

Media Statement



Wednesday, 12 May 2021

Federal Budget 2021 – Investment in tackling sexual harassment

The following statement can be attributed to the President of the Law Council, Dr Jacoba Brasch QC.

“The Law Council of Australia is pleased that the Federal Government has made an investment in tackling sexual harassment in the workplace.

Eliminating sexual harassment in the legal profession has been part of a long-running commitment from the Law Council and recent events have emphasised that fresh and comprehensive responses are required to drive the necessary, and overdue, cultural change.

This includes a commitment of \$9.3 million over four years to support the Respect@Work Secretariat and implement a number of recommendations made in the Report.

The Law Council is also encouraged by the increase of funding to provide legal assistance to workers who experience, or are at risk of, sexual harassment, allowing for specialist lawyers with workplace and discrimination law expertise to deliver these services to help vulnerable workers to address their legal issues and empower them to take action if required.

However, the Law Council is mindful that commitment is also needed by the states and territories, with responses to the Report due by the end of this year.

While we wait to see the detail, a further \$5.3 million over three years has been pledged to build evidence and further develop primary prevention initiatives as recommended in the Respect@Work Report, with funding being directed to Australia’s National Research Organisation for Women’s Safety (ANROWS) to deliver research projects into sexual harassment.

The Law Council firmly believes that research is an imperative to inform future programs that are fit for purpose, in addressing sexual harassment.”

ENDS

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