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Attorney-General

Tuesday, 23 May 2023

## **New tool to address harassment, bullying and discrimination in the legal profession**

The Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner has launched a free online tool for lawyers and others employed in the legal industry to anonymously report instances of sexual harassment, bullying, discrimination and other forms of inappropriate personal behaviour.

The new tool, accessible through the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner's (LPCC) website, enables targets, witnesses and others concerned by inappropriate behaviour to report what happened, where, when and to whom.

Anyone with information about such inappropriate behaviour in the legal profession is still encouraged to make a formal complaint via the LPCC website, as opposed to reporting only through this new online tool. The LPCC recognises that there may be barriers to making a formal complaint, with people potentially fearing negative implications or repercussions from embarking on official complaint proceedings.

The new online reporting tool allows anyone making a report to provide as much or as little detail as they are comfortable with. People making a report will be provided with a unique key to access their report and will be able to add to it later, if they choose, including being able to make a formal report should they become comfortable to do so.

The launch of the online anonymous reporting tool is in keeping with the recommendations of Acting Commissioner for Equal Opportunity, Ms Steph Halliday, who noted in her 2021 Review of Harassment in the Legal Profession Report that there was overwhelming support for anonymous reporting to help address what is a serious and underreported problem in the profession.

The Acting Commissioner noted in her Report that the problem is widespread, with more than 42% of respondents indicating that they had experienced sexual harassment in the legal profession at least once, but there is limited data available.

The data collected by the LPCC through this new anonymous reporting tool will, in part, guide any further steps to be taken.

## **Quotes attributable to Kyam Maher**

*I commend the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner and his staff for their ongoing work to address harassment, bullying and discrimination in the legal profession in South Australia.*

*All workers have a right to feel safe in the workplace.*

*The online anonymous reporting tool will not be a panacea for inappropriate personal behaviour in the legal profession but is one positive step in a broader strategy to address the problem.*

## **Quotes attributable to Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner Anthony Keane**

*The new online reporting tool is intended to remove some of the barriers to reporting by placing the person making the report in control of the information they choose to share.*

*I encourage anyone who has experienced sexual harassment, discrimination or bullying in the legal profession and who is, for whatever reason, unwilling to make a formal complaint to visit the Legal Profession Conduct Commissioner website and utilise Speak safely. Reporting of inappropriate conduct is a first step in promoting change.*

