

Joint Statement

Heads of Jurisdiction, Members of Courts Council and the Chief Executive Officer Court Services Victoria

Review of Sexual Harassment in Victorian Courts

19 April 2021

Prevention of sexual harassment in the Courts and VCAT is an absolute priority for us as leaders, and for the Courts, VCAT and Court Services Victoria as organisations.

We continue to build a better culture by acknowledging the harm that has occurred in our Courts, VCAT and CSV. We also acknowledge that our organisational responses to date have not been good enough and that we must and will do more.

The harm experienced by victims and survivors of sexual harassment takes different forms. It can impact psychological, physical and economic wellbeing. The harm is profound. The harm that is experienced as a result of the actions of the perpetrator is exacerbated if those affected are not in an environment which supports them and is able to respond.

We thank all those who contributed to this Review and who came forward to tell their stories. The telling of their stories cannot have been easy. But it is powerful. We have heard them.

Ensuring people feel safe to report what is happening in the Courts, VCAT and CSV is an important part of tackling this issue. We have a clear roadmap to take action to make sure that happens.

As leaders, we will continue to speak up about the importance of safe and respectful workplaces. But we know that's not enough. Sexual harassment harms our people and when that happens, it erodes trust and damages our organisations.

We will take concrete action in implementing the recommendations with the aim of preventing sexual harassment, improving reporting and support, and providing a robust system of accountability.

Heads of Jurisdiction, Courts Council, the Board of the Judicial College of Victoria and the Judicial Commission have considered the recommendations of the review that are directed to each of them and support their implementation. Work is already underway. CSV has created positions of Executive Director, Sexual Harassment and Respect and Program Manager, Sexual Harassment and Respect to lead the work within CSV and coordinate work occurring across the different bodies.

History has shown this is not a simple problem to solve and the Courts, VCAT and CSV are not alone in confronting these issues. It will take time and resources and the cooperation and commitment of others. That does not deter us from our continuing pursuit of a working environment free from sexual harassment.

SIGNED:



The Honourable Justice Anne Ferguson
Chief Justice of the Supreme Court



The Honourable Justice Peter Kidd
Chief Judge of the County Court



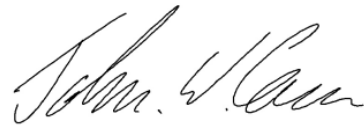
The Honourable Justice Michelle Quigley
President of the Victorian Civil and Administrative
Tribunal (VCAT)



Her Honour Judge Lisa Hannan
Chief Magistrate



His Honour Judge Jack Vandersteen
President of the Children's Court



His Honour Judge John Cain
State Coroner



Dr Philip Williams AM
Independent Member of Courts Council



Ms Susan Friend
Independent Member of Courts Council



Ms Louise Anderson
Chief Executive Officer, Court Services Victoria