



Paddy Crumlin - National Secretary **Will Tracey** - Deputy National Secretary
Ian Bray and **Warren Smith** - Assistant National Secretaries

24 July 2020

The Hon. Christian Porter, MP Attorney-General
Email: attorney@ag.gov.au

Senator the Hon. Marise Payne Minister for Women
Email: ministerforwomen@pmc.gov.au

Dear Ministers,

On behalf of the Maritime Union of Australia division of the Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union, I am writing to urge the government to take the formal steps to ratify the new International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work.

Convention 190 and Recommendation 206 are the first international legal standards that specifically recognise the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

The Convention defines broadly the term violence and harassment, which includes not only physical and verbal abuse, but psychosocial risks and abusive work practices. The Convention protects all workers in the formal and informal economy, including volunteers, trainees and apprentices, and sets out clearly the role of governments and the social partners in preventing, addressing and remedying violence and harassment. It includes protection against third party violence and harassment, as well as protection against the impacts of domestic violence in the world of work.

In any circumstances, the ratification and proper implementation of C190 and R206, would be urgent to address the scourge of violence and harassment in the world of work, and particularly the prevalence of gender-based violence. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, brought a new urgency. We have been witnessing an unacceptable rise in violence and harassment against workers deemed "essential" such as health and care workers, food retail workers and transport workers. We have also seen an alarming surge in cases of domestic violence worldwide because of confinement measures. C190 and R206 set out clear steps that governments and the social partners can take to mitigate the impacts of domestic violence, including when home is the place of the work. As suggested in the article 18 of the Recommendation 206, such measures could be:

- "(a) leave for victims of domestic violence;*
- (b) flexible work arrangements and protection for victims of domestic violence;*
- c) temporary protection against dismissal for victims of domestic violence [...]*
- d) the inclusion of domestic violence in workplace risk assessments*
- e) a referral system to public mitigation measures for domestic violence, where they exist; and*
- f) awareness-raising about the effects of domestic violence."*

Whilst the attention of governments is necessarily on saving lives and livelihoods under threat from this unprecedented pandemic, we would urge you to see early ratification and implementation of C190 as part and parcel of response measures to curb the effects of this pandemic.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter further at a time of your convenience.

Sincerely,

Paddy Crumlin
National Secretary

Mich-Elle Myers
National Womens Liaison Officer