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PART C: Submission

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Dear Commissioner Jenkins,

Thank you for the opportunity and reading my submission to the Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces.

I was former [REDACTED] for a [REDACTED] MP. I was excited at first to work for the MP and I will not forget my experience in helping many individuals during that time. However, the workplace was becoming toxic, witnessed many of my ex-colleagues were bullied to quit and I had to quit to protect my mental health.

The workplace was a revolving door, more than a dozen staff came and gone during my tenure, most of them were either being pushed away by the MP. It was somehow encouraged by the MP to backstab your work colleagues, social interaction outside working hours were discouraged and staff were often used as 'punching bag' when the MP was having a bad day. I do hope not all MPs and Senators possess the same behaviour. Moral of the office was always tense and low and social cohesion was difficult to develop due to constant turnover of staff.

Once a staff became a target by this MP, the MP then always talked down about particular staff both in the present and absence of a said staff to all other, ignoring the mental health repercussion by the MP's action. In my observation, this was the strategy to make that staff to resign – hence being bullied to quit. It happened many times unfortunately. It was difficult for others to defend your work colleague, because your job security was depending whether you were on MP's side.

In my experience, the current employment system was set up to make MP and Senator becoming a 'God-like'. The [REDACTED] is toothless and has no or little influence in intervening when there was employment dispute between the employees and MP/Senator. Based on my observation, [REDACTED] always sided with the MP when there was dispute.

Perhaps, the Department can play a significant role during the recruitment of staff, ie. Participate in interview process, frequent surveys about staff's health condition and more pro-active action in resolving conflict between staff and their political employer. Additionally, mandatory courses for all politicians to attend leadership and management courses would benefit on this matter.