



What YOU can do to advocate for change which will better support work rights

It is no accident that you have landed on this page. You have arrived here because of your workplace experience. Or, you have witnessed firsthand someone else's workplace experience.

Understanding advocacy and why it is important for you to raise concerns about work rights:

Work rights are important to all workers.

If you know a government law or process is not working properly, you should do something about it!

Advocacy is about taking up a cause. It is not about you. Usually you take up a cause based on your personal experience or what you have witnessed.

When people seek change, they advocate for that change. Change will not happen in a vacuum. Change requires individuals or groups to demonstrate through their experiences, expectations and understanding that change is warranted.

Reducing the incidence of bullying and unfair dismissals within our workplaces is important.

Ensuring that our systems become transparent and accountable to remove the incidence of unfair work practices is also important.

Holding the leadership within our workplaces to account if they break workplace laws is important so also is reducing the taxpayer liability from public sector employers breaking workplace laws. Refer to:

<https://www.workrightsmatter.com/wasteful-spending>

Speaking up for the rights of workers is a must if change is to happen.

You may have concluded your employment matters with your employer but your workplace experience matters if you have the evidence that something didn't work as was intended. In other words, you have the evidence to suggest change. Or, you may choose to tell someone else's story if you have first hand information about it.

To advocate for change:

First consider the barriers you or someone you know may have faced in your/their employment matter. This could be your experiences with bullying, unfair work practices and/or unfair dismissal despite the existence of the *Fair Work Act 2009 (FWA)* and the *Health and Safety Act 2011 (HSA)*.

Based on your experience, think about how government policies need to change in order to better support workers so that there is minimal opportunity for employers to break workplace laws - Fair Work Act (2009) and Health and Safety Act (2011).

What more can policy makers do to support workers?

Second read the information that is on the Fair Work Commission website at: www.fwc.gov.au and the Fair Work Ombudsman's website at www.fwo.gov.au

These are the organizations that are there to assist workers and employers.

Reflect on how your employment matter evolved and what could have been done differently in light of current government policies.

Document your workplace experience.

Third - Be proactive by writing about your experience and suggesting changes to workplace laws which will provide better protection for workers.

If you don't bring forward your concerns to the attention of those that can initiate change, then nothing is going to change!

There are a number of organizations and people that you could approach based on your experience:

- the Fair Work Commission - www.fwc.gov.au
- the Fair Work Ombudsman - www.fwo.gov.au
- the Department of Employment and the Minister for Employment - www.employment.gov.au/
- the Shadow Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations - <http://brendanoconnor.ml.net.au/en-au/>
- The Human Rights Commission - <https://www.humanrights.gov.au>
- Independent Senators in Parliament
- Health and Safety agencies in your city which are responsible for Health and Safety matters. (*Workplace bullying is a health and safety matter. In some jurisdictions it is a criminal offence.*)
- your union - write to the local union office but also the Central union headquarters
- your local Member

Consider also writing to:

- media in your area or to national newspapers

Where possible:

- dialogue/debate in social media

Be particularly cautious about what you communicate in social media. Your purpose should be about raising awareness about workplace issues and not about slandering individuals or organizations. Read the Tips below.

TIPS ABOUT WRITING/COMMUNICATING ABOUT CHANGES YOU WISH TO:

When communicating issues where you need to disclose information, *stick to facts!*

Remember when you communicate within the public space (social media, newspapers, etc) you need to do so cautiously as these communications go to a wider audience and are not restricted. (Example - once you place material online or in print, you can't take it back!) *Therefore, take your time to understand what you want to achieve and why and whether it is in the public interest for you to disclose facts or if you need to discuss the subject matter in a very generic way.*

On the other hand, government and relevant agencies are well aware that if you are advocating as an individual, you are seeking change based on the evidence you have with your workplace experience. *Dealing with agencies that work in the public interest (non profits, government, etc) is different to communicating in social media.* Therefore, if you are making the case about changing/adapting/reinforcing workplace laws so unfair work practices can be eliminated or you are suggesting ways in which wasteful government spending can be eliminated, then yes you are likely to have to disclose the name of relevant individuals and organizations. *In other words you would need to provide your evidence.* If in doubt, speak to the organization first and mark your material to the organization as 'confidential' and to be used only for the purpose of investigating the matters you have brought forward.

Be aware that employers who contravene workplace laws and also create taxpayer liabilities (disclosable conduct) are accustomed to using the might of their HR and Legal offices to threaten you. Remember stick to the facts and let the relevant agencies deal with the investigations that may be necessary to bring about the change that you seek.

