**Our Watch Response to sexual harassment allegations in the fly-in fly-out mining industry**

**Our Watch CEO Patty Kinnersly:**

“We support the Minerals Council's calls for the Respect@Work Bill to place a positive duty on employers to act to prevent sexual harassment and assault before it occurs, and we applaud the first step the Council is taking to drive cultural change across the industry, including establishing a Respect@Work taskforce and industry-wide code of conduct.

“Addressing harmful alcohol use may be one component of what is needed in mining sites, but alone this is not sufficient. It is critical that strategies also commit to addressing the underlying drivers of violence against women. These include gender inequality in the [workforce](https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/why-do-this-work/understanding-violence-against-women/) and leadership, workplace cultures that support or condone harmful ideas about masculinity, and male peer relationships that condone attitudes of male sexual entitlement and aggression towards women

“Not all people who drink are violent, and many people who do not drink are violent. The issue is when alcohol interacts with harmful gender [stereotypes](https://www.ourwatch.org.au/the-issue/), particularly in men’s drinking cultures that emphasise ideas of male conquest and aggression.

“We also know alcohol weakens behaviours that focus on empathy, respect, care and concern for others. So again, in a context where there are disrespectful ideas about women, or harmful forms of masculinity, alcohol can play a role in violence.

“For mining sites, and all workplaces to be safe, they need to have the right [policies](https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/tools-and-resources/workplace-conditions-and-policies/) and practices in place to address the drivers of violence against women.

“This means creating [workplace](https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/what-is-workplace-equality-respect/culture/) cultures that actively promote gender equality; have zero tolerance of sexism; eliminate discriminatory attitudes; introduce policies to support gender equality and women’s career progression, and support increasing the number of female leaders and influencers.

“Our Watch's [Workplace Equality and Respec](https://workplace.ourwatch.org.au/)t website provides tools and guidance to support industries on this journey. International and national evidence tells us violence against women can be reduced in Australia by increasing gender equality in all elements of everyday life – particularly workplaces, where adults spend a large proportion of their time.

“We need to tackle the systems and structures that create and reinforce unequal power relations between men and women, and the harmful attitudes and behaviours that are associated with dominant norms of masculinity, in the workplace, and right across society.

“All women should feel safe in their workplace – that is a fundamental right.”

## **Media contact**

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\*If you cover this story, or any story regarding violence against women and children, please include the following tagline:

“If you or someone you know is impacted by sexual assault, family or domestic violence, call 1800RESPECT on 1800 737 732 or visit www.1800RESPECT.org.au. In an emergency, call 000.”

To access guides for reporting about violence against women and their children, visit [Media Making Change](https://media.ourwatch.org.au/media-home/reporting-violence-against-women/guidelines-for-reporting-violence-against-women/).

## **About Our Watch**

Our Watch is a national leader in Australia’s work to stop violence against women and their children before it starts. The organisation was created to drive nation-wide change in the structures, norms and practices that lead to violence against women and children.