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Preventing and Addressing Sexual Harassment in Victorian Courts and VCAT

Appendix 6 –

VEOHRC Data summary of participant’s experiences

This Appendix summarises data from a survey completed by interview participants prior

to their interviews with the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission. People who had experienced or witnessed sexual harassment in Victoria’s courts and VCAT were invited to share their story as part of the Review of Sexual Harassment in Victorian Courts, over a six-week period in

2020. The purpose of the survey was to gather basic demographic details and an overview

of the types of harassment experienced by interview participants.

*Please note that some interview participants may have chosen not to answer all questions when they completed the survey. This means that the number*

*of participants represented in the graphs and tables below will generally be less than the total number of participants who contributed to the research.*

Experiences of sexual harassment

Of the 36 total participants, 28 reported that they had experienced sexual harassment, with 23 further reporting that there had been multiple incidents; 21 reported witnessing sexual harassment with 18 reporting witnessing multiple incidents.

The table below shows the types of harassment behaviours that participants reported experiencing/witnessing. Note that participants could report multiple types of behaviour, so the column totals will add up to a number higher than the total number of participants.

**3**

**Behaviour Experienced Witnessed**

Unwelcome questions or comments about your private life 16 9

(including relationships) or body (including your physical appearance or features)

Unwelcome physical contact 13 5

Unwelcome touching, hugging, cornering or kissing 12 5

Staring or leering 11 6

Sexually suggestive comments or jokes that made you 10 9

feel offended, humiliated or intimidated (in either a group or one on one situation)

Sexual gestures, indecent exposure or display of the body 9 2

Repeated or inappropriate advances on email, social 7 0

networking websites or internet chat rooms by a colleague

Repeated or inappropriate invitations to go out on dates 7 3

Requests or pressure for sex or other sexual acts 4 1

Sexual assault (such as unwanted kissing and touching, 3 0

forcing someone to watch pornography or masturbation)

Sexually explicit pictures, posters or gifts 2 2

None 1 1

Sexually explicit emails or text messages 1 0

Sexually explicit posts or messages on social media 0 1

(including Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter)

Reporting

When asked if they had reported the incident of harassment they had experienced or witnessed, 15 participants out of 33 respondents said that they had reported at least one of the incidents.

Age and gender identity of participants

The majority of participants who completed this question identified as female, with the largest age cohort from those aged 25-34 years. Note only 47% of participants chose to complete these demographic details in the survey.

**4**

Age and gender identity

Gender ID

55-64 yrs Female

Male

45-54 yrs Self-described

35-44 yrs

25-34 yrs

18-24 yrs

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

COUNT

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Roles within the court system

The table below shows the roles that participants reported working in while in the courts or VCAT.

Relationship with harasser

Participants who were current or former employees in courts or VCAT had the following relationships with the perpetrators of sexual harassment that they experienced or witnessed.

Time period of harassment

Definitions of ‘other’ provided by participants included a senior colleague or manager in

a different area; male barristers; a bench clerk; and someone employed by another organisation and based at court.

**5**

**Period Count**

Ongoing (continuous) 9

It was one-off 6

Sporadic (comes and goes) 6

7 to 12 months 4

Other 4

More than 1 year 2

1 to 3 months 1

4 to 6 months 1

**Relationship Count**

A member of the Judiciary 19

or VCAT

Other 11

A colleague 9

My immediate manager or 6

supervisor

A manager more senior 4

than my immediate manager or supervisor

Prefer not to say 1

**Role Count**

Associate/Tipstaff/Clerk 10

Other 5

Administration officer 4

Solicitor and/or barrister 5

Policy and Research officer 2