

SEX DISCRIMINATION & SEXUAL HARASSMENT



SEX DISCRIMINATION IN THE WORKPLACE

All unequal treatment because of gender or circumstances specific to gender, such as pregnancy/potential pregnancy, marital status or family responsibilities, is sex discrimination.

The Australian Human Rights Commission is charged with powers to assist women who have been discriminated against under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). You have grounds to lodge a formal complaint if you believe you have been:

- Unfairly dismissed;
- Denied promotion;
- Afforded poorer conditions of employment;
- Denied equal access to training opportunities;
- Adversely treated because of breastfeeding; or
- Adversely treated or dismissed because of carer's/family responsibilities.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Australian Human Rights Commission has further powers to deal with sexual harassment, which is defined, as "any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour, which makes a person feel offended,

humiliated or intimidated". This can include, but is not exclusive, to:

- Staring or leering;
- Unwanted familiarity, and touching;
- Jokes and comments of a sexual nature;
- Verbal abuse or insults of a sexual nature;
- Inappropriate or sexual questions;
- Displaying digital or hardcopy material of a sexual nature;
- Sexually explicit emails or text messages;
- Inappropriate behaviour via social networking sites;
- Accessing sexually explicit material online;
- Requests for sex or other unwanted advances, or
- Behaviour that may also be an offence under criminal law.

NO EXCUSES

With more women in the traditionally male dominated heavy industries and more men in the traditionally female dominated community sector there is no excuse for business to settle for the status quo. The AWU doesn't believe in a gender-segregated workforce. Men and women should all be able to work side by side and feel accepted, supported and safe.

COURSES OF ACTION

If you feel that you are being sexually harassed or discriminated against in your workplace contact the AWU. Our Organisers and Industrial Officers can support you through any complaints process you engage in.

The Australian Human Rights Commission will take all legitimate formal complaints to conciliation and outcomes can range from written apologies to reinstatement or financial compensation.

Free Call the AWU on 1300 885 653



Need more information on this issue? Call the AWU free on 1300 885 653.