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Call for financial services sector to adopt more robust reporting on sexual harassment cases

The national advocacy and networking organisation in the superannuation industry, **Women in Super (WIS)** is calling on its partners and other entities in the financial services sector to adopt a more robust and transparent approach to managing and reporting workplace sexual harassment incidents.

WIS wants financial service companies to “lead by example” and implement a system of reporting against sexual harassment indicators, in line with recent recommendations from the Australian Human Rights Commission.

WIS CEO Sandra Buckley said while the superannuation sector and wider financial services industry had worked hard to increase diversity and inclusion and to provide supportive frameworks to attract women to the industry, more needed to be done to protect women.

“The lifelong impacts of workplace sexual harassment include loss of earnings, employment and career progression as sexual harassment often leads to the victim leaving the company and feeling like they need to leave the sector entirely. This is in contradiction with commitments to improve gender equality in financial services.” Ms Buckley said.

“Eradicating sexual harassment in the workplace requires more than simply having the right policies and training in place. Companies need to be transparent about how they deal with sexual harassment cases and what the outcomes are.”

In a report released in May, the Australian Human Rights Commission recommended several changes to how organisations deal with sexual harassment, including that the ASX Corporate Governance Council introduce sexual harassment indicators for ASX-listed entities to report against.

WIS is calling on the Corporate Governance Council to adopt this recommendation and calls on all industry organisations to report in this manner.

In the meantime, it would like to see financial service companies put the following practices in place:

- Reporting processes to capture all incidences of sexual harassment



- Clear processes for reporting of sexual harassment claims, preferably to an external, independent organisation
- Minimal involvement of, or oversight of, sexual harassment investigations by senior management, the executive leadership team or Board of Management
- Reporting of the immediate outcomes for both parties (perpetrator and victim) to include whether there has been a continuation/reinstatement/termination and/or resignation of employment
- Reporting and measuring of outcomes of all sexual harassment claims over five-year and ten-year period
- Reporting of number of cases ending in financial penalties and/or non-disclosure statements
- Reporting of number of cases ending in court proceedings.

According to the most recent National Survey on Sexual Harassment, 1 in 3 people faces sexual harassment in the workplace¹ and reflecting the gendered nature of the issue, almost 2 in 5 women (39%) are impacted.

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