

Despite legislation introduced by the Commonwealth 20 years ago to deal with sexual harassment, the reflections provided by participants indicate that little has changed. Consequently, the report urges government, employers and the community to take workplace sexual harassment seriously.

The WASH report provides a valuable resource for those seeking information on people's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace and is intended to be used as a resource by government, employer groups, community groups, researchers, students and activists alike to work for social change and to reduce workplace sexual harassment.

The full WASH report *Taking It Seriously: Contemporary Experiences of Sexual Harassment in the Workplace* can be downloaded from the CASA House website at [www.rwh.org.au/casa/](http://www.rwh.org.au/casa/)

Since the WASH report was published, the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission has released two further publications that provide information in relation to workplace sexual harassment.

The first publication, entitled *20 Years On: The Challenges Continue: Sexual Harassment in the Australian Workplace*, reports the findings of the first comprehensive national survey undertaken in Australia of the incidence and nature of sexual harassment. This was a national telephone survey of sexual harassment that documented the responses of more than 1000 randomly selected interviewees from the Australian adult population.

A key finding of the survey was that 18 per cent of survey participants stated they had personally experienced workplace sexual harassment at some time (28 per cent of women and 7 per cent of men). Other important findings relate to: the incidence of sexual harassment in the community; the nature of sexual harassment in the workplace; characteristics of the target of sexual harassment, the harasser, and of the workplace; and reasons for not reporting.

The second publication *Sexual Harassment in the Workplace: A Code of Practice for Employers* updates and revises the earlier *Sexual Harassment: A Code of Practice*, developed in 1996. "The Code" provides guidelines for employers for avoiding sexual harassment in the workplace and incorporates mandatory requirements of the Sex Discrimination Act, accepted practice in the area, and established case law.

Both publications provide extremely useful resources for those wanting information on the incidence and nature of sexual harassment in Australia and guidelines and initiatives aimed at preventing and appropriately responding to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Both these publications can be downloaded from the Commission's website at [www.hreoc.gov.au/](http://www.hreoc.gov.au/).

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## Community response to allegations against footballers

### "Football Fans Against Sexual Assault"

Since the beginning of this year, there has been a series of highly publicised sexual assault allegations involving National Rugby League (NRL) and Australian Football League (AFL) players.

These include sexual assault allegations against two NRL *Melbourne Storm* players, gang-rape allegations against members of the NRL *Canterbury Bulldogs* team, and sexual assault allegations against two members of the AFL's *St Kilda* team. In each case, the allegations were the subject of police investigations but did not proceed further due to "insufficient evidence". In addition to these allegations, other women have come forward to allege sexual assault by NRL and AFL players. To date, no case involving sexual assault allegations against NRL or AFL players has been brought to trial.

*Football Fans Against Sexual Assault* (FFASA) is one community response to the recent series of sexual assault allegations involving footballers. FFASA is a group of grassroots footy fans

disillusioned by the response to sexual assault allegations by both codes. FFASA has launched a web-based campaign aimed at providing a vision for the NRL and AFL on promoting respectful sexual attitudes and behaviours towards women.

The FFASA website provides:

- information on proposals developed by FFASA for the NRL and AFL aimed at promoting cultural change;
- an opportunity to sign the FFASA campaign petition to express your opposition to sexual violence against women and club cover-ups;
- statistics on sexual assault; and
- copies of FFASA newsletters and media releases.

For further information on *Football Fans Against Sexual Assault*, or to sign the campaign petition, visit the FFASA website at [www.ffasa.org/](http://www.ffasa.org/)