



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Human Rights Commission Calls on Workplaces to Address Harassment

This International Women's Day, the Manitoba Human Rights Commission calls on all workplaces in Manitoba to be part of the change required to eliminate sexual harassment in the workplace.

International Women's Day, celebrated around the world, is an opportunity to acknowledge the achievement of women and successful efforts towards gender parity in all areas of society. At this time, the Commission also reflects on the work that must still be done to achieve equality for women.

Sexual harassment was confirmed to be a form of sex discrimination in a hard-fought journey by two waitresses who complained under *The Human Rights Code* that they were sexually harassed in a Winnipeg restaurant in the early 1980's. In *Janzen v. Platy Enterprises* the Supreme Court of Canada revolutionized the law on harassment for employers—recognizing they have a legal obligation to provide a harassment-free work environment.

More than thirty years later, the Commission still routinely hears from women who feel uncomfortable or unsafe in their work environments; who are subjected to sexual solicitations or advances; or who are forced to tolerate a sexualized work environment. Recent decisions of the Human Rights Adjudication Panel have recognized the indignity of harassment raising the maximum compensation awarded to a victim of harassment in Manitoba from \$4,000 just six years ago, to \$20,000 today.

“True equality for women in the workplace is not just directed at hiring, firing, and remuneration. No woman should have to tolerate a work environment in 2018 where she is subjected to unwelcome sexualized behavior or commentary. And employers must recognize their responsibility to do something about this”, said Chairperson Brenlee Carrington Trepel.

To help support employers in this area, the Commission is launching a training program for businesses and organizations around identifying harassing behaviour, developing policy and conducting investigations.

For more information see www.manitobahumanrightst.ca or to arrange interviews please contact: George Sarides, Assistant Executive Director; 204-945-5815; hrc@gov.mb.ca