



Wednesday, 27 June 2012

Committee Secretary
House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Education and Employment
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Secretary

RE: WORKPLACE BULYING INQUIRY

I was employed at _____ complex at _____, on the Gold Coast in about September 2008. I can provide precise dates if necessary. At this time it was a part of the _____.

It was explained at the interview level that I would be working between 20-30 hours per week. I was employed in the laundry department as a truck driver/laundry attendant. It was also said at the interview that they have had problems in getting and keeping truck drivers due to the wages structure, (not to go into this here). The truck driving required me to attend the _____, and then to _____ in Brisbane. I thoroughly enjoyed my work and the people I worked with in the main. I say in the main as I had to deal with a woman from the food stores who was a bit difficult, however she was known throughout the complex as being like this.

When I first commenced, a laundry supervisor, _____ was on leave. I met her couple of weeks later, she seemed ok. A week or so later, _____, (Laundry Manager), took leave, and then _____ showed her true colours. She constantly made me feel completely inadequate, unable to perform the tasks assigned to me, (issues around speed and efficiency). As I was out in the truck till after lunch time, I rarely saw the full capacities of the equipment as the biggest part of laundry had been processed.

I can remember one Thursday that there was an issue with the truck fridge unit not working, this set the woman from food stores off about not getting e-mails etc., (I did not have access to this), and I went and told the administration person in the laundry. Again, the way the woman (_____) spoke to me made me feel completely inadequate and that I was not doing my job properly. I had no

Bullying Submission cover letter

negative feedback from anyone at this point. I think I should say at this point I cannot be called precious nor do I take offence easily.

As I was quite distressed at this point it was decided that I would not be driving the truck this day, I was initially put out by this, as I felt that I was the truck driver. I hadn't realised that they had recruited another person in same position as me, I understand this, as they need more than just 1 or 2 drivers, I did however find it contradictory that they were able to find someone else so quickly after my recruitment. I was still upset and tried to work as best I could, however kept at me and at me, again about my speed and efficiency.

The next day we were processing linen for another hotel in , I do not know why. We were only ironing it. There was some chemical reaction and the linen from the other was turning yellow and I was feeling like it was a waste of time. The other hotels linen was also much bigger and required much more people power to process than own. At the end of this day asked me to come back and do overtime tomorrow. I initially said no, and then thought, well give it another try. She wasn't quite as bad on this Saturday, but still had snide, comments to and at me.

I went back to work on the Monday, (manager), was back from holidays, she called me in, (I still wasn't driving the truck at this stage), and asked me to talk about what was going on, how I was coping etc., again I broke down and cried in talking about all the past couple of weeks events, going back to the e-mail thing mentioned earlier.

said to hang in; she would talk to and see how things go from there. It was just after morning tea and I came back and was worse than she had been, taking me from one job to the other, so I never really "settled" into any kind of rhythm, more grounds for her to carry on at me about my speed. Interesting enough, they recruited another laundry hand the same day as me and he confided to me that was the same towards him.

I felt that had I stayed on too much longer I would have been quite violent to towards . I went and saw and told her how I was feeling and in the interests of team safety I have to resign. was able to do this with me in her office.

, even on my out of the building, had to have one last dig at me. I was not in a state to think clearly and say anything back, but was salt in the wound.

I returned home to , made an appt. with my Psychiatrist to talk about all this stuff. There was about 2 week delay I think.

That night, at my home, all the events came crashing down around me and in talking to the mental health access people, it was decided that I be admitted to hospital, my first such ever admission.

I have probably said much more here than I need to here than necessary, as I address your terms of reference most of this will be repeated, and for this I apologise. I can also tell you, as I am sure you would appreciate, I have a huge volume of paper associated with this matter and would be more than happy to forward it to you should you feel it necessary.

This subject still after this much time affects me emotionally and as a result very rarely discuss it with anyone, and indeed, even preparing this submission has caused me some stress.

Bullying Submission cover letter

Again, I thank you in advance for your time, assistance and the opportunity to address this most serious issue.

Workplace bullying submission

Thursday, 28 June 2012

Committee Secretary

House of Representatives Standing Committee
On Education and Employment
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600
AUSTRALIA

Dear Secretary

RE: INQUIRY INTO WORKPALCE BULLYING

As an individual who was bullied in the workplace I am most keen to make a submission to the inquiry.

I feel I need to address the following points from your terms of reference:-

- The role of workplace cultures in preventing and responding to bullying and the capacity for workplace policies and procedures to influence the incidence and seriousness of workplace bullying.
- Whether the scope to improve coordination between governments, regulators, health service providers and other stakeholders
- Whether there are regulatory, administrative or cross jurisdictional and international legal and policy gaps that should be addressed in the interests of enhancing protection against and providing an early response to workplace bullying

I am sure there would be more, but these are the main points.

I hope the committee is able to make some use of my submission on this serious issue.

Should you require any additional information from me, please do not hesitate to contact me as below:

Workplace bullying submission

TEL:

MOB:

e-mail:

FAX: C/-

Thanking you in advance

TERM OF REFERENCE NUMBER 1

The role of workplace cultures in preventing and responding to bullying and the capacity for workplace policies and procedures to influence the incidence and seriousness of workplace bullying.

During the course of my employment with _____, I was given the impression that no-one was interested in my complaint or issue. During the course of the last couple of weeks I spoke to _____ about the possibility of transferring to another department, _____ said that if I couldn't cope in the laundry there would be no way I would deal with any other area in the complex. This indicates that bullying is pretty much accepted and tolerated by all levels of management. Further, I wrote to _____ corporate headquarters in Melbourne as a way of resolving my feelings, and they didn't even have the courtesy to acknowledge my letter, let alone the contents.

TERMS OF REFERENCE NUMBER 2

Whether the scope to improve coordination between governments, regulators, health service providers and other stakeholders

I think that is room to improve coordination between all relevant authorities, government or private, taking into consideration privacy concerns.

As [redacted] is a self-insurer, it made them un-accountable to WorkCover Queensland, and the only way I could argue a case was to take it to court at a cost of around \$30, 000, (thirty thousand dollars), and about 3 years. Ignoring the financial aspect I just did not need the stress and dramas of having such a bad experience hanging over my head for 3 years. I was also told in an e-mail that within Queensland WorkCover and Q-Comp, the Workers Compensation Regulatory Authority have an inherent bias against physiological injuries, so even though I attended appointment, (more on this later), chances are I wouldn't have gotten up anyway.

TERMS OF REFERENCE NUMBER 3

Whether there are regulatory, administrative or cross jurisdictional and international legal and policy gaps that should be addressed in the interests of enhancing protection against and providing an early response to workplace bullying

From my own, personal experience there is certainly regulatory and cross jurisdictional issues that need to be addressed.

To begin with, as mentioned in Terms of Reference number 2, Queensland WorkCover and Q-Comp, the Workers Compensation Regulatory Authority has an inherent bias against physiological injuries. So how could anyone ever prove that issues were caused by bullying or worse in the workplace to satisfy these 2, or any other independent agencies.

I have been through the NSW WorkCover for a physical injury and was difficult enough, so I cannot comment on how they deal with these kinds of issues, however I believe it could not be worse than my experience with Queensland.

There is also, in Queensland WorkCover thing called "Reasonable Management Action". It seems to me that this allows management to get away with almost anything. Anyone I have spoken to in NSW has never heard of this clause and is dumb founded when I tell them, this applies to medical and lawyers as well as lay people.

also required me to attend their own Doctor in Brisbane, which I did, thanks entirely to my most amazing parents, as I did not get any kind of payment to attend this, again despite there being something in law that they

are supposed to provide expenses for this kind of thing.(This did happen with my NSW claim). I live somewhere around 200 Kilometres from Brisbane and because of my experience was unable to drive or even think about undertaking a journey like this on my own. While it might seem that I was doing as a payout kind of thing, please be assured that this is/was not my intention and under no circumstances wish I what I went through and occasionally still do, on my worst enemy, so it's not about the money.

CLOSING COMMENTS

I would first of all like to thank the secretary and the committee for taking the time to consider my input into this inquiry. I hope it is of some value to you.

I am sorry that I probably got a bit off track in some of my submission notes, however there is so much to say to you that I am sure I have missed lots of valuable information.

After I returned home from this experience I lived with my parents for an extended amount of time, at least 6 months, again for my own safety and wellbeing. When I did try to return I just fell apart again and had to go back to them. My parents are really my saviours as if I didn't have them I doubt very much I would be here to tell my story now.

I am, at the moment unsure of where to from here for me, even though it's been close to 4 years, however the experience has undermined all my confidence and self-esteem, I have tried to study, both on campus and on line, both with limited success, but haven't really passed as I have done prior to the experience.

I also think that can get away with bullying, one because of who and what it is... everyone wants to work there so employees are an infinite resource to them. Secondly, they would make too much money for the Government from the gambling alone, without anything else for the government to interfere/upset them too much.

Also, when they decided that it was this reasonable management action "thing", they weren't even brave enough to tell me directly, the report and telephone calls went to my psychiatrist. Interesting enough as I am writing this, I am remembering that the Reasonable Management Action thing only came up only came up after they got the report from their Doctor in Brisbane. Again, as I said, I am more than prepared to forward this, and any additional information you feel would benefit the committee, upon your advice.

Again, I am sorry for getting off track during the writing of my submissions to the inquiry, I trust that you understand it's been a long process and even longer process to get to this point.

Workplace bullying submission

I thank you and the committee for your time in considering my submission once again.

Yours most sincerely