



# WHAT IS WORKPLACE HARASSMENT?

**W**orkplace bullying is verbal, physical, social or psychological abuse by your employer (or manager), another person or group of people at work.

Workplace bullying can happen in any type of workplace, from offices to shops, cafes, restaurants, workshops, factories, community groups and government organisation.

Workplace bullying can happen to volunteers, work experience students, interns, apprentices, casual and permanent employees.

## SAMPLES OF BULLYING COVERED BY THE ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ACT

BEHAVIOUR	EXAMPLE	ATTRIBUTE
Abusing or yelling at a person (usually when others are present)	A male manager regularly abused a woman worker in terms such as 'dumb bitch, useless female, stupid cow...'	Sex
Making hurtful remarks or verbal attacks, making fun of a person's work, or the person themselves (eg: their race or culture, impairment, sex, sexuality)	An Aboriginal worker was called 'ape man' as a nick name by workers, and they made monkey gestures and noises. The supervisor just laughed and did nothing to stop it.	Race
Sabotaging a person's work, deliberately withholding or giving incorrect information, hiding documents or equipment, not passing on messages, getting a person into trouble in other ways;	The supervisor of an older worker with more than 20 years' service deliberately excluded him from receiving information on IT training and skill development. He put pressure on the worker to resign, constantly saying that he doesn't pick things up quickly and maybe he's 'past his use by date' and 'time to give a young bloke a go'.	Age (older worker)
Subjecting a person to initiation ceremonies, making a person do humiliating or inappropriate things to be accepted as part of a group	A 16-year-old apprentice was stripped naked and hosed with a fire hose while everyone else looked on and laughed.	Age (young worker) Sexual harassment
Excluding or isolating a person from activities or an online group	An office worker who recently immigrated from Sri Lanka was always asked to stay behind to look after the office over lunch, and when there were work functions. Her co-worker said things like 'you wouldn't like it anyway... you wouldn't fit in.'	Race

Source: QHRC\_factsheet\_Bullying.pdf

## **WHAT IS UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION?**

Discrimination occurs when a person or group of people, is treated less favourably than another person or group because of their background or certain characteristics.

Federal discrimination laws protect people from discrimination based on their:

- Race, including colour, national or ethnic origin or immigrant status,
- Sex, pregnancy or marital status and breastfeeding,
- Age,
- Disability, or
- Sexual orientation gender identity and intersex status.

## **WHAT IS HARASSMENT?**

Under discrimination law, it is unlawful to treat a person less favourably based on particular

protected attributes, such as a person's sex, race, disability or age. Treating a person less favourably can include harassing or bullying a person. The law has specific provisions relating to sexual harassment, racial hatred and disability harassment.

## **HARASSMENT CAN INCLUDE BEHAVIOUR SUCH AS:**

- Telling insulting jokes about a particular racial group,
- Sending explicit or sexually suggestive emails or text messages,
- Displaying racially offensive or pornographic posters or screen savers,
- Making derogatory comments or taunts about a person's disability, or
- Asking intrusive questions about someone's personal life, including his/her sex life.

## **WHAT IS WORKPLACE BULLYING?**

Bullying behaviour can range from obvious verbal or physical assault to subtle psychological abuse. It can include physical or verbal abuse:

- Yelling, screaming or offensive language,
- Excluding or isolating employees, eg work events or meetings.
- Psychological harassment,
- Intimidation,
- Assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to the job,
- Giving employees impossible jobs or deadlines and setting one up to fail,
- Deliberately changed work rosters to inconvenience particular employee,
- Undermining work performance by deliberately withholding information vital for effective work performance,
- Cyberbullying on social media or online. ●