



Australian
Bar Association

The ABA acknowledges the relationship between the land on which it and its members work and the First Nations' peoples of Australia.

Media release

Australian Bar Association statement on the release of the Victorian Review into Sexual Harassment in Victorian Courts and the Report of the Review of Sexual Harassment in the South Australian Legal Profession

20 April 2021

The Australian Bar Association (ABA), as the representative body of all Australian state and territory Bar Associations, is committed to addressing all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, at the Bar and in the legal profession. The ABA recognises the devastating impact that sexual harassment can and does have, and has had, on victim-survivors, including causing them to leave the profession. The conduct revealed in the Victorian and South Australian reports released this week also undermines public confidence in the legal profession and the administration of justice.

The President of the ABA, Matthew Howard SC, said “The Victorian and South Australian reports released this week expose again the dark behaviours that unchecked power imbalances and hierarchical structures can perpetuate. Sexual harassment cannot be eradicated from the legal profession if victim-survivors fear that they will not be heard or may face repercussions from speaking out, or that perpetrators will be protected.

“Sexual harassment is illegal and unacceptable in any workplace and must not be tolerated at the Bar. As the national representative body of Australia’s independent Bars, the ABA recognises our responsibility to work towards a nationally consistent approach to effecting real and lasting change.” Mr Howard added.

The Diversity and Inclusion Committee of the ABA has been commissioned by the ABA Executive to review the Victorian and South Australian reports and develop an implementation plan. The ABA will work closely with State and Territory Bar Associations.

The Review of Sexual Harassment in Victoria’s Courts is [here](#).

The Report of the Review of Sexual Harassment in the South Australian Legal Profession is [here](#).

The ABA’s statement of zero tolerance of sexual harassment is [here](#) and its Diversity and Inclusion Principles are [here](#).

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About the ABA

The Australian Bar Association is the peak body representing nearly 6,000 barristers throughout Australia. Established in 1963, the ABA is committed to serving, promoting and representing its members, as well as advocating for fair and equal justice for all.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES: media@austbar.asn.au or call Elizabeth Gray on 0401 561 554.