

Submission

to

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee

Building and Construction Industry Inquiry

Submission no: 116

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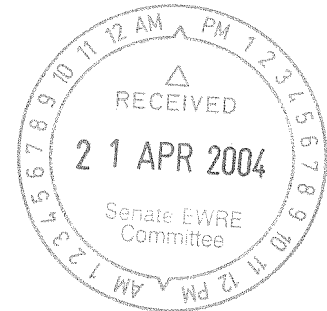
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21st April 2004

Attn: The Secretary,
Senate Employment Workplace Relations
And Education References Committee,
Canberra, ACT. 2600



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I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present a character reference for the people of the Federated Engine Driver and Fireman's Association Union (FEDFA) and describe to you the events that happened and how people worked together at a very difficult time after an industrial accident and a death on a building site.

On 8th October 2000, I was employed as the Operation Manager at Sergi Pty Ltd (a Melbourne based Mobile Crane Company). The Director of Sergi Pty Ltd, Mr. Robert Sergi was killed on that day in an industrial accident at the Corio Interchange on the Geelong Road Project.

I am presenting to you an overview of the events that took place on this day and in the following few months after the incident and how the organizers of the FEDFA worked with the company through a very difficult time.

At 7.20am on Sunday 8th October 2000 I answered a telephone call to a voice on the other end saying "The job has turned to shit, the bridge has collapsed, Rob's dead, get here now".

I got in the car and for the next hour I drove to the job site, not knowing what to do. There are endless phone calls as the news spreads through the industry and I received the one call I dreaded most - Rob's Wife calls wanting to know why her husband is not home yet, I replied there was an accident and I was on the way there. I have had her sisters notified by a senior project manager and they are almost at her home now.

I called Maurie Hill from the FEDFA to tell him of the accident and he told me he was in Ballarat and on his way to the site.

I arrived at the job site at 8.30am and was stopped and kept away from the work area by Victorian Police, refused entry onto the site until all people on site were interviewed. Shortly after this time Maurie Hill arrived, I explained

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to Maurie what was going on and he was allowed entry to meet with the men who were there. For two hours I waited on the street with members of the Press, being photographed and looked upon as they waited for a story.

As soon as it was possible Maurie Hill got permission for me to enter the site and view for myself the accident scene and to meet with the Sergi employees on site. Following meeting with the men, it was clear to me that the organizers from FEDFA had looked after the men during this most traumatic time, they had organized Chaplains and Councillors to the site to assist the men during this very difficult time.

Over the following days the organizers from FEDFA attended meetings at the company's office with all of the employees of the company and anyone who wanted was put in contact with the Chaplain or Councillors to assist with their grieving.

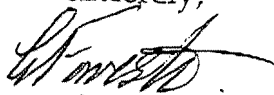
In the months that followed, Maurie Hill from FEDFA was instrumental in lobbying the State Government in naming the bridge The "Rob Sergi Bridge" and partaking in an opening ceremony at the bridge for Rob's family and friends to have a place to remember.

In closing I would like to say that we are all too quick to think about the bad in people and organizations, however, we rarely look at the good.

With the help of FEDFA we ensured that:-

- (1) any employees and Sergi family members received counselling
- (2) assistance with funeral arrangements
- (3) the bridge was named after a man who lost his life during construction
- (4) his family and friends attended a very fitting name ceremony at the site.

Yours sincerely,


George Forrester

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