

Talking to leaders about preventing sexual harassment at work

This is a resource for HR professionals to share and provide guidance to your leadership team.

Leadership teams set the tone for workplace culture. That's why leadership's commitment to preventing sexual harassment is crucial, as their actions shape policies and influence workplace behaviours.

Lead the change.
End sexual harassment in your workplace.

Here are some key messages you can use to encourage your leadership team to take action:

In the last five years:



Further industry specific statistics can be found in the latest **Time for Respect survey**

Sexual harassment is prevalent in Australian workplaces

These statistics show that sexual harassment is happening in most workplaces. Low volumes of reporting do not mean sexual harassment is not happening in your workplace.

Common barriers to reporting include

- **an unsafe or unequal** workplace culture resulting in fear of reporting
- **ineffective** support and reporting frameworks.

You can also share findings from your staff surveys with leadership to help them understand the scope of the issue.

* Source: Time for Respect, Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022

Get started with Our Watch Workplace Equality and Respect tools & resources. Visit: www.ourwatch.org.au/workplace

Workplaces have a legal responsibility to prevent sexual harassment

- **Respect@Work Amendments** mean employers are now responsible for taking active measures to focus on the prevention of sexual harassment and violence. This is called Positive Duty.
- **Positive Duty** means that workplaces can no longer only respond to sexual harassment after it occurs.
- Positive Duty **will look different** for every workplace, so it is important to allocate time and resources to ensure we fulfil our obligations.
- These Positive Duty requirements **present an opportunity** for organisations to prioritise safe and respectful workplace culture.

Preventing sexual harassment benefits workplaces

Doing this work is not only a legal obligation; it also has tangible benefits for your business.

- **Improved employee satisfaction and engagement** - Taking action against sexual harassment creates a positive work environment where all employees feel valued and respected, leading to higher morale, increased engagement, and improved productivity.
- **Expanded talent pool** - Safer workplaces attract a diverse range of talent, allowing businesses to access a broader pool of skills and expertise.
- **Enhanced innovation and creativity** - When employees feel safe at work, it cultivates innovation and creative problem-solving.
- **Enhanced reputation and brand image** - Proactively preventing sexual harassment meets the growing expectations from customers, clients, talent, and investors.
- **Increase in financial performance** - Workplaces with diverse leadership teams and inclusive cultures outperform their competitors, as they are better equipped to adapt to changing market dynamics and customer needs [McKinsey & Company, 2018].



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End workplace sexual harassment.

Our Watch
Preventing violence against women