# Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces

FARE made a submission to the [*Independent Review into Commonwealth Parliamentary Workplaces*](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhumanrights.gov.au%2FCPWReview&data=04%7C01%7CSteven.Rummukainen%40fare.org.au%7C4930d9164486465d35b308d97819c485%7C529fe962c9ab412f8a3ca9731674181d%7C0%7C0%7C637672874335217771%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=YDpN0MBTEdJN%2BaKSHJSYMNb57BBHbDqZnieDkmycI9g%3D&reserved=0) being conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission. Led by Sex Discrimination Commissioner Kate Jenkins, the Review is investigating the culture within Parliament following concerns raised about bullying, sexual harassment and sexual assault, with a view to creating and maintaining a safe and respectful work environment.

The role of alcohol in creating an unsafe workplace has been highlighted in a number of recent reviews such as the [*Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report*](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fhumanrights.gov.au%2Four-work%2Fsex-discrimination%2Fpublications%2Frespectwork-sexual-harassment-national-inquiry-report-2020&data=04%7C01%7CSteven.Rummukainen%40fare.org.au%7C4930d9164486465d35b308d97819c485%7C529fe962c9ab412f8a3ca9731674181d%7C0%7C0%7C637672874335227725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=%2F5UYOgYQqubDZ4yLtAQXpfnqIraEqmGcSNaggsgILV4%3D&reserved=0), the [*Review of the Parliamentary Workplace: Responding to Serious Incidents*](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pmc.gov.au%2Fresource-centre%2Fpmc%2Freview-parliamentary-workplace-responding-serious-incidents&data=04%7C01%7CSteven.Rummukainen%40fare.org.au%7C4930d9164486465d35b308d97819c485%7C529fe962c9ab412f8a3ca9731674181d%7C0%7C0%7C637672874335227725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=GVlr73oGm75ewDRQp1s0Txh6jueYgaMy33d2yAGKLiE%3D&reserved=0) and the [*Review of Harassment in the South Australian Parliament Workplace*](https://aus01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.eoc.sa.gov.au%2Fdocuments%2FReport-Review-of-Harassment-SA-Parliament-Workplace.pdf&data=04%7C01%7CSteven.Rummukainen%40fare.org.au%7C4930d9164486465d35b308d97819c485%7C529fe962c9ab412f8a3ca9731674181d%7C0%7C0%7C637672874335227725%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=mNIOVBLoNHIbWI%2F16wom65rnXaIH4DmJZ%2F0h3%2FPoRTc%3D&reserved=0) by Emily Strickland, Acting Equal Opportunity Commissioner in South Australia, the latter two reports specifically focussing on parliamentary workplaces.

FARE’s submission discusses some of the factors that lead to alcohol use in Parliament and highlights some of the barriers that prevent people from speaking out about issues such as workplace bullying,  sexual harassment and alcohol.

FARE makes a number of recommendations to address alcohol use in parliamentary workplaces, such as developing an alcohol policy to provide a framework for managing and responding to alcohol use and adopting a health and human rights approach to addressing situations when they arrive. FARE also recommends that an independent unit is established that provides a confidential environment for reporting and responding to alcohol use and takes responsibility for reducing the risk factors that lead to these unacceptable behaviours. The full list of recommendations are found below.

The Inquiry is expected to report in November 2021.

## FARE recommendations to the Review:

1. Undertake a risk assessment of alcohol use and harm at Parliament House.
2. Develop and enforce an alcohol policy to address alcohol in the workplace and at work-related events, including work-related social functions. The alcohol policy should include a clear aim, scope, principles, priority action areas and accountability measures.
3. Apply the alcohol policy to all people who work in parliamentary workplaces, including the Prime Minister, Parliamentarians and their staff, departmental staff, public servants, consultants undertaking work for Parliament and event staff.
4. Limit alcohol use in Parliamentary workplaces within the alcohol policy, to pre-approved functions and events and licensed premises. Make a condition of pre-approval, having clear controls for alcohol use in place, including ensuring that the supply and service of alcohol does not encourage risky use. All other environments, including parliamentary offices, should be alcohol free.
5. Ensure the alcohol policy takes a health and human rights approach to addressing alcohol use in the workplace.
6. Make support services available to people who work in Parliamentary workplaces, both within the work environment and outside to accommodate different situations and needs.
7. Establish an independent unit with a presence within Parliament House to be responsible for the prevention, reporting and management of unacceptable behaviour within Parliament, including responding to alcohol use.
8. Hold people accountable for actions that breach the alcohol policy through a staged response that outlines a process for escalating matters.
9. Develop a Code of Conduct that applies to all people that work in Parliamentary workplaces and requires them to abide by the alcohol policy.
10. Ensure the Code of Conduct is developed in conjunction with key stakeholders in the workplace, including those at risk of alcohol harm.
11. Ensure that people who are affected by alcohol do not attend work, including in their parliamentary offices and in the chambers, and are asked to leave if they become intoxicated while at work or work-related events.
12. Provide regular workplace training to ensure people are aware of the alcohol policy and Code of Conduct.
13. Provide support for people to deal with a situation where someone is behaving in a way that is inconsistent with the standards of behaviour expected in the workplace.
14. Provide training to security staff to recognise and respond to situations where people are intoxicated.
15. Adopt a whole of workplace approach to reducing alcohol harm.
16. Embed policies and processes into everyday activities to create a safer and healthier work culture.

[view submission](https://fare.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FARE-Submission_AHRC_Review_Parliamentary_Workplaces.pdf)