



NEWS

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Trinity P3 to ask agencies to sign bullying, harassment, assault statutory declaration before pitches

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by [CALUM JASPAN](#)



Marketing consultancy Trinity P3 has called on agencies to tackle harassment, bullying, and assault in the industry, by requesting all agencies that participate in future pitches run by the consultancy to sign a statutory declaration at the outset.

The consultancy [took to LinkedIn this afternoon](#) to explain the reasoning for the move, with a contact signed off at the bottom by founder and global CEO, Darren Woolley.



According to the post, as of 4 July, Trinity P3 will request that any agency wishing to take part in a pitch managed by it complete a statutory declaration "of their status and processes regarding workplace bullying, harassment and assault". It also states that it is not a mandatory requirement.

The post wrote: "In the past year, we have become increasingly aware that issues related to workplace bullying, harassment and assault were still occurring in the advertising industry. Too often these issues are framed as historical, and that the industry was "not as bad as it was". But you only have to look at the stories and concerns that emerged at recent International Women's Day events to realise the issues are still very apparent and directly affect this generation of adland employees.

These issues that we whisper about are an endemic and ongoing problem. We discuss it over drinks, we console friends, colleagues, even family, who might have been impacted, but no one takes a stand.

No one in power moves to force change."

Darren Woolley was contacted for comment on the post, however declined to add anything further.

Clients Trinity P3 has worked with include MyDeal, Optus, Australian Red Cross Lifeblood, Credit Union Australia, Bega, Bankwest, Virgin Australia, and Subway.



"Our fear is that it might impact business. It gets rolled into the too hard basket. But the reality is marketers and brands are left exposed by

ignoring these issues. After all who wants to deal with the backlash of choosing to work with an agency that allowed issues of bullying, harassment or worse to go on?

"Instead, we are weighed down by collective inertia to an industry-wide culture of silence. And we are all made complicit."

"Let me explain why and how, while an imperfect solution, we believe it's in the best interests of the marketers who work with us."

"Over the past 12 months, all of us have heard the wave of stories where particularly female employees have been targeted, bullied, and in some instances assaulted. It has felt like Australian adland might suddenly have its "me too" moment. But then the strictures of our defamation laws worked to ensure nothing happened and the moment faded."

The post alleges that each of the main advertising industry bodies in Australia were approached in March, with the suggestion they "take a position of leadership on the issue", with Trinity P3 further claiming that "their collective and confidential response to this suggestion has been, in our view, underwhelming".

"Many of their members have clear, independent and secure reporting processes that could have been extended to all other members (or those that refused might have clients asking why they would reject such processes). Instead, the response emphasized how using EAPs and other mechanisms was sufficient and that any such member-wide scheme would be problematic."

Several industry bodies, including the IMAA, MFA and ACA have been contacted regarding the claims.

The Advertising Council of Australia told Mumbrella that it received the communication from Woolley and Trinity P3 on Friday, and that it will be responding on 14 July, in line with the release of its Create Space Census Report & Action Plan.

Sophie Madden, CEO of the MFA also said to Mumbrella: "The safety of industry employees has always been, and continues to be very important to our board and members, and we welcome any initiative that increases accountability and supports safe and respectful workplaces. The MFA will continue its ongoing work on formulating appropriate industry support services for our membership – including guidance, training, minimum standards and policy advice – in addition to the Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) many of our members already have in place."

"We remain open-minded on initiative suggestions, and we are assessing P3's proposal, which we received shortly before 5pm on Friday 1 July. We believe consultation and a considered, whole-of-industry approach that includes clients and media owners is the best way forward."

An IMAA spokesperson told Mumbrella: "We can confirm we received a letter on Friday 1 July from Trinity P3. While it's premature to comment until we consult with our members, we can say that our new Diversity & Inclusion committee and RAP both advocate for inclusive, positive and nurturing employee environments among IMAA members. We welcome any initiative that supports an inclusive and respectful workplace for everyone."

The consultancy said it has a "key role in advising our clients on the agencies they choose to work with. We are trusted to provide insights and knowledge in recommending the best fit agencies for their needs. But there is also a requirement that we inform them of the possible risks and challenges that come with that selection process."

Specifically, regarding the details of the statutory declaration, the post wrote:

"Our lawyers have drafted a statutory declaration, which we will require any agencies wanting to participate in a pitch or tender managed by us to consider and sign."

This statutory declaration asks for the following three things:

- The agency to define their status in regard to complaints of workplace bullying, harassment and assault;
- The agency to detail their use of Deeds of Confidentiality and other legal instruments potentially gagging victims and others from reporting such workplace behaviours;
- It also asks for warrants on policies and processes regarding meeting agency obligations as employers in ensuring the safety of their employees and contractors.

Signing the statutory declaration is NOT mandatory for the agency to be considered by the client for participation in the pitch or tender process. But the agency's compliance or non-compliance will be shared with the client and become part of their due diligence, as they see fit."

Read the [full post here](#).

Fck The Cupcakes (FTC), an industry movement [established by Innocean Australia's CEO Jasmine Bedir in 2021](#) to help address gender inequality, [recently launched its first major campaign, 'Be the Change'](#), aimed at motivating men to help women drive change.

In December, [an industry survey from ShEqual found](#) that 83% of respondents said agency management should have a lot of responsibility in managing gender equality, but only 36% felt they are doing enough.

GOT A TIP?

Calum Jaspán

Calum Jaspán is News Editor at Mumbrella, based in Melbourne. He is also the producer and host of the Mumbrellacast.



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Help 4 Jul 22

Can we ensure this somehow filters through to media owners too, where it's most needed?

👍 2

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John 4 Jul 22

Clients bullying agency staff usually the bigger issue..

👍 14

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Mike 4 Jul 22

This is a great initiative, well done Trinity P3. But I wonder why its one-sided? Surely clients should be asked to sign it as well? This will help to protect agency staff who can often feel uncomfortable with the behaviour of marketing staff.

👍 13

Reply

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Anne Miles 4 Jul 22

Acknowledging the proactivity of TrinityP3 across the industry to be continually action-based to make change where others are failing. No biased activism that is backfiring anywhere to be seen here, but actual fully inclusive action that supports everyone – and where it hurts those offenders.

Darren Woolley gets my vote for the most significant effort on gender issues and general industry welfare with creative problem solving that is shaking up things – some no doubt are shaking in their boots too. Good stuff.

👍 1

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