

Additional submission to the House of Representatives Standing  
Committee on Education and Employment  
**Inquiry into workplace bullying**                      **September 12, 2012**

I have been asked to provide comments additional to my evidence at the inquiry on August 23, 2012, regarding the wider strategies that may assist in preventing and managing workplace bullying into the future. Comments from the panel indicated that a list of strategies that were not necessarily bound by existing practices, nor practicalities might be useful.

**Short term strategies**

- Adoption of the National Code of Practice on Workplace Bullying
  - This will deliver a unified definition across the country and set out the basic minimum standards that organisations should implement to control the risk of workplace bullying.
- Development and evaluation of materials to complement the Code (eg. Valid and reliable risk assessment tools for employers; guides for employees regarding when to report bullying etc)

**Medium term strategies**

- Development of a national bullying research foundation (or similar) that is set up to keep abreast of international research and undertake longitudinal studies
- Increased improvement and coordination of the processes used by safety regulators to enforce workplace health and safety legislation
- Development of an ongoing body to oversee and advise on these and other ongoing preventive actions on workplace bullying (eg. a task force or advisory body)

Examples of other strategies that should be considered as medium term strategies are listed below. These are not fully tested (nor costed) ideas, however, the task force or advisory body referred to above might either undertake such tasks, or advise on whether, how and by whom they should be undertaken.

- Independent analysis of existing data on workplace bullying held by safety regulators and other agencies, on an ongoing basis to analyse trends
- Coordinating education, awareness and advocacy campaigns to ensure workplace bullying remains an important issue especially in relation to prevention of occupational morbidity and that conceptual clarity is achieved (eg. clarifying the roles of various agencies with a mandate in relation to workplace bullying compared with harassment or discrimination)
- Reviewing, with better data and ongoing consultation, the nature and scope of any independent agency that may be proposed by the committee

- Communication of best practice strategies for dealing with bullying across a range of businesses and sectors (eg. contextualised case studies)
- Advising on or overseeing any other strategies that the committee recommends
- Clarifying and communicating about the expectations of existing government agencies who have a role in dealing with workplace bullying
- Advising government agencies on evidence based practice for workplace bullying
- Evaluating practices of safety regulators on workplace bullying prevention and management
- Providing advice for employers on what is the best kind of intervention for a situation that they have to deal with (eg. at an early triage stage)
- Providing better advice for those who have been accused of workplace bullying or similar issues
- Providing an independent reporting mechanism (independent of safety regulators, organisations etc), more like a whistleblowers' reporting line which may then feedback to identify risks at a local level, or collect data at an industry/sector level
- Advising on longer term strategies (below)

#### **Longer term strategies**

- Development of a list of organisations that exercise good practice with regards to psychosocial hazards at work
- Implementation of strategies that encourage organisations to take part in meaningful workplace bullying interventions and research

The long-term goal should be to have appropriate recognition and consistent understanding of workplace bullying at work, such that it is clearly unacceptable in any workplace, and that should it occur, it is dealt with quickly, confidentially, and appropriately for all parties.

I am happy to provide any further information on these comments

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