against women is, how gender inequality drives it, and why workplaces are a key setting for prevention.                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Core messages</b><br>Provides evidence-based messages you can use or adapt in your internal communications.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Communication guidance by workplace size</b><br>Offers tailored communication approaches for sole traders, small organisations, and medium to large organisations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>16</b> |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Communication templates and resources</b><br>Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ready-to-use internal and external email templates</li><li>▪ newsletter copy</li><li>▪ social media posts</li><li>▪ FAQs to support clear, consistent messaging</li><li>▪ a calendar of key national and international dates you can integrate into your communication and engagement planning.</li></ul> | <b>18</b> |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Tools and further resources</b><br>Links to trusted evidence-based tools that complement your prevention work.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>43</b> |



# Part 1:

## Understanding the issue

In Australia, violence against women is called many different things, including:

- domestic violence
- family violence
- intimate partner violence
- coercive control
- online abuse stalking
- workplace sexual harassment
- street harassment
- sexual assault.

Our definition includes all these forms of violence against women. When we refer to women we mean anyone who identifies as a woman (whether they be trans, cisgender, or identify with another gender label).

**'Violence against women is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.'**<sup>1</sup>



# The link between gender equality and violence against women

Creating a workplace culture that values gender equality and respect is a powerful driver of safety and is critical for preventing gender-based violence at work. To create workplaces that are free from gender-based violence, you need to actively promote gender equality. Why? Whether it shows up in pay gaps, imbalance in leadership teams, or everyday disrespect, gender inequality creates the conditions where harassment and violence can take hold. When you lead with fairness and respect, people feel safe speaking up, contributing, and thriving. You'll attract top talent, mitigate risks, and foster a stronger, more resilient workplace.

**'Workplace cultures that normalise inequality also normalise abuse. When women and gender-diverse people are marginalised, underrepresented, or unheard, violence can flourish unchecked.'**

— **Respect@Work Report, Australian Human Rights Commission**

Whether you're a sole trader, running a small business, working in a community group, a large company, the public sector, or a non-profit, you have a role to play in creating a workplace culture that values gender equality, respect, and inclusion. When everyone feels safe, respected, and included, your organisation becomes a better place to work, collaborate, and grow.

Building this kind of culture helps you meet your legal responsibilities, protect your people from harm, and build a strong, trusted reputation in your community and sector. Promoting gender equality and respect improves wellbeing, productivity, and organisational performance.

It reduces anxiety, burnout, and absenteeism—issues that cost the Australian economy over \$3.8 billion annually. Inclusive workplaces foster higher morale, better teamwork, and safety outcomes, while driving innovation, resilience, and talent retention. Evidence shows that when businesses actively close gender gaps, everyone benefits through stronger engagement, lower attrition, and enhanced reputation.

## Legal obligations to create safe equal and respectful workplaces

Every workplace has a legal obligation to prevent violence against women. Recent changes to the Sex Discrimination Act and Work Health and Safety laws mean workplaces now have a positive duty to actively mitigate risk and prevent discrimination, harassment, and psychosocial harm. Meeting these obligations isn't just about ticking boxes, it's about creating a culture where safety, gender equality, and respect are part of how you lead, work, and grow.

### Resources

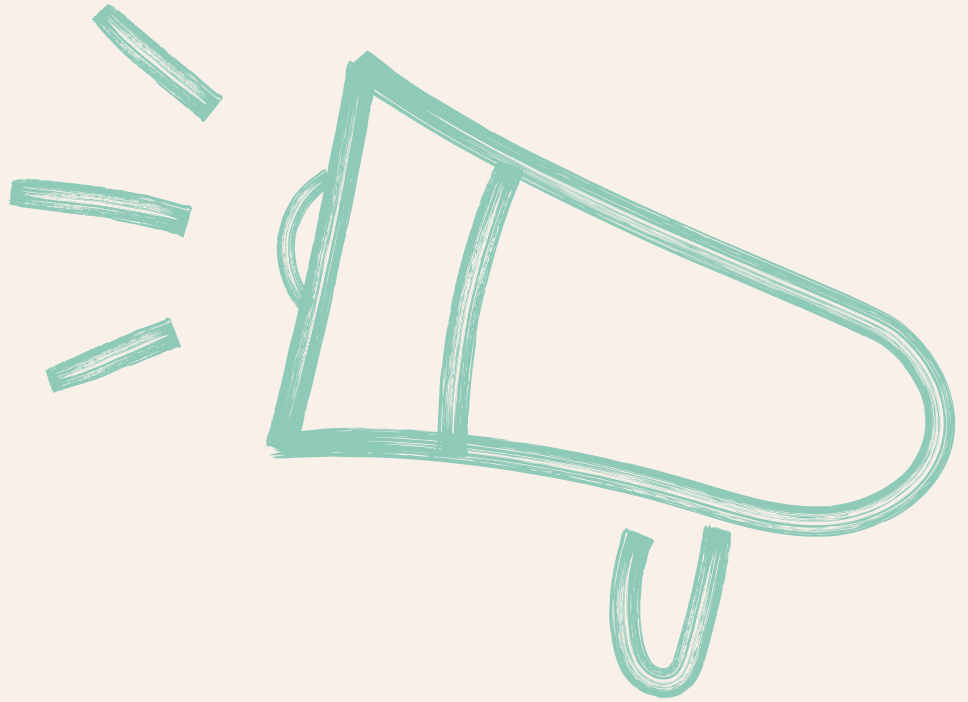


You can find out more about violence against women on the [Our Watch website](#).

Certain people, identities and communities within Australia are at greater risk than others and experience violence that intersects with other forms of discrimination and disadvantage. You can learn more about these intersections on the [Our Watch website](#).

To explore more about the role of workplaces in preventing violence against women see the [Workplace Equality and Respect Model](#).

To understand positive duty obligations, visit the [Australian Human Rights Commission's website](#).



## **Part 2:**

# **Core messages**

### **Effective communication is central to building a workplace culture that promotes gender equality and prevents violence against women.**

It enables staff to understand the issues, feel confident to speak up, and engage meaningfully in change. While every workplace is different, the goal of any communication strategy in this space remains the same: **to ensure everyone understands what they can do to advance safety, gender equality and respect and why it matters.** This involves:

- fostering a clear understanding of the link between gender inequality and violence against women
- recognising the workplace as a key setting for implementing prevention initiatives.

It can be hard to know where to begin or what to say when communicating about preventing violence against women in the workplace. One of the hardest messages to get across to new audiences is the link between gender inequality and violence against women. You can strengthen the link through repetition, consistency and using multiple formats.

These messages, drawn from the latest evidence, are a great starting point. They help explain why workplaces are such a powerful setting for change. Including them in your communications can give staff and stakeholders a clearer understanding of why this work matters and how they can contribute.

## CORE MESSAGE

# Why workplaces are key to preventing violence against women

Use these in leadership statements, posters, and internal campaigns

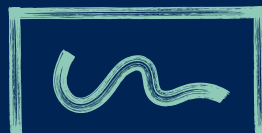
- **'Workplaces have a vital role in creating an Australia free of violence against women'**—an Australia where women are not only safe but respected, valued, and treated as equals in private and public life.'
- **'Workplaces are powerful settings for prevention.'** Violence can occur within workplaces, but they also influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours in both personal and professional lives. Workplaces can even provide a safer space or refuge for women experiencing violence outside of work.'
- **'Gender equality is the foundation of prevention.'** Organisational structures, norms, and practices can either challenge or reinforce gender inequality. Increasing equality in every aspect of life reduces violence against women.'
- **'Change is collective.'** The power to prevent violence lies not in the efforts of a single workplace but in the incremental changes all workplaces can make. Leadership from individual workplaces is vital to building momentum for this change.'
- **'Culture change starts at the top.'** Boards, CEOs, and senior leaders must reject sexism and discriminatory attitudes, confront organisational practices that devalue or marginalise women, and actively support increasing the number of female leaders to achieve whole-of-organisation change.'
- **'Violence impacts workplaces even when it happens at home.'** Women's experiences of violence affect productivity, absenteeism, and staff wellbeing. By implementing programs and policies to prevent violence against women, workplaces benefit through higher morale, reduced turnover, and improved health and safety outcomes.'

## Practical phrases for your communications:



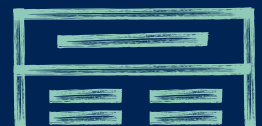
### Email subject line:

*'Why our workplace matters in preventing violence against women.'*



### Poster tagline:

*'Workplaces can lead the change for equality and safety.'*



### Intranet banner:

*'Every workplace action counts—  
together we can prevent violence.'*

## CORE MESSAGE

# The link between gender equality preventing violence against women

Use these messages in emails, posters, intranet updates, and leadership statements:

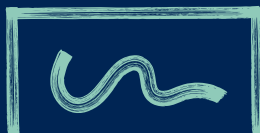
- **'Violence against women is driven by gender inequality and workplaces have the power to change this.'** When women have less power, fewer opportunities, and limited voice in decision making, the risk of harassment and violence increases. Tolerating sexism, rigid gender roles, or unequal power creates conditions for harm, reinforced through organisational norms, policies, and everyday behaviours. Addressing these drivers is essential because workplaces are not only sites where violence can occur, they also shape attitudes and behaviours beyond the office.'
- **'Workplace culture matters.'** Norms and practices that devalue or exclude women—such as pay gaps, lack of representation in leadership, or tolerance of sexist jokes—reinforce inequality and enable harassment. A respectful culture actively challenges these norms.'
- **'Violence against women is systemic, not random.'** It stems from attitudes and structures that normalise disrespect and unequal treatment. When workplaces fail to address these, they perpetuate harm.'
- **'Preventing violence starts with equality.'** Challenging stereotypes, sharing decision-making power, and valuing diversity reduces harm. Equality initiatives—such as flexible work policies, gender-balanced leadership, and inclusive recruitment—are prevention strategies.'
- **'Gender equality benefits everyone.'** Respectful, inclusive workplaces improve wellbeing, productivity, and morale. They reduce absenteeism, turnover, and burnout, creating stronger teams and better business outcomes.'
- **'Sexual harassment is a form of gendered violence.'** It is rooted in power imbalances and harmful attitudes. Addressing these through equality initiatives—such as clear policies, active bystander training, and leadership accountability—is essential for prevention.'

## Practical phrases for your communications:



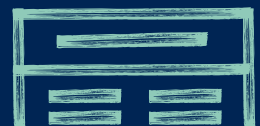
### Email subject line:

*'Why gender equality matters for safety and respect.'*



### Poster tagline:

*'Equality is the foundation of a safe workplace.'*



### Intranet banner:

*'Preventing violence begins with challenging inequality.'*



## Reporting sexism or inappropriate behaviour

Use these in leadership statements, internal communications, talking points, and organisational responses.

- **'Speaking up matters.** When sexism or inappropriate behaviour is reported, it shows that people feel confident to raise concerns. Reporting is a vital part of creating a safe and respectful workplace where issues can be identified early and addressed appropriately.'
- **'Reporting strengthens workplace culture.** Every report, whether formal or informal, provides insight into what is happening across the organisation. This transparency reinforces that disrespectful behaviour is not acceptable and helps maintain a culture grounded in respect.'
- **'A safe workplace requires action, not silence.** Sexism and disrespect can escalate if left unaddressed. Taking reports seriously helps prevent harm, protect wellbeing, and uphold the organisation's values.'
- **'This is about behaviour, not blaming groups of people.** Sexism and inappropriate behaviour stem from harmful attitudes, norms, and power imbalances — not from men or any specific group. The focus is on promoting respectful behaviour from everyone and addressing the conditions that enable harm.'
- **'Respect is a shared responsibility.** Creating a safe workplace is not the responsibility of one person or one team. Every employee contributes to the environment through their actions, attitudes, and willingness to call out inappropriate behaviour.'
- **'How reports are handled shapes organisational trust.** Responses to reported behaviour must reflect fairness, confidentiality, and respect. Trust is built when people see that speaking up leads to meaningful action and support.'
- **'Support is available.** Anyone affected by sexism or inappropriate behaviour — directly or as a witness — can access confidential internal supports [insert details here], along with external services such as 1800RESPECT and Lifeline. No one should have to manage these experiences alone.'
- **'Addressing issues helps prevent future harm.** Responding to incidents not only resolves the immediate concern; it helps identify patterns, inform improvements, and build a workplace culture where dignity, equality, and respect are upheld.'
- **'Continuous improvement is essential.** Preventing sexism and sexual harassment is complex, and no organisation has all the answers. Partnering with specialist organisations such as Our Watch supports stronger, evidence-informed approaches that align with national best practice.'

## CORE MESSAGE

# Engaging men

Gender equality isn't just a women's issue; it's an everyone-in-the-workplace issue that impacts morale, wellbeing, and organisational success. By actively involving men, we can dismantle stereotypes, prevent violence, and build cultures where respect and inclusion thrive. Here are some messages you can use in internal communications.

- **'Gender equality benefits everyone.'** Workplaces that promote equality see higher morale, better teamwork, and improved wellbeing for all employees. Equality reduces harassment and discrimination, creating safer environments where everyone can thrive.'
- **'All harassment and violence are unacceptable.'** Sexual harassment and gender-based violence harm individuals and organisations. They lead to absenteeism, turnover, and reputational damage. Every employee has a responsibility to speak up and act.'
- **'Men and women experience violence differently.'** Evidence shows women are disproportionately affected by sexual harassment and violence, often with severe physical, psychological, and economic impacts. Men are more likely to be perpetrators, which means men have a unique opportunity and responsibility to lead change.'
- **'Rigid gender expectations increase risk.'** When workplaces reinforce stereotypes—such as men needing to be dominant, competitive, or unemotional—it creates environments where disrespect and abuse can flourish. Challenging these norms helps prevent violence and fosters healthier relationships.'
- **'Gender stereotypes harm men too.'** Pressure to 'be tough' or avoid vulnerability

contributes to stress, poor mental health, and reluctance to seek help. Breaking these stereotypes benefits men's wellbeing and workplace culture.'

- **'This is not about blaming men.'** Prevention is about everyone being free from harmful norms, not men feeling guilt. Men can be allies and leaders in creating respectful workplaces by modelling positive behaviours and supporting equality initiatives.'
- **'Every man can make a difference.'** Practical actions include:
  - championing workplace policies that promote equality and respect
  - calling out sexist jokes or behaviours
  - having open conversations with colleagues about respect and inclusion
  - participating in training and mentoring programs
  - supporting women's leadership and decision-making roles.'

## Resources



You can find out more on engaging men in workplaces with gender equality through these resources:

- [Our Watch, Men in Focus](#)
- [Our Watch, Practical tips for engaging men \(video\)](#)
- [Our Watch, Why men, and what men can do to prevent violence against women \(video\)](#)
- [VICHealth, Framing Masculinity Messaging Guide](#)
- [Common Cause, Framing Masculinity](#)
- [The Man Box 2024](#)

## Framing strategies to manage resistance to change

Framing is about how we explain *why* an issue matters and how we help people understand it. The way we frame gender equality can influence how others think, feel, and act.

Here is some practical framing strategies based on *VicHealth's Framing Masculinities: Message Guide* (2020).

### Frame gender equality as something that benefits everyone

Highlight the shared benefits of gender equality for people of all genders, workplaces, families, and communities.

### Acknowledge that gender operates at many levels

Connect the personal and bigger picture. Gender is personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural, shaping both our lives and the systems we live in.

### Use real stories and solutions as compelling accounts of change

Share real examples of progress or positive change your organisation has influenced. Stories inspire hope and make the issue tangible.

### Reframe harmful narratives

Keep the focus on the social learning, not defending or excusing. Instead of saying 'Men are not naturally violent. They have been taught to use violence,' say 'Men have been taught to use violence.'

### Focus on the persuadables and avoid debating or myth-busting opponents

Speak to those in the 'moveable middle'—people open to learning and change. Tell your positive, forward-looking story.

### Show that change is already happening

Emphasise progress and readiness for equality. Instead of saying, 'Challenging outdated ideas of what it means to be a man is difficult because they are deeply embedded in our culture,' say, 'The vast majority of Australians do not agree with these outdated attitudes and are ready for change.'

### Don't reinforce dominance

Avoid suggesting traditional masculine norms are 'dominant' or normal. Instead, point out that most people believe rigid stereotypes are harmful and that men deserve to be free from them.

### Focus on solutions, not blame

Instead of saying, 'All men do things that contribute to a culture of violence against women,' say, 'There are things all men can do to end the culture of violence against women.' This invites action instead of guilt, promoting engagement and responsibility.

### Key takeaway

Spend more time highlighting **people's role in the solution**, and less time focusing on **their role in the problem**, this avoids defensiveness and activates shared motivation for change.

# Values-based messaging: communicating for change

When communicating about gender equality and preventing violence against women, it's not just what you say that matters, it's how you say it. Research from Common Cause<sup>2</sup> shows that messages grounded in shared human values are more likely to build long-term support, reduce defensiveness, and inspire collective action.

Values-based messaging focuses on activating intrinsic values — such as care, fairness, dignity, community, equality, and responsibility — because these values strengthen people's motivation to create a safer and more respectful world.

Below are the key principles to guide your communications:

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## Lead with shared values, not fear or blame

- Highlight values most people already hold and apply to this issue (for example, fairness, collective safety, dignity, care).
- Begin with what unites us, not what divides us.
- Avoid messages that shame, scapegoat, or single out groups—they trigger defensiveness, not change. We want everyone to take collective ownership of the actions needed.
- Avoid leading with facts and figures, as this tends to position people in a place of wanting to debate what is right or wrong.

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## Emphasise collective wellbeing and shared responsibility

- Frame equality as something we create together.
- Reinforce that respectful workplaces benefit everyone—staff, families, and communities.
- Use 'we' language to build connection and shared purpose.

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## Focus on the future we're working towards

- Paint a picture of the positive, safe, inclusive workplace you want to build.
- Remember that hope-based messages mobilise people more effectively than fear-based messages.
- Show that change is possible and already happening.

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## Activate compassion, not compliance

- Rather than leading with rules or obligations, centre messages on care for self and others, and dignity.
- Understand that when people feel emotionally connected to the issue, they're more likely to take action.
- Use real stories and examples to make the purpose relatable and human.

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## Avoid reinforcing harmful frames

- Don't repeat myths or negative stereotypes, even to 'correct' them—doing so strengthens them.
- Introduce a new, hopeful frame focused on equality, fairness, and freedom from stereotypes.

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## Invite people into the solution

- Make clear that everyone has a valued role to play.
- Use language that empowers rather than blames, especially when engaging men.
- Emphasise small, everyday actions that help create safer cultures.

## In practice

Values-based messaging helps create communication that feels respectful, motivating, and inclusive. It supports your broader culture-change efforts by strengthening connection, reducing resistance, and reinforcing why gender equality and respect matter to all of us. Align your messaging on workplace gender equality and respect with pre-existing (and accepted) organisational values regarding care for others, equality, dignity, and justice.

### Why use statistics?

When you open a conversation, especially one about prevention, behaviour change, social norms, or gendered violence, with statistics first, people can shift into “fact-checking” or “debate” mode or disconnect emotionally. However, statistics are powerful when used effectively. Statistics help ground your message in evidence, making it more persuasive and credible. They can highlight the scale of the issue, the impact on workplaces, and the benefits of prevention.

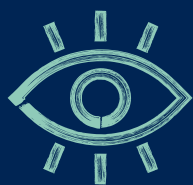
Pairing values-based messaging with solid data ensures your communication is both credible and compelling, reinforcing why equality and respect matter in every workplace.

### How to use statistics effectively:

- **Use up-to-date sources:** Refer to current data from reputable organisations like Our Watch, ANROWS, the Australian Human Rights Commission, or the Workplace Gender Equality Agency.
- **Localise where possible:** Use data that reflects your sector, region, or workforce to make it more relevant.
- **Pair stats with stories:** Combine data with real-life examples or case studies to humanise the issue.
- **Keep it simple:** Use one or two key stats per message to avoid overwhelming your audience.
- **Link to impact:** Show how violence against women affects productivity, wellbeing, and workplace culture and how prevention benefits everyone.

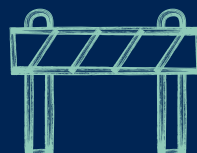
**Tip:** Don't start with data—start with connection, values, meaning, or lived experience. Then bring in the data to deepen understanding and strengthen the case.

## Key components of a values-based message:



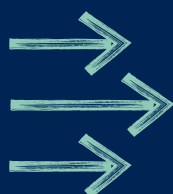
### 1 Vision

Seek out the shared value with the person you're engaging and describe the ideal situation.



### 2 Barrier

What is getting in the way of our vision? Be specific.



### 3 Action

What needs to happen to remove the barrier? Add a specific call to action if appropriate. Find ways to work together.



### 4 Final message

Put it all together to create a powerful, persuasive message.

## Sample tips and messages

### TIP 1

#### **Say equality matters, because equality matters**

'Our organisation needs to do more to address gender inequality because women and girls deserve to be treated as equals.'

### TIP 2

#### **Focus on causation, not just outcomes**

'It is unfair for companies to pay women less than men for the same work.'

### TIP 3

#### **Talk about men's advantage (not just women's disadvantage)**

'Men are overrepresented in leadership roles and are less likely to be overlooked for promotions than women.'

### TIP 4

#### **Be solutions focused**

'Gender pay audits can help businesses identify and address discriminatory pay, so women are equally compensated for their hard work.'

## Example phrasing using statistics:

### PHRASE 1

'Workplaces that champion gender equality and respect are safer, more inclusive, and more productive. When we create environments where everyone feels valued and supported, we prevent harm and help people thrive.'

### PHRASE 2

'One in three people have experienced sexual harassment at work in Australia. That's not just a statistic, it's a call to action. Every workplace has the power to change this story by fostering respect and equality.'

### PHRASE 3

'Evidence continues to show that violence against women has serious economic and social impacts. Our workplace has a role to play in prevention, and the benefits are clear.'





## **Part 3:**

# **Communication guidance by workplace size**

### **Tips for sole traders and small workplaces**

Even without large teams or formal communication channels, sole traders and small businesses can still play a vital role in promoting gender equality and preventing violence against women. Here is quick-scan list with practical ways to integrate respectful communication into everyday business practices.

#### **Direct conversations**

- Talk openly with staff, contractors, or clients about your commitment to respect and equality. You can have a ready-made 'elevator pitch' style statement ready to go for when the opportunity arises.
- Use everyday interactions to reinforce expectations around respectful behaviour.
- Invite questions and encourage open dialogue.

#### **Business values**

- Signal your stance and expectations clearly to everyone you work with.
- Add a clear statement about gender equality and respect to your website, onboarding materials, and staff handbooks.
- Add short values-based messages to everyday touchpoints for example:
  - Email signatures ('Proud to promote equality and respect at work.')
  - Invoices or receipts ('We value inclusion and respect in every interaction.')

#### **Social media and website**

- Share content from trusted sources (Our Watch, ANROWS).
- Highlight positive messages on gender equality, respect, safety and inclusion initiatives or key dates (International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism).
- Use your online presence to show leadership in respectful practice.

#### **Visuals in the workplace**

- Display posters or infographics in:
  - waiting rooms
  - reception areas and;
  - digital screens.
- Reinforce core messages visually and frequently.

#### **Support pathways**

- Share information about internal (employee assistance programs) and external support services (1800RESPECT and state and local support services).
- Ensure staff, contractors, and clients know where to find help.

#### **Community engagement**

- Join local networks focused on gender equality.
- Attend community events or campaigns.
- Build partnerships that reinforce your commitment.

## Tips for medium to large workplaces

Medium to large organisations often have a wide range of internal communication channels, from newsletters and intranets to team meetings and digital platforms. These channels offer powerful opportunities to engage staff in conversations about gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. However, knowing where to begin or how to make these messages resonate can be challenging. Here is a quick-scan list with practical ways to integrate respectful communication into everyday business practices.

### Emails

- CEO introductory message
- Progress updates on gender equality initiatives
- Staff survey invitations
- Consistent email signature messages
- Call-outs for equality ambassadors

### Team meetings (including stand-ups or toolbox talks)

- Discussion questions and short exercises
- Group reflection on culture, respect, and behaviour
- Upcoming activities or training announcements

### Internal newsletters

- 'Tips from training' summaries
- Articles on gender equality
- Videos or spotlight stories
- Staff reflections or case studies

### Intranet / internal communication platforms

- Key messages and organisational commitments
- Infographics that simplify complex data
- Our Watch's *Change the story* video and other resources
- Clear information about disclosure pathways and support
- Short audio episodes or podcasts commissioned on key themes (unconscious bias, active bystander)

### Internal social media channels

- Links to relevant articles
- FAQ posts
- Short reminders reinforcing respectful behaviour

### Noticeboards and screensavers

- Posters challenging gender stereotypes
- Visual messages that normalise equality and respect
- Screensaver campaigns featuring rotating key messages

### Induction

- Provide new starters with:
  - workplace expectations on respect and equality
  - values and commitments
  - reporting pathways
  - links to training or resources

### Community engagement

- Fundraise, sponsor, promote, or support organisations doing good work in this space



# Part 4:

## Communication templates and resources

Clear, consistent messaging is key to building staff understanding and engagement around gender equality and the prevention of violence against women. To support your efforts, we've developed a suite of communication templates and resources that can be adapted to suit your organisation's tone, audience, and existing channels.



### Accessibility matters

Accessibility is essential to ensure every employee can engage with your messages. Inclusive communication removes barriers and supports a culture where everyone feels informed and valued. Here are practical ways to make your communications accessible:

- **Use plain language:** avoid jargon and complex terms so messages are clear for everyone.
- **Provide multiple formats:** share information in text, audio, and visual formats (captions on videos, alt text for images).
- **Ensure readability:** use high-contrast colours, large fonts, and accessible design for posters and digital content.
- **Consider language diversity:** translate key messages or provide summaries in languages spoken by your workforce.
- **Accessibility for disability:** make documents screen-reader friendly and ensure videos include captions.
- **Test your content:** check accessibility using tools like WCAG guidelines or your organisation's accessibility standards.

# Internal communication

## Scenario:

### Launching a new initiative

After recent employee feedback and updated Australian workplace safety guidelines, your organisation has recognised the need to strengthen its approach to preventing sexual harassment. Staff indicated they wanted clearer reporting options, better support, and more visible leadership commitment to respectful behaviours.

In response, you have developed a safety and respect initiative that includes awareness activities, training, and improved reporting pathways. To introduce this initiative and highlight why it matters, senior leadership have asked you to prepare an organisation-wide email encouraging all employees to take part.

#### EMAIL

### Our commitment to a respectful workplace

**SUBJECT:** A commitment to safety and respect at **[insert company name]**  
**ALT:** Join us in shaping a respectful workplace

**BODY:** We are proud to announce the launch of our initiative focused on safety and respect in the workplace.

We are committed to building a workplace where every person feels safe, valued, and respected. In recent years, workplaces across Australia have seen increasing awareness of the impacts of gender-based violence, including sexual harassment, and the responsibility organisations hold in preventing it. These issues are not abstract, they affect real people, including colleagues, friends, and community members.

In Australia, more than **[XX]**% of women and **[XX]**% of men have experienced sexual harassment at work in the past 5 years. This is not just a statistic, it's a reality that many face daily. But sexual harassment is preventable.

To support this commitment, over the coming weeks we are launching a series of activities designed to educate, empower, and engage our workforce. Through these actions, we aim not only to meet our legal and ethical responsibilities but also to shape a workplace environment that prioritises dignity, inclusion, and care.

Every voice is vital in shaping our workplace, and wider community, ensuring they are free from sexual harassment. We encourage everyone to take part in the upcoming activities.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with **[insert contact name and email]**.

This initiative reflects our commitment to ensuring that every member of our team feels safe, supported, and respected, not only at work but in their personal lives as well.

Together, we can lead the change in our industry.

# Where to find up-to-date statistics

These are authoritative, regularly-updated data sources, which means you can return to them each year (or when new releases come out) and keep your communications fresh:

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## Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)

### » Personal Safety Survey

- Provides national prevalence data on sexual harassment, including workplace settings
- Good for periodic updates (when the next collection is released)
- Use this for broad trend information, including by age, sex and other demographics

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## Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

### » Time for respect: Fifth national survey on sexual harassment in Australian workplaces

- Workplace-specific survey that gives rich detail about incidence, sectors, gender, and response dynamics
- Useful for tailoring communications to the workplace setting and understanding more context-specific stats
- More information can be found here:  
» Sex and gender – projects and reports

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## Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)

### » Employer data on workplace sexual harassment and prevention efforts

- Focuses on employer side: policies, training, risk-management in organisations
- Ideal for linking statistics to organisational action and compliance

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## Safe Work Australia

### » Infographics and stats on workplace sexual harassment

- Focuses more on WHS (Work Health & Safety) approach to harassment in workplaces
- Good for framing harassment as a safety issue in the workplace context

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## Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

### » Sexual violence section (includes workplace harassment)

- Provides context, links between sexual harassment, violence and other public-health indicators
- Useful for embedding workplace data into the broader context of violence prevention

## Scenario:

### Communicating the importance of sustained ongoing actions

Following recent updates to Australian workplace safety and respect standards, your organisation has reviewed staff feedback, training, and workplace culture. Employees expressed pride in the organisation but also a need for clearer expectations around respectful behaviour and more open conversations about safety and inclusion.

Leadership has recognised that this work is not just a compliance requirement but essential to supporting wellbeing, strengthening relationships, and creating a positive environment where everyone feels valued. To reinforce this understanding, the leadership team has asked you to draft an email to explain why the ongoing focus on safety, respect, and gender equality matters, for individuals, the workplace, and the wider community.

#### EMAIL

### Why we are taking action

**SUBJECT:** Our path to a safer workplace

**BODY:** As part of our ongoing efforts to create a supportive workplace, it's important to discuss why this initiative is critical. This commitment isn't just about adhering to new standards, it's about recognising the unique position we hold to make a lasting impact, within our walls and across the broader community.

#### Why this work is important

- Safety and respect: preventing sexual harassment and promoting gender equality ensures everyone feels safe, respected, and valued at work.
- Community impact: what we do at work doesn't stay at work. We can make our communities better by carrying what we learn here into our daily lives.
- Growth opportunities: there are chances for all of us, including our leaders, to learn more and grow from this initiative. It's about becoming better at what we do and how we treat each other.

#### Upcoming events

**[Insert events here]** We encourage everyone to participate and contribute to the discussions and training sessions planned. Your active participation is key to our success.

Let's work together to lead this change.

Your wellbeing matters. If you ever need support or want to raise a concern, here are the resources available:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): **[Phone number / link]**
- Reporting pathways: **[Link to internal reporting system or HR contact]**
- Workplace policies: **[Link to Respect and Inclusion Policy]**
- Confidential helplines: **[Relevant external support services]**



## Scenario:

### Communicating the importance of going beyond compliance

Following the introduction of new Respect@Work legislative requirements, your organisation reviewed its obligations to ensure it is taking all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour. During this process, leadership recognised that simply

meeting legal standards wasn't enough. To communicate that the organisation's efforts go beyond compliance and to highlight the important role employees play in shaping a safe, equitable workplace, the leadership team has asked you to draft an email explaining the concept of positive duty and how it aligns with the company's values and ongoing cultural goals.

#### EMAIL

### Beyond legal obligations, our positive duty

#### SUBJECT:

**Understanding Positive Duty—more than just legal compliance**

#### BODY:

Recent legislative changes under the Respect@Work recommendations require workplaces to take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and inappropriate behaviour, however, our commitment goes beyond mere compliance.

**[Insert company name]** sees this as an opportunity to enhance our workplace culture for everyone.

We are not just checking a box, our goal is to set the standard for fostering a safe and equitable environment for all our employees.

#### What this means for you

- Participation: we will be rolling out a series of initiatives designed to strengthen our policies and practices. Your feedback and involvement will be essential.
- Empowerment: this is about empowering everyone to help shape our workplace into a space where everyone can thrive.

#### Upcoming events:

**[Insert events here]** We encourage everyone to participate and contribute to the discussions and training sessions planned.

Thank you for being an integral part of this positive change.

Your wellbeing matters. If you ever need support or want to raise a concern, here are the resources available:

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP): **[Phone number / link]**
- Reporting pathways: **[Link to internal reporting system or HR contact]**
- Workplace policies: **[Link to Respect and Inclusion Policy]**
- Confidential helplines: **[Relevant external support services]**

## Scenario:

### Responding when inappropriate behaviours occur in the workplace

In recent weeks, several employees at your organisation became aware that complaints had been made regarding sexist behaviour and sexual harassment within the workplace. Although formal processes were followed, the fact that such behaviour occurred caused concern among staff.

Employees expressed a desire for reassurance that their workplace is safe, that inappropriate behaviour is taken seriously, and that leadership is committed to upholding company values. To address these concerns and reaffirm the organisation's stance, the leadership team has asked you to draft a values-based email reinforcing trust, accountability, and the importance of a respectful culture.

#### EMAIL

### Communicating how the organisation takes reporting seriously

#### SUBJECT:

**Strengthening our culture of respect and safety**

#### BODY:

We understand that some of you are aware that concerns have recently been raised about sexist behaviour and sexual harassment in our workplace. While we cannot discuss individual matters, we want to take this moment to speak clearly about what you can expect from us whenever a concern is raised.

At **[insert company name]**, we take every report seriously.

Whether it relates to disrespectful behaviour, sexism, or sexual harassment, you have our commitment that:

- every concern will be listened to with respect and without judgement
- reports are handled confidentially and addressed through fair, thorough processes
- no one will be disadvantaged for speaking up
- your safety, wellbeing, and trust remain our highest priority.

We know that reporting takes courage, and we want everyone to feel confident that their voice matters. Speaking up helps us protect the wellbeing of individuals and strengthens our culture as a whole. It is how we ensure our workplace reflects our values of respect, safety, and dignity for all.

We recognise that raising a concern can be difficult. You are not alone. Support is always available, both within our organisation and through external services.

#### Where to find support

Internal support:

- **[People and Culture / HR contact name and email]** – for confidential advice, reporting options, and guidance
- **[Employee Assistance Program (EAP)]** – free, confidential counselling for employees and their families
- **[Wellbeing or safety contact]** – for support related to workplace behaviour or safety

**BODY:****External Support:**

- 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) – 24/7 counselling, information, and support for sexual harassment, assault, or family violence
- Lifeline (13 11 14) – 24/7 crisis support
- Beyond Blue (1300 22 4636) – mental health support and counselling
- SafeWork **[your state/territory]** – for guidance on workplace rights and safety obligations

These services are independent, confidential, and available to anyone who needs them.

Speaking up—whether for yourself or someone else—helps keep our workplace safe and strengthens the culture we are committed to building together. Your voice matters, and your wellbeing is important to us.

If you have questions or need support, please reach out. We are here to listen, to support, and to take action when needed.

Thank you for continuing to uphold our values and for contributing to a respectful, safe, and inclusive workplace for all.



# Digital channels



## Intranet banner

### HEADLINE:

**Equality and Respect Start Here**

### BODY:

Our workplace is committed to creating a culture where everyone feels safe, valued, and respected. Learn more about our initiatives and how you can get involved.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- Click here to explore resources
- Join the conversation
- Download the toolkit
- Listen to this podcast

## Screensaver/digital signage



### TEXT:

Respect is everyone's responsibility. Equality isn't just a value—it's how we work.

### VISUAL:

Bold typography with diverse silhouettes or icons representing inclusion.



## Chat platform message (Teams/Slack)

### MESSAGE:

Did you know? Workplaces that promote gender equality have higher morale, better teamwork, and improved wellbeing for everyone. Check out our quick guide on how you can make a difference → [\[link\]](#)

## Internal social media post



### POST:

Every conversation matters. By challenging stereotypes and promoting equality, we can prevent harassment and build a stronger workplace culture. What does respect at work look like to you?

### HASHTAGS:

#RespectAtWork #GenderEquality  
#CultureOfRespect

### VISUAL:

Photo of team collaboration or an inclusion event.

# Newsletter

Internal newsletters are a powerful way to shape workplace culture. They raise awareness about respectful behaviours, promote transparency on policies and reporting, and celebrate role models who champion inclusion. Newsletters also encourage engagement through workshops and campaigns, provide clear support resources, and create a sense of shared responsibility for equality and safety. Consistent, positive messaging helps embed these values into everyday work life.

The ideal frequency for internal newsletters depends on your goals and resources. Monthly newsletters are the most common and effective for building a respectful workplace culture, as they keep information fresh without overwhelming employees. If your content is more detailed or resources are limited, bi-monthly (every two months) editions work well. For broader strategic updates, quarterly newsletters can be suitable, though they are less effective for maintaining ongoing engagement and driving behaviour change.

## NEWSLETTER

### TITLE:

### **Building a workplace where respect and equality thrive**

### HEADER IMAGE:

A graphic showing diverse silhouettes with the words 'Equality Starts Here.'

### INTRO:

Creating a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace is more than a legal obligation—it's a shared responsibility. At **[insert company name]**, we believe equality is the foundation for innovation, collaboration, and wellbeing.

### MAIN CONTENT:

#### **Why this matters**

Gender inequality is a key driver of harassment and violence. When workplaces challenge stereotypes and promote fairness, everyone benefits. Equality isn't just good ethics, it's good business.

### What we're doing

- Delivering training on respectful behaviours and active bystander skills
- Reviewing policies to ensure fairness and transparency
- Celebrating diversity through awareness campaigns
- **[Add your own initiatives]**
- How you can help
- Join upcoming workshops
- Model inclusive behaviours daily
- Speak up—your voice matters

### CALL-OUT BOX:

#### **Need Support?**

HR Contact: **[Insert details]**

EAP: **[Insert details]**

1800RESPECT (24/7)

Lifeline: 13 11 14

### CLOSING:

Together, we can create a workplace where equality thrives. Learn more on our intranet: **[Insert link]**.

# Themes to cover in your newsletters

|                                           |                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Inclusive leadership</b>               | How leaders can model respect and inclusion.                                            | Tips for inclusive decision making, spotlight on leaders championing equality, leadership training opportunities.                 |
| <b>Psychological safety</b>               | Creating an environment where employees feel safe to speak up.                          | Why psychological safety matters, practical steps to foster trust, stories from teams that embrace openness.                      |
| <b>Intersectionality in the workplace</b> | Understanding how overlapping identities (gender, race, disability) impact experiences. | Content ideas: explaining intersectionality, promoting equality for all, resources for learning.                                  |
| <b>Active bystander action</b>            | Empowering employees to intervene safely when they witness inappropriate behaviour.     | What active bystander action looks like, scenarios and tips, upcoming training sessions.                                          |
| <b>Respect in hybrid and remote work</b>  | Maintaining respectful behaviours in virtual environments.                              | Guidelines for online meetings, preventing exclusion in remote teams, digital etiquette.                                          |
| <b>Celebrating diversity</b>              | Highlighting cultural awareness and inclusion.                                          | Key cultural dates, employee stories, how diversity drives innovation.                                                            |
| <b>Preventing microaggressions</b>        | Understanding and addressing subtle forms of disrespect.                                | Examples of microaggressions, their impact, strategies to avoid them.                                                             |
| <b>Gender equality and pay equity</b>     | Closing the gap and promoting fairness.                                                 | Why pay equity matters, organisational commitments, progress updates.                                                             |
| <b>Mental health and respect</b>          | Linking wellbeing to respectful workplaces.                                             | How respect reduces stress, mental health resources, promoting empathy.                                                           |
| <b>Accountability and transparency</b>    | Building trust through clear processes.                                                 | How complaints are handled, reporting statistics, continuous improvement initiatives.                                             |
| <b>Reporting and support</b>              | Empowering employees to speak up and access help when needed.                           | Explain why reporting matters and how it strengthens workplace culture. Share clear steps and resources for confidential support. |
| <b>Engaging men as allies</b>             | Encouraging men to actively support gender equality and respect.                        | Highlight the role of men in challenging harmful behaviours. Promote allyship workshops and share success stories.                |



# Posters

## POSTER 1 Equality benefits everyone

### HEADLINE:

#### **Equality Benefits Everyone**

### BODY:

- Gender equality creates safer, stronger workplaces.
- When everyone is respected, teams thrive.
- Equality isn't just fair—it's smart business.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- Learn more about our commitment to equality and respect. **[Insert link or contact details]**

## POSTER 2 Prevent sexual harassment

### HEADLINE:

#### **Prevent Sexual Harassment. Promote Respect**

### BODY:

- Harassment and discrimination have no place here.
- Speak up if you see or experience disrespectful behaviour.
- Together, we can create a culture of safety and inclusion.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- Report concerns confidentially. **[Insert reporting process or contact details]**

## POSTER 3 Lead the change

### HEADLINE:

#### **Lead the Change for Respect at Work**

### BODY:

- Every action counts—challenge stereotypes and model respect.
- Leadership starts with what we say and do every day.
- Join us in building a workplace where everyone feels valued.

### CALL TO ACTION:

- Get involved in upcoming equality initiatives. **[Insert link or contact details]**

# External communications

These templates can be used for clear and effective communications to your stakeholders and clients regarding the work you are doing to create an environment of safety, gender equality and respect.

## Scenario:

### Commitment to workplace excellence

As Respect@Work reforms came into effect, your organisation has recognised growing expectations from clients and partners for stronger workplace safety, governance, and cultural leadership. Several stakeholders had begun requesting evidence of compliance with positive duty requirements, prompting the organisation to review its practices

and identify opportunities to strengthen its commitment to respectful and inclusive workplaces.

In response, you have developed a comprehensive sexual harassment prevention program, not due to any incident, but as a proactive step aligned with your values and long-term business strategy. Your leadership team sees the importance of communicating this to external stakeholders to maintain transparency, demonstrate industry leadership, and reinforce the organisation's commitment to ethical, safe, and future-focused operations. They have asked you to draft an email that aims to highlight the strategic benefits of the work being done to prevent workplace sexual harassment, and reaffirm the organisation's dedication to upholding high standards across the industry.

#### EMAIL

### Communicating to external stakeholders your proactive efforts to prevent sexual harassment

#### SUBJECT:

**Commitment to workplace excellence: proactive sexual harassment prevention initiatives at [insert company name]**

#### BODY:

We are writing to share an important development at [insert company name] that highlights our unwavering commitment to workplace excellence and ethical business practices.

We have recently launched a comprehensive sexual harassment prevention program, driven by our core values and a proactive approach to ensure a safe and respectful work environment. This initiative is a strategic move, not prompted by any incidents, but influenced by a broader commitment to foster an inclusive and productive workplace.

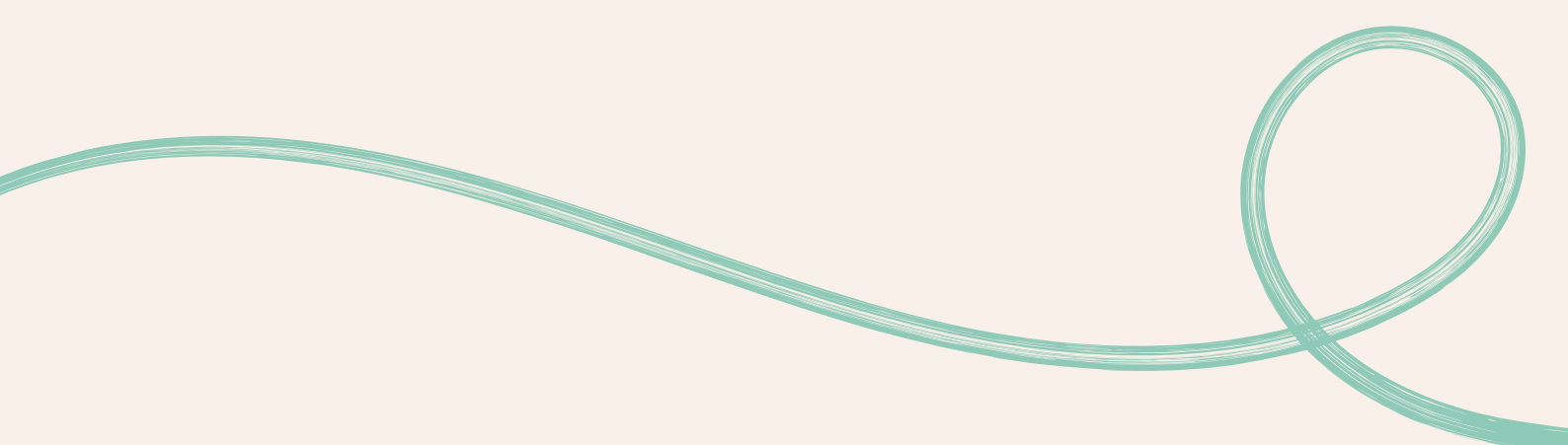
As part of our compliance with Respect@Work legislation, we are taking all reasonable steps to ensure our workplace, including its culture, mitigates the risk of sexual harassment and workplace gender-based violence occurring. We are committed not only to meet but exceed these legislative requirements, ensuring we are leaders in our industry by setting the new standard for gender equality.

**BODY:**

The business benefits of such initiatives are clear and significant. By fostering a respectful and equitable work environment, we enhance employee satisfaction, boost innovation, and maintain high levels of productivity, all increasing the company's bottom line. These factors directly contribute to our competitive edge and the quality of service we offer to our esteemed clients.

We see this as not just an internal goal but as a community and industry-wide responsibility. We are keen to collaborate and share our practices and learnings from this initiative, encouraging a collective effort to uplift our standards.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. We hope to work together to promote these values across our industry. If you have any questions, please get in touch with **[insert contact name and email]**.



## Scenario:

### News media reporting on inappropriate workplace behaviours

A national news outlet has published a story alleging sexist and inappropriate behaviours occurring within your organisation. The article includes anonymous accounts from former and current employees and has sparked public discussion about workplace culture and

gender equality. Staff are concerned about how the organisation will respond publicly, and stakeholders are seeking reassurance that the company is committed to providing a safe and respectful environment. To uphold transparency and reinforce organisational values, you have been asked to prepare a media release addressing the situation and an email to external stakeholders.

#### MEDIA RELEASE

[Insert company name] is aware of the recent media report alleging sexist and inappropriate behaviour within our organisation. While we cannot comment on individual matters, we want to reaffirm our commitment to fostering a workplace grounded in respect, safety, and dignity for every person.

Our values guide who we are and how we operate. Any behaviour that undermines the safety or wellbeing of our people is unacceptable and inconsistent with what we stand for. We have zero tolerance for this type of behaviour in our workplace.

We take all concerns seriously. Whenever an issue is raised, whether formally or informally, it is handled with confidentiality, sensitivity, and fairness. We have established processes to support anyone who comes forward, and we continually review our systems to ensure they meet our obligations and our own expectations of a safe workplace.

We recognise the importance of listening, learning, and evolving. To strengthen our culture, we continue to invest in respectful behaviour training, leadership development, and mechanisms that make it easier for employees to speak up safely. We are committed to ongoing improvement and transparency in this work.

Our priority remains the wellbeing of our people. We encourage anyone who needs support—current or former employees—to reach out to the services available, including our Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or external services such as 1800RESPECT and Lifeline.

We understand that reports like this can be distressing, and we want our community to know that we are committed to doing what is right, acting with integrity, and maintaining a workplace where everyone feels valued and respected.

#### Media Contact:

[Name]

[Title]

[Phone]

[Email]

## SUBJECT:

**Our commitment to a safe and respectful workplace**

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## BODY:

You may have seen recent media coverage alleging sexist or inappropriate behaviour within **[insert company name]**. We understand that such reports may raise questions, and we want to take a moment to address them directly and transparently.

While we cannot comment on individual matters, we want to reaffirm our strong commitment to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace. These values guide every aspect of how we operate and how we engage with our people, clients, and community.

Whenever concerns are raised, formally or informally, we take them seriously. They are handled confidentially, sensitively, and in line with our established processes. We act promptly and appropriately because the wellbeing of our people and the integrity of our organisation are paramount. We have zero tolerance for this type of behaviour in our workplace.

We also want to reassure you that our operations remain stable and focused. Our teams continue to deliver the high-quality service and professionalism you expect from us, and we remain dedicated to upholding the trust you place in our organisation.

As part of our ongoing commitment to continuous improvement, we actively invest in creating a culture where everyone feels safe and respected. This includes strengthening training, reinforcing expectations of respectful behaviour, and ensuring clear pathways for speaking up.

We value the relationship we share with you and appreciate your continued trust during this time. If you have any questions or wish to discuss this further, please feel free to contact **[insert contact name and details]**.

Thank you for your support. We remain committed to acting with integrity, living our values, and maintaining the highest standards in all that we do.

## SOCIAL MEDIA



### OPENING (HOOK OR VALUE STATEMENT):

At **[Organization Name]**, we believe that every voice deserves to be heard and respected. Equality and respect are more than values, they are the foundation of a thriving workplace where everyone can bring their best selves to work.

### MIDDLE (HIGHLIGHT KEY MESSAGE OR INITIATIVE):

We're committed to creating an environment where differences are celebrated, and inclusion is woven into everything we do. Whether it's through **[specific initiatives: inclusive hiring, employee resource groups, bias training, pay equity reviews]**, we're constantly striving to make our workplace more equitable and supportive for all.

### OPTIONAL - INCLUDE A QUOTE OR STATISTIC:

As **[Leader's Name, Title]** says, 'Respect is not just shown in words, but in the everyday actions that make people feel valued.'

Did you know that according to [Deloitte](#) organisations with inclusive cultures are 6 times more likely to be innovative and agile, 8 times more likely to achieve better business outcomes, and 2 times as likely to meet or exceed financial targets?

### CLOSING (CALL TO ACTION / ENGAGEMENT PROMPT):

We're proud of the steps we've taken and we know the journey continues. Let's keep the conversation going.

How does your team promote equality and respect at work?  
#WorkplaceEquality #RespectAtWork #Inclusion  
#DiversityAndInclusion #CultureMatters #Leadership

### Tips for customisation

- **Tone:** keep it warm, authentic, and human and avoid overly corporate language.
- **Visuals:** add a photo or short video of employees collaborating, attending an inclusion event, or sharing testimonials.
- **Hashtags:** use 4–6 targeted hashtags (avoid overloading).
- **Frequency:** posts about inclusion and respect resonate best when they're part of an ongoing series, not one-offs.



## Social media campaign:

### Respect and equality at work

Use these themes and captions to promote gender equality and respect in the workplace across your social channels. Pair posts with strong visuals (team photos, inclusion events, infographics) and keep tone authentic and leadership-driven.

#### Posting tips

- **Cadence:** 2 posts per week (main and quote/stat).
- **Cross-posting:** use full captions on LinkedIn; concise versions on Instagram and X.
- **Engagement prompts:** use a warm, authentic, and leadership-driven tone:
  - 'How is your team leading the change?'
  - 'What does respect at work look like to you?'

### Week 1: Lead the change

Lead the change in your industry by setting the new standard for gender equality. True leadership is shown not only by what we achieve but by how we treat each other.

#GenderEquality  
#Leadership  
#RespectAtWork  
#Inclusion



### Week 2: Safe workplaces

Businesses have a responsibility to ensure their workplaces are free from sexual harassment. Every workplace deserves to be safe, respectful, and inclusive.

#SafeWorkplace  
#RespectAtWork  
#CultureOfRespect  
#Equality



### Week 2: Culture and influence

Every conversation, policy and action can influence your workplace culture and address the gender inequalities and power imbalances that lead to sexual harassment. Change begins with what we say and what we do.

#WorkplaceCulture  
#GenderEquality  
#InclusionMatters



### Week 4: Equality and community Impact

Creating a world where everyone is equal is the fair and right thing to do. When we make our workplaces safer and more respectful, we're also having an impact on the wider community.

#EqualityForAll  
#CommunityImpact  
#LeadWithRespect



### Bonus post: Challenging stereotypes

Organisations can use their influence to challenge stereotypes and speak out against sexual harassment and violence. Workplace attitudes shape beliefs, behaviours and communities.

#ChangeTheNorm  
#PreventHarassment  
#RespectAtWork



## Days of significance to anchor events and communications

One way to use social media is to time your posts to align with days of significance. You can tailor your messages to amplify awareness, celebrate progress, and connect your workplace initiatives to broader conversations happening nationally or globally. You can also use international and national days of significance to anchor your event or communications in a broader context. Consider inviting a guest speaker, organising a group walk, hosting a creative activity, or participating in fundraising or poster campaigns. When planning events, be mindful of equal representation—actively prioritise and highlight women's voices and leadership to ensure visibility and inclusion.



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### Feb

#### Ochre Ribbon Week

12-19 FEBRUARY

Ochre Ribbon Week raises awareness of the impacts of domestic and family violence in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Ochre Ribbon Week is an Indigenous-led campaign.

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### Mar

#### International Women's Day

8 MARCH

Globally recognised day celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement. International Women's Day brings attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.

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#### Transgender Day of Visibility

31 MARCH

Annual celebration of trans pride and awareness, recognising trans and gender diverse experiences and achievements.

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### Apr

#### Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Aims to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it.

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## May

### Domestic Violence Remembrance Day

3 MAY

Remembers those who have been lost in the previous 12 months to domestic and family violence.

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### International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT)

17 MAY

International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination, celebrates achievements and raises awareness of ongoing inequality.

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### National Sorry Day

26 MAY

Acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, who we now know as 'The Stolen Generations'.

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### National Reconciliation Week

27 MAY-3 JUNE

A time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

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### LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Day

28 MAY

Increasing visibility and understanding and giving hope and courage to victims and survivors.

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### Reconciliation Day

FIRST MONDAY AFTER OR ON MAY 27

A dedicated time for all Australians to learn about shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each individual can contribute to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

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## Jun

### Pride Month

Celebrates the diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community and protests ongoing discrimination.

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## Jul

### National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) Week

FIRST WEEK OF JULY

National NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia in the first week of July each year (Sunday to Sunday), to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC Week is an opportunity for all Australians to learn about First Nations cultures and histories and participate in celebrations of the oldest, continuous living cultures on earth.

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**Aug**

## International Equal Pay Day

25 AUGUST

Represents the longstanding efforts towards the achievement of equal pay for work of equal value. The average woman in Australia effectively works an extra 56 days of the year to earn the same as the average man, therefore men could stop working on 25 August and earn the same as women who worked through to 31 Dec.

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**Oct**

## World Mental Health Day

10 OCTOBER

Raises awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilise efforts in support of mental health.

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**Nov**

## Transgender Awareness Week

13-19 NOVEMBER

Raises the visibility of transgender people and addresses issues members of the community face.

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## Transgender Day of Remembrance

20 NOVEMBER

Honours the memory of the trans lives lost to acts of transphobia and discrimination.

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## International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

25 NOVEMBER

A moment to reflect on, renew, amplify, and strategise to achieve commitments to eliminate violence against women by 2030.

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## 16 Days of Activism

25 NOVEMBER-10 DECEMBER

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It is used as an organising strategy by individuals and organisations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.

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**Dec**

## World Human Rights Day

10 DECEMBER

Adopted by the United National General Assembly in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It proclaims the rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.

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# FAQs: talking about workplace equality and respect

These are examples of some common questions you might get from employees, clients, or stakeholders about your workplace's commitment to preventing violence against women in the workplace (including sexual harassment). The answers will help you respond effectively and emphasise the importance of this work.

## About the Initiative

### Why are you undertaking this work?

Sexual harassment is all too common in Australia, but it is preventable. We are committed to ensuring a safe and respectful work environment for everyone. This initiative is part of our proactive approach to foster a culture of respect and safety, aligning with our values and the broader commitment to social responsibility.

Find latest statistics at [humanrights.gov.au](https://humanrights.gov.au)

### Does this workplace have an issue with sexual harassment?

While we strive to maintain a respectful work environment, national statistics indicate that a significant portion of people in Australia have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years. This initiative is about being proactive, not just reactive. It's about ensuring that our workplace remains safe and that we are stopping inappropriate behaviour from occurring in the first place. This work not only creates a safe workplace for all employees but helps to create a safer community.

### Are you getting outside support for this work?

Yes. We recognise that preventing sexual harassment and promoting gender equality is specialist work, and we don't claim to have all the answers or expertise internally. To ensure we are taking the most effective and evidence-based approach, we are partnering with organisations that lead this work nationally.

We use the tools, resources, and guidance developed by Our Watch, Australia's national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women. Their evidence-based frameworks support workplaces to understand the drivers of sexual harassment, strengthen organisational culture, and implement meaningful, long-term prevention strategies.

By working with experts like Our Watch, we can:

- draw on national best practice and current research
- ensure our approach is credible, informed, and effective
- build capability across our organisation
- stay aligned with the Respect@Work reforms and the expectations placed on Australian workplaces.

We see this work as a shared responsibility. Partnering with specialist organisations helps us strengthen our impact and ensures that our efforts contribute to positive change beyond our workplace.

## Gender equality and inclusion

### What about men?

Our initiative focuses on preventing sexual harassment in a way that supports everyone in our workplace. While people of all genders can experience or be affected by sexual harassment, decades of Australian evidence show that gender does play a significant role. Women are more likely to experience sexual harassment, and most perpetrators in reported cases are male. This pattern reflects the wider social and cultural norms that shape behaviour, not something inherent about men as individuals. The issue is the harmful attitudes, behaviours, and expectations tied to certain forms of masculinity, not men themselves.

The Australian Human Rights Commission recognises sexual harassment as a form of gendered violence. Gendered violence is driven by factors such as unequal power dynamics, rigid gender stereotypes, and harmful norms about how men 'should' behave. These norms can negatively affect everyone—women, men, and people of all genders.

Our focus on gender equality aims to address these underlying drivers by:

- challenging harmful stereotypes, such as expectations that men should be dominant, dismissive of emotion, or entitled to power
- supporting healthy, respectful expressions of masculinity, where men can be allies, leaders, and active contributors to safer workplaces
- making the workplace safer for men too, as men also experience sexual harassment and can be harmed by pressures to 'stay silent' or 'tough it out'
- creating a culture where all employees, including men, benefit from respect, safety, and equal opportunity.

This work is not about blaming or targeting men. In fact, men play a crucial role in prevention. When men model respectful behaviour, challenge inappropriate actions, and support gender equality, workplace cultures shift for the better.

By promoting gender equality and addressing harmful norms, we create a workplace where everyone can thrive and where men are seen as essential partners in positive change.

### Why talk about gender equality alongside preventing sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment and other unwanted behaviours don't occur randomly, they follow clear patterns. In Australia, research consistently shows that sexual harassment is a form of gendered violence, meaning it is shaped by gender inequality, power imbalances, and harmful stereotypes about gender. These underlying drivers influence who is most likely to experience harassment, who is most likely to perpetrate it, and why certain behaviours are normalised or dismissed.

Because sexual harassment is rooted in gender inequality, preventing it requires more than just responding to incidents. It requires creating a workplace culture where disrespect, sexism, and gender stereotypes are *not allowed to take hold in the first place*.

Promoting gender equality helps prevent sexual harassment by:

1. **Challenging harmful norms and stereotypes:** Sexual harassment is more common in environments where rigid or unequal expectations about men and women go unchallenged. When workplaces actively promote equality, they interrupt those harmful norms.
2. **Addressing power imbalances:** Gender inequality often shapes who has power, whose voices are valued, and whose behaviour is excused. Strengthening equality reduces the conditions where harassment can flourish.



3. **Supporting respectful, healthy expressions of masculinity and workplace behaviour:** This work is not about blaming men, it is about addressing the harmful attitudes and pressures that influence behaviour. Promoting gender equality allows everyone, including men, to engage in respectful and equitable ways.
4. **Creating cultures where disrespect is not tolerated:** Workplaces that model equality are more likely to have cultures where inappropriate behaviour is recognised early, called out, and prevented. Staff are also empowered to know how to respond and support others when they see these behaviours happening.
5. **Improving safety and wellbeing for everyone:** While women are more likely to experience sexual harassment, people of all genders benefit when workplaces are

respectful, safe, and equitable. 'A rising tide lifts all ships.' Better conditions and safer environments support everyone to thrive.

6. **Aligning with national best-practice frameworks:** The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report clearly state that preventing sexual harassment requires addressing gender inequality as a key driver. This is now considered essential best practice.

In short, we talk about gender equality because it is the evidence-based pathway to preventing sexual harassment. By promoting equality, respect, and healthy workplace cultures, we reduce the conditions that allow harassment to occur, creating a safer, more inclusive environment for everyone.

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## The drivers of violence against women (including sexual harassment)

### **Driver 1**

In workplaces, excusing or minimising violence against women and sexual harassment (e.g. dismissing women's experiences of sexual harassment, or sexually suggestive comments; or jokes that intimidate or offend), or trying to justify why the violence occurred.

### **Driver 2**

Gender inequality in workplaces resulting in men dominating decision-making (e.g. gender pay gaps; lack of women in leadership; lack of respect for women, including women from marginalised groups).

### **Driver 3**

Rigid gender stereotyping which limits the ways people can express themselves (e.g. making assumptions that certain types of work are better suited for women or men).

### **Driver 4**

Male peer relations at work that disrespect women and each other (e.g. 'locker-room talk'; unwanted touching, or sexual gestures; readily excusing a peer's disrespectful behaviour; being discouraged from taking a stand because they fear rejection by their peers).

## How are you ensuring diverse needs are addressed?

We recognise that people experience the workplace differently based on their gender, culture, age, disability, sexuality, role, background, and many other aspects of identity. Because of this, a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective. Our work is guided by an intersectional approach, which means we consider the overlapping and varied experiences that shape how individuals may encounter or be impacted by sexual harassment, discrimination, or inequality.

To ensure our initiatives meet the diverse needs of everyone in our workplace, we are:

### 1. **Listening to a wide range of voices:**

We actively seek input from staff across different roles, identities, and experiences. Understanding these perspectives helps us design strategies that reflect the realities of our whole workforce.

### 2. **Considering how different forms of inequality intersect:**

People may experience disadvantage in more than one way—for example, based on gender, cultural background, disability, or sexual orientation, and the cumulative effect of these. Our work acknowledges how these factors can compound risk or limit access to support.

### 3. **Ensuring accessibility and cultural safety:**

We review our policies, training, and communication tools to ensure they are accessible, culturally sensitive, and inclusive. This includes offering support options that respect diverse communication needs and cultural contexts.

### 4. **Creating multiple pathways for support and reporting:**

We know people feel safe in different ways. That's why we offer varied and confidential ways to seek support or raise concerns, ensuring everyone has an avenue they feel comfortable using.

### 5. **Using evidence-based frameworks:**

We draw on national guidance, including best-practice resources from Our Watch, to ensure our approach reflects what works for diverse communities and workplace settings.

### 6. **Continuously reviewing and adapting:**

We assess the impact of our initiatives through feedback, data, and dialogue with employees to ensure we are responding to emerging needs and improving over time.

In short, by taking an intersectional, inclusive, and evidence-informed approach, we aim to ensure our initiatives are relevant, accessible, and effective for everyone in our workplace, not just some.

## Getting involved

### How can I get involved?

We encourage every employee to participate in **[insert activities here]** and discussions. Your feedback and active engagement are crucial for the success of this initiative. All employees should role model respectful attitudes and behaviours. You can also ensure you are an active bystander, calling out inappropriate behaviour when you see it. Please keep an eye on internal communications for upcoming events and how you can contribute.

### What does the initiative involve?

Our commitment includes **[insert activities here]**, requiring active participation from all staff and ongoing evaluation to ensure effectiveness. We also incorporate ongoing assessment to ensure the effectiveness of our strategies.

## **Support and reporting**

### **What measures protect those who report harassment?**

We ensure confidentiality and protection against retaliation for anyone who reports sexual harassment, whether it happens to you, or you witness it. Our policies are designed to provide a safe mechanism for reporting and addressing complaints effectively and sensitively. **[insert further information relating to your policies]**.

### **Are there resources if I need help or want to learn more?**

Yes. Our Watch resources can be found at [ourwatch.org.au/workplace](https://ourwatch.org.au/workplace). Additional materials are available on our intranet **[insert link]** and through our human resources/people and culture/diversity, equity and inclusion/ other team.

## **Impact and measurement**

### **How will this initiative impact daily work?**

While the initiative may introduce new practices and training sessions, it is designed to integrate seamlessly into our daily operations, build on processes and work that we already do, and improve our work environment without disrupting productivity. The goal is to enhance workplace interactions and ensure everyone feels respected and valued.

## **What are the expected outcomes?**

We aim to reduce incidents of sexual harassment, enhance awareness and understanding of respectful behaviours, and foster a culture where everyone feels safe and supported. Long-term, we expect to see improved employee satisfaction and retention.

### **How will success be measured?**

Success will be measured through regular feedback, surveys, and monitoring of workplace incidents. Additionally, employee engagement levels and feedback during review sessions will help us assess and refine our strategies.

# **Part 5:**

## **Tools and further resources**

**These additional tools and resources can help guide you in your activities to prevent sexual harassment in your workplace.**

They can also build employees' awareness about the issue of workplace sexual harassment and how to prevent it. These tools should be provided alongside your communications and activities.

### **Our Watch**

[Workplace Equality and Respect resources](#)

### **Harvard University**

[We for She: Mobilising men and women to act in solidarity for gender equality](#)

### **Diversity Council of Australia**

[Engaging men on gender equality](#)

### **UN Women**

[He for She Barbershop Toolkit](#)

### **Common Cause Framing and Messaging resources**

[Values based messaging](#)

[Framing gender equality](#)

[Framing masculinity](#)

### **Rainbow Health**

[Pride in Prevention Messaging Guide](#)

## Endnotes

- 1 United Nations. (1993). *Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women*. Proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 48/104 of 20 December 1993.
- 2 Common Cause. (n.d). *Values based messaging*. <https://www.commoncause.com.au/values-based-messaging>

**[ourwatch.org.au](https://ourwatch.org.au)**

**Our  
Watch**  
  
Preventing violence  
against women