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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday, 28 June 2012 8:21 PM  
**To:** Committee, EEWorkplaceBullying (REPS)  
**Subject:** Sub 95 - submission

To whom it may concern,

As a former Park Ranger in \_\_\_\_\_ and therefore a member of the Australian Public Service I have experienced bullying first hand. It is the reason that I am not still employed in that role which was my absolutely ideal job and one which I tried to get into for many years. I worked in the role on short term contracts for some time, and I was extremely happy in that role, before I did get a permanent position. When I was offered a permanent position it was under a District Supervisor, \_\_\_\_\_, whom I knew to be a bully but had not worked with before. I was still under the illusion that the public service Code of Conduct and the law were there to prevent this and that the reason that bullying continued was because people chose not to stand up for themselves and use these tools to allow senior management to stop it.

My first confrontation was just after I started in this position when at a staff meeting this DS said that we would be required to work overtime on burning programs and fauna surveys. This was and still is an normal part of the job. He then stated that there was no money to pay overtime in the budget so we would have to take time in lieu. The collective agreement said at the time that we could elect to take time in lieu if we wanted to but being forced to didn't bother me as it was my preferred option. He then went on to say that time in lieu was to be taken at even time, that is an hour for an hour. The Collective Agreement stated that time off in lieu of overtime was at the equivalent hourly rate for the overtime worked - time and a half or double time as the case may be. I stated that even time was not in the Collective Agreement. This argument went on for approximately 18 months (recorded in emails) during which time I put my time sheets in as per the collective agreement and other staff members put theirs in according to what the DS had said because they were intimidated. From this point on I was targeted. Projects that I had initiated were sabotaged and the argument re: overtime continued. There were other instances and the Park managers 2nd in charge was also involved but the DS and the Park Manager were the principle parties to this dispute.

Eventually I approached the Park Manager, \_\_\_\_\_. I did this informally to allow her to deal with the situation with as little disturbance as possible. She was very conciliatory and sympathetic, offering to meet me in private away from the office and without the knowledge of the DS whom I was talking about. I met her in at Park HQ and she listened expressing empathy and saying that the situation needed to be resolved. I drove back to district office where I worked and my DS immediately confronted me saying that as I had put a complaint in against him he was launching his own action against me. I was a little surprised at the actions of the Park Manager but when I heard later from an employee who over heard her speaking about the incident her reasons became clearer. She was apparently over heard to say when asked if I had anything in writing to back up my case "He'd better have!". I approached the Human Resources Department because their on line information said that if a situation could not be resolved in the work place then that was the procedure. They referred me to a company who provided mediation services. A meeting was convened but the 'mediator', after first meeting with senior management then with our workgroup, decided that there was no problem except that I was aggressive. By this time I was severely clinically depressed. They then sent an 'Investigator', \_\_\_\_\_, up from Canberra. I was pleased, until I was interviewed when I discovered that he was not there to investigate anything. His role was to compile a brief of evidence against me to 'prove' that I was in breach of the Code of Conduct. I was then suspended and then told that I was going to be found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct. I was then advised that if I resigned prior to this determination being made then I would not have that on my record as the determination had not been made. I was, as I've said, severely depressed, and on quite a lot of medication by then. I also realised that not only could I not do anything about these people but I no longer wanted to work in such an environment so I resigned. At some stage during the process of realisation of the reality of the situation I sent an email to most of the Australian Public Service about what was happening. I got replies from all over Australia's territories from the Antarctic Division to the Cocos Keeling Islands and Darwin to Canberra of support and containing tales of the same thing happening. Most also asked that I deleted them on receipt and not pass them on or use them because they were afraid of the same treatment. Apparently the investigator gets to travel a lot. A number of other employees in \_\_\_\_\_ have been similarly threatened since I resigned.

There is a lot more to this story but as it is painful to recall I will wait to see if there is any interest before I go into it further. My experience has primed me to suspect that a similar thing could happen here. There was a line out of one of the yes minister series about "...never start an enquiry without know what it will find first....". However, if there is interest I am more than happy to assist in any capacity at all.

I still have a lot of the records, emails and other documents, recording the incident and validating my story if anyone is interested. This occurred only approximately 5 years ago and most of the people involved are still employed in those positions or organisations.

It is the sort of corruption that you wouldn't be surprised to find in a developing country that was just starting to experiment with democracy but to find it in the Australian Public Service was astounding. It is a very well organised system for ensuring that there are no accusations of bullying or corruption (I have information re: another instance of corruption in \_\_\_\_\_ as well). The fact that it is organised right from the top with the very people whose job it is to ensure that this bullying can't happen being the ones who actually enforce it was stunning. As well as being well organised it is also apparently well rehearsed as the system works very smoothly to turn any such accusation back on the accuser and get rid of them.

Yours sincerely