

Submission

No 93

INQUIRY INTO THE ROYAL NORTH SHORE HOSPITAL

Name: Mr Rodney Edwards

Rev. Fred Nile MLC
Christian Democratic Party
Legislative Council NSW
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Mr Nile,

Once again I find myself being compelled to write to members of the NSW State Parliament in relation to a concerning issue that certainly strikes a nerve ending or two with me. The concern being the alleged culture attributed to workplace bullying and victimisation of staff.

It is my understanding from news media that two Nurses may have been subjected to such activity and are thus somewhat reluctant upon presenting themselves at the hearing for fear of retaliatory action being taken out against them. It is my further understanding that you are attempting to alleviate the Nurses concerns and provide a way forward for their testimonies to be presented to the Parliamentary Committee. If this is correct then I for one commend you upon your efforts.

That said I trust you will likewise recall that our Premier issued a statement on 5th October 2007 that workplace bullying would not be tolerated. This was backed up a few days later by a statement from the Minister that bullying would be deemed a misconduct issue.

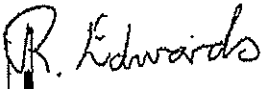
Hence if the Premier and Minister have been bold enough to issue such warnings, then surely Ms Robyn Kruk Director-General NSW Department of Premiers and Cabinet should be able to issue the Nurses with a written guarantee. The guarantee consisting of a statement that basically said if any retaliatory activities are taken out against the individuals presenting evidence to the Parliamentary Committee, that the perpetrators will find themselves under investigation with the strong emphasis on facing disciplinary action.

Hopefully this suggestion will be of some assistance in finding a way forward. For if these Nurses are in fear of persecution for daring to question problem concerns or poor management practices, well this is an outcome I for one have empathy with. Need I remind the members of the Parliamentary Committee that in my case, not only have I written reports pertaining to a culture of workplace bullying existing within the bureaucracy, but these reports were submitted to the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) and the Parliamentary Oversight Committee on the ICAC. The end result being political and bureaucratic defensive ploys to stifle accountability reforms that would rectify the concerns presented.

Thus on this policy reform front my interests are high. Then again I am a well seasoned reformist who is prepared to join a policy battle if the situation is warranted. Having said this I would certainly be interested in hearing what the Nurses have to say. Hopefully their comments may include a few ideas upon how things could be improved.

To finish I trust my comments may aid the members of this committee to put aside the politics and defensive posture of the complicit amongst the bureaucracy, thus perhaps seeking out a few of the innovative to find solutions to address some of the concerns being mooted. I understand that some of the testimonies have been somewhat compelling but perhaps that is exactly what our Politicians need to hear from time to time.

Yours sincerely


Rodney Edwards