

# Bullying, harassment and exploitation are all in a day's work in hospitality

September 13 2022

---



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

A University of Queensland study of hospitality workers in Australia has found the industry is rife with sexual harassment, bullying, wage theft and exploitation.

Associate Professor Richard Robinson from UQ Business School surveyed almost 400 hospitality employees in late 2021 and early 2022 to understand how their working experiences aligned with the five Fairwork Principles: contracts, pay, working conditions, management and representation.

"The results exposed deep cultural issues in the hospitality industry, with poor behaviors and practices that have become normalized and systemic," Dr. Robinson said.

"More than 60% of respondents experienced [sexual harassment](#), verbal and psychological bullying or racial abuse, while more than 70% witnessed these behaviors.

"Customers were the main perpetrators, although 42% of respondents said the abuse came from their managers or supervisors."

Pay and contracts were also significant concerns, with almost 20% of respondents not receiving minimum pay rates or unsure whether they were paid fairly.

Around 45% reported not receiving overtime or penalty rate loading entitlements, while more than 30% said they never saw a contract or written terms for their current job.

Dr. Robinson said it was important to highlight these issues, particularly in the current tight labor market.

"With the [unemployment rate](#) at 3.4%, demand for workers is high but supply is low—allowing some [hospitality workers](#) to negotiate [higher wages](#) and better conditions," he said.

"But unless all industry leaders and [business owners](#) address these

cultural issues at their core, we'll return to an imbalance of power when labor market dynamics change."

Dr. Robinson said the same survey was administered by colleagues to hospitality workers in New Zealand, Ireland, Scotland, Norway and Greece.

"The results were consistent, indicating systemic issues in hospitality worldwide," he said.

Dr. Robinson said he hoped his findings would give exploited hospitality workers a voice.

"The [general public](#) should be aware that the people serving them in restaurants, cafes, hotels and clubs are often under immense strain—and we should cut them some slack," he said.

The survey findings have been published in the report, "Serving up a Fair Go? Surfacing cultural issues in hospitality employment."

**More information:** Serving up a Fair Go? Surfacing cultural issues in hospitality employment: [business.uq.edu.au/files/82074... ality-employment.pdf](https://business.uq.edu.au/files/82074...ality-employment.pdf)

Provided by University of Queensland

Citation: Bullying, harassment and exploitation are all in a day's work in hospitality (2022, September 13) retrieved 18 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2022-09-bullying-exploitation-day-hospitality.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private

study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.