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GPSC's

10 December 2009

The Director  
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2  
Legislative Council  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

**Re: Review of the implementation of the recommendations of the Inquiry into the management and operations  
of the Ambulance Service of NSW**

Although I did not make a submission to the Inquiry conducted in 2008 I would like to relate my experiences as an injured paramedic with the Ambulance Service of New South Wales (ASNSW) over the last 14 months. I believe my experiences demonstrate that little has changed since the Inquiry in terms of the unacceptable workplace culture of ASNSW.

While the medical specialists I have been referred to have unanimously agreed that I am permanently unable to return to duties within ASNSW I remain in a state of limbo. ASNSW refuses to terminate my employment. The ASNSW *Secondary Employment Policy* renders me unable to engage in any other form of employment – paid or voluntary – while I remain employed by ASNSW. I am therefore forced to remain on workers' compensation leave. I have been (informally) advised that ASNSW will not terminate any employee who has a work related injury within five years of the date of the injury. I strongly suspect such inaction has positive financial implications for ASNSW. However, it has unwelcome implications for injured employees. In addition to the negative psychological effects of long term unemployment there are also adverse financial pressures as employees receive a (very basic) statutory rate of pay while on workers' compensation leave. However, if employees feel that they have no option but to resign then their rights under workers' compensation legislation are compromised and any potential financial recompense from the *ASNSW Death and Disability Scheme* is placed in jeopardy. I would like to point out that contributions to this scheme are made by the employees themselves and are mandatory.

In addition to the above, from my limited knowledge of workers' compensation legislation I believe such a policy of delaying termination (albeit an unofficial policy) contravenes the intentions of the legislation in terms of returning injured workers to meaningful employment as soon as possible. Instead, injured employees are left to feel worthless and mistreated by an employer to whom they have given long and valuable service. I believe the mistreatment I have received is not isolated and indeed I have spoken to other injured officers who have similar stories to my own.

I would like to think that further action might be taken in terms of making concrete and lasting changes to the operations of the management of ASNSW so as to bring about a positive workplace culture wherein the road staff feel valued rather than disrespected.

Regards