



Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham

Minister for Finance
Leader of the Government in the Senate
Senator for South Australia

Key Points

- *The Safe and Respectful Workplaces training program will be rolled-out from 20 September 2021.*

MIN 2021/09

All Senators and Members
All MOP(S) Act employees

SAFE AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES TRAINING PROGRAM

The Government is taking steps to change the way Parliament, and individual parliamentarians and staff, are thinking about, and working to prevent and respond to, issues relating to sexual harassment, sexual assault and workplace bullying.

The Safe and Respectful Workplaces training program will be rolled-out from 20 September 2021. The program has been developed in response to recommendations made by the *Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents* so that parliamentary workplaces are safe, supportive and respectful for all.

The Review recommended making available dedicated face-to-face work health and safety training for all parliamentarians and staff. I and, separately, my office, have recently participated in the pilot of this face-to-face training.

This training will be mandatory for all Coalition Ministers and staff, and the Government will work with other parties and independents to establish a public register of those parliamentarians who complete the training.

The face-to-face training program will support parliamentarians and their staff to understand their rights and responsibilities in the workplace, what constitutes unacceptable behaviour and how to respond to serious incidents when they occur.

Sessions will be delivered by experienced facilitators in one hour face-to-face sessions for parliamentarians and Chiefs of Staff, and two hour face-to-face sessions for groups of MOP(S) Act employees. Sessions include practical scenarios, and provide guidance and supports to improve how serious incidents are prevented and resolutions are managed in the parliamentary workplace.

The training program will be open to all parliamentarians and staff from 20 September 2021:

- Sessions will be available within Electorate Offices, CPOs and Parliament House and will be booked on an individual office basis.
- Where a parliamentarian has multiple electorate offices, training will be provided at the primary office, with opportunities for remote participation.
- A schedule of training sessions based on geographical area together with information on how to book a session will be provided by 13 September 2021. Parliamentarians and offices will be expected to book into training sessions at the times offered in their geographic location wherever possible.
- All parliamentarians and offices will be given the opportunity, and expected, to complete the training before the end of the year, unless there are exceptional circumstances. We are also looking at arrangements to ensure any new starters are provided the opportunity to complete the training.

With changing COVID restrictions across Australia limiting the ability for travel, some sessions may be required to be delivered through a virtual video conferencing platform. These live sessions would be conducted by the same experienced facilitators.

Continued supports available

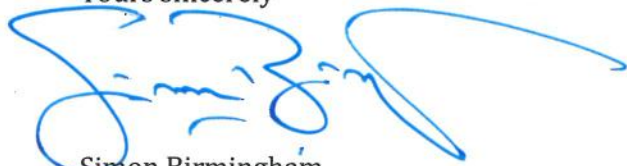
If you or a colleague need support at any time, there are a number of services available to you.

- The [Parliamentary Support Line](#), 1800 APH SPT, provides dedicated 24/7 independent, confidential, anonymous and free counselling and support services for current and former staff, and those who have experienced serious incidents in Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces.
- The [Employee Assistance Program](#) is an independent, professional and confidential counselling service available to assist with work, life and health and wellbeing issues. It is available 24/7 for MOP(S) Act employees and their families and households.
- All MOP(S) Act employees have free access to [NewAccess workplaces](#), a service developed by Beyond Blue. The service provides assistance in dealing with workplace stress and life pressures.

If you have any questions or would like more information on the program, please contact MaPS@finance.gov.au.

The Safe and Respectful Workplaces training program is one aspect of the ongoing effort to ensure Commonwealth parliamentary workplaces are safe and respectful, and that national Parliament reflects and promotes best practice in the prevention and handling of bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault.

Yours sincerely



Simon Birmingham
Minister for Finance
7 September 2021