

SUBMISSION OF DEBBI METAXAS

Debbie Metaxas



Postal Delivery Officer – Western Delivery Centre

I wish to submit that Australia Post do not advise new-starters of their compensation and rehabilitation rights. Australia Post managers pressure staff to attend their FNDs who in my case did not properly investigate my injury and who insisted on me attending work regardless of my pain and injury. New starters have no reserves of sick leave so are very vulnerable to this pressure.

1. I was employed by Australia Post on 30 July 2008 as a Postal Delivery Officer on probation for 5 hours per day. I was told to finish up on Wednesday 29 October 2008.
2. During my HART course on 21 August 2008, I had an accident and sustained an injury to my left shoulder when my motorbike fell on me when my foot slipped due to wet, slippery conditions. I reported this to my manager and filled out a P400 listing left side, arm bruised, left hip and shoulder soreness. I was then sent for in excess of 4 visits to the company doctor and 4 physiotherapist visits (this I discovered later was in excess of what is available under the Early Intervention Program).
3. I was never given a Compensation Claim form at the time. I received medical restrictions for a short period of time from 22 – 29 August 2008. My restrictions were lifted on 29 August and the company doctor provided a full medical clearance on 10 September 2008.
4. At one visit, the FND told me a story along the lines of 'if I was on a desert island and there was a coconut up a coconut tree and it was the only thing to eat then I would climb the tree, wouldn't I?' That was his way of dealing with my reluctance to return to work because I was in pain and still injured. He was saying this was the only way to earn my living or be paid.
5. I still feel shoulder pain even now.
6. This injury at the time caused me to have time off work (which was taken as sick leave because of the FND's opinions). I also had difficulty in meeting the mandatory sort rates of 18 small letters a minute and 13 large letters a minute.

7. Once I had been sacked, my union obtained a Compensation Claim Form which I filled in and liability was accepted for my shoulder and my medical costs on 3 December 2008. My claim that Australia Post had not made allowances for my injury during my probationary period was subject to mediation at the Australian Human Rights Commission. The matter did not settle as I was not prepared to accept a confidentiality agreement and a small financial offer. Because I did not have the resources to pursue the matter in the Federal Court, this matter has lapsed.

8. Just to provide you with the full background I wish to advise I also had another complaint against Australia Post. I was subject to sexual harassment by the person who was second in charge at the Delivery Centre. This also led to me having time off work. This was subject to mediation at the Australian Human Rights Commission. The matter did not settle but because I did not have the resources to pursue the matter in the Federal Court, so this matter has also lapsed.