

PRESS RELEASE

Voice of Horticulture calls for policies to be put in place to deal with harassment

With the current volatile political environment, the Voice of Horticulture is calling on all its members to ensure they have the correct policies and procedures in place within their organisation to deal with sexual harassment and bullying.

Voice of Horticulture Chair, Tania Chapman said: “The Board’s aim is to ensure that all its members are protected and have a complete grasp on all sexual harassment and bullying issues which could affect an organisation, as well as their employees and volunteers”.

Ms Chapman stressed that “...whilst the focus is currently on women, we should remember that it can also include males within the organisation”.

“Our total aim should be for respect and equal opportunity regardless of age or gender” she added.

“Whether it be directors, employees or volunteers on committee’s, we all know how difficult it is to find the right people and how sourcing volunteers can often seem impossible as most are so focussed on running their farms and businesses”.

“Dealing with new regulations and policies is the last thing people want to do when they are working in an industry body, but policies are needed to protect these volunteers and employees so that our peak bodies can represent growers”.

Ms Chapman said that in today’s environment; establishing an anti-harassment policy which is known, understood and enforced in an organisation should be mandatory.

“Whether you are required to have a written anti-harassment policy or not, having one in place can be a valuable tool to prevent and defend against costly lawsuits” she said.

“Remember an anti-harassment policy is only valuable if it is enforced. Having the policy in your employee or board handbook which is read, understood, and signed by every person; is a logical place to distribute this information”.

Ms Chapman believes that for the sake of your industry, your people’s welfare and your reputation (and that of your business) it’s crucial that you take all reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment and bullying from occurring in your workplace, as well as being able to deal with it promptly and legally if it does.

The Voice of Horticulture is a member based organisation that represents horticultural growers and business across fruit, nuts, mushrooms, onions, turf, nursery plants and cut flowers.

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