

'I have paid a high price': Ex-ANZ trader grilled over rape hits out

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By Sarah Danckert

A woman ANZ Bank forced to detail her rape as a teenager as part of a sexual harassment court case in New York has issued a broadside at the bank in a searing four page letter to the company's board of directors.

Former ANZ vice president corporate foreign exchange Enilolobo Malika Oyo wrote to the ANZ board on Tuesday asking to meet with ANZ's directors to discuss her \$US8 million (\$10.79 million) claim against the bank for sexual and racial harassment.

Last month, Fairfax Media detailed the legal tactics ANZ's lawyers in New York had used to defend its claim including forcing Ms Oyo to recount her rape as a freshman at university and grilling her about whether she had any sexually transmitted diseases or sought psychiatric assistance during a pre-trial deposition.

"There was no legitimate reason for a complete stranger to ask me detailed questions about the fact that I was sexually assaulted – that event has nothing to do with my case," Mr Oyo said.

"The only reason for this line of questioning was to intimidate me in the hopes that I would back off of my claims," Ms Oyo said, adding ANZ also sought access to her gynaecological records.

"I sincerely hope that none of you have been sexually assaulted, but, if you have, I would ask to consider what it would be like to have to relive that experience with a stranger simply because you stood up to discrimination in the workplace."

ANZ's board is led by prominent businessman David Gonski and includes a suite of high profile directors such as Ilana Atlas and Paula Dwyer.

In her letter Ms Oyo asks the board to stop defending the alleged conduct of her former ANZ colleagues and asks they ensure ANZ is a safe place to work for women and people of colour.

"I have paid a high price for the way ANZ has treated me, both during and after my employment. I have received significant mental health treatment and just spent nearly two weeks receiving inpatient psychiatric care for severe depression that continues to persist as a result of ANZ's behaviour."

Ms Oyo was sacked for underperformance by ANZ in 2013 shortly after complaining about Mr Nursey to HR. She had previously worked for top banks Barclays, Citibank, JPMorgan as a

trader and at with Ford Motor Company's global treasury.

She alleges ANZ fostered a toxic workplace culture where staff bragged about visiting sex clubs, commented on the size of their penises, rated women's "racks", called each other "pussy" and theorised about how big a woman's breasts needed to be to breastfeed triplets.

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Enilolobo Malika Oyo

Ms Oyo, who is an African-American, also alleges she was continually asked by male colleagues about her sex life and was regularly called a monkey by her boss Ravi Nursey who is also named as a defendant to her legal claim.

"Many of the comments identified ... were made in writing or caught on audio recording and/or were admitted. Yet, ANZ continues to defend the conduct of these men and continues to attack me for speaking up against this conduct."

"Tactics like this that are employed against women and people of colour who stand up against discrimination is one of the many reasons that women and people of colour often remain silent."

ANZ is defending the claim and has admitted as part of its defence that Mr Nursey did say on more than one occasion to Ms Oyo that a task was so easy a monkey could do it but denied it was racist pointing to a Google search that showed, according to the bank, that it was not racist.

Fairfax Media did not name Ms Oyo in an earlier report at her request but she has since given permission to be named after informing her family about the details of the letter and the case.

ANZ declined to answer Fairfax Media's questions about whether the bank's board would meet with Ms Oyo. A spokesman for the bank said it had acted in good faith since learning of the "inappropriate" questioning from its external lawyers.

"We reject Ms Oyo's allegations about the culture at ANZ and will continue to defend the case. It's regrettable Ms Oyo is using the media to request a meeting while at the same time her lawyers have refused to engage in discussions," the spokesman said.

"ANZ has zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour in the workplace and has strong policies in place."

ANZ chief executive Shayne Elliott apologised to Ms Oyo for ANZ's legal tactics on Twitter saying the bank would not introduce that material at the trial.

Ms Oyo is being represented by Renan Varghese and Michael Willemin from New York law firm Wigdor LLP.

ANZ has since told the court that it would not be introducing evidence pertaining to Ms Oyo's sexual history to the court case.