

## Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2024

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<b>Submitted by:</b>	Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety
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# ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

## Committee Secretary

Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee  
Parliament House  
George Street, Brisbane Qld 4001  
By email: [cslac@parliament.qld.gov.au](mailto:cslac@parliament.qld.gov.au)

## Re: Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2024

Dear Committee Secretary

ANROWS thanks the Queensland Community Safety and Legal Affairs Committee for the opportunity to respond to the Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill 2024. ANROWS supports the intent of the Bill to implement key reforms from the *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces* report (“Respect@Work report”; Australian Human Rights Commission, 2020) and to introduce a positive duty to eliminate sexual harassment. ANROWS encourages the Committee to ensure that people with lived experience of workplace sexual harassment are appropriately consulted as part of the development and implementation of this Bill.

ANROWS wishes to advise the Committee of our [2021–2024 ANROWS Sexual Harassment Research Program](#) and accompanying resources. ANROWS established this research program in response to Recommendation 4 of the Respect@Work report to contribute to a national evidence base on sexual harassment to guide policy and practice.

To date, ANROWS has published research from this program on the sexual harassment of migrant and refugee women in the workplace, workplace technology-facilitated sexual harassment, workplace sexual harassment in the retail industry, and key findings from an evaluation of the Respect@Work Council. Forthcoming reports include research on the sexual harassment of LGBTQ young people in the workplace and workplace training, as well as further findings on the sexual harassment of migrant and refugee women in the workplace.

In lieu of a formal submission to this inquiry, ANROWS would like to direct the Committee’s attention to the *In Brief* reports and fact sheets that are published alongside these research reports. These resources provide a concise overall summary of the research reports. In particular, they will be useful for the Committee in considering the key findings and policy recommendations from this research.

This body of research indicates that sexual harassment in the workplace is common. It has significant negative impacts on those who experience it, which include, for example, facing distress and anxiety, or consequences for career choice or progression. The research unanimously confirms that workplace sexual harassment is gendered, with women more likely to be victims and survivors while men are more likely to be perpetrators. Certain groups were found to be at higher risk, such as migrant and refugee women and young women. Perpetrators are rarely held to account, with insufficient policies and reporting processes in place and low rates of formal reporting.

Recommendations for policy and practice are broadly consistent across this research. There is a need for improved workplace policies, training, reporting mechanisms and data collection. Clear and actionable recommendations for workplaces include the need to:

- embed clear working definitions of workplace sexual harassment, including workplace technology-facilitated sexual harassment, in workplace policies, along with guidelines for prevention and response
- improve sexual harassment training with customised courses for workers and managers, specific case studies and bystander scenarios
- improve reporting mechanisms by increasing transparency around the process, including outcomes, and by creating opportunities for anonymous reporting
- harmonise data collection and increase industry-wide data sharing.

Workplaces can proactively engage in safety by design in both online and offline contexts, for example, through safe staffing practices at closing times and embedding safety-by-design principles into workplace technologies. These changes must be supported by industry-wide strategic responses and cultural change within workplaces.

We hope these resources are informative and useful to the Committee. We would be very pleased to assist the Committee further, as required.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Tessa Boyd-Caine**  
Chief Executive Officer

2 July 2024

## References and relevant resources

Australian Human Rights Commission [AHRC]. (2020). *Respect@Work: National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces*. AHRC. <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/sex-discrimination/publications/respectwork-sexual-harassment-national-inquiry-report-2020>

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2023). *Migrant and refugee women in Australia: A study of sexual harassment in the workplace* [Fact sheet]. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/resources/key-findings-migrant-and-refugee-women-in-australia-a-study-of-sexual-harassment-in-the-workplace/>

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2024). *Evaluation of the Respect@Work Council: Key findings* [Fact sheet]. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/resources/evaluation-of-the-respectwork-council-key-findings/>

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2024). *"Just another day in retail": Understanding and addressing workplace sexual harassment in the Australian retail industry* [In brief]. ANROWS. <https://www.anrows.org.au/publication/just-another-day-in-retail-understanding-and-addressing-workplace-sexual-harassment-in-the-australian-retail-industry/in-brief-read/>

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety. (2024). *Workplace technology-facilitated sexual harassment: Perpetration, responses and prevention* [In brief]. ANROWS. <https://anrowsdev.wpenginepowered.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/SH22.03-FLYNN-INBRIEF-Workplace-technology-facilitated-sexual-harassment-Perpetration-responses-and-preventionFINAL.pdf>

## About ANROWS

ANROWS is an independent, not-for-profit company established as an initiative under Australia's *National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010–2022* (the National Plan). Our primary function is to build the evidence base that supports ending violence against women and children in Australia. ANROWS is embedded in the National Plan architecture and will continue to deliver and develop this function across the next decade under the *National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022–2032*. Every aspect of our work is motivated by the right of women and children to live free from violence and in safe communities. We recognise, respect and respond to diversity among women and children, and we are committed to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

Primary (core) funding for ANROWS is jointly provided by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia. ANROWS is also, from time to time, directly commissioned to undertake work for an individual jurisdiction, and successfully tenders for research and evaluation work. ANROWS is registered as a harm prevention charity and deductible gift recipient, governed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).