

Independent Sexual Assault & Harassment Parliamentary Inquiry Needed - AMSA

Content warning: Contains discussion of sexual harassment and assault.

The Australian Medical Students' Association (AMSA) is today calling for the establishment of an independent inquiry into the prevalence of sexual assault and harassment within Parliament following weeks of inaction.

"The events of recent weeks stand as a stark reminder that inadequate workplace safety across Australia stands as a barrier to the personal welfare and professional success of women," AMSA President Ms Sophie Keen said.

"It is clear there has been a total lack of transparency, and inadequate protocol, from the Government.

"Sexual assault remains an unacceptable reality for women, transgender, and gender diverse people in Australia.

"Our institutions are only as strong as the protections they afford to their most junior staff, and these events have brought to light a growing demand for both cultural and systemic change.

"Consequently, AMSA is echoing previous recommendations by Gender Equity Victoria, who called for an independent inquiry into sexual assault and harassment within Parliament.

"The Government must take ownership and commit to a tangible and timely implementation of inquiry recommendations, alongside transparent and regular progress reporting.

"AMSA remains deeply disturbed by this reality of sexual assault in Australia, including within our Government, and expresses disappointment in previous handling of this issue.

"Medical students and doctors are exposed to this violence, and we recognise the potential for re-traumatisation with the discussion of sexual violence in the media.

"We also acknowledge the culture of sexual harassment still present within the medical profession on both an individual and systemic level, and encourage professional medical bodies to reflect on the safety of their own organisations."

In a survey conducted by AMSA, 90 per cent of Australia's future doctors affirmed that promoting equitable access to sexual and reproductive healthcare is 'extremely important' or 'very important'.

AMSA is the peak representative body of Australia's 17,000 medical students. AMSA Sexual and Reproductive Health believes in all individuals' freedom from sexual shame, stigma, and violence. AMSA Gender Equity advocates for the breakdown of gender inequities within the community and workforce.

Sexual Assault Support Services

- [1800 Respect national helpline](#): 1800 737 732
- [Lifeline \(24 hour crisis line\)](#): 131 114
- [Beyond Blue](#): 1300 224 636
- DRS 4 DRS



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Email info@amsa.org.au
Web www.amsa.org.au
Twitter [@yourAMSA](https://twitter.com/yourAMSA)

- List of state based services available here:
<https://www.respect.gov.au/services/>

Background

- One in six women have experienced at least one sexual assault since the age of fifteen in Australia (1).
- Survivors of sexual assault have a significantly increased lifetime risk of mental illness (1, 2).
- One in five sexual assaults cause physical injury at the time (1, 2).
- Less than 17 per cent of victims of sexual harassment at work report the incident as a complaint (3).

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