

Wednesday 24th March 2021

Parliament house workers demand change

CPSU members who work in Parliament House met today with ACTU President Michele O’Neil and CPSU National Secretary Melissa Donnelly. They have signed an open outlining 5 key demands for change in their workplace.

Every employer in every workplace has an obligation to ensure that employees are safe. In this respect the Morrison Government has failed employees at Parliament House.

CPSU members are calling for the following changes to be implemented immediately:

1. An independent and confidential complaints process, which is victim-centric, that staff can have confidence in, and that ensures there are consequences for poor behaviour;
2. A safe workplace that guarantees workers’ workplace health and safety rights, that includes mandatory training for parliamentarians and staff, safe reporting mechanisms, and data reporting to workplace health and safety committees or equivalent;
3. Provisions to mitigate gendered violence and sexual harassment agreed to in the MOPS Enterprise Agreement currently under negotiation, and in the current workplace health and safety policies for the Department of House of Representatives, Department of the Senate, Department of Parliamentary Services, Department of Finance and Parliamentary Budget Office and other APS agencies, until they can be inserted into relevant industrial agreements;
4. Appropriate, specialised, and ongoing support services for all workers in Parliamentary workplaces; and
5. The immediate implementation of the 55 recommendations of the Respect@Work report.

Quotes attributable to CPSU National Secretary Melissa Donnelly,

“The work our members do is incredibly important for our democracy, but their workplaces have significant power imbalances, which can allow bullying, sexual harassment, and sexual assault to fester and go unpunished. This must change.

Respect and safety at work are non-negotiable. Our members across all departments that work in parliament have had enough, and they are demanding action for safe workplace.

Much have been written about their experience, but these are their demands. It’s time for the government to stop talking and start acting.”

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil,

“It was an honour to meet today with CPSU members at Parliament House and listen to their concerns. The Morrison Government has been dragged to the realisation that the workplace culture in Parliament House is toxic and dangerous, especially to women. This is not news to workers who go to work every day in a high risk workplace where sexism is rife, sexual harassment is common and sexual assaults are alleged to have happened.

“These demands if met would provide clear and confidential reporting lines, consequences for actions, training, support and obligations to mitigate risk

“It also asks the Morrison Government to implement the recommendations of its own report into sexual harassment in the workplace, which has been sitting in a drawer in Christian Porter’s office for more than a year.

“The entire union movement stands with these workers who are fighting to make their workplace safer. It is past the time for the Morrison Government to act.”

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