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ADELAIDE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

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for Cities

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Jamie Bucirde, Not So Hospitable

Anna Edwards, Centre for Cities, University of Melbourne

A/Prof Bianca Fileborn, School of Social and Political Sciences, University of Melbourne

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INTRODUCTION¹

Sexual harassment in the workplace is, unfortunately, an all-too-common experience for women in Australia, with often-devastating impacts for victim-survivors' wellbeing and careers (AHRC, 2022). Like other forms of sexual violence, workplace sexual harassment is highly gendered, with women disproportionately impacted and men overwhelmingly the perpetrators of harassment (AHRC 2020, 2022). Existing research suggests that sexual harassment is more prevalent in certain industries, particularly those that are strongly hierarchical and male dominated (AHRC, 2020). The hospitality industry has been identified as one industry with disproportionately high rates of workplace sexual harassment (UWU, 2023).

In response to the pervasive problem of sexual harassment in the hospitality sector, Not So Hospitable formed as a grassroots movement aiming to highlight the prevalence, nature and impacts of sexual assault, sexual harassment and bullying within the Adelaide Hospitality Community. Not So Hospitable was established in 2022 by Jamie Bucirde to provide a safe space for individuals working in the Adelaide Hospitality sector to share their experiences of workplace harassment. Not So Hospitable's objectives are to:

- Help eradicate the culture and practices within the hospitality industry that enable sexual harassment, sexual assault and other workplace bullying
- Better protect hospitality workers across Adelaide and
- Help foster an industry culture that cultivates safety, respect and education.

This report presents findings from the 359 testimonies submitted to Not So Hospitable between August 2022 and December 2022. We provide an overview of the nature of participants' experiences, and identify key themes, behaviours and drivers of sexual harassment and assault within the Adelaide Hospitality Industry.

As we illustrate in the following section, there is currently only a small body of research detailing the experiences of hospitality workers. We therefore hope that this report provides a valuable contribution by shining a light on the normalised behaviours and culture of sexual harassment for hospitality workers. The findings of this report have important implications for the prevention of, and responses to, workplace harassment. We make a series of recommendations for key next steps relating to awareness raising, education for hospitality venues and pathways for further industry and policy reform.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HARASSMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY AND NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY SECTORS?

A growing body of research illustrates that the night-time economy and hospitality settings can be a 'hotspot' of sexual harassment and other forms of violence. In saying this, it is important to recognise that sexual violence is endemic across Australian society, and we don't intend to suggest that this problem is isolated to the night-time economy or hospitality. Nonetheless, we know that women and LGBTQ+ people routinely encounter sexual harassment and sexual violence in and around licensed venues in particular (Becker & Tinkler, 2021; Fileborn, 2016; Fileborn et al, 2023; Graham et al, 2017; Gunby et al, 2017; Kavanaugh, 2013; Nicholls, 2017; She's a Crowd, 2023). For example, recent Victorian research with 246 venue patrons found that 87.6% had experienced sexual violence in a licensed venue (Fileborn et al, 2023). Actions such as leering and unwanted verbal comments were most common, although a large minority also reported experiences that would constitute sexual assault or rape – and these findings are in line with other studies (e.g., Fileborn, 2016; Kavanaugh, 2013; She's a Crowd, 2023).

There are also contextual features of the night-time economy that can facilitate the occurrence of sexual violence. For example, some night time venues are sexualised spaces where patrons may go to 'hook up' or flirt. While there is nothing wrong with sexual venue cultures per se, they can be taken advantage

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of to normalise or excuse sexual harassment, which can be framed as simply something to be expected on a night out (Fileborn, 2016). Similarly, while alcohol and other drugs do not cause sexual violence, such substances can be used to facilitate and excuse sexual violence in venues (see Abbey, 2011, generally; Fileborn, 2016). For example, intoxication can be used by perpetrators to excuse or downplay their actions, while survivors are often blamed for their own experiences if they consumed alcohol (Fileborn, 2016; Grubb & Turner, 2012).

Most Australian research to date has focused on the experiences of patrons, rather than the experiences of those working in the hospitality industry and, of course, the hospitality industry does not only operate at night, though many examples from our data set do relate to night-time venues. There are, however, several recent Australian studies focusing on the experiences of hospitality workers that show that sexual harassment is a pervasive issue in the sector. For example, a 2023 report from the United Workers Union (UWU) found that 47% of respondents had experienced sexual harassment, while 86% of participants in an unpublished 2017 survey had experienced sexual harassment (UWU, 2023). Most participants did not report, with respondents citing a fear of negative repercussions if they reported, such as losing their jobs. There were often power disparities at play, with perpetrators in a position of power, and respondents in casual or precarious employment – themes that also play out in our own data set. We also know that the likelihood of experiencing workplace harassment in any sector is not shared equally, with women, LGBTQ+ people, younger people, disabled people and people from other marginalised communities encountering higher rates of sexual harassment at work (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2022).

Another recent project by Julia Coffey and colleagues (2023) shows how gendered expectations of hospitality workers could facilitate sexual harassment. Participants in this study similarly reported that sexual harassment was routinely encountered at work and was often viewed “as an unfortunate but unavoidable ‘part of the job’ for young women” (2023: 12). There was a gendered expectation for hospitality workers to foster a ‘fun’ environment’ for patrons, something which participants indicated could be taken advantage of or ‘cross the line’ into sexual harassment (2023:12). These hospitality workers also described becoming adept at predicting and ‘managing’ the potential for sexual (and other) violence as part of their roles.

Collectively, these studies tell us that sexual violence is a pervasive issue in the hospitality sector for both workers and patrons alike. There are environmental and contextual factors within hospitality that can facilitate, normalise and excuse the occurrence of sexual violence. Nonetheless, overall, we still know relatively little about the nature of sexual harassment in the hospitality sector. Drawing on the stories of 359 hospitality workers based in Adelaide, South Australia, this report builds on

existing work by providing further insight into the lived experiences of people who have experienced sexual harassment in the hospitality sector.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL ASSAULT?

The Not So Hospitable project took a victim-centred approach to understanding sexual harassment and sexual assault. Adelaide-based hospitality workers were invited to simply ‘share their testimony’, and there was no requirement for people’s experiences to adhere to any legal definition of sexual harassment or sexual assault. This approach ensures that the lived experiences of victim-survivors are centred above legal conceptualisations of sexual harm.

That said, it is important to establish that sexual harassment in the workplace is unlawful, and addressed through both South Australian and Commonwealth legislation including the following:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)

Under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth) sexual harassment refers to “any unwelcome sexual advance; unwelcome request for sexual favours, or; other unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature in relation to the person harassed in circumstances where a reasonable person, having regard to all the circumstances, would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would be offended, humiliated or intimidated” (AHRC, 2020: 16). This includes harassment from other colleagues, but also customers and clients (AHRC, 2023). Workplace sexual harassment also encompasses harassment that occurs in settings such as workplace functions or after-work drinks. The Sex Discrimination Act was amended in 2022 to include a positive duty for all workplaces to take “reasonable and proportionate” steps to prevent sexual harassment (AHRC, 2023: 1).

Some forms of workplace sexual harassment – and the experiences of those who submitted testimonies to Not So Hospitable – also constitute criminal offences under the Criminal Law Consolidation Act 1935 (SA). However, we recognise that all forms of sexual harassment and assault have the potential to cause harm and should be eliminated from the hospitality sector, regardless of whether they meet legal thresholds of harm.

In this report, we use the following terminology and definitions:

- Sexual harassment is used to refer to non-physical forms of violence, such as verbal comments, gestures and digital harm (e.g., image-based harassment).
- Sexual assault is used to refer to physical forms of violence, including rape (which includes vaginal, anal and oral penetration with other body parts or objects), attempted rape, groping, kissing and so forth.
- Sexual violence is used as an umbrella term to refer to the full continuum of sexual harassment and assault.

OVERVIEW OF THE ADELAIDE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

The City of Adelaide boasts an impressive density of 376 food, drink, and entertainment businesses per 10,000 residents, ranking it one of Australia's leaders in the night time economy sector. These businesses are major contributors to the local job market, with more than 10,000 individuals employed within the city, meaning more than one in every ten workers finds their livelihoods in the hospitality sector (Edwards & License, 2023, p. 14). Furthermore, more than one third of consumer spending in the City of Adelaide happens after-hours, with 72% of that night time spend attributable to dining, bars, clubs and entertainment (Adelaide Economic Development Agency, 2024).

These jobs range from culinary positions in kitchens, to service roles in bars and clubs, and entertainers, to name a few. The contributions of these professionals are essential to the city. They not only support the economy through their work but also help to shape the city's identity and cultural offerings. Their expertise and creativity enhance Adelaide's reputation as a destination for excellent food, compelling entertainment, and vibrant nightlife, attracting both locals and tourists alike. We know, however, that many people working in the night time industries suffer from harms generated by sexual misconduct within the workplace. This report shines a light on some of the experiences of these people and calls for action to reduce these harms going forward.

METHODS

In this report, we present findings from 359 testimonies submitted to the Not So Hospitable website from August to December 2022. The Not So Hospitable website contained an online submission form that provided an open-text box for respondents to describe their experience(s) of harassment in the Adelaide hospitality sector in their own words. Respondents were required to provide the year of the incident(s), the venue,

and their gender, and had the option of providing their name and contact details or to remain anonymous. Respondents were then invited to share their experiences in their own words, with minimal instruction provided as to what the testimonies 'should' focus on. This was important in terms of ensuring that respondents had full control over the details they provided, and to enable respondents to share their experience(s) in a way that was meaningful to them. However, this also meant that individual responses varied significantly in terms of their length and the level and type of detail provided. Nonetheless, as our findings illustrate, there were still strong themes and commonalities across submissions. The data generated in this project was primarily text-based, however the large number of responses enabled us to undertake both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of experiences.

The Not So Hospitable project was promoted through an Instagram account, through Jamie's personal social media accounts, and the project also generated interest through print and radio news media. Respondents were self-selecting, and while the large number of responses received provide some robust insights into this issue, the findings of this project are not generalisable. It is important to note that all respondents had experienced sexual harassment and/or assault in the hospitality industry. This means that while the project provides rich insight into the experiences of victim-survivors, it cannot provide insight into the prevalence of sexual harassment in the Adelaide hospitality sector at large.

DATA ANALYSIS

The testimonies collected by Not So Hospitable were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative analysis. For the purposes of the analysis for this report, and in accordance with the University of Melbourne's ethics approval, the data collected was fully deidentified prior to data analysis commencing. Jamie Bucirde from Not So Hospitable was the only person with access to the raw data. Jamie led the data analysis, with support from the other report authors.

A descriptive quantitative content analysis was undertaken on the testimonies. This included generating descriptive statistics of respondent demographic information (where provided), the nature of the harassment disclosed, the perpetrator's gender and role, the year of incident, the type of hospitality venue, and so forth. As respondents were invited to provide an open-text submission, there was variability in the level of detail provided in the testimonies. When presenting the quantitative data, we also indicate how many of the 359 participants provided information on a particular topic. Qualitative content analysis was also used to identify common features across respondent's accounts, and to identify implicit or abstract themes in respondents' accounts, such as 'power' and 'industry norms'. The report authors also

met regularly during the data analysis process to discuss and refine emerging themes.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The testimonies drawn on in this report were collected through the activist work of Not So Hospitable. In 2023, after the activist work had been completed, Not So Hospitable collaborated with researchers from the University of Melbourne (A/Prof Bianca Fileborn and Anna Edwards) to support the data analysis and development of this report. The data analysis and report writing process was supported by funding from the Australian Research Council (DE190100404 and DP220101078). The project team applied for and received ethics approval from the University of Melbourne Human Research Ethics Committee to work with the data collected by Not So Hospitable (Ethics ID 28131).

When Not So Hospitable launched their submission platform in 2022, individuals submitting a testimony were provided with information about how their data would be used and stored, including the potential for submissions to be used in future research and advocacy around sexual harassment in the hospitality sector. Contact details for counselling and support services were also provided on the Not So Hospitable submission form. In line with both the information provided by Not So Hospitable, and the requirements of the University ethics process, all data presented in this report has been fully de-identified to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of those who made submissions. This means that details that could be used to identify someone, such as venue names, names of perpetrators and so forth, have been removed from the dataset. We have edited respondents' submissions for spelling and grammatical errors however they are otherwise presented as submitted.

LIMITATIONS

While this project offers some valuable insights into the lived experiences of hospitality workers who have experienced workplace sexual violence, there are limitations associated with the data that should be kept in mind. As noted, as respondents were asked to submit an open-ended written response and had full control over the details shared, this meant there were inevitably some inconsistencies in the levels of detail provided. While we can report on the prevalence of certain features within respondents' accounts, we cannot comment more broadly on prevalence rates within the hospitality industry.

As the project utilised a survey, with many participants choosing to remain anonymous, it was not possible to ask follow-up or clarifying questions. Respondents may have also not felt comfortable sharing aspects of their experiences or may have omitted experiences that they did not consider relevant to the

project. So, we must view the testimonies presented in this report as partial accounts of respondents' experiences.

Further, respondents to this project are not necessarily representative of the broader Adelaide hospitality industry. We are particularly cognisant of the fact that particularly vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups may not have participated. Respondents were not asked to provide information on things like their cultural or racial background, or their sexuality. We know from other studies that women of colour, people from migrant backgrounds, and LGBTQIA+ people can all face disproportionately high rates of workplace harassment (AHRC, 2022; Segrave et al, 2023), and these experiences are not always reflected in our data.

The latest research commissioned by the Council of Capital City Lord Mayors shows that there are more than 10,000 people employed in Adelaide's night time industries, providing food, drink and entertainment to patrons (Edwards & License, 2023, p. 14). While the testimonies collected represent a relatively minor fraction of the total workforce, it's important to note that not all 10,000 individuals employed in the sector will have seen the opportunity to submit a testimony. This suggests that the actual number of individuals who have encountered such distressing incidents could potentially be higher, pointing to a need for further investigation.

KEY FINDINGS: EXPERIENCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT IN THE ADELAIDE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY

We move on now to provide a snapshot of key findings of respondents' experiences of sexual harassment and assault in Adelaide's hospitality sector. Of the 359 testimonies received, 333 gave information on the venue in which the incident occurred. Of those 333²:

- 39% were in a bar / pub / club (n=129)
- 36% were in a cafe / restaurant (n=121)
- 8% were at a festival / event / music / performance venue (n=25)
- 5% were in hotels (n=17)

The remaining 12% (n=15) respondents reported incidents that occurred at other hospitality venues including bottle shops, wineries and fast food/takeaway outlets.

Of the 359 testimonies received, 357 gave the year of the incident:

- 13% of incidents were reported to have taken place prior to 2104 (n=48)
- 44% of incidents happened between 2015-2019 (n=156)
- 43% of incidents took place more recently, since 2020 (n=153)

Of the 359 testimonies received, 328 gave information on the nature of the incident identified in the testimony. Of those 328:

- 57% involved sexual harassment (n=186)
- 41% involved sexual assault (n=136)

- 2% involved other incidents of intimidation, domestic violence, sexism and harassment (n=6)

As noted earlier, in the context of this report 'sexual harassment' refers to experiences that did not involve physical contact, while 'sexual assault' refers to experiences that did involve physical contact. In this project, we centre victim-survivors experiences and do not draw on legal conceptualisations of sexual violence, though it is likely that many of these experiences would also meet legal thresholds of sexual harm.

In 302 of these responses, we were able to classify respondent's experiences into more specific categories of sexual violence:

- 43% involved unwanted sexual comments (sexual harassment) (n=129)
- 17% involved unwanted touching or groping (sexual assault) (n=50)
- 15% involved unwanted sexual acts (sexual assault) (n=44)
- 8% involved unwanted sexual advances (sexual harassment) (n=23)
- 8% involved rape (sexual assault) (n=23)
- 4% involved intimidation (n=11)
- 3% involved unwanted kissing (sexual assault) (n=8)
- 5% involved other sexual harassment and assault incidents including attempted rape, unwanted texts/calls, assault, bullying, grooming, homophobia and indecent exposure (n=14)

Participants in this study shared detailed and at times distressing narratives that shed light on the pervasive nature of sexual harassment and assault culture within Adelaide's hospitality sector. These narratives highlight the varied spectrum of sexual harassment and assault behaviours experienced by hospitality staff and the normalised and systematic nature of sexual violence in Adelaide's hospitality sector.

As noted, for the purposes of this report, we use 'sexual harassment' to refer to experiences that did not involve physical contact, and 'sexual assault' to refer to experiences that involved

² Please note that percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding

physical contact. However, these forms of sexual violence also overlapped and co-occurred. Many participants expressed that they had experienced “countless” incidents of sexual harassment, that the information shared in their testimonies was “only the tip of the iceberg”, and that “every female I know in hospitality has experienced sexual harassment”. This suggests that sexual harassment and assault are ingrained within the hospitality industry, and respondents’ testimonies are providing a small snapshot of countless lived experiences. In the following sections we provide a more detailed account of the forms of sexual violence respondents shared through the project.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The incidents of sexual harassment experienced by staff were varied within Adelaide’s hospitality sector. Respondents described a wide range of sexual harassment and intimidation, including unwanted sexual comments and advances, unwanted prolonged staring and leering, unwanted texts or phone calls, and colleagues watching or displaying pornography at work.

Unwanted sexual comments or advances emerged as the most prevalent form of harassment, reported by 43% of participants. One participant, a young female waitress, shared her experience of being verbally sexually harassed by her boss in front of male colleagues, who would address her using derogatory terms within the confines of the office, stating:

“As the only female staff member in my venue, my boss would address me as a ‘slut’ and ‘whore’ in the office in front of my other male colleagues”

Another participant described a hostile work environment where the staff changeroom was adorned with female pornography, creating an uncomfortable and inappropriate atmosphere that went unaddressed by management. Furthermore, a different female participant revealed how her male manager engaged in a pattern of inappropriate behaviour, including making derogatory remarks about female coworkers’ appearances, commenting on their physical attributes, and sharing inappropriate anecdotes about past workers.

“My (male) manager would call me and other young female presenting coworkers inappropriate names, tell us we looked good today comment on girls’ chest sizes and would share inappropriate stories ...[about] past workers”

One participant stated that she:

“worked at a place that had ‘sexual assault Sundays’, where the more senior staff were allowed to make sexual jokes and harass the younger staff. It was disgusting. Even the general manager was in on it.”

These testimonies highlight the pervasive and normalised nature of sexual harassment within the hospitality industry.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Participants in this study shared harrowing accounts of experiencing various forms of sexual assault while working in the hospitality industry. These incidents included unwanted kissing, forced oral sex, penetration with fingers, unwanted touching and groping, attempted rape and rape. For instance, one participant, a 20-year-old waitress, described being cornered by her sommelier in the wine room and coerced into kissing him. Similarly, another female bartender recounted an experience in a staff toilet where a colleague attempted to force her into a sexual encounter while she was there as a patron. Additionally, participants detailed instances such as:

“When kneeling down to get something from a cupboard, a male coworker put his hand on my head and thrust his groin towards me. I told him to leave me alone. This happened in front of the entire kitchen staff”

One female staff member recounted her experience of a male patron putting his fingers between her thighs when she was bending over to pick something up, yelling “That’s a prime cut you’ve got their chef” to the kitchen. She said her bosses did nothing about the situation but laugh with the other men, and recounted feeling sick to her stomach and believed that she was young and naive. Another instance was described where a staff member was raped in the venue bathroom. The incident was reported to a security guard on shift, who did not take the report seriously and took no action.

Another recounted a story of an assault by her male boss:

“He told me I’d still be getting paid and roughly grabbed my hair and brought me down to my knees. I screamed and he smacked my face. He told me I was stupid for screaming in a club and that his office was soundproof.”

These narratives shed light on the pervasive and distressing nature of sexual assault within the hospitality industry, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive intervention and support for victim/survivors.

OVERLAPPING BEHAVIOUR

A significant number of participants detailed instances of overlapping harassment and assault underscoring the normalised and recurrent occurrence of these behaviours within the hospitality sector. These testimonies often depicted concurrent experiences of verbal and physical harassment and assault, sometimes unfolding within the same incident or persisting over extended periods. For instance, one female worker recounted enduring incessant comments about her body and appearance from older male patrons, alongside unwelcomed touching and groping of her bottom. She also described how older patrons would specifically request drinks from the top shelf to watch her stretch, expressing

dissatisfaction if she placed the spirits on a lower level. Similarly, another participant narrated receiving a suggestive comment regarding her attire and behaviour, coupled with unwanted physical advances such as creeping hands down her lower back or lewd gazes directed at her chest. Moreover, instances of bullying and gaslighting by both management and customers were reported by several female hospitality staff, further emphasising the pervasive and multifaceted nature of the harassment and assault experienced in the workplace.

We move on now to overview the environmental, cultural and structural factors underpinning sexual violence in the hospitality industry.

POWER, CULTURE AND NORMALISATION

POSITIONS OF POWER

Of the 359 testimonies, 308 shared their role. Of the 308 :

- 94% were hospitality staff members (n=279)
- 6% were patrons (n=18)
- 1% were in other roles (n=2)

Of the 359 testimonies received, 320 gave information on the perpetrator's role within hospitality. Of those 320:

- 23% were a manager of the venue (n=74)
- 22% were patrons (n=71)
- 19% were owners of the venue (n=61)
- 16% were also staff members (n=50)
- 15% were chefs (n=47)
- 5% were other, including friend and family members of the venue, DJs and rideshare drivers (n=17)

A prevalent theme emerging from these accounts was the exploitation of staff members by individuals in positions of power. The majority of perpetrators identified were men holding managerial or ownership roles within the establishments, while the victim/survivors were predominantly younger women employees. This pattern underscores the profound impact of gendered and hierarchical power dynamics on instances of sexual harassment and assault within the hospitality industry. Moreover, it elucidates the challenges faced by victims in reporting, seeking assistance, or maintaining employment in environments where the perpetrator holds authority.

For example, one participant described how the head chef utilised his authority to coerce compliance from staff,

threatening them with reduced shifts or termination if they resisted. Desperate to retain their positions, young female employees endured such abuse silently. Another recounted her discomfort when her married boss, leveraging his position, solicited sexual favours in exchange for financial compensation. One woman shared:

“A male colleague harassed and assaulted seven female colleagues. Including withholding hours unless they slept with/went out with him and groping them while on shift.”

Additionally, a participant described the humiliation of being physically assaulted by her male manager in front of colleagues, while another highlighted the normalisation of inappropriate behaviour fostered by venue owners, who notoriously solicited sexual favours from female staff in exchange for perks like free drinks. Furthermore, a 19-year-old interviewee shared her experience of being sexually assaulted by the owner during a job interview at a pizza bar, illustrating the pervasive nature of abuse wielded by those in authority.

“When I was 19 I went for a job interview/ job trial at a pizza bar where I was unfortunately locked in a room and sexually assaulted by the owner.”

Another said:

“Management also made disgusting sexual remarks, even having sex with employees on the premises. Sexism, racism and general bullying was rampant.”

Similarly, another participant detailed the exploitation she faced when the venue owner withheld her pay and conditioned proper compensation on her compliance with his advances, demonstrating the systemic abuse of power and manipulation within the industry. Another respondent said:

“I was slapped on the ass by a head chef. Continuous sexual comments and blatant objectification.”

These narratives underscore the urgent need for systemic change within the hospitality industry to address the pervasive culture of exploitation and abuse perpetuated by individuals in positions of power. Implementing robust policies, fostering a supportive environment for reporting, and holding perpetrators accountable are crucial steps toward creating safer workplaces for all employees.

GENDER

The latest Census data shows that more than 70% of people employed in hospitality occupations in South Australia identify as female (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021). Of the 359 testimonies collected, 352 shared their gender. Of these 352:

- 89% identified as female (n=312)
- 7% identified as male (n=24)

- 5% identified as other (n=7)

Of the 359 testimonies received, 318 gave information on the perpetrators' gender. Of those 318:

- 97% of perpetrators were reported to be male (n=97)
- 3% of perpetrators were reported to be female (n=9)

The gendered nature of harassment and assault within the hospitality industry was strikingly evident in the narratives shared by participants, and this reflects the gendered nature of sexual violence more broadly. Victimisation and perpetration adhered to highly gendered patterns. Women, particularly those in subordinate positions, were disproportionately targeted by male perpetrators who wielded power within the workplace hierarchy. In their comments, participants repeatedly drew attention to the gendered nature of harassment in the hospitality industry, and the role of gendered power inequalities in enabling harassment.

"After being promoted ahead of a male employee, he went out of his way to harass me until I resigned."

Others said:

"Constant overt sexual harassment and comments made by kitchen staff towards any female employee that happened to find themselves in the kitchen"

"As a female apprentice chef, I was in a male dominated industry. My entire apprenticeship was filled with abuse, sexual harassment and bullying."

That said, it is important to acknowledge that a smaller number of male hospitality workers also experienced sexual harassment, and a small number of female respondents reported being harassed or assaulted by other women. For example, two male respondents described being sexually harassed by groups of intoxicated female patrons, including:

"touching my arms and chest and telling me how handsome/beautiful I was. This made me feel extremely uncomfortable and confused as to whether it was normal as I've never heard stories of a male being sexualised in this manner."

While the hospitality sector is female-dominated in terms of the sheer number of women employed, men continue to disproportionately hold positions of power, and a gender-pay

gap persists (WGEA, 2023).³ Indeed, respondents drew attention to broader sexism and gendered expectations in the industry, such as being denied opportunities to take on more senior roles "because I was too pretty to be hidden in the office". Thus, the hospitality sector is arguably culturally and structurally masculine. Perpetrators often exploited their positions of authority to perpetrate acts of harassment and assault with impunity, creating a hostile work environment where victims felt powerless to speak out. Many hospitality workers also face precarious and exploitative working conditions and underpayment (Robinson, Oren & Riordan, 2022). This precarity compounded the vulnerability of hospitality workers to sexual harassment and created further barriers to speaking out, something we explore further later in this report. The normalisation of sexual harassment and assault therefore perpetuated systemic inequalities in the hospitality sector.

AGE AND UNDERAGE GROOMING

Of the 359 testimonies, 54 shared their age at the time of the incident. Of those 54:

- 33% were aged 15 and under (n=18)
- 44% were aged between 16 and 18 (n=24)
- 17% were aged between 19 and 21 (n=9)
- 6% were aged 22 and over (n=3)

The legal age of sexual consent in South Australia is 17.

Of those who specified their age at the time of the incident, 49% were underage at the time of their experience and couldn't legally consent.

Of the 359 testimonies received, 27 gave information on the perpetrators' age. Of those 27:

- 22% were aged between 18 and 29 (n=6)
- 11% were aged between 30 and 39 (n=3)
- 37% were aged between 40 and 49 (n=10)
- 15% were aged 50 and over (n=4)

³ The WGEA data encompasses the Accommodation and Food Services Industries broadly, and is not strictly limited to the hospitality sector.

- 15% were reported to be older than the victim/survivor but their age was not specified (n=4)

Of those who provided age details, the perpetrators were consistently older than the victim. Eighteen testimonials specified both the age of the victim/survivor and the age of the perpetrator at the time of the incident. The average age gap for these 18 testimonials was 21 years. It is important to note that the estimated age of each perpetrator may be a subjective assumption of the victim/survivor. We cannot confirm the exact age of the perpetrator.

Concerningly, a significant minority of participants shared stories of being harassed and/or groomed by older male employers or colleagues in a position of power while they were underage. Numerous respondents described a gradually escalating pattern of behaviour, usually commencing with seemingly 'innocent' comments or interactions, and gradually shifting towards more overtly sexualised or violent behaviour over time.

One respondent shared that when she was 15, her 55-year-old male manager would "make comments every now and then about if he could spot my underwear line through my leggings. Eventually he'd offer to take me camping and suggest I shouldn't wear a g string to work because it would turn him on". Another recounted that when she was 15, her old boss would give her back massages and a foot massage on break, explaining that this made her feel extremely uncomfortable. One participant said she was harassed sexually as a 14-year-old by the elderly owner and multiple other male staff members. Another said that when she was 14 years old a co-worker in his 20's followed her into the staff bathroom and tried to kiss her without consent, would always slap her butt and whisper things into her ear suggesting he wanted to take her home with him.

"My first job was at 14 was where I was regularly sexually harassed by the pub owner and all his old friends."

"I used to work at a winery when I was 15. My male boss in his 40s used to touch all the female workers aged 15/16 on the bum and rub their shoulders."

"An underage crew member was sexually assault[ed] and spoke to head office about the experience and the man who sexual assaulted ended up moving to another restaurant chain and a few months later he was promoted to restaurant manager."

One respondent described how when she was 16, her managers' husband would stroke her thighs and bottom when no one else was around, which over time progressed into more overt groping. She recounted being frozen in shock and confusion at the time as she was so young. She said that worst of all, this behaviour only occurred when his wife wasn't around. Another underage female stated that she would constantly get asked questions about her body and sexuality, including if she was a

virgin or if she had ever masturbated. One night, she said her male manager asked her to pull her pants down, and when she refused, he attempted to grab her belt and pull her towards him. She states she remembers feeling extreme distress and crying a lot that night. Another young female recounted her male boss grooming her and pursuing her sexually when she was intoxicated and he was sober, whilst also encouraging her to stay quiet about the incident.

These experiences illustrate how hospitality workers can face multiple and compounding layers of vulnerability relating to age in addition to gender and workplaces precarity (among many other intersecting factors).

ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUGS

Of the 359 testimonies received, 48 gave information on whether alcohol or other drugs were involved. Of those 48:

- 77% involved alcohol
- 19% involved other drugs (n=19)
- 4% involved both alcohol and other drugs (n=4)

It is important to note that under the South Australian legal definition of consent, a person who is drunk, intoxicated or under the influence of drugs is unable to give consent.

Participants disclosed many instances of sexual harassment and assault where alcohol or other drugs played a significant role. One participant shared her experience of being raped by a person in a position of power at her workplace. She recounted being groomed over several months and then plied with excessive amounts of alcohol, leading to a state of confusion and memory loss. Despite her attempts to report the incident, management turned a blind eye, compounding her distress. Another participant revealed a disturbing culture of coercion, where female staff members were pressured to accept shots from male patrons, facing ridicule if they declined.

"I was raped by someone in a position of power at this venue. They spent a few months grooming me and then one night fed me copious amounts of alcohol. I woke up in their bed so confused and could only remember a small amount about what had happened."

Additionally, another victim/survivor recounted being sexually assaulted by a manager on multiple occasions, with the perpetrator using her alcohol consumption to discredit her complaints. Another disturbing account detailed an incident where a staff member was drugged during after-work drinks (known in the hospitality industry as knock-offs) and subsequently raped by multiple colleagues, awakening to find herself alone in the closed venue with visible injuries.

Previous research has illustrated how the ready availability of alcohol and other drugs, rape myths that place blame on victim-survivors who were intoxicated, and perpetrators' control over a venue space can all be drawn on to facilitate sexual violence against patrons in hospitality and licensed venue spaces (e.g., Fileborn, 2016). Our findings illustrate that these same environmental and cultural features are also implicated in perpetration against hospitality workers. These stories underscore the urgent need for robust measures to address the pervasive issue of alcohol and drug-facilitated sexual harassment and assault within hospitality settings, and to ensure that preventative measures are inclusive of the experiences of staff as well as patrons.

HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY NORMS

While we have begun to touch on the role of industry specific norms (particularly those relating to alcohol and other drugs), in this section we delve into the role of industry specific norms in facilitating, minimising and excusing sexual violence against hospitality workers. Across the data set, it was apparent that a range of over-lapping cultural norms within the hospitality industry were contributing towards the occurrence and normalisation of sexual violence.

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT

Among these norms is the pervasive belief in the mantra 'the customer is always right,' which often prioritises patron satisfaction and monetary spend over the well-being of staff members. One participant shared a distressing experience of being groped by a customer while working at the age of 16. When she reported the incident to her boss, she was dismayed to hear him dismiss her concerns, suggesting that such behaviour was acceptable because the perpetrators were football players. This highlights a concerning normalisation of inappropriate customer behaviour and a disregard for the safety and dignity of hospitality workers. Another participant recounted a regular customer sexually harassing her over a period of months, with no consequences because he spent so much money within the venue. Yet another participant described witnessing her boss pouring her perpetrator a beer after saying he would 'handle' the patron when she reported his behaviour. The prioritisation of customer satisfaction and venue profit over the safety and dignity of hospitality workers underscores a troubling cultural norm within the industry, and one that undermines the safety of staff in the name of profit.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT ARE NORMAL FOR WOMEN IN HOSPITALITY

The deeply ingrained notion that sexual harassment and assault are considered normal within the hospitality industry was evidenced by the numerous accounts shared by participants (see also Coffey et al, 2023). Despite the prevalence of

harassment, many instances were dismissed or trivialised, perpetuating a culture of impunity. In our data there were numerous accounts of women being told that their abuse was just a part of working in the industry. Some respondents described encountering harassment so frequently that they simply became 'used to it':

"Regulars at this pub would constantly grab my ass or leave their hand close to it while talking to me. We were encouraged to smile and get on with it."

"I became used to the disgusting way they would look at myself and the other young staff as we would bring their drinks out, ignoring the comments, the piercing stares and the smirks after making us feel uncomfortable"

"After a while you stop taking it personally but unfortunately this is a universal experience all female bartenders have, where sexual harassment is condoned and laughed off because they're just drunk"

"We were expected to put up with customers and to 'just ignore them'... Management brought customer loyalty with my dignity"

Women were also asked to dress more sexily at work, specifically to wear shorter skirts and low-cut tops, expectations that were not placed on their male counterparts.

"I... previously worked in a nightclub where my manager told me to dress more provocatively. I was a door girl, working outside on [location] in the winter"

"Wear a shorter skirt next week it will bring the young boys in"

"I'd been forced to wear tight revealing low tops as my uniform, although I requested on several occasions to have access to the men's uniforms...so I didn't have to reveal my body and receive staring eyes and glares 24/7"

For some participants being *required* to present themselves in a sexualised manner was uncomfortable and was drawn on by others to excuse and minimise experiences of harassment. The examples provided here also illustrate how these different industry norms interact to produce an environment that is conducive to sexual violence. For example, we can see in the excerpts above that alcohol consumption, ensuring the happiness of customers, and the construction of sexual harassment as something that must simply be 'put up with' come together to normalise and minimise respondents' experiences.

Moreover, there exists a pervasive belief that sexual harassment within the hospitality industry should be brushed off as a joke rather than taken seriously. Female staff members attempting to report instances of harassment were often met with responses urging them to relax or not make a big deal out of it. For example:

"I was supposed to take it as a joke when I wore a skirt and my boss made me get stock from upstairs while he held the ladder. One of the employees later raped me".

"Any attempt to speak up was responded to as it just being a joke"

"I told management of the incident – they told me at least I have a funny story to tell"

This dismissive attitude from management further reinforces the culture of impunity, making it challenging for victims to seek support or resolution. By minimising the seriousness of harassment, the industry perpetuates a cycle of abuse and injustice, ultimately failing to protect the wellbeing and dignity of its workforce.

HOSPITALITY IS A BOYS' CLUB / BOYS WILL BE BOYS

Hospitality was described as a boys' club, reflected through refrains such as "boys will be boys." That is, men are often situated in positions of power within the industry, and support the careers of other men even when they engage in abusive behaviour. This attitude fosters a culture where misconduct and harassment are excused or even condoned, particularly when perpetrated by male employees in positions of power.

As we discuss further in a later section on reporting and disclosure, venue managers and owners frequently downplayed or dismissed complaints, resorting to trivialising comments such as "boys will be boys." For example, one respondent described her perpetrator as a "hot shot chef and definitely 'one of the boys'". Another respondent discussed how after reporting a male colleague who had sexually harassed her over a period of time, the response from management was to:

"basically [give] him a slap on the wrist. 'Boys will be boys'... I got demoted and had my hours cut. He stayed on as Duty Manager with zero repercussions".

Respondents also described instances of sexual harassment occurring as a form of homosocial bonding. For example, many respondents reported that groups of male colleagues, or male friends of venue managers/owners, would openly comment on the appearance of female employees.

This normalisation of inappropriate behaviour not only perpetuates a hostile work environment but also created barriers for victim/survivors seeking justice and accountability:

"This culture was accepted and encouraged, the power imbalance between the younger female employees and the older male employees (plus a few older females who would unfortunately laugh along when we were harassed) was uncomfortable and left me feeling constantly anxious and objectified."

"The owner created an environment that allowed friends of his to discuss our looks, and touch us inappropriately, or hug us. Most

staff were barely 18 and we had to suck it up or risk losing our jobs"

"He's a predator who has operated with impunity in an industry that rewards misogyny and aggression with hero status while victims suffer"

Across respondents' accounts, it was clear that many hospitality venues fostered environments in which male members of staff were not held to account for their behaviour, with harmful actions excused and minimised, and the careers of harassers actively supported.

INDUSTRY-WIDE COMPLICITY TO SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT

Beyond the 'boys club', respondents described how the hospitality industry more broadly often harbours individuals known for perpetrating sexual violence, choosing to turn a blind eye to their abusive behaviour. For example, numerous respondents described being forced out of the hospitality industry while their perpetrator was promoted or otherwise lauded within the industry. This environment not only enables predators to operate with impunity but also rewards misogyny and aggression, further perpetuating a cycle of abuse where victims suffer while perpetrators are celebrated as heroes.

"Sexual harassment is normalised, it's their culture, its accepted and encouraged. If I set boundaries in these spaces, spoke up, expressed my concern I was the one dragged into a separate room to consider how I need to change my viewpoint because that's just the way it is"

"I spoke to another manager about it and he said this person had been a known sexual predator for over 10 years but that he felt obligated to defend them under the 'bro code'"

"[venue names] continue to employ the...services of known sexual predator and fucking scumbag [name], despite management and staff being told of his repeated actions"

"They also made me believe that nobody else would want to hire me without their approval...It's been seven years and they've loomed over every single new job I've applied for, interfering with the reference check process (even though I never used them as a reference)"

"Venue continues to hire known sexual predators. Men who work here prey on vulnerable women"

"A [venue owner] has a history of sexual assault...Many in the community know of these actions and continue to support him professionally"

Several participants working for larger hospitality outlets also described perpetrators simply being moved to another location

after reporting their actions. In addition to apparent industry-wide complicity, the celebrity chef culture exacerbates the problem by glorifying renowned chefs, regardless of their track records of sexual assault or misconduct. Despite allegations against them, these chefs often continue to enjoy fame and success, sending a disturbing message that talent and celebrity status outweigh accountability for their actions.

That said, a small number of respondents indicated that some abusive men had been blacklisted from the industry:

“This venue manager does not work with us anymore, and has since been fired from another hospitality venue for not supporting female staff members. The industry talks, or rather the people working in it do...”

REPORTING OUTCOMES

Of the 359 testimonies received, 170 gave information on the outcomes from reporting the incident within their venue. Of those 170:

- 48% said nothing was done by management after reporting (n=81)
- 29% said they felt they couldn't report due to a work perpetrator (n=50)
- 4% said they had their shifts cut or were forced to quit (n=7)
- 4% said they were fired / had an unfair dismissal (n=6)

A further 13% (n=22) reported other negative reporting outcomes, including mental stress, a fear of losing their job, not being taken seriously, being threatened or bullied and having their pay withheld. Only 2% of victims reported positive reporting outcomes where action was taken by the venue, or the perpetrator was dismissed from work (n=4).

BARRIERS TO DISCLOSURE AND REPORTING

The testimonies highlight several significant barriers that deter individuals from reporting sexual harassment and assault in the hospitality industry. Foremost among these barriers is the pervasive fear of negative repercussions, including further abuse or retaliation from perpetrators – something that is again heightened by the often-precarious nature of hospitality work. Many victim/survivors expressed concerns about losing their jobs or facing reduced shifts if they spoke out, reflecting a power dynamic that protects perpetrators and silences victims:

“I was too scared to talk to the guys at work about it”

“I felt very uncomfortable but felt I was unable to speak up”

“Most staff were barely 18 and we had to suck it up or risk losing our jobs”

“We have to work with him, and have no one to report his behaviour to as he is the owner/operator...I have since quit”

“How was I meant to approach and explain that the man they trusted like a son had done this to me, and feel secure that they would not only believe me, but take action”

“I don't recall reporting it to anyone...I hadn't yet found my voice as a 19-year-old”

Unfortunately, and as we have already begun to illustrate and discuss further in the next section, many respondents were met with disbelief or minimisation if they did report, and numerous respondents indicated that they lost their jobs, resigned, or faced other forms of retaliation after reporting. Such responses undoubtedly serve as a warning to others working in the industry, having a chilling effect on workers' willingness to report. Additionally, the lack of comprehensive education on workplace rights contributes to a sense of confusion and helplessness among workers, leaving them unaware of how to navigate reporting procedures or where to seek support:

“I never quit officially or submitted a complaint, I just never went back. I didn't know what to do or who to tell”

Moreover, the presence of perpetrators in positions of authority, such as managers or owners, further complicates the reporting process, as victims may fear not being taken seriously or simply had no one to report to because their perpetrator was in charge.

“All of the staff were pretty aware of the owner and manager's behaviour but felt like we couldn't do anything because they would 'ruin our career'. Also, it's pretty hard to make a formal complaint when it's your boss you have to complain about”

These barriers collectively create a culture of silence, fear and victim blaming, and hamper the potential for meaningful accountability within the industry. As we have discussed earlier in this report, many respondents first experienced workplace harassment when they were young, often in their first jobs, and from men who were considerably older than them and in direct positions of control and authority (e.g., managers, business owners). Many had little access to formal recourse – such as a HR department to report to – and were employed in casual or precarious positions and thus readily disposable if they complained. Collectively, this structural precarity amplified the potential risks of disclosure and reporting, and many respondents described simply leaving their job rather than reporting.

Many individuals also grappled with a lack of awareness regarding what constitutes sexual assault, as expressed by one participant who stated, “I never told anyone because I didn't realise at the time that was sexual assault.” Another said, “I was an innocent young girl just trying to make money. However, now I look back and see how uncomfortable and wrong everything

was". Again, this may be particularly heightened for respondents who began experiencing workplace harassment at a young age (see Fileborn & Hardley, 2023), and it is not uncommon for survivors to need time to fully understand and label experiences of violence for what they are. While we are cautious not to lay responsibility on survivors to identify and report or disclose sexual violence, these findings nonetheless underscore the urgent need for comprehensive education and awareness campaigns to empower workers to recognise and address instances of harassment and assault.

RESPONSES TO DISCLOSURE AND REPORTING

Another key theme identified within this data set was the lack of action taken by venues after instances of sexual harassment or assault were reported. Responses to disclosures often minimised, brushed aside or actively avoided addressing the violence. Respondents were told that they shouldn't take their assaults or harassment seriously, or that it wasn't the venues or managers responsibility to keep them safe. For example:

"This is repeated behaviour where senior male management take advantage of younger female employees without punishment. The only people to report to are the other male bosses who don't really care about this behaviour"

"I was sexually assaulted by a manager on a night out. I alerted staff and management the next day and there were no consequences, just a half assed apology message saying I don't remember what happened from the perpetrator."

"As a waitress I was sexually assaulted by a few men of a large group. The guests weren't kicked out and no support was offered to me by management by way of making a report or anyone checking if I was okay"

"I've had older male staff members constantly touch me while talking or working behind a bar, while serving at the same venues I have had patrons slap me on the ass numerous times and management not do anything about it due to profits lost from patrons leaving regardless of behaviour."

"I told my dad about this and he took me to the police but they said there was nothing they could do because it was my word against his. I was only 16."

Respondents also described experiencing backlash and negative repercussions if they reported, including losing their jobs, or being subject to further bullying and ostracization:

"After standing up for myself on countless occasions, I was dismissed. Apparently I had an attitude problem"

"One of the older girls raised the issue with his [the harasser's] wife and had a failed attempt at reporting it to police; we were all immediately fired"

"I immediately had most of my shifts cut and was made to feel extremely unwelcome at work until I eventually quit"

"I made my discomfort know[n]...After that, I was given no more shifts and when I came in to pick up my cash pay, he only paid me for half the hours I'd worked...and said 'what are you going to do about it - you never worked here'"

"When I reported the sexual assault, I was bullied to the point of not being able to work anymore and being sent to hospital due to my decreased mental state"

Participants also commonly described sexual harassment occurring in full view of other colleagues, who did nothing to intervene or provide support:

"He had one hand on my thigh and one on another coworker's. Our kitchen team saw this and said nothing"

"I left the venue upset and embarrassed as it happened in front of everyone and no one helped, they just laughed"

However, it is important to note that a smaller number of respondents described more positive responses to disclosure. For example, in some cases venue security or management removed a perpetrator from the venue, expressed a sense of care and concern regarding the respondent's wellbeing, or (rarely) fired the perpetrator:

"I was called by the office manager and was apologised to on behalf of the company and was told it was going to be taken very seriously, the guy was given a warning and had to write me an apology (which if he hadn't cooperated apparently he was going to be fired)"

"Luckily, my current coworkers and managers are good and have kicked out or banned people who I complain about behaving in this way"

Unfortunately, such examples were not common across the dataset, but they do provide a useful starting point for identifying good or perhaps even 'best' practice for responding to sexual violence within the industry.

IMPACTS AND CONSEQUENCES

Of the 359 testimonies received, 98 gave information on the impacts resulting from experiencing the incident within their venue. Of those 98:

- 32% quit their jobs (n=31)
- 24% felt unsafe at work (n=24)
- 9% has a fear of losing their job or had their shifts cut (n=9)
- 8% had bad mental health affects (n=8)

The remaining 27% of people (n=26) reported a range of other negative impacts including feeling unsafe, embarrassed or intimidated.

Respondent testimonies captured the wide ranging and lasting impacts of sexual harassment and assault in the hospitality industry. Victim/survivors' recounted feelings of vulnerability, humiliation and distress in the aftermath of abuse. Participants recounted that:

"The constant fear of working alone in this space always hung over me".

"I was incredibly distressed...and worried about my safety"

"I'm broken and scared all the time...I'm constantly looking over my shoulder, waiting for them to say or do something that will end my career"

"I went on to develop PTSD from this and still to this day am affected by it"

Reporting incidents often led to further victimisation, with some facing bullying, demotions, or even hospitalisation due to deteriorating mental health – with these negative repercussions reflecting the findings of previous research (AHRC, 2022). Despite seeking help, many were met with dismissive responses from management or coworkers, exacerbating their trauma and leaving them feeling unsupported and isolated. One person recounted that after her sexual assault, she hasn't been able to be in a room with an older man alone since and has never felt more violated in her life.

Victim/survivors described enduring emotional blackmail, bullying, and ostracism, often orchestrated by perpetrators who hold positions of power and influence within the industry. Even after leaving their jobs some abusers continued to exert control by interfering with reference checks, spreading rumours, or making malicious comments within the industry. This toxic environment not only perpetuates a culture of silence but also reinforces the notion that perpetrators can act with impunity, further entrenching the cycle of abuse and exploitation.

"He continued to spread rumours about me at work which culminated in me being fired. I told my bosses about the rape...and they just said they didn't believe me"

"I couldn't trust anyone since I was getting bullied. I was avoided and laughed at behind my back when I needed help. I was left out every day and wanted to have a panic attack every morning"

As noted earlier, other consequences included participants being forced to quit their jobs out of fear or at the hands of the abuser. Others had their shifts cut due to attempted reporting, experienced unfair dismissal or stopped going into work due to fears of unsafety. One respondent stated that after her boss assaulted her, he stopped for a week before continuing that

same behaviour. She subsequently resigned from this unsafe workplace. Another female worker recounted her abuser cornered her at work after she reported him and was so terrified she stopped going into work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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The findings presented in this report depict a concerning picture of sexual harassment and assault in the Adelaide hospitality industry. The experiences shared by participants consolidate the findings of earlier research (e.g., Coffey et al, 2023; UWU, 2023), which suggest that workplace sexual violence is routine for those working in hospitality. The testimonies submitted to Not So Hospitable show that hospitality workers encounter violence in the workplace ranging from sexualised comments, staring/leering, and groping to sexual assault and rape. Such experiences were often normalised, trivialised, and written off as just 'part of working in hospitality'.

Moreover, our findings point to a range of industry-specific norms that foster workplace sexual violence – such as alcohol and other drug use, hierarchical workplace structures, and an emphasis on customer satisfaction above worker safety – suggesting a need for industry-specific interventions and responses. The precarity associated with hospitality work also created significant structural barriers to reporting, and many respondents described negative repercussions if they did report. The young age of many participants when they commenced careers in hospitality further compounded their vulnerability. Experiencing workplace sexual violence had profound impacts on respondents, including negatively impacting on or ending their careers in hospitality, as well as negatively impacting their emotional and psychological wellbeing and physical safety.

The experiences of hospitality workers detailed in this report call for the implementation of preventative measures aimed at curtailing the occurrence of such incidents in the future. Indeed, such action is now proactively required of hospitality venues under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984. Ensuring a safe working environment is paramount, not only for safeguarding the wellbeing of employees but also for maintaining the integrity and sustainability of the hospitality industry itself.

There are a range of measures that have already been introduced to address sexual violence in the hospitality industry, and particularly the night-time economy. For example, the City of Melbourne's Project Night Justice introduced a Night Safety Charter and Good Night Out training for licensed venue staff. The City of Adelaide introduced Project Night Light, a pilot which aimed to improve women's safety in the city at night and included the provision of training to venue staff on how to report

workplace harassment. However, most initiatives to date have been limited to licensed venues and have focused on sexual violence against patrons rather than hospitality workers. Our recommendations build on these initiatives, and call for the consistent implementation of such measures across all hospitality venues. We also recognise that this issue is not isolated to the hospitality industry, and these recommendations need to work alongside broader efforts to prevent and redress sexual violence.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION

There is a clear need for holistic industry training and educational initiatives addressing a range of issues. Such training should be mandatory across the industry and incorporated into existing training requirements such as Responsible Service of Alcohol training. This may also help to ensure there are avenues for accountability in the event of non-compliance.

- **Implement Accessible Education and Primary Prevention Programs:** All hospitality venues should provide holistic, accessible education and primary prevention programs on sexual violence. These programs should be mandatory for all staff members and focus on recognising, preventing, and responding to sexual harassment and assault.
- **Implement Accessible Education on Workplace Sexual Harassment Legislation and Reporting Structures for Venues:** All hospitality venues should be provided with accessible education for both managers and staff on how to report workplace violence, your legal rights at work and how to get support. These programs should be mandatory for all managers and staff members.
- **Collaboration with Industry Associations:** Government bodies should collaborate with industry associations to develop tailored resources and training programs for hospitality businesses. These partnerships would ensure that training initiatives are relevant, effective, and accessible to businesses of all sizes and relevant to their specific industry culture.

LEGISLATION AND FUNDING

- **Government Support for Training Initiatives:** Local, state and federal governments should allocate funding to support training initiatives aimed at combating sexual violence in the hospitality industry. This funding would ensure that venues have the resources necessary to implement effective training programs, and recognises the financial constraints faced by small businesses, especially in implementing

comprehensive training programs. This assistance would help small hospitality businesses access resources necessary for training, policy development, and implementation of safety measures.

- **Launch a Safety Campaign:** Government bodies, in collaboration with industry stakeholders and advocacy groups, should initiate a comprehensive safety campaign focused on sexual violence in nightlife settings. This campaign would raise awareness, educate the public, and promote bystander intervention strategies. It is vital for such campaigns to include sexual violence perpetrated against hospitality staff in addition to patrons.
- **Mandate Online Training for RSA Certification:** Responsible Service of Alcohol (RSA) curriculum should be revised to include compulsory and holistic training on recognising and responding to sexual harassment and assault by 2025. This mandatory training would ensure that staff members are equipped with the knowledge and skills to create safer environments for patrons and workers alike.
- **Support Following Positive Duty Law Changes:** After the implementation of Positive Duty requirement under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, which hold employers responsible for preventing sexual harassment and assault in the workplace, it's essential for the government to provide ongoing support and guidance to businesses. This support could include industry-specific resources for developing and enforcing policies, establishing reporting mechanisms, and conducting regular assessments of workplace safety culture.
- **Incentives for Compliance:** To encourage compliance with training requirements and safety measures, the government should offer incentives such as tax breaks, accreditation recognition, or eligibility for government contracts. These incentives would motivate businesses to prioritize safety and invest in prevention efforts.

INDUSTRY CULTURE AND NORMS

- **Introduction of an Independent Reporting Body:** To shift the culture of minimisation and lack of accountability within the hospitality industry, we recommend the introduction of an independent, properly resourced industry body that could receive and investigate complaints from a trauma-informed and survivor-centred lens. This is particularly

important given the challenges of reporting when a perpetrator was also the venue owner. This body should also conduct regular audits of the hospitality industry to monitor gender equality, discrimination and sexism in the industry.

- **Creating Pathways to Career Stability:** The precarious nature of employment in hospitality compounded workers' vulnerability to sexual violence. As such, ensuring that hospitality workers have access to secure employment, fair pay, and pathways to career progression is paramount. There should be a particular emphasis on supporting the career progression of women and gender-diverse people in the industry. We support and reiterate the recommendations made by Robinson et al (2022) in this regard.
- By implementing these key recommendations, we can work towards creating a culture of safety and respect in the hospitality industry, where harassment and assault are not tolerated, and all individuals feel empowered to report incidents and seek support. Government funded support, both at a local, state and federal level, is vital for effectively changing a systematically ingrained culture of sexual violence within Australian Hospitality culture.

CONCLUSION

Addressing the pervasive culture of sexual harassment and assault in the hospitality industry requires a multifaceted approach that involves education, policy reform, and support for both businesses and workers. The testimonials presented highlight the urgent need for change, underscoring the profound impact of these experiences on individuals' mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing. By implementing comprehensive training programs, enforcing robust policies, and fostering collaboration between government agencies, industry associations, and businesses, we can create safer and more inclusive work environments for hospitality workers.

It is imperative that we prioritise the safety and dignity of all individuals within the industry and work collectively to dismantle the structures that perpetuate sexual violence. Only through concerted efforts and sustained commitment can we build a culture of respect, accountability, and empowerment in the hospitality sector. In addition, it's crucial to recognise the importance of qualitative lived experiences in informing our understanding of the pervasive issue of sexual harassment and assault in the hospitality industry. These first-hand accounts provide invaluable insights into the complex dynamics at play and underscore the urgency of taking meaningful action.

Furthermore, addressing this systemic problem requires a significant industry-wide change, one that cannot be achieved without robust support from government entities. By working collaboratively with policymakers, advocacy groups, and industry stakeholders, we can implement effective solutions, allocate necessary resources, and enact policy reforms that prioritise the safety and well-being of hospitality workers. It's only through collective efforts and unwavering commitment that we can drive meaningful progress and create lasting change in the hospitality sector.

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Sexual harassment: is used to refer to non-physical forms of violence, such as verbal comments, gestures and digital harm (e.g., image-based harassment). The term sexual harassment also has a specific legal definition which differs to our use of the term in this report.

SEXUAL ASSAULT: is used to refer to physical forms of violence, including rape (which includes vaginal, anal and oral penetration with other body parts or objects), attempted rape, groping, kissing and so forth. The term sexual assault also has a specific legal definition which differs to our use of the term in this report.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE: is used as an umbrella term to refer to the full continuum of sexual harassment and assault.

UNWANTED SEXUAL COMMENTS: is used to refer to verbal statements or remarks of a sexual nature that are unwelcome or offensive to the recipient. These comments may include sexually explicit language, jokes, or innuendos that create a hostile or uncomfortable environment for the individual.

UNWANTED SEXUAL ADVANCES: involve unwelcome or inappropriate physical or verbal actions of a sexual nature directed towards another person without their consent. This can include suggestive gestures, propositions, or attempts to initiate sexual contact without the other person's agreement.

UNWANTED LEERING: refers to staring or gazing at someone in a sexually suggestive or intrusive manner, making the individual feel uncomfortable, objectified, or intimidated. It involves prolonged and unwanted visual attention that may contribute to a hostile or harassing environment.

UNWANTED TOUCHING /GROPING: refers to any non-consensual touching of a person's body, typically in a sexual manner, without their explicit consent.

RAPE: is a specific form of sexual assault that involves non-consensual vaginal, anal, or oral penetration with a body part or object. The term rape also has a specific legal definition which may differ to our use of the term in this report.

ATTEMPTED RAPE: occurs when an individual takes actions with the intent to commit rape but is unsuccessful in completing the act. The term attempted rape also has a specific legal definition which may differ to our use of the term in this report.

CONSENT: under South Australian law, consent refers to voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. It must be given freely and willingly by all parties involved, without coercion or manipulation.

PERPETRATOR: is used to refer to a person who has enacted or committed sexual violence (as defined above) against another person/people.

VICTIM/SURVIVOR: is used to refer to an individual who has experienced any form of sexual violence.

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