

ACT GREENS - WORKPLACE BULLYING

POLICY

Purpose

The ACT Greens are committed to fostering a safe, respectful, and supportive workplace, free from bullying. This policy outlines our approach to identifying, addressing, and preventing workplace bullying to protect the dignity, autonomy, health, and safety of all workers, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.

Commitment

The ACT Greens regard the dignity and autonomy of all individuals as fundamental. Workplace bullying undermines these principles and will not be tolerated. We commit to addressing any reported bullying promptly, impartially, confidentially, and thoroughly.

Scope

This policy applies to all ACT Greens employees, volunteers, contractors, Office Bearers, and visitors engaging in Greens-related activities, including:

- Daily work activities, interactions with members of the public;
- Work-related events, conferences, social functions;
- Social media interactions connected with workplace relationships or activities.

Note: This policy does not apply to parliamentary office staff for interactions pursuant to their duties in that role. It may nevertheless apply to them as Greens members during interactions outside that role, including campaigning, volunteering, and discharge of roles as Greens office bearers.

Definitions

Workplace bullying is defined as repeated, unreasonable behaviour towards an individual or group of workers that creates a risk to health and safety.

- Repeated behaviour refers to persistent conduct, including a pattern of diverse incidents over time.
- Unreasonable behaviour is conduct that a reasonable person would see as victimising, humiliating, intimidating, degrading, threatening, or offensive.

Bullying behaviours may include but are not limited to:

- Aggressive or intimidating actions;
- Verbal abuse or belittling comments;

- Spreading malicious rumours or misinformation;
- Exclusion from work-related events or isolation;
- Unreasonable work expectations, excessively high or insufficient workloads;
- Displaying offensive or degrading materials;
- Humiliating someone through sarcasm, criticism, or insults;
- Deliberately inconveniencing workers through unfair work routines or procedures.

What is Not Workplace Bullying?

Reasonable management action carried out fairly, respectfully, and lawfully, such as performance management, directing work, or providing constructive feedback, does not constitute workplace bullying.

Reporting Procedure

If you experience or witness bullying, take the following steps:

1. If comfortable, address the issue directly with the person involved;
2. If uncomfortable or unsuccessful, promptly report the incident to your supervisor, the Convenor, or Management Committee Office Bearer;
3. Union members may also seek support from their delegate.
4. All ACT Greens members and volunteers have an obligation to report workplace bullying they are aware of.

Response and Resolution

In responding to a bullying report, the ACT Greens will follow these principles:

- There is no wrong door for reporting and all members who receive a report of bullying should ensure it reaches the appropriate mechanisms.
- Responses will be prompt and time-sensitive.
- The ACT Greens will engage with all parties to gather information and seek, where appropriate, a mutually agreeable resolution.
- Matters will be handled confidentially and on a need-to-know basis.
- Parties will receive procedural fairness and natural justice, including an opportunity to present their case and a right of reply.
- Matters involving potential criminal behaviour (such as physical violence or sexual assault) will be handled in accordance with legal requirements and any guidelines outlined elsewhere in ACT Greens policies, including through making police referrals.
- The ACT Greens will protect individuals who report bullying from victimisation, while noting that malicious or bad-faith complaints may result in disciplinary action.
- The ACT Greens reserve the right to appoint a third-party mediator and/or investigator where matters are serious, complex, or an additional level of independence is warranted.

Consequences

Substantiated bullying allegations may result in disciplinary actions, including:

- Verbal or written apologies
- Counselling or training
- Verbal or written reprimand
- Restrictions on involvement in social media or group activities
- Transfer, demotion, or dismissal
- Summary dismissal if criminal behaviour is substantiated by police.

Unsubstantiated Claims

If bullying allegations are not substantiated, the ACT Greens may still take appropriate steps to address any underlying workplace issues highlighted during the investigation.

Right of Review

While internal resolution is strongly encouraged, parties have the right to external review, including:

- WorkSafe ACT
- Fair Work Commission
- Human Rights Commission.

Information Storage

Investigation materials will be securely stored and accessible only to those directly involved in resolution processes. Post-investigation, records will be stored confidentially in accordance with legal obligations.

Policy Access and Review

This policy will be provided to all workers during induction and periodically reinforced by supervisors. Regular reviews and updates will be conducted by the party office and approved by the Management Committee as required.

Further Resources

A non-comprehensive list of other relevant documents includes:

- ACT Greens Sexual Harassment Policy
- ACC Policy and Procedures
- Safe Work Australia guide to workplace bullying -
<http://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/swa/about/publications/pages/workers-guide-workplace-bullying>
- Fair Work Commission anti-bullying benchbook

Relevant legislation (non-exhaustive list)

Work Health and Safety Act 2011

Fair Work Act 2009

Fair Work Regulations 2009