

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STANDING COMMITTEE
ON EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT***Review into bullying in the workplace**Chair: Ms Amanda Rishworth MP
Deputy Chair: Mr Rowan Ramsey MP***REVIEW INTO BULLYING IN THE WORKPLACE****Education and Employment Committee to launch
inquiry into workplace bullying**

The Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations has tasked the Education and Employment Committee to inquire into bullying in Australian workplaces. The inquiry (terms of reference attached) will examine the nature, causes and extent of workplace bullying and consider proposals to address bullying cultures and prevent their development in the workplace. The review will also consider schemes to support individuals who have been affected by bullying in their return to work.

The Committee is interested in taking evidence on all forms of bullying in the workplace and is keen to hear about the perspectives and experiences of employees, parents and guardians of young employees and employers.

The consequences of workplace bullying for individuals and the community are great. Workplace bullying can cause great distress and serious psychological injury to victims and their families, as well as affecting the wider community resulting in the reduction of productivity and contributing to increased workers' compensation claims and associated costs. The Productivity Commission estimates the total cost of workplace bullying in Australia at between \$6 billion and \$36 billion annually.

The Chair, Ms Amanda Rishworth MP, said, 'Bullying has serious consequences for individuals and the wider community. Every Australian has a right to feel safe and respected at work. The Prime Minister and Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations recognise the importance of tackling this issue in referring this inquiry to the Committee.'

'While it is not the role of the Committee to intervene in or consider individual cases, we welcome submissions from employers, employees and their representative organisations regarding proposals and suggestions for securing workplaces against bullying at a national level,' Ms Rishworth said.

Submissions close Friday 29 June 2012.

For media comment: contact the Committee Chair, Ms Amanda Rishworth MP on 0416 086 019.

For information on the inquiry: contact the Secretariat on (02) 6277 4578 email workplacebullying.reps@aph.gov.au or visit the Committee's website at <http://www.aph.gov.au/ee>

Terms of Reference

Workplace bullying can have a profound effect on all aspects of a person's health as well as their work and family life. It also has significant flow-on effects for the community and the economy, with the Productivity Commission estimating the total cost of workplace bullying in Australia at between \$6 billion and \$36 billion annually.

The terms of reference for the inquiry will focus on:

- the prevalence of workplace bullying in Australia and the experience of victims of workplace bullying;
- the role of workplace cultures in preventing and responding to bullying and the capacity for workplace-based policies and procedures to influence the incidence and seriousness of workplace bullying;
- the adequacy of existing education and support services to prevent and respond to workplace bullying and whether there are further opportunities to raise awareness of workplace bullying such as community forums;
- whether the scope to improve coordination between governments, regulators, health service providers and other stakeholders to address and prevent workplace bullying;
- whether there are regulatory, administrative or cross-jurisdictional and international legal and policy gaps that should be addressed in the interests of enhancing protection against and providing an early response to workplace bullying, including through appropriate complaint mechanisms;
- whether the existing regulatory frameworks provide a sufficient deterrent against workplace bullying;
- the most appropriate ways of ensuring bullying culture or behaviours are not transferred from one workplace to another; and
- possible improvements to the national evidence base on workplace bullying.