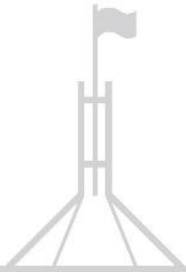




Australian Government



**Work-Related Violence and Aggression
Policy for *Members of Parliament*
(*Staff*) Act 1984 employees**

APRIL 2022

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Department of Finance (Finance) is committed to supporting MOP(S) Act employees in providing them a work environment that is free of work-related violence and aggression.

1.2 Work-related violence is not acceptable and is never to be tolerated.

1.3 This policy provides a framework to support Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees to manage work-related violence and aggression.

1.4 The information in this policy is based on the model Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws. These laws have not been implemented in all jurisdictions, although other Australian WHS laws have similar duties.

1.5 This policy also acts as a guide for Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees to support those individuals who have experienced work-related violence and aggression. It outlines support available within and outside the workplace for individuals, their managers and their colleagues.

If you are in a life threatening situation, contact Emergency Services on 000

If you are feeling unsafe in the workplace contact the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services, HR Advice and Support team on (02) 6215 3333.

2. Principles

2.1 The following principles provide Parliamentarians, managers, and MOP(S) Act employees with a framework for managing work-related violence:

- **Prevention** – Develop control measures that minimise the risk of work-related violence
- **Support** – Provide appropriate training on how to prevent and manage incidents of work-related violence
- **Risk Management** – Identify, assess, mitigate the risk of work-related violence and review control measures once implemented
- **Reporting** – Ensure that all incidents of work-related violence are reported to the Parliamentarian (where appropriate), Finance, or any other appropriate authorities such as the police.

3. What is work related violence and aggression?

3.1 Work-related violence refers to any incident where a person is abused, threatened, intimidated, physically handled or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work. Workplace violence and aggression can have significant short and long term impacts on a worker's physical and psychological health.

3.2 Work-related violence or aggression may happen:

- at a worker's usual workplace
- where a worker is working remotely, including if the person's workplace is their home
- in a place where the worker is undertaking work at a different location (such as constituents home)
- when a worker is engaging in a work-related activity (such as work-related corporate events or if you host a work-related social activity like a Christmas party).

3.2 MOP(S) Act employees may experience workplace violence and aggression when they are not at work from a result of risks which arise at the workplace or in connection to their employment. For example, if a MOP(S) Act employee receives abusive text messages after work from a colleague or constituent or receive abusive commentary through their personal social media where their identity as a private citizen has become apparent in connection to their employment.

4. Who is affected by workplace violence and aggression?

4.1 Violence can harm both the person it is directed at and anyone witnessing it. This can have significant economic and social cost for workers, their family, their organisation and the wider community. Workplace violence and aggression can happen in any industry but is most common in industries where people work with the public or external clients.

4.2 Certain demographics, such as new or junior staff, are more susceptible to experiencing higher rates of workplace violence or aggression. This is possibly attributable to a perceived vulnerability or an unfamiliarity with acceptable work practices.

5. Impacts of workplace violence or aggression

5.1 Workplace violence and aggression can have significant short and long term impacts on a worker's health.

5.2 Workplace violence and aggression can contribute to physical injury or illness as well as cause physiological harm to the person it is directed to and anyone witnessing the behaviour.

5.3 Violence and aggression can lead to:

- feelings of isolation, social isolation or family dislocation
- loss of confidence and withdraw
- physical injuries as a result of assault
- stress, depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- risks of self-harm
- psychological injury and illness such as cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal disorder, immune deficiency and gastrointestinal disorder e.g. as a result of stress and suicidal thoughts.

6. Work health and safety duties

6.1 The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) requires a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking (PCBU) to ensure workers and others are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. Finance is responsible for discharging the Commonwealth's duties as PCBU.

6.2 Finance, Parliamentarians and all MOP(S) Act employees, have duties under WHS laws to eliminate or minimise risks to health and safety of workers and other persons so far as is reasonably practicable. If it is not reasonably practicable to eliminate risk, they must be minimised so far as is reasonably practicable.

6.3 Parliamentarians, managers and MOP(S) Act employees must take a systematic approach to managing risk with the aim of eliminating risk or if this is not possible minimising the risk as far as is reasonably practicable.

6.4 Everyone in the workplace has a duty to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and not adversely affect the health and safety of themselves or others.

7. Roles and responsibilities

MOP(S) Act employees are responsible for:

- taking reasonable care to manage their own health and safety
- reporting any instances of work-related violence and aggression to their Parliamentarian, manager or appropriate authority where applicable.
- accessing support mechanisms available if needed, through contacting any of the following:
 - their Parliamentarian or immediate supervisor
 - a MaPS Case Manager on (02) 62153333 or MOPSSupport@finance.gov.au
 - the [Employee Assistance Program](#)

7.1 Where an employee is concerned about a colleague's health and safety following an incident of work-related violence or aggression they should discuss their concerns with their manager or employing Parliamentarian and contact the MaPS HR Advice and Support team on (02) 62153333 or MOPSSupport@finance.gov.au for advice.

Parliamentarians and managers are responsible for:

- responding promptly to reports or concerns and implementing measures to mitigate the risks and occurrences of workers being subjected to work related violence and aggression.
- maintain the privacy of the employee in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.
- ensure that employees are aware of and understand the Work-related Violence and Aggression Policy.
- discussing their concerns and encouraging employees to use support services available, and/or consult with the MaPS HR Advice and Support team if concerned about an employee's welfare.
- facilitating workplace support for an employee to the fullest extent possible consistent with this policy.
- continuing to have regular conversations with employees about job requirements, performance expectations and development opportunities taking into account their specific situation.
- acknowledging work-related violence and aggression as a potential mitigating factor if work performance has been affected.

Finance is responsible for:

- providing information and advice to Parliamentarians, managers, and MOP(S) Act employees about this policy and supports available.
- working with Parliamentarians and MOP(S) Act workplaces to support employees who are impacted by work-related violence and aggression.
- assist MOP(S) Act employees to access and process appropriate leave entitlements for employees impacted by work-related violence and aggression.

8. Prevention and Control Measures

8.1 WHS Site Officers should develop control measures that minimise the risk of work-related violence occurring. Some examples of preventative measures include:

- providing visibility of a clear statement that the workplace will not accept any form of violence or aggression, including from clients, staff and members of the public, including examples of the types of behaviours that are and are not allowed
- reviewing risk factors and control measures when risk indicators occur, and during the completion of each quarterly workplace inspection
- developing and implementing processes to manage incidents of work-related violence and ensure staff are aware of them
- using the Risk Assessment Tool in the WHS Online Portal (Skytrust) to determine the likelihood of someone being harmed and the degree of harm that may be caused. Note that potential harm could be physical or psychological, and it could be the result of a single incident, or built up over a longer period as a result of long-term exposure to risk factors
- designing work areas so that visitors have limited access to office staff
- implementing measures to protect MOP(S) Act employee privacy so their identity is not easily ascertained by members of the public
- ensuring objects that can be thrown and likely to hurt someone are not on the service counter and are not within reach of visitors.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 Information about a work related violence situation will be handled and stored in accordance with the *Privacy Act 1988* and as outlined in Finance's Privacy Policy [Department of Finance Privacy Policy | Department of Finance](#).

9.2 Employees and managers must maintain appropriate confidentiality in regards to personal information and shared on a strictly needs-to-know-basis.

9.3 Where there is a requirement for a manager to discuss with their respective Parliamentarian and/or manager, the manager should ensure the employee's anonymity will be maintained unless prior consent is given from the affected employee.

9.4 The APP may permit in certain circumstances the disclosure of personal information including lessening or preventing a serious threat to life, health or safety or taking appropriate action in relation to suspected unlawful activity or serious misconduct. In these circumstance, advice should be sought from the MaPS HR Advice and Support team.

9.5 All records are to be kept securely to ensure confidentiality is maintained in accordance with Finance's Privacy Policy and relevant legislation.

10. Support Services

10.1 MOP(S) Act employees experiencing work-related violence and aggression may access a range of support services available. This may include:

- flexible working arrangement, including details such as:
 - a change of work house and/or patterns
 - a change of work location (if available)
- secure parking and other security measures where possible and as required
- change of phone number and email address to limit unwanted contact, or screening or blocking calls and emails
- contact with police on the employees behalf (where appropriate)
- referral to external support through the Employee Assistance program for MOP(S) Act employees or their immediate family members

- access to leave entitlements in accordance with the [Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020-2023](#) (MOP(S) (EA), and
- any other measures or change to normal arrangements that are considered appropriate with Finance and employing Parliamentarians.

11. Leave

11.1 The MOP(S) EA provides for various types of leave including miscellaneous leave which may be accessed for the purposes of dealing with work-related violence and aggression.

11.2 A flexible and supportive approach will be taken to the management of leave for employees affected by work-related violence and aggression.

Recording an Absence

The recording of absences balances the privacy of the employee and the need to monitor and report on leave usage.

12. Reporting

12.1 **Where an emergency response is required, offices should call 000 immediately**

12.2 MOP(S) employees are to report all instances of work-related violence and aggression to their manager and/or Parliamentarian. Some, instances of work-related violence and aggression may also need to be reported to the police.

12.3 **All** incidents of work-related violence must **also** be reported through one of these channels:

- online WHS Portal (Skytrust)
- MOP(S) Act Employee Help Desk (02 6215 3333)
 - MOPSWHS@finance.gov.au

13. Legislative framework and guides

- *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*
- *Privacy Act 1988*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Work Health and Regulations Act 2011*
- [Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020-2023](#)
- [Leave and Public Holidays Guideline](#)
- Safe Work Australia (2016) [Workplace violence and aggression](#)
- Safe Work Australia (2021) [Preventing workplace violence and aggression – National Guidance Material](#).
- Safe Work Australia (2016) [Dealing with workplace bullying - a workers guide](#)
- Safe Work Australia (2016) [Guide for preventing and responding to workplace bullying](#)
- Fair Work Commission
 - National Helpline: 1300 799 675
 - Website: www.fwc.gov.au

- MaPS Workplace Bullying and Harassment Policy
- MaPS Early Intervention Policy
- Emergency Procedures Manual and Flipchart

14. Further Assistance

14.1 For queries relating to the operation of this policy please contact MOPSWHS@finance.gov.au

Information on available supports and resources is at Attachment A

Attachment A: Supports and resources

In an emergency

If you are in a life threatening situation contact Emergency Services on 000

HR Advice and Support Team, MaPS, Finance

The HR Advice and Support Team offers access to a team of trained case managers who can provide support and advice on options to Parliamentarians and employees engaged under the MOP(S) Act by calling (02) 62153333 or via email on MOPSupport@finance.gov.au.

Employee Assistance Provider (EAP)

You can access EAP services for work or personal issues or to access the Manager Support Program by calling 1300 360 364 or booking an appointment at www.benestar.com Available to MOP(S) Act employees' families, friends and colleagues.

| <u>Authority</u> | <u>Jurisdiction</u> | <u>Contact Details</u> |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| <u>Comcare</u> | <u>Commonwealth</u> | Website: www.comcare.gov.au Email: general.enquiries@comcare.gov.au Phone: 1300 366 979 |
| <u>SafeWork NSW</u> | <u>New South Wales</u> | Website: www.safework.nsw.gov.au Email: contact@safework.nsw.gov.au Phone: 13 10 50 |
| <u>WorkSafe Victoria</u> | <u>Victoria</u> | Website: www.worksafe.vic.gov.au Email: info@worksafe.vic.gov.au Phone: 1800 136 089 or 03 9641 1444 |
| <u>Workplace Health and Safety Queensland</u> | <u>Queensland</u> | Workplace Health and Safety Queensland Website: www.worksafe.qld.gov.au Phone: 1300 362 128 |
| <u>SafeWork SA</u> | <u>South Australia</u> | Website: www.safework.sa.gov.au Email: help.safework@sa.gov.au Phone: 1300 365 255 |
| <u>WorkSafe WA</u> | <u>Western Australia</u> | Website: www.commerce.wa.gov.au |

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|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| | | WorkSafe Email: safety@commerce.wa.gov.au Phone: 1300 307 877 (within Western Australia) |
| WorkSafe Tasmania | Tasmania | Website: www.worksafe.tas.gov.au Email: wstinfo@justice.tas.gov.au Phone: 1300 366 322 (within Tasmania) |
| WorkSafe ACT | Australian Capital Territory | WorkSafe ACT Website: www.worksafe.act.gov.au Email: worksafe@act.gov.au Phone: 02 6207 3000 |
| NT WorkSafe | Northern Territory | Website: www.worksafe.nt.gov.au Email: ntworksafe@nt.gov.au Phone: 1800 019 115 |

Community supports

Lifeline: [Lifeline Australia - 13 11 14 - Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention. 13 11 14](#)

1800Respect: [Home | 1800RESPECT 1800 737 732](#)

[Relationships Australia: 1300 364 277](#)

Beyond Blue: [Anxiety, depression & suicide prevention support-Beyond Blue 1300 224 636](#)

Police: Emergency line – 000, assistance line - 131 444

[Australian Indigenous Health Infonet – Family Violence Western Australia – 08 9370 6336](#)

Suicide Call Back Service: [Mental health counselling & suicide prevention| Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467](#)

Mensline: [Free help, support, referrals & counselling for men: MensLine Australia 1300 789 978](#)

[Everyman](#) – counselling services for men who are perpetrators or survivors of domestic and family violence on 0479 018 021 or 02 6230 6999

[AFP Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers – 131 444 and ask for the GLLO Officer](#)

[QLife](#): Free support, referrals for LGBTI individuals, their friends, families, and health professionals: [10](http://Get Help (qlife.org.au) 1800 184 527 (3pm to midnight every day)</p>
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[Another Closet – Domestic and Family Violence in LGBTQ Relationships](#) on 1800 063 481

[Daisy – E-Mental Health Clinic](#)

[Kids Help Line](#) – 1800 551 800

ACT [Domestic Violence Crisis Centre](#) – (02) 62800900

ACT [Women’s Legal Services](#) – 02 6257 4377 or 1800 634 669

[Safesteps](#) – Victorian 247 family violence response centre on 1800 015 188 or 03 9928 9600