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Resources employers committed to eliminating workplace sexual harassment

Statement by Tara Diamond, AMMA Director Operations

Australian Resources and Energy Group AMMA, the national representative for employers across mining, oil and gas and all allied sectors, welcomes the Australian Human Rights Commission's (AHRC) report into sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

Resources and energy employers are committed to doing everything possible to eliminate sexual harassment in their workplaces.

The industry is aware that sexual harassment in its workplaces is at a higher than average prevalence. As noted by the AHRC, there are a number of reasons for this including the sector's male-dominated gender ratio and the nature of work being considered 'non-traditional' for women.

None of these factors excuse sexual harassment, rather it is critical we understand and address them.

Encouragingly, these are all areas in which the industry, led by the Australian Women in Resources Alliance (AWRA), an AMMA initiative, has been making significant improvements in recent years.

Resources and energy employers have invested significant capital and management attention into cultural change, education and awareness campaigns, various programs and initiatives designed to promote more diverse, inclusive workplaces free from sexual harassment.

AMMA will take the necessary time to consult with our membership on the 55 recommendations put forward by the AHRC to address sexual harassment in the workplace.

Broadly, we welcome any moves to ensure the Fair Work Act treats sexual harassment with the same seriousness it treats bullying, general harassment and other forms of serious misconduct in the workplace that put people at risk of physical and/or psychosocial harm.

Any changes must however ensure decreased regulatory and legislative complexity, which was raised throughout the review process as a key challenge for employers in managing workplace sexual harassment.

We also welcome recommendations that would promote greater coordination across education, accreditation and training to build skills and capacity on preventing and responding to workplace sexual harassment.

Through collaboration and ongoing industry consultation, AMMA is optimistic this report can be a turning point to achieving real and lasting change in relation to sexual harassment in Australian workplaces.

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