



Set the Standard Implementation Update

December 2022



Update from Kerri Hartland - Chair, Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce

It has been a very productive end to 2022 with the culmination of numerous significant reforms to transform the standards of Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

These key reforms include the release of draft behaviour standards and codes to regulate the conduct of parliamentarians, their staff and all those in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces, the completion of the review of the MoP(S) Act, and a planned expansion of the Parliamentary Workplace Support Service to provide centralised human resources support and advice to Parliamentarians and their staff.

The Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce recently welcomed the Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins, to a meeting of the Taskforce. We reflected on the progress made to implement the Commissioner's recommendations and noted the positive impact already seen across our workplaces.

I also enjoyed recently talking with many of you from across Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces on 25 November and 6 December to discuss the progress of the Set the Standard reforms. These information sessions outlined the Set the Standard reforms, progress made to date and outlined some of the changes to come. A recording can be found on the [PLT website](#) for those who couldn't make it to the sessions. Keep an eye out in the new year for future information sessions and other opportunities to engage, including a new staff consultative forum.

Thank you to those involved in the implementation of these reforms so far and I extend my best wishes to everyone for the upcoming holiday period. I look forward to this important work continuing in 2023.



Set the Standard Implementation Update



Codes of conduct report handed down

The Joint Select Committee on Parliamentary Standards [has released](#) three draft behaviour standards following evidence provided via submissions and public hearings. The codes are designed to bring clear and consistent behaviour standards to everyone in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.

The Committee's report supports the establishment of an Independent Parliamentary Standards Commission (IPSC) as a complaint, investigation, and enforcement mechanism. Government is now considering the design of the new Commission and options for how the behaviour standards and codes should be implemented and enforced.

MOP(S) Act review completed

The [review of the MoP\(S\) Act report](#) was published in October 2022 with 15 recommendations for reform. The review concluded that the framework of the MoP(S) Act required some modernisation to provide greater clarity and transparency. Government agreed in-principle to the recommendations, with the reforms to progress alongside the Set the Standard reforms in consultation with staff.

New role in Parliamentary Workplace Support Service

The *Set the Standard* report recommended centralised human resources support for parliamentarians and their staff. The Parliamentary Workplace Support Service (PWSS) will be re-established as an independent statutory agency, bringing many of its current services into the new structure. Investigation functions will move from the existing PWSS to the new IPSC.

Legislation to establish the PWSS will likely be introduced in early 2023, with services to commence by mid-2023.

Statement by the Presiding Officers

The Presiding Officers [delivered a joint statement](#) on 30 November 2022 to mark one year since the Set the Standard report was tabled. The Presiding Officers recommitted the Parliament to making lasting change and stated that *'we all have an ongoing responsibility to creating a workplace that attracts and supports the best people our country has to offer'*.

Respect@Work developments

Separate but relevant to the Set the Standard reforms, two key recommendations have recently been implemented from the *Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report*.

The Australian Human Rights Commission and the Respect@Work Council recently launched the [Respect@Work website](#) which provides tools, education and resources to better understand and address sexual harassment in the workplace. The Council publishes its progress updates [here](#).

The *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022* requires employers to take proactive measures to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination, including sexual harassment, as far as possible. While there is a 12-month transition period, all workplaces are encouraged to implement change now, so that people may enjoy safer workplaces sooner.

Taskforce Annual Report

Keep an eye out for the first annual report from the Parliamentary Leadership Taskforce in early February 2023. The annual report will outline the progress made in the first 12 months in implementing the recommendations from the Set the Standard report.

Subscribe for updates

You can now sign up for email alerts whenever there are any news updates (including newsletters like this!) published to the PLT website. Click on the [Subscribe](#) button on the right hand side of the [PLT website](#).