

Brittany Higgins squares up to Morrison government in stark post

Brittany Higgins has squared up to Australia's leaders over "systemic issues" in politics, issuing an uncompromising call for action.

Staff writers and Samantha Maiden

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Brittany Higgins has squared up to the Morrison government in a Twitter post, saying the onus is now on Australia's leaders to end a "culture of silence".

The former Liberal staffer said the Government needed to "show leadership and act" after she spoke with Prime Minister Scott Morrison, Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese and Deputy Labor leader Tanya Plibersek about "about the systemic issues in Parliament House".

Ms Higgins, who was allegedly raped in a minister's office in 2019, thanked the women who had supported her and shared their expertise as she issued a call for action on Twitter on Monday night.

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"For too long the culture of silence has allowed workplace bullying, harassment and other inappropriate conduct to go unchecked," said Ms Higgins, who has become a figurehead in the women's movement since news.com.au first broke the [story of her allegation](#) in February.

"Cultural change is only achieved when we stand up and say 'enough is enough'. The onus is now on the Govt to show leadership and act."

Jessica Rudd, entrepreneur and daughter of former PM Kevin, was among the many Australians who thanked Ms Higgins for her tweet, with many praising her courage.

The 26-year-old finally got the chance to speak to the Prime Minister face-to-face on Friday, saying afterwards that it had been a "difficult" conversation.

The former media adviser told news.com.au that it was an "emotional" moment returning to her old workplace and respectfully asking the Prime Minister to join her in delivering "real change".

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“Obviously it was emotional talking about the failings in the system. I think he witnessed that, which I guess, in that moment, was all he could do,” she told news.com.au.

She said that explaining how isolated she felt at times in the months and years after her alleged rape was the trigger for a brief moment of tears during the marathon meeting that was observed by senior government advisers and a representative from the solicitor-general’s office.

“It was explaining how insular the system is when you’ve gone through a trauma and trying to report it and how vulnerable you are and how few protections you have,” Ms Higgins said.

“Explaining that, as someone who was really at the bottom of the food chain.”

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The meeting went for longer than expected because Ms Higgins and her team of supporters including feminist Wendy McCarthy wanted to push the PM to agree to in-principle support for reforms to ministerial staffing arrangements.

“It became quite tense when it came to actually delivering on anything beyond what has already been announced and the reviews in place,” Ms Higgins said.

“I said I was disappointed. And that’s why the meeting went for an hour and a half.”

Ms Higgins said that the Prime Minister conceded to her that the “system had let her down” but also argued many people had tried to help her in good faith.

“He opened with that. He opened with that concession that the system had let me down. Which was nice,” she said.

“He did seem committed to the reform.

“But it really came back to ‘what are you going to do?’”

Ms Higgins has signed a [six-figure book deal](#) to write her memoir, saying she plans to “shine a light on the culture inside the corridors of power”.