



ANROWS

AUSTRALIA'S NATIONAL RESEARCH  
ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN'S SAFETY  
*to Reduce Violence against Women & their Children*

## MEDIA RELEASE

**Strictly under embargo until 6am Tuesday, 9 August 2022**

# First ever national study to investigate migrant and refugee women's experiences of sexual harassment at work

Perspectives of women from migrant and refugee backgrounds are being sought for a groundbreaking study capturing experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace.

In a national first, researchers from Monash University will partner with Harmony Alliance, the National Women's Alliance representing migrant and refugee women, to investigate migrant and refugee women's understanding of, experiences and responses to sexual harassment in a national study funded by ANROWS.

The [project](#) will build on the knowledge that migrant and refugee women are more likely to be in precarious employment or hold employer-sponsored visas, both of which can contribute to risk of sexual harassment and impact decisions to disclose or seek support.

Lead researcher [Associate Professor Marie Segrave](#) from the [Monash Gender and Family Violence Prevention Centre](#) said, "Migrant and refugee women remain largely overshadowed in major national studies and national commitments to ending sexual harassment in the workplace."

Results from the study will aim to build a national picture of the experiences of a diverse group of migrant and refugee women with the view of informing more targeted engagement with women and workplaces regarding unacceptable workplace behaviour.

Nyadol Nyuon OAM, Chair of Harmony Alliance said, "Thanks to the brave advocacy of survivors and the Respect@Work National Inquiry and report, Australia is finally having the conversations we need to have about sexual harassment in the workplace."

"It's so important that we now understand the experiences of migrant and refugee women who we know are at a higher risk of sexual harassment at work so that we can develop the systemic and cultural responses that are needed to ensure their safety."

"This project, which has been funded as part of the Australian Government's response to the *Respect@Work* report, will provide governments, employers, and industry groups with the evidence they need to support migrant and refugee women in Australian workplaces. We know these groups of women experience high levels of sexual harassment, and this research will help us develop more effective and culturally safe strategies to prevent and respond to it," said Padma Raman PSM, CEO of ANROWS.

Researchers and collaborators said past national studies on workplace sexual harassment had not explored migrant and refugee women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace in detail.

The views and responses of different groups of migrant and refugee women who have experienced work-based sexual harassment will be used to guide training and education needs and to identify service gaps as well as strengths and weaknesses in the current system.

"We're hoping to lay the groundwork for developing more informed and responsive systems that are attuned to the social and systemic factors that influence how women negotiate and respond to experiences of sexual harassment as bystanders and/or targets," Associate Professor Segrave said.



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"Nearly half of the adult population in Australia are overseas-born citizens, permanent residents and temporary visa holders. It is critical we understand what they are facing and how we can better support them."

The project involves an online survey, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with key women leaders and diverse groups of women across different levels of English language proficiency, citizenship or visa status, employment status and work settings.

"Migrant and refugee women are often in precarious work conditions or also enduring insecurity due to their visa status. They often feel that they can't speak up about sexual harassment for fear of losing their jobs or other repercussions," said Ms Nyuon.

"We can work together to ensure women in Australia, from all backgrounds, are protected from sexual harassment in the workplace. That's why this first ever research into migrant and refugee women's experiences of sexual harassment in the workplace is so important and why we are asking women all over Australia to share their stories."

Social Services Minister Amanda Rishworth said it was important women from migrant and refugee backgrounds were represented in research so policy solutions could be crafted that would actually work.

"The Albanese Labor Government wants to ensure all Australian workplaces are safe and that people are not subjected to harassment, including women from migrant and refugee backgrounds," Minister Rishworth said.

"This research will be so important in providing the data to inform policy decisions and do what we can to help people to feel safe and be free from harassment at work."

The survey launches on Tuesday 9 August and [can be accessed here](#).

*The survey is distinct from the Australian Human Rights Commission survey into the prevalence, nature and reporting of sexual harassment with a focus on workplaces, which will launch at a similar time.*

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