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6th of June, 2012

Inquiry into workplace bullying

I have been waiting for this opportunity for a long time—nine years in fact. I have prepared a brief statement so I cover all the points I need to cover. In 2003, I was forced onto workers compensation as a result of a work-based injury. I suffered a psychological injury as a result of workplace bullying. I had blown the whistle on the culture of workplace bullying and corruption and was subsequently fired as a result.

My claim was initially declined and I was forced to fight for basic entitlements from the Workers Compensation Commission. I was successful in winning my case. However, that was only the beginning of the nightmare. Despite suffering from major depression as a result of the ordeal I received very little help from the insurance company or WorkCover ,NSW. It took the insurance company, even after years of lobbying New South Wales politicians for help, six years to provide me with the support I desperately needed. I was left with very little support from the system for six years.

Furthermore, from 2003 until late 2005 I was subjected to numerous psychiatric assessments. Many of the recommendations that were put forward by many of these psychiatrists was for a complete change in career and career retraining. Yet despite this advice, from late 2005 to 2009 I received little or no contact from the insurer. When I was finally contacted I received an apology for the failure of previous case managers to appropriately assist me at the time. I found this incredibly insulting. This meant that I was left to languish for far too long and almost lost everything as a result. I even contemplated suicide on my darkest days.

It was in 2009 that the insurer finally then provided me a rehabilitation counsellor who was a trained psychologist. This specialist was amazed by the fact that when I first sustained my injury another psychologist had not made available to assist me. Just recently I completed a degree in Applied Social Science, paid for by WorkCover, which I think highlights their understanding of their own failures in the past regarding the management of my case. It has cost them \$45,000 to re-educate me, which could have been done years ago, instead of just ignoring me.

None of this, however, can compensate for the years of pain and suffering caused firstly by my employer and then by a system that fails to protect victims of workplace bullying. In fact, it can be reasonably argued that the system only makes the problem much worse. I also think my case highlight the grave injustice done to many people who suffer injuries as a result of workplace bullying.

Despite completing my degree I still cannot be sure that after 9 years on workers compensation that any employer would view me as being employable.

I sincerely hope that I will be considered to appear personally before this inquiry and hope to offer more details of my case history.