

# Internal Communications Toolkit

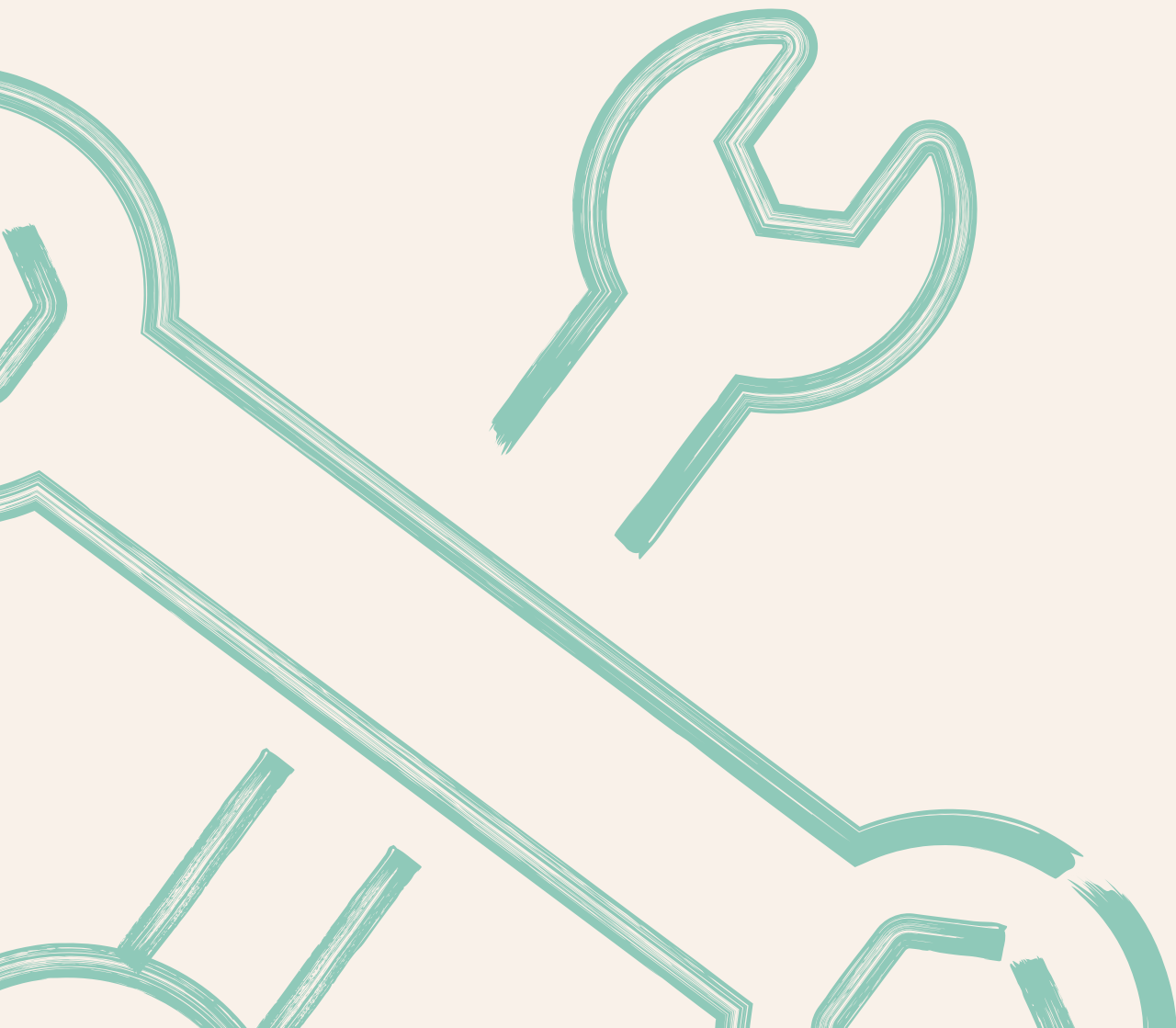


**Lead the  
change.** →  
End workplace  
sexual harassment.

**Our  
Watch**  
Preventing violence  
against women

**This toolkit empowers leadership, HR, and People and Culture Managers to effectively communicate to all staff, clients, and stakeholders about preventing workplace sexual harassment, to get whole of workplace engagement.**

The provided messages and techniques are generic and should be tailored to your workplace as you gain familiarity. These communications are provided to go alongside activities that will actively change workplaces and ensure they are free from sexual harassment.



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# Introduction

Preventing violence against women in workplaces centres on successful communication. The issues are complex, and can evoke discomfort or uncertainty, but it doesn't need to be this way.

Using multi-channel communication strategies, you can empower everyone, from staff managers to clients and stakeholders, to understand the issues and contribute to a workplace where everyone feels safe and respected.

It starts with leadership setting clear expectations for acceptable behaviour, and reinforcing communication to help employees understand and address issues. By doing this, you're creating a more informed workforce and fostering a culture of respect and understanding.

## Do

- **Safety and wellbeing are paramount** - Ensure your information does not risk harm, offense, or distress by omitting specific incident details.
- **Always include support options** - When discussing violence, disclosures are common. Ensure employees know where to find support. Provide details of accessible services for all, including women with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ community members, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Include local and institutional resources, such as government or community violence support services.
- **Prepare for backlash or resistance** - Public discussions on violence against women may provoke backlash. Before making statements, set up processes to manage negative reactions, including monitoring social media and promoting self-care among colleagues. For more guidance, refer to Our Watch's practice on managing backlash.
- **Use appropriate imagery** - Ensure images do not disempower victims/survivors or reinforce stereotypes about gender, race, disability, sexuality, and age. Avoid depicting victims as helpless or only affected by physical violence.
- **Onboarding** - Use these communications and resources as part of your employee onboarding process to show your commitment and values as a workplace.
- **Intranet access** - Ensure employees have access to resources via your intranet and this location is easily accessible for all.
- **Be intersectional** - Some groups of people experience workplace sexual harassment more frequently and more severely than others due to additional forms of discrimination. Ensure your communications and activities take an intersectional approach to eliminate sexual harassment against all people.

## Don't

- **Use jargon** - where possible, it is more effective to focus on examples rather than definitions.
- **Expect perfection** - everyone should have the right to be inarticulate when discussing new and difficult subjects.

Toolkit:

# Internal emails or main communications channel.



These **3 email templates** can be used for clear and effective communications to all staff, introducing:

## **Email 1**

What you are doing and your commitment.

## **Email 2**

Why you are doing this work.

## **Email 3**

Positive Duty.

## **Email 1**

### **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**

We are proud to announce the launch of our initiative focused on preventing workplace sexual harassment. 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.

In Australia, one in four women and one in six men have experienced sexual harassment at work in the past year. This is not just a statistic; it's a reality that many face daily. But sexual harassment is preventable.

Over the coming weeks we will be [insert activities here]. 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].

Together, we can lead the change in our industry by setting the new standard for gender equality.

## Email 2

### Why we are taking action.

#### Subject: Our path to a safer workplace

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 recognizing 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.

## Email 3

### Beyond Legal Obligations - Our Positive Duty

#### Subject: Understanding Positive Duty - more than just legal compliance

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.

# FAQs

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

## Why are you undertaking this work?

Currently in Australia, 1 in 3 people have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the last five years - 41% of women and 26% of men. This is unacceptable, but 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.

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

While we strive to maintain a respectful work environment, national statistics indicate that 1 in 3 people have experience 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.

## What about men?

Our initiative focusses on preventing sexual harassment against everyone, regardless of gender. However, evidence states that women are more likely (41%) to experience sexual harassment compared to men (26%) and in 77% of reported workplace sexual harassment cases, one or more of the perpetrators was male. Sexual harassment is also recognised as a form of gendered violence by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Gendered violence is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful attitudes, and is overwhelmingly perpetrated by men against women. Therefore, our initiatives will focus on promoting gender equality in the workplace to prevent sexual harassment for everyone.

## What does the initiative involve?

Our commitment to preventing sexual harassment in our workplace and community includes [insert activities here]. We require active participation from all staff to foster a respectful workplace. We also incorporate ongoing assessment to ensure the effectiveness of our strategies.

## Why are you talking about gender equality alongside preventing sexual harassment?

Sexual harassment is recognised as a form of gendered violence by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Gendered violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, abuse of power and harmful attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, to prevent sexual harassment we must promote gender equality.

### **How can I get involved in this initiative?**

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.

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

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

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

We are using the tools and resources provided by Our Watch, a national leader in the primary prevention of violence against women. They drive social change to prevent violence against women and support workplaces to end sexual harassment.

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

Yes. Our Watch have provided various resources, including educational materials, contact information for support services, and access to external help if needed. These are available on our intranet and through HR.

### **What measures are in place to protect those who report sexual harassment?**

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

### **How are you ensuring that the initiative addresses diverse needs and inclusivity?**

Our approach is intersectional, meaning we are considering all perspectives and experiences to ensure our initiatives are effective for all staff.

### **What are the expected outcomes of this initiative?**

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 you measure the success of this initiative?**

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.



# Communications to stakeholders and clients

This email template can be used for clear and effective communications to your stakeholders and clients regarding the work you are doing to prevent sexual harassment.

**Subject: Commitment to Workplace Excellence: Proactive Sexual Harassment Prevention Initiatives at [insert company name]**

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 the new [Respect@Work](#) legislation, we have embraced the new Positive Duty requirements, which require workplaces to take all reasonable steps to ensure a workplace, including its culture, mitigates the risk of sexual harassment occurring.

This legal framework reinforces our initiative, highlighting our commitment not only to meet but exceed these standards, ensuring we are leaders in our industry by setting the new standard for gender equality.

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].

## External email or main communications channel

These communications can be used in an external email newsletter or main communications channel to concisely highlight the work you are doing to prevent workplace sexual harassment.

We're excited to announce a new sexual harassment prevention program at [insert company name], reflecting our commitment to fostering a safe and respectful workplace. Aligned with the new [Respect@Work](#) legislation, this initiative will help set the new standards for gender equality in our industry, as well as help build a safer community beyond our organisation's doors. Thank you for your continued support in helping us lead this change.

# Other key messages

These additional key messages can be used to support your communications about the work you are doing to prevent workplace sexual harassment, including specific messages to engage men.

- Lead the change in your industry by setting the new standard for gender equality.
- Businesses have a responsibility to ensure their workplaces are free from sexual harassment.
- Every conversation, policy and action can influence your workplace culture and address the gender inequalities and power imbalances that lead to sexual harassment.
- Creating a world where everyone is equal is the fair and right thing to do.
- Workplaces significantly influence our professional and personal lives, shaping attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. When these attitudes relate to gender equality and preventing sexual harassment, workplaces can either reinforce its importance or challenge it.
- Organisations can use their influence to challenge stereotypes and speak out against sexual harassment and violence.
- Workplace attitudes and behaviours don't remain confined to the office, and often extend into employees' personal lives and communities.
- Leading the change to prevent sexual harassment fosters innovation, growth, and a positive workplace culture.
- When we make our workplaces safer and more respectful, we're also having an impact on the wider community.

## Key messages when engaging men:

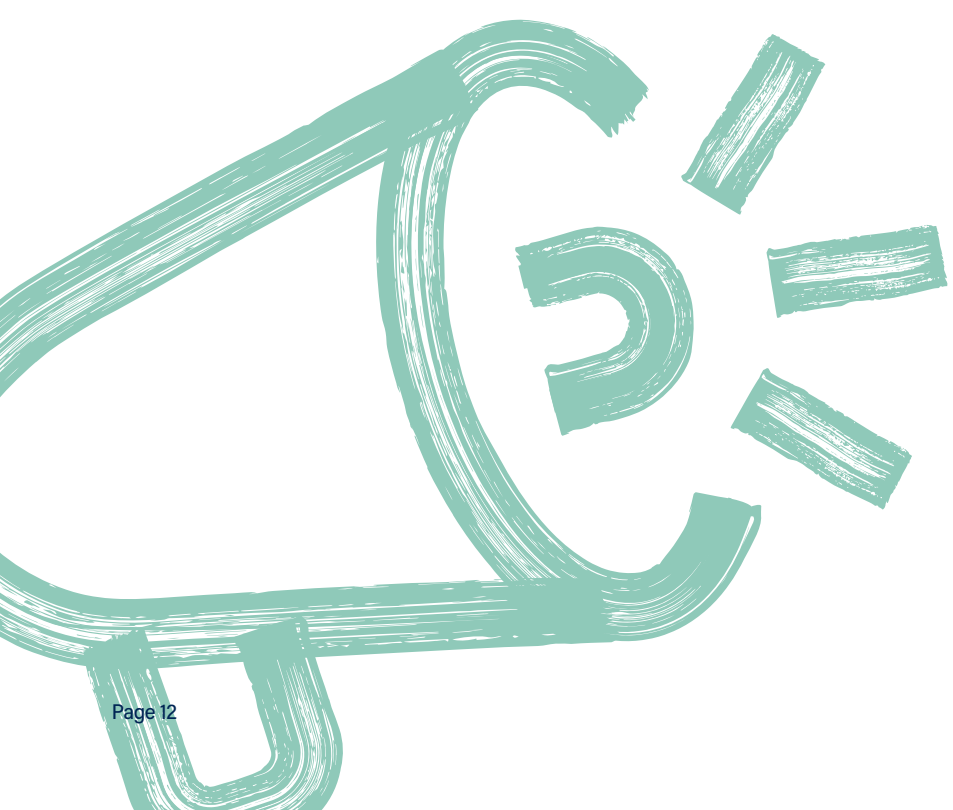
- Gender equality benefits everyone.
- All harassment and violence are unacceptable.
- Data shows clearly that men and women experience violence very differently, in both severity and impact.
- While there are many ways of being a man, rigid gender expectations in the workplace can increase the likelihood of sexual harassment.
- Negative mental health outcomes in men can also be caused by rigid gender roles. Challenging gender inequality and gender stereotypes is directly linked to improving men's mental health.
- Challenging gender stereotypes is not about blaming men. Promoting gender equality includes acknowledging that many men feel pressured to fit 'masculine' stereotypes, resulting in negative impacts on their health and wellbeing.
- There are things that every man can do to prevent sexual harassment – that can include championing workplace policies, having conversations with co-workers, and modelling respect.

# Days of acknowledgement

These national and international days are widely acknowledged to support gender equality and the prevention of violence against women and sexual harassment and can be celebrated and acknowledged as part of your activities.

- **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.
- **International Women's Day (8 March)**  
Global holiday celebrated annually on March 8 as a focal point in the women's rights movement, bringing attention to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.
- **Transgender Day of Visibility (31 March)**  
Annual celebration of trans pride and awareness, recognising trans and gender diverse experiences and achievements.
- **Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)**  
Aims to raise public awareness about sexual violence and educate communities on how to prevent it.
- **Domestic Violence Remembrance Day (3 May)**  
Remembers those who have been lost in the previous 12 months to domestic and family violence.
- **International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia (IDAHOBIT) (17 May)**  
International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination, celebrates achievements and raises awareness of ongoing inequality.
- **National Sorry Day (26 May)**  
Acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, which we now know as 'The Stolen Generations'.
- **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.
- **LGBTQ Domestic Violence Awareness Day (28 May)**  
Increasing visibility and understanding and giving hope and courage to victims and survivors.
- **Reconciliation Day (29 May)**  
Increasing visibility and understanding and giving hope and courage to victims and survivors.
- **Pride Month (June)**  
Celebrates the diversity of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex community and protests ongoing discrimination.
- **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.

- **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.
- **World Mental Health Day (10 October)**  
Raises awareness of mental health issues around the world and to mobilize efforts in support of mental health.
- **Transgender Awareness Week (13-20 November)**  
Raises the visibility of transgender people and address issues members of the community face.
- **Transgender Day of Remembrance (20 November)**  
Honours the memory of the trans lives lost to acts of transphobia and discrimination.
- **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
- **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 organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls.
- **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 original, property, birth, or other status.



# Tools and resources

These additional tools and resources can help guide you in your activities to prevent sexual harassment in your workplace, as well as build employees' awareness about the issue of and how to prevent workplace sexual harassment. These tools should be provided alongside your communications and activities.

- **Workplace Equality and Respect webpages** - These webpages are for people doing violence prevention work in their workplace. It includes information to help you assess and identify key actions to ensure that gender equality and respect are at the centre of your business or organisation. These are also tools and resources to support you along the way. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/>
- **Readiness Assessment Tool** - This tool has five questions to help you determine if you meet the minimum requirements to continue understanding a corporate culture change program to promote gender equality and prevent sexual harassment and gender-based violence. This tool can be used by the senior executives and/or HR and Diversity and Inclusion teams. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-readiness-assessment-tool/>
- **How to guide** - This guides you through the key steps to secure commitment and consult effectively, identify needs and priority areas, and prepare an action plan to create a gender-equitable and inclusive workplace for people of all genders. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-a-how-to-guide/>
- **Workplace Equality and Respect Standards** - The five Workplace Equality and Respect standards are a set of goals that you and your workplace can work towards to address gender inequality and prevent sexual harassment and violence against women. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-standards/>
- **Positive Duty Standards** - This guide will help you understand how the Workplace Equality and Respect Standards align with the AHRC Positive Duty Standards and how they can be mapped together. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/wer-positive-duty-standards/>
- **Factsheets** - A series of factsheets provided an overview of topics related to build awareness about preventing sexual harassment including:
  - What is Positive Duty?
  - Taking an intersectional approach to prevention
  - How common is workplace sexual harassment?
  - The link between sexual harassment and gender inequality
  - What is sexual harassment?
  - Prevent workplace sexual harassment.
- **Action Plan template** - This tool helps to prioritise and plan for change by developing a strategy or action plan based on the needs and circumstances of your workplace. This tool also assists to build annual reviews and reflections. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-action-plan-template/>
- **Leadership commitment checklist** - This checklist ensures commitment is secured from board members/senior executives. This may include training to ensure they understand violence against women and the role of the workplace in prevention, discussing the business case for workplace gender equality, and connecting gender equality to the vision and goals of the organisation. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-leadership-commitment-checklist/>
- **People survey tool** - This survey explores your opinions and perceptions on your workplace experiences and how gender influences and shapes employees' working lives. De-identified survey responses will be used to guide you in identifying the most critical areas of focus and will inform the development of strategies and activities to promote gender equality in your workplace. <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-people-survey-tool/>

# Video resources

These video resources can further support your communications.

- **Workplace Equality and Respect** - A 2 minute video that outlines the powerful role workplaces can play in preventing violence against women: <https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/resource/workplace-equality-and-respect-video/>
- **The importance of men in prevention** - A video outlining the importance of including men in preventing workplace sexual harassment.
- **What is sexual harassment?** A 1 min video outlining what sexual harassment is. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqXz-F\\_WlnQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dqXz-F_WlnQ)
- **Preventing workplace sexual harassment** - a 1-minute video outlining the importance of preventing sexual harassment. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7KiVSFhvUg>
- **What is Positive Duty?** - A 45 second video outlining Positive Duty. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ9Q\\_8liDpII](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ9Q_8liDpII)

# Infographics

These infographics distil key statistics on workplace sexual harassment in Australia into an easily digestible format, helping to raise awareness about the issue among employees.

- **Infographic 1** - Workplace sexual harassment in Australia.
- **Infographic 2** - Workplace sexual harassment in Retail Trade.
- **Infographic 3** - Workplace sexual harassment in Construction.
- **Infographic 4** - Workplace sexual harassment in Telecommunications.



**Get started with Our Watch Workplace  
Equality and Respect tools & resources.  
Visit: [www.ourwatch.org.au/workplace](http://www.ourwatch.org.au/workplace)**

