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## **Workplace culture at Sovereign Hill must change now**

Today's media reports of sexual harassment and assault at Ballarat's iconic Sovereign Hill are deeply concerning and indicate an unsafe workplace culture that must change, says the union for workers at the tourist attraction.

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance has represented several members over the past few years who have made allegations of sexual harassment and bullying.

MEAA has also raised other workplace health and safety concerns with management, but in each case, the management response has fallen short of what should be expected.

"Today's reports are shocking but unfortunately they are not surprising," said MEAA Victorian regional director, Adam Portelli.

"We have raised a number of concerns around similar harassment and OHS issues over the last year or so.

"Sovereign Hill is one of Victoria's premier tourist attractions, employing hundreds of people, and it is a badge of honour to work there.

"But we have concerns that Sovereign Hill has fallen well short of its duty of care to provide workers with a safe workplace.

"In some of the cases we have dealt with, employees making genuine complaints to management have subsequently been subject to disciplinary processes by management. There seems to be an ad hoc approach to discipline – employees who complain appear to have been disciplined for minor infractions while serious complaints are left unresolved.

"The systemic issues we have raised have not been addressed.

"At the end of the day it's about the sort of culture Sovereign Hill has, and the culture appears to be rotten – it's something the MEAA has raised with management as recently as December last year and one that while management has made noises about improving, still hasn't delivered on.

"Sexual harassment cannot be condoned and we call on the management of Sovereign Hill to take a strong stand on this.

"We commend the bravery of these women for taking a stand against sexual harassment and assault and will continue to offer our members whatever support they need.

"We also call on the company to work with the union and its own employees to create a workplace that everyone can be proud of and feel safe at."

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