

23 November 2009

**The Senior Clerk of Committees
Environment, Communications and the Arts Standing Committee
Parliament of Australia - Senate**

Dear Sir/Madam:

Relative to the Senate's Inquiry on Australia Post's injury management practices, I intend to bring my experience to your attention and hoping that it be made part of the Submission to the Senate Inquiry.

I sustained work-related injuries the past months, but my submission is more on the lack of health and safety procedures, and thus may fall under section (h) "any related matters.", as stated in the **Variation of Reference of the Environment, Communications and the Arts References Committee.**

I joined Australia Post on [REDACTED] 2008 as a part-time staff and my current position is Mail/Parcel Officer. I am assigned to the [REDACTED] Parcel Facility, working Tuesdays to Fridays with work shift starting at 9.30am and ending 5.15pm. My principal task is sorting parcels inbound and outbound of [REDACTED]. The size of the parcels vary in weight and dimensions. A parcel's weight ranges from less than a kilo to more than 30 kilos, and can come in letter size to almost 2 meters in length.

The Christmas sorting period, where parcel volume is at its peak, starts the 3rd week of November. Amongst the high-volume parcels received by the facility are wine boxes. The weight ranges from 7 kilos to more than 18 kilos. Most wine boxes are of the standard dimensions of 12 bottles of 750ml.

My first injury happened during the 2nd week of [REDACTED] 2008. I suffered a back injury after sorting a lot of wines. I was sent to a Facility nominated doctor and had to do restricted or light duties for the next four weeks. I never thought of seeing my own doctor, as my manager gave me specific instructions to see the Company's doctor. I suffered my second injury, again a back injury, sometime [REDACTED] 2009. The injury happened while sorting more than 20 wine boxes all going to the same location. Again, I was put on restricted duties for four weeks.

I wrote my shift production manager regarding the incident, asking that I be given a copy of the safe operating procedure (SOP) on how wine parcels should be sorted. This was in [REDACTED] 2009. I was called to a meeting a few days after and [REDACTED] verbal reply was that there is no procedure that specifically relates on the number of wine parcels sent up for sorting. [REDACTED] also advised me that since this is a health and safety matter, it would be more appropriate to bring this to the OHS Committee's attention.

I therefore wrote the HSRepresentative after 3 weeks regarding the safety issue of the wine sorting. I waited for a response for almost a month and without one, I wrote the HS Committee Chairperson [REDACTED] asking for a response on the wine sorting, amongst the health and safety issues raised. I reminded the Committee, in my letter, that the Christmas sorting period is approaching and injuries are again bound to happen on account of the wine sorting.

Instead of a health and safety assessment being conducted, the acting facility manager met me sometime early November. [REDACTED] verbally informed me that, as far as wine parcels are concerned, operational decisions are the management's prerogative. When I asked for a written response to my letters, [REDACTED] replied that [REDACTED] can only give me a copy of the OHS minutes of the meeting. I also gave suggestions on how to address the high injury rate in the facility, but I am not sure how my suggestions would be accepted by management.

This, therefore, is my issue with the Management relative to my health and safety. I am also sure that other staff members share my concerns. MPF management's program on injury management is on correction, and not on injury prevention. It spends resources on how best it can bring injured workers back to full, unrestricted duties, instead of identifying and addressing the root causes of these injuries, one of which is wine parcel sorting. This management approach, I believe, is not confined to the MPF, and for which I believe it should be brought to the Senate's attention.

I am attaching the 3 letters I sent to MPF management. I am also disclosing my contact details below as I am ready and willing to face the inquiry to give more details when needed.

[REDACTED]