

# Great businesses are safe businesses

**As a boss, it's your job to take steps to make sure your workers are safe at work.**

If you own a business, you must take steps to keep your workers safe from sexual harassment. It's the law.

We asked over 300 workers what helps to make workplaces safer. They told us that workplaces can take simple steps to stop sexual harassment from happening. **These case studies show some of what they told us.**



## Case Study 1 - Construction

*First Nations young  
worker, Darwin*



### Meet Jade.

Jade is 21 and works in the construction industry. She is the only woman in her workplace and has worked in male-dominated trades since high school.

*"I think my first experience of [workplace sexual harassment] was when I was maybe 15 or 16. And then you work up the courage to say something to someone, they're like, 'Oh, well, that's the men!'"*

We heard that health and safety are prioritised in construction. Jade told us that every month the safety officer gives what is known as a 'toolbox talk'.

*"At all the job sites I've been on, they have their toolbox talks. [Sometimes] they do [talks on] men's health... I don't know if it's because there's hardly any girls or whatever, but the whole two years I was working there, they didn't do a talk about sexual harassment."*

Jade believes this simple step could help reduce sexual harassment in her workplace.

*"Even if there isn't a girl there, I think it'd be good to have a talk [about sexual harassment]. Having a speaker come in from an [external] organisation, instead of having just your Safety Manager or Supervisor, because then people [would take it seriously]."*

## Case Study 2 - Customer Service

*Culturally and racially  
marginalised worker,  
regional NSW*



### Meet Selena.

Selena works as a receptionist in an isolated building. She is often alone at the front desk with customers, working early mornings and late nights.

She said it can be intimidating dealing with customers when no one else is around.

Selena told us her boss had completed a risk assessment and decided that some measures were needed to address workplace sexual harassment. She told us that her boss made it clear to workers that they should raise any concerns early on and makes sure all new staff receive training.

*"I work in a [customer service role] and that was the first training course [on workplace sexual harassment] that I received."*

Selena's boss also set up a system to make it easy for staff to make reports.

*"They have a big phone number on the desk that you can call. They say, 'even if you don't think it is [sexual harassment] but you feel uncomfortable, please call this number!'"*

### Case Study 3 - Sport & Recreation

Young worker,  
Melbourne



#### Meet Farah.

Farah is a student and works part-time as a swim instructor.

*"I'm now working in a swimming centre and lifeguards open at 5 am and **we're not allowed to use the car park in front of the centre** because it's meant for patrons and there's a lot of staff at a big aquatic centre... they told us to park in the footy club a block over because they had unrestricted parking."*

Farah said management overheard some workers talking about their safety concerns related to workplace sexual harassment and spoke to their workers to find out more.

*"People expressed that walking there at 4.30 am to start your shift or go home at 8 pm **didn't feel safe.**"*

In response, management made some adjustments to improve staff safety.

*"Now they let you park there if you're at an opening or a closing shift. So, I think **taking that [feedback] on board is really important.**"*

Farah thinks it was helpful that management consulted with staff and responded to their feedback.

*"[It's] subtle things that you might not even think, so like 7 pm doesn't feel that late to be finishing work, but in winter it's dark by then. So, I think **you really have to take into consideration the things that affect safety.** Like what time does it get dark in the different seasons and things like that."*

### Case Study 4 - Hospitality

Hospitality worker,  
Sydney



#### Meet Cam.

Cam is a bartender at a club. He enjoys working in a playful environment, but he said some patrons take their behaviour too far and make him feel uncomfortable at work.

The bar manager noticed the behaviour and created house rules to keep the staff and the patrons safe. There is a big poster up on the wall that everyone can see.

*"They brought in **house rules** in my venue. There's like six rules that are very clear that **that's the standard of behaviour and if you don't meet those standards you are going to be asked to leave.**"*

Cam believes the standards of behaviour help set expectations about what is not acceptable and makes workers feel confident to report workplace sexual harassment.

*"That kind of **helps empower people** to go, actually, no, you can't do that because **that's the standard of behaviour here. The conditions of entry.**"*

The bar manager has made it clear to workers that they do not need to be responsible for telling patrons to leave if they don't feel comfortable doing this.

*"Because some of the staff are really young and **don't necessarily feel comfortable** saying that, so there's an **option for them to go to their manager** who can then enforce that."*

## Case Study 5 - Health Care

Healthcare worker,  
Melbourne



### Meet Gia.

Gia is a healthcare worker in a hospital.

She is committed to the health and safety of her patients but sometimes she feels that her health and safety is neglected.

*"We are kind and caring people, and we go into our roles wanting to look after the people that come in and who need it. Then to be **taken advantage of** – that's a really frustrating thing."*

She told us her workplace has systems in place to protect the physical safety of patients and staff, but not a policy to specifically protect them from workplace sexual harassment.

*"At [the hospital], we have **safety champions**, we have **trauma champions**, we have the **infection champions**. In [my ward] there's a lot of falls, so we've got our **fall safety champion**. There's a **champion for everything**, but [there isn't one for] **sexual safety**."*

Gia recognised the benefits of having safety champions. She spoke to management about introducing a new 'champion' to protect workers from workplace sexual harassment. They refer to this in the hospital as the 'sexual safety champion'.

*"There was a **continuous professional development [CPD]** session that you could elect to do which was an **eight-hour training day**. I think having something like that for **sexual safety** would be a very handy thing so that people could attend, tick off CPD hours, and then **become an advocate**."*

Management listened and took on her suggestion, and they plan to apply it across the hospital.

*"Now I'm the **sexual safety champion**."*

## Case Study 6 - Corporate

Young worker,  
Melbourne



### Meet Sam.

Sam works in a busy office.

Sam said that in the past, he felt that addressing workplace sexual harassment was not always prioritised, but recently things have changed.

*"At my workplace they rolled out [workplace sexual harassment] training after a big incident happened after a Christmas party."*

Management brought in experts to provide a trauma-informed training program on sexual harassment.

*"That is nice that **everyone in the company has to do it**. They have to go to this training and **yes, it does take time, it takes resources**, but at least now it feels that there's a little bit more happening."*

Sam believes these regular trainings are helping to change the culture and create a safe workplace.

*"I think that's really important, something like that, that happens on an **ongoing basis** and is **embedded into the training and induction** of an organisation just so that **everyone, including people that have been there for a while, and new people, are all on the same page**."*

**If you own a business, you must take steps to keep your workers safe from sexual harassment. It's the law.**

**Learn how you can make your workplace safer.**

Scan the code or contact the **Respect@Work Information Service on 1300 656 419** or [respect@humanrights.gov.au](mailto:respect@humanrights.gov.au)

