



Parliament of Australia

Statement of Acknowledgement
8 February 2022

In the final sitting week of 2021 the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces was published by the Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins.

Today, on the first sitting day of 2022, we deliver this Statement on behalf of the Parliamentary Cross-Party Leadership Taskforce recommended by Commissioner Jenkins and as a reflection of the Parliament. We acknowledge the unacceptable history of workplace bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces.

This issue is of the greatest importance and the responsibility of all people who work in this place. Any bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault is unacceptable and wrong. We say sorry.

Every workplace should be safe and respectful. This place and its members are committed to bringing about lasting and meaningful change to both culture and practice within our workplaces. We have failed to provide this in the past. We today declare our personal and collective commitment to make the changes required. We will aspire, as we should, to set the standard for the nation.

We thank all of those who participated in the Jenkins Review, acknowledging everyone who came forward to tell us of their experiences. We also acknowledge the many others who could not or did not participate but who may have experienced misconduct. We know that your experiences have had profound and far-reaching impacts on your lives. We have listened and heard you, and we accept your calls for change.

This Parliament should serve as a model workplace for our nation. Only by creating the best workplace will this Parliament attract the best people our country has to offer. And only by attracting the best our country has to offer, and listening to the communities we represent, will we deliver the high standards that our country deserves.

Parliamentary workers feel pride in working for their country, and the privilege and honour of making a difference for the Australian people. However, for far too many, it has not been safe or respectful. The Jenkins Review proposes an ambitious program of reform to ensure Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces meet the highest standards. We are fully committed to working across the Parliament to implement all of these recommendations within the timeframes proposed by Commissioner Jenkins.

We have started to act. Last year, we established a new independent complaints process and began providing trauma-informed support for people who have experienced serious incidents working in the Parliament. Members, Senators and staff have undertaken professional workplace training.

Parliamentarians must uphold the highest standards and be accountable for delivering required actions. We know that cultural change has to come from the top – it has to be role modelled and championed by all of us.

While we know we cannot undo the harm that has already been done, we are committed to acknowledging the mistakes of the past and continuing to build safe and respectful workplaces.