

May Day 2026: Workers' Rights Include the Right to Speak

Adelaide, Australia — April, 2026

This International Workers' Day, we're asking a simple question: how can workplaces be safe if workers are being silenced?

The Working Women's Centre Australia is marking May Day by calling for urgent law reform to end the misuse of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in workplace sexual harassment and discrimination cases.

Our campaign, "**Our Silence Is Not For Sale,**" is led by Working Women's Centre clients and advocates and grounded in what we see every day, women trying to speak up about unsafe workplaces and being asked to stay silent instead.

As CEO of the Working Women's Centre Australia, it is clear this issue is widespread. Working Women's Centres across every state and territory are advising and supporting women to understand their rights, that NDAs should not be the default and supporting women to speak up about what has happened to them.

Women who come forward are making incredibly difficult and courageous decisions. Many want to speak out to warn others, stop the behaviour, and make workplaces safer. For many, it is also part of their healing. In our campaign video, victim-survivors are speaking about their experiences and why being able to speak matters.

But too often, they are coerced into silence, to resolve their case, to bring it to an end. To give you an idea of how this coercion occurs, we have included a case study setting out the average experience of a sexual harassment and discrimination case. NDAs are being used to protect reputations, not people.

When we silence women, we stop progress. We can't fix what we're not allowed to talk about.

Sexual harassment affects 1 in 3 workers in Australia, yet only 18% report it. ¹And when they do, many are met with NDAs—legal agreements that stop them from talking about what happened.

In fact, almost 7 in 10 lawyers representing workers, and nearly 8 in 10 representing employers, say they have never settled a sexual harassment case without a strict NDA².

That's not a coincidence. That's a system.

This isn't just an Australian issue. The #MeToo movement showed how widespread this problem is. Campaigns like Can't Buy My Silence, in the UK and Canada have also highlighted the harm caused by NDAs and successfully pushed for change around the world.

On May Day, a day built on solidarity, we stand with workers everywhere calling for dignity, safety, and the right to speak up. There's also a broader cost. Sexual harassment is estimated to cost the Australian economy around \$3.5 billion each year. ³But the human cost is far greater.

¹ Australian Human Rights Commission, Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Enquiry Report.

² University of Technology Sydney (2022). Let's Talk About Confidentiality: The Use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in Workplace Sexual Harassment Settlements.

³ University of Technology Sydney (2022). Let's Talk About Confidentiality: The Use of Non-Disclosure Agreements in Workplace Sexual Harassment Settlements.

Right now, the system discourages people from coming forward. Legal processes are long and exhausting, and very few cases ever reach a public outcome. The misuse of NDAs only makes this worse.

We're calling for change. Working Women's Centres across the country are backing the same 14 key legislative recommendations to address these issues.

NDAs should only be used if a victim-survivor wants one—not as a default. They must be regulated so they can't be used to hide serious workplace harm or silence people indefinitely.

Women deserve the right to tell their stories, to warn others, and to demand better from their workplaces.

We're inviting you and your colleagues to be part of this campaign.

Help bring visibility to this issue, amplify women's voices, and drive the national conversation forward.

Media kit available

We've developed a media kit to support coverage of the campaign, including:

- A campaign video available for media use
- Visual assets
- Campaign page and resources
- Stickers, poster and badge to support engagement



The campaign video, visual assets, resources, and the 14 key recommendations can be accessed via the QR code.

Thank you for your time and we hope to rely on your support in the future.

For further information or to discuss the campaign and its impact, I welcome media enquiries and would be pleased to connect directly.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Abbey Kendall', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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