

# Creating a safe and respectful workplace

## Leadership

**We want leaders at all levels to prioritise a safe and respectful culture, set clear expectations and model safe and respectful behaviour**



- Leaders have continued to highlight the importance of a respectful culture and committed to supporting ongoing change in Parliamentary workplaces.
- The Presiding Officers acknowledged the unacceptable history of workplace bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces and outlined their expectations for the Parliament to serve as a model workplace.
- Training is available to support leaders to develop capabilities, including induction programs, safe and respectful workplace training and many more.
- The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce has overseen the implementation of the reforms and published regular updates detailing the changes being made.

## Safety and wellbeing

**People should be physically and psychologically well and feel safe and supported**



- Amendments to the WHS Act now clarify parliamentarians' WHS duties to their staff.
- Work health and safety (WHS) arrangements are being improved with a new framework to help manage shared WHS duties and risks between different parliamentary workplaces.
- Information on medical and pharmaceutical services will be published and enhanced health and wellbeing services will continue to be promoted.
- There are now more flexible parliamentary sitting arrangements for members.
- Alcohol policies for parliamentary service staff and media have been reviewed and aligned to common principles. The PWSS will consult on a baseline alcohol policy for parliamentarians and their staff in early 2024.

## Diversity, equality and inclusion

**We want a diverse and inclusive workplace: everyone should experience respectful behaviour as the baseline standard**



- Political parties have outlined plans for advancing the diversity of parliamentarians and their staff.
- The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) will annually report on the gender and diversity characteristics of parliamentarians and their staff from 2024-25, building on data collection and reporting options already explored.
- Parliamentary departments have undertaken activities to support a diverse and inclusive workforce and working environment, with some publishing additional data about their workforce diversity.
- Accessibility reviews of electorate offices and Commonwealth Parliament Offices have been completed, while a 'dignified access review' of Parliament House is underway.
- Parliamentary committees reviewed how to improve respect in parliamentary proceedings, with the House Procedure Committee making several recommendations for consideration.

**The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce oversees the implementation of recommendations from the *Set the Standard* report. Of the 28 recommendations, 13 have been implemented, 6 partly implemented, and 8 are in progress, with many ongoing (February 2024).**

## Systems to support performance

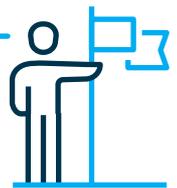
**People should be clear about their roles and responsibilities, and have consistent and standardised systems, processes and advice to support performance**



- The PWSS was established as a statutory body and offers independent and confidential support to everyone in a Commonwealth parliamentary workplace.
- The employment framework for political staff was comprehensively reviewed with arising recommendations being implemented alongside the *Set the Standard* reforms.
- There are now improved protections and processes covering MoP(S) Act employee termination.
- The PWSS will publicly report, annually from 2024-25, on progress in preventing misconduct and other matters relating to the culture of Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.
- Future PWSS initiatives include a professional development strategy and a new PWSS Learning Academy to provide MoP(S) Act employees with a range of formal and informal skills development opportunities.
- The parliamentary departments will continue to review the training provided to support parliamentary service staff.
- An external independent review in 2025 will assess the effectiveness of the *Set the Standard* reforms.

## Standards, reporting and accountability

**We should have clear and consistent standards of behaviour, with processes to ensure it is safe to make a report and that complaints are addressed. We want people to be held to account, including through visible consequences for misconduct**



- The Parliament has endorsed standards of behaviour (overleaf) for Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, pending legislation to establish an independent enforcement body. The Government will soon consult on draft legislation to establish this body.
- Amendments to the Age Discrimination and Disability Discrimination Acts confirm the application of protections to MoP(S) Act employees.
- The PWSS' support services were expanded to all people in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces. The expansion of PWSS' existing review mechanism and provision of protections for MoP(S) staff who disclose wrongdoing are being considered as part of the work to establish the Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission.

# Standards of behaviour for Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces

---

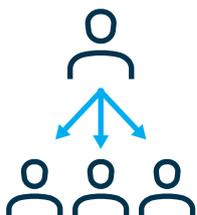
**ENDORSED BY THE PARLIAMENT IN FEBRUARY 2023**



**Act respectfully, professionally  
and with integrity.**



**Encourage and value diverse  
perspectives and recognise the  
importance of a free exchange of ideas.**



**Recognise your power,  
influence and authority and  
do not abuse them.**



**Uphold laws that support safe and  
respectful workplaces, including  
anti-discrimination, employment, work  
health and safety and criminal laws.**



**Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment  
or assault or discrimination in any form,  
including on the grounds of race, age, sex,  
sexuality, gender identity, disability, or religion  
will not be tolerated, condoned or ignored.**