

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT IN THE WORKPLACE

### *Statement*

**HON SOPHIA MOERMOND (South West)** [5.35 pm]: I rise to give my contribution to the excellent motion by Hon Kate Doust that I was unable to speak to earlier today due to time constraints. The question is: why is there such a lack of respect for women and our boundaries out there?

A friend of mine by the name of Caitlin Roper has recently published a book named *Sex Dolls, Robots and Woman Hating: The Case for Resistance*. She speaks of the objectification of women and how that has led to a whole sex doll industry, including child sex dolls with rape settings, that I find incredibly disturbing. One of the reviewers of her book is Gail Dines. She is the author of a book called *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality* and is an expert on how porn has influenced our society. About 80 per cent of porn shows degradation and violence towards women. This is what boys as young as eight years are accessing. We cannot improve the status of women when our continued sexual abuse is used as entertainment.

### *Statement*

**HON WILSON TUCKER (Mining and Pastoral)** [5.36 pm]: I will not take up too much time. I also want to contribute to the motion raised by Hon Kate Doust earlier. Unfortunately, we ran out of time. I thought it was an excellent motion and I thank the honourable member for raising it. The motion notes the *'Enough is enough': Sexual harassment against women in the FIFO mining industry* report, which highlights a lot of sexual assault and harassment allegations in mine sites and the resource industry at large here in Western Australia. I was recently at the Diggers and Dealers conference. An incident occurred at that event whereby the deputy editor of the *Kalgoorlie Miner* was sexually assaulted at the conference. I did not personally see it, but I was shocked to hear that that could occur at the state's premier mining conference. I would like to put on the record and acknowledge the bravery of this young lady for coming forward in a very public way to really enforce the message that this type of behaviour will not be tolerated, because clearly some people do not have that message and they continue to basically promote the level of sexism that is unfortunately prevalent in some of the mine sites here in WA.

I was there to witness some of the very sobering comments by Hon Bill Johnston at the conference. He mentioned that despite this report coming down, a lot of work still needs to occur. I agree with Hon Kate Doust and her comments that this is a problem not only for the mining industry, but for all of society, encompassing all sectors here in WA. I thank the honourable member for raising it.

### *Statement*

**HON MARTIN PRITCHARD (North Metropolitan)** [5.39 pm]: I will keep my comments brief. I also want to commend Hon Kate Doust for moving such a good motion. I had a fairly long contribution to make, but I will truncate it because it has been a fairly long week.

I thank the Community Development and Justice Standing Committee for its report *'Enough is enough': Sexual harassment against women in the FIFO mining industry*. It is most important that we keep a spotlight on this issue, and I thank the committee for doing that. I highlight the fact that companies should be providing a safe workplace for all employees.

During the late 1980s, I was up in the north west when there were not so many fly-in fly-out workers. Having fly-in fly-out workers and a village to house them in is one of the things that contributes to an unsafe workplace. Of course, the mining companies operate that way because it is economical for them to do so. I believe that companies can do more in the way they lay out those villages. They also need to look at the drinking culture in those villages. I draw the distinction between this issue and what happened when the viability of those companies was challenged by COVID. They quickly pivoted and sorted out all the issues they needed to so they could continue to operate. I think they need to turn their mind to this issue in a very serious way, because ultimately it will challenge whether they can continue to operate in a society that does not accept these sorts of problems.

I want to confirm another thing that Hon Kate Doust said; namely, it is not just the mining industry in which sexual harassment happens—it happens in a lot of industries. I am ashamed to say, of course, looking at our federal and state Parliaments, that we cannot hold our heads up particularly high when things of the nature that occurred in the prayer room in Parliament House in Canberra dominate what is on television. We have to look at ourselves as well. Sexual harassment also occurs in other areas. I think Hon Kate Doust said that it is in every workplace. I have racked my brain to think of a workplace where it may not be a problem, but I could only think of the old-fashioned lighthouse with its keeper. That is probably one of the only places where there are no particular problems. Lighthouses are probably automated these days.

In a previous life, I was a union organiser and one of the areas I looked after was fast food. Of course, in fast food I dealt with young people—15 and 16-year-old young ladies and men, who are particularly vulnerable. I think about

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Hon Sophia Moermond; Hon Wilson Tucker; Hon Martin Pritchard

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it often, because my kids went through an era of working in a pizza parlour. My grandkids will soon be able to look for some part-time work. They may work in fast food because fast-food employers tend to employ young people. During my time trying to organise those fast-food places, sexual harassment was very prevalent. Young people would be groomed. Hon Lorna Harper indicated that women can speak for themselves, and they can. The women in this chamber are exceedingly strong and very capable of talking for themselves. But let us think about young men and women who are 15 years of age who have just come out of school, or are still in school, at their first job. If the manager happens to brush past them as he is reaching for something, do those young people complain to that manager and say, “You can’t do that to me”? Most do not. The next step is that the manager lingers a bit longer. Do they complain then? Probably, they do not. That sort of grooming goes on. I implore everybody, man or woman, to call out that sort of behaviour when they see it, there and then. Do not accept it. What we walk past we accept. Do not accept it in any place—here in this Parliament, in a fast-food place or in a retail place. Do not accept it anywhere.

Members: Hear, hear!

*House adjourned at 5.44 pm*

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