

Submission  
No 88

**INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF BULLYING IN  
WORKCOVER NSW**

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date received:** 11/09/2013

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Partially Confidential

## Introduction

I cannot tell you how delighted I was when Commissioner Harrison made his findings against WorkCover, in the Industrial Commission. Someone at a high level had uncovered WorkCover's inappropriate actions against a worker at last, and it was public knowledge, not covered up and suppressed! The subsequent announcement of the Parliamentary Inquiry I know has brought hope to many of those other parties who have been, and continue to be, bullied. That hope is shared by others like myself who have suffered substantially at the hands of the same Managers but have had to leave the organisation to save their health. Thank you David Shoebridge, for the part you played in this Committee coming to fruition, as documented in the press and of course thanks in advance to all Committee Members, and to those staffers behind the scenes who support the Committee.

In leaving WorkCover it is with hope that you can move on, not always possible because of the ongoing trauma that the bullying and harassment has caused. The worst is having to relive scenarios and chronology as one either makes a workers compensation claim, seeing a variety of medical specialists and practitioners or opens themselves to distress by responding to previous inquiries into WorkCover and their bullying such as Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PWC). Nothing happened with the PWC report or any ongoing advisory contact made with those like me, who subjected themselves to severe trauma by the reliving of many distressing events and times and questioning about them.

Initially I was just about jumping up and down with sheer relief that a Parliamentary Inquiry was to be held into bullying at Workcover. Then I went through the "can I do this again, can I really relive all of this?" I decided that yes, I should because how would you ever know what sort of things went on if I didn't. However, I have now been told that it is likely this is only a generic view that particular parties will not be held accountable. I ask myself what is the point of both the inquiry and my putting myself through trauma. Rest assured I am no drama queen and it is extremely traumatic to make myself live all this again – it is not possible to distance myself from past events. As a result of my own feelings, I ask you to consider these issues:

1) There will be many people who do not have the courage to write and make a submission to your Inquiry, because they may either be still in the organisation and terrified of reprisals and the fact they of course will continue to be bullied and harassed. The other groups will be those who have left the organisation and just cannot relive the trauma. Or there may be those like myself who already went there once with no outcome (PWC enquiry) and cannot see the point if nothing gets done and nothing ever changes. Therefore, if there are limited numbers of submissions, in no way can you make a correlation between lack of submissions and lack of bullying at least in the OHSD area of WorkCover. Specifically, that if there are few stories told, not for one moment try and correlate that bullying doesn't and hasn't happened, that is absolutely not so.

2) This is a Parliamentary Inquiry and it comes to mind that it would be easy for any Parliamentary Inquiry to lay blame at the opposing political party's door and make it a political show down, rather than what it apparently aspires to, that is to seek out information into entrenched bullying in WorkCover. Make no mistake, to bring politics into it would be erroneous in the extreme. Bullying has gone on in WorkCover in the Work Health Safety Division (previously Occupational Health and Safety Division (OHSD)) regardless of which political party holds power in NSW. The level at which WorkCover Safety Inspectors and all Managers in OHSD work is not affected in a day to day sense by political change. Inspectors undertake their duties consistent with the legislation that they administer. Their Managers are not political

appointees. The legislation which WorkCover administers does not change just because the political leadership in the State of NSW changes. Naturally new political leadership might see introduction of new legislation, but changes to existing legislation or introduction of new legislation is made through the set legislative process with all its specific stages. A change of government is still "business as usual".

May I then say that I am pleased to see the mixed composition of this Committee and hope that the broad range of knowledge and experience that it brings to this Committee is fully utilised.

3) That there must be action taken or action proposed and taken as a result of your findings. To leave things as they are and allow the perpetrators of bullying to carry on would be a serious miscarriage of justice and lack of action may see highly skilled intelligent people damaged permanently. Many of the perpetrators of bullying will be known and praised for their style of management and there will be great nashing of teeth and wailing as they retire, all by the most senior management. Not only will they retire, but they will do so heaped with praise and potentially benefits that many people have been denied because their careers and employment came to an early close when they left to save their sanity and health.

4) There has never been any accountability or investigation by any authorised, independent body with significant power into WorkCover's own breaches of the legislation which they administer, and for which they punish all NSW employers when they fail in their legislative responsibilities. In OHSD where does an inspector go to report bullying, and failures by WorkCover to comply with the legislation they administer under Occupational Health and Safety and Return to Work? To their supervisors or higher managers, who have allowed and condoned or carried out the breaches in the first place is the answer.

If any government body administers legislation which is also to be upheld by them as employers, then there should be an independent panel of persons appointed, who are not involved with that government department or have any connection that could be construed as conflict of interest to investigate claims of legislative breaches by that particular body as an employer. This does not necessarily need to be a full time panel, although it possibly might be, depending on the range and number of government departments that it might have jurisdiction over.

## **Background to my issues**

I commenced employment in 1986 as a Rehabilitation Counsellor with the State Compensation Board of NSW.

With the enactment of the Workers Compensation Act 1987, the State Compensation Board was dissolved and the functions were brought together with the occupational health and safety functions, previously performed under another organisation, to create the WorkCover Authority. I transferred into a role in what became the Division of Rehabilitation Services of WorkCover Authority. I had a 2 year absence from WorkCover between 1989-1991 whilst I worked at the NSW Fire Brigades as a rehabilitation co-ordinator, then returned to employment as a Recom Co-ordinator.

In this position I was responsible for a team of staff located in \_\_\_\_\_, who provided information and advice on both rehabilitation and compensation matters for workers, employers, unions and any party seeking information,

In 1994 further restructuring took place and the 4 ReCom units were absorbed into the general

inspectorate. At this time the advisory staff, working under the 4 ReCom co-ordinators, were provided with the full 12 months of entry level inspector training to re-train as generalist inspectors. The 4 ReCom co-ordinators were provided only with a small amount of training designed to provide only a general overview of occupational health and safety duties.

The Recom Co-ordinators were transferred into Principal Inspector positions and retained as specialists in workers compensation and rehabilitation. In approximately 1998 a new competency based assessment was introduced to the inspectorate. As a result, each of the 4 Principal Inspectors who had transferred from Recom were asked to undertake a competency assessment process to demonstrate our competence at Principal Inspector level. This assessment was made utilising our specialist skills in workers compensation and rehabilitation only.

At this time we received a written memorandum from the Acting Assistant General Manager of the Occupational Health and Safety Division confirming that being awarded the competencies would not mean that we would be required to undertake generalist inspector duties for which we had not established a specific competency. This memo confirmed our key role as specialists in workers compensation and rehabilitation.

I continued to work in this specialist field dealing with all matters related to workers compensation and rehabilitation. In 1999 I was encouraged to apply for competency assessment at the next level, being Regional Inspector. Over a period of time I undertook this process and was ultimately successful in obtaining Regional Inspector level, based on my technical expertise in the workers compensation and rehabilitation stream. I was advised of my successful competency application whilst on leave in January 2000. Unfortunately some other staff were not successful and this created some petty jealousies resulting in bullying and social isolation from other workers in the office.

Putting in the extra work and achieving recognition at a higher level unfortunately proved to be a very negative experience, as it ultimately ended my career.

## **My Story**

For me the troubles all began in 2000 when I was advised that I was to be transferred from the Office of WorkCover to the office. I was advised that this action was being taken because the other staff in the office objected to me achieving Regional Inspector competency. I considered that to be patently unfair. I objected to this action as I was advised that it would also mean that I would be unable to continue to work in my specialist area of workers compensation and rehabilitation. I complained to management that I had never received the full inspector training and was therefore not equipped to perform generalist inspector duties, having been repeatedly given assurances that I would continue to work in my specialist area and also undertake appropriate Regional Inspector duties.

I became very distressed. I felt victimised and bullied. Managers who should have been assisting me to deal with the unreasonable behaviour of my colleagues, simply supported them by isolating me further and placing me in an untenable position. The move to resulted in significant hardship as it required a commute of almost 100km each way and significantly increased travel time. In an attempt to placate me I was told that the office was ultimately planned for move to – this is significantly closer to my residence.

This move was only ever going to result in negative outcomes for me and the staff in the office to which I was forced to transfer. Management was aware that the office was trying to cope with a massive workload and they needed an experienced inspector who could deal with the full range of OHS issues which presented themselves. With no general OHS skills and only a specialty in workers compensation matters I was never going to be much help with their massive workload. From that point on I was forced to conduct OHS workplace visits in response to complaints I have tried to do my best but it is hard to see how this was in the best interests of those workers and others whose complaints I was allocated. Due to my lack of training and practical awareness in OHS, each workplace visit filled me with fear and trepidation. I was constantly worried that I would overlook something of importance as I had never had the benefit of inspector training. With assistance from my colleagues I did gain some general OHS skills and I was able to undertake a variety of tasks such as dealing with counter and phone enquiries but would always become anxious if there was no-one more experienced around from whom I could seek assistance.

To find myself in this situation was quite soul destroying as I had previously been a competent, professional, high achieving, well respected and recognised specialist from both within and outside the organisation with nearly 20 years' experience in my specialty area. I was under constant attack from colleagues and supervisors, being unhappy that I could not competently undertake the full range of OHS duties. Whilst I understood their need for a fully functioning generalist inspector, it was not my fault that I had been put in a role for which I did not possess the skills, but I was certainly targeted by all concerned as being the reason for their problems.

My reward for reaching the peak of my career and being recognised for exceptional specialist technical skills was to be forever removed from my specialty area and literally thrown in at the deep end to perform a job I have never applied for nor desired to perform. Unfortunately it did not stop there.

On 8 March 2006 I was called to a work review meeting with my supervisors. I was allocated a full OHS investigation file. I tried again to advise that I had been assured I would never be undertaking day to day inspector duties which is why the Recom Co-ordinators were not given the full one year training. I advised I had not been trained to undertake OHS accident investigations. My supervisors were not interested. They insisted that I must do as directed and advised I would face disciplinary action if I did not do as I was instructed. I felt sick. I did not know how I would cope.

The stress that had built up in my work life over this 6 year period had flowed over into my private life. I would barely go anywhere on the weekends, preferring to stay at home which I viewed as my sanctuary. I ceased socialising with friends outside of the immediate vicinity of my home and no longer saw many old friends. I lost confidence and self-esteem through being removed from my area of competence. I could still see no reason for this to have occurred. There was still plenty of work in the workers compensation and rehabilitation field, however it was being allocated to other inspectors who were not specifically competent in that area. It all seemed so unnecessary to me.

I was advised that a "training programme" was proposed for me. It was acknowledged that the training programme might take over 1 year to complete. If this training had been provided six years earlier when I had been transferred to a generalist position I may have been able to enthusiastically take up the challenge. However this prospect at the age of 55, without any clearly articulated goals or process, for a job that I may only have continued for another year or so, due to the ongoing stressful situation, left me severely stressed and depressed. For the past six years I had resisted

taking sick leave due to these stresses, as I saw it as a personal failure. This time I found myself unable to cope and I had no alternative but to take some sick leave.

When I returned from sick leave I attended a team meeting. The \_\_\_\_\_ spoke about each Regional inspector in the team and their significant work achievements in such positive and glowing terms. When he got to me he told the whole team "..... is here for training". I felt humiliated in front of the whole team. He had reduced my whole career to being nothing but a trainee. I had in fact contributed to the writing of workers compensation legislation, was recognised as a leader and mentor to numerous staff across the state. I also trained new and existing inspectors and outside parties. I was also a trail blazer in that I had imposed on the spot fines for a workers compensation matter in a coal mine which had never been done before, along with many other proud and personal achievements after many years of service.

I left the meeting in tears. I could not go back to the meeting despite the threatening direction from my \_\_\_\_\_ that I MUST return to meeting. I simply could no longer cope.

I knew my situation was untenable and that if I did not do something to help myself that I would become sick again. I applied for and obtained on merit a temporary position in the \_\_\_\_\_ . This was an \_\_\_\_\_ with responsibility for auditing accredited external \_\_\_\_\_ . The unit was based in Gosford, which is where my supervisor was, but I was located in and working from the \_\_\_\_\_ office from which I had been transferred six years earlier. I worked throughout the \_\_\_\_\_ . It also meant that I could be working during the day, evening or even weekends.

For two years this was a thoroughly enjoyable and positive experience. I felt that I was once again valued and respected and was able to contribute to significant positive outcomes for WorkCover. I was immensely satisfied with my work and the fact I achieved a very significant "first" for the unit unfortunately this temporary secondment was due to come to an end on 30 June 2008.

However I was to find out that \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were being contacted on a regular basis by \_\_\_\_\_ particularly in regard to my office attendance and hours, and I was yet again being highlighted as a non-performer.

As I said, I was required to work odd hours as part of my work. That meant I might come into the office say at 11am after a long late night, or that I would be working into the night of that particular day. WorkCover's online timesheet system does not allow inspectors to actually enter the hours you work which is a real problem. I however kept manual timesheets and diary notes, and my supervisor knew where I was at all times. Out of courtesy to the \_\_\_\_\_ office I had a file on my desk that showed what job I was on at any one time, and where I was, and I advised each Manager of \_\_\_\_\_ Team where it was. I had absolutely no formal obligation to do so.

Once I had a problem with my glasses and as a result was getting the beginnings of a migraine headache, so I ducked out of the office to see a local optometrist. I advised my supervisor in Gosford and although I didn't need to, out of courtesy I advised the \_\_\_\_\_ clerical staff.

I found out later that one of the \_\_\_\_\_ was immediately on the phone to Gosford tittle-tattling of my apparently unauthorised and inappropriate short term absence. \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ were basically being harassed about me and I was being secretly and inappropriately micro-managed from another office! Over a period to time you might imagine my \_\_\_\_\_ would not be happy about this inappropriate, underhand and unnecessary intervention which was purely raising a negative profile of me.

Unfortunately this temporary secondment was due to come to an end on 30 June 2008. I believe all the interference by the \_\_\_\_\_ office was ultimately responsible for my secondment not being

further extended, as it simply became too hard for my Gosford Manager to deal with the constant interference.

On 28 May 2008, whilst still working in the , I was approached by the supervisor advised me that needed to talk to me. I went to office and told me that she had already arranged the training programme I would need to commence when I returned to the generalist inspector role. told me that the training would commence on 2 June 2008. I reminded the supervisor that I would still be in the till 30 June 2008. I also advised that I had already planned to take 7 weeks recreation leave followed by some long service leave as I needed to spend some time with my elderly mother. The supervisor was furious. asked me how I was able to accrue so much leave. said words to the effect of "I'm not allowed to accrue that much leave so why should you". I was stunned. It should be noted that our conditions of employment allow for 8 weeks recreation leave to be accrued and there is no restriction on the accrual of long service leave.

The supervisor advised that the training programme would commence as advised and documented 2 years ago. When I suggested that this should be reviewed in light of the 2 years which had passed, the pending restructure and the new skills I had obtained in my current position, was adamant that the plan made 2 years earlier would be adhered to. I suggested that an alternative would be for me to stay working in the office as a Regional Inspector, where I could undertake duties such as specialist project work commensurate with my Regional Inspector level and job description and avoid an unnecessarily lengthy, costly and stressful experience.

The supervisor made some comment about maybe considering this, but advised that had already emailed me a draft training programme. I believe I handled this meeting well given how emotive the topic of the training programme was for me. I did not become emotional or reduced to tears as had previously occurred. I put this down to my re-gained sense of self-esteem since working in the

I went back to my desk and decided to get out of the office for a short while to get some lunch with a colleague. I began to realise that things had impacted upon me more than I thought when I made a purchase but could not remember my pin number. I returned to work but found it very hard to concentrate. I told the supervisor (from the previous meeting) of my memory loss. I forced myself to continue as there was so much work to complete from a recent country tour for audit management. Later in the afternoon I started to get a pain going down my left arm and into my chest. I left the office at about 6pm and drove myself to hospital. On the way I again rang the supervisor to advise I was going to hospital and of my symptoms. I was admitted to hospital for several days under the care of a cardiologist and had to return again for another few days a few weeks later. I was advised I was suffering from stress-related angina.

I later discovered as a result of a GIPA application that the supervisor had not made any note of my contact with that day regarding my health. It is a specific requirement for supervisors to note such information on the online service centre. This would later be to my disadvantage when I finally filed a workers compensation claim.

I never returned to work. I was advised by the cardiologist that if I returned to the same stressful situation, that I would have a serious heart attack and probably die. I cannot begin to describe how distressing this was. I had to make a decision to prioritise my health and my life over continuing at work. I used up all my sick leave and then arranged to take all of my remaining recreation leave and then long service leave at half pay. I eventually left WorkCover with no alternative but to retire early, leaving me with substantially less superannuation and retirement benefits than I had planned.

During my period of leave I was advised that my use of the work vehicle would be charged at full cost recovery, a significant expense. I made a request of the same supervisor that the full cost recovery be waived, as had been arranged for many of my colleagues. I never received any follow up notification on this issue from the supervisor. I later received a letter telling me I had incurred a debt that needed to be repaid. The same letter questioned the validity of my sick leave on the basis that they had discovered that I had registered for a charity horse ride.

The letter caused a return of my distress and chest pain symptoms. I felt that I was being further bullied and harassed. My planned horse ride, an annual event was in keeping with my doctors' instructions that I should stay physically fit and avoid stressful situations. I remain unaware of what kind of investigation was undertaken by my employer that allowed them to delve into my social activities.

My GIPA application also revealed that management had documented that they knew that sending me the letter would cause me distress. They were fully aware that I had a heart condition. They also documented my telephone call "in a distressed state" after receiving the letter. I do not believe they show me any duty of care, or even basic human concern during this time, in fact exactly the opposite.

#### WORKERS COMPENSATION CLAIM

As I stated earlier, I made a workers compensation claim. I didn't undertake that action until I had left the organisation. I knew if I made a claim whilst still employed, that it would allow for more bullying under the legitimate guise of a claim. I also did not make a claim because I knew it would have a negative impact on my health. "Why make the claim" you might ask? In the end I made the claim because I felt that if my claim were accepted that I would be vindicated that WorkCover had done the wrong thing by me. This vindication was highly important for me. The claim was not initially accepted nor was the legislative process for claims processing adhered to. I am currently seeking the chronology which will identify the breaches and the party responsible for same.

The claim was only denied after some 6 months, and accepted some 9 months after it was put in, as a result of telephone conciliation which I attended in my solicitor's office. During that conciliation WorkCover's solicitor (nominated by their insurer) advised no there was no doubt that WorkCover was responsible for my condition. I actually heard him say this – the Conciliation Officer expressed her concern about denial of the claim and why we were then in a conciliation hearing? He was adamant that I fell outside the timeframe for making a claim. This was despite my knowing I had made an appropriate notification, which my supervisor failed to enter on the Online Service Centre consistent with obligations as a Supervisor.

Through this conciliation I was highly distressed and getting chest pain. At the end of it I was obliged to accept a sum equal to less than 6 months wages despite being off from work for nearly 4 years and continue to be unfit to work, I also received a small sum towards medical expenses. The amount for medical expenses did not cover what I had already spent, let alone any future expenses. The worst thing was that had I wanted to go to Court to continue, my solicitor advised I should accept what was offered because he could not represent me further. Whilst I knew my entitlements to be substantially greater, I accepted the offer. You are in a stressful situation and under huge pressure at this time to accept. I didn't know that when I accepted I had to sign a declaration that stated I was fully fit and not going to take matters further – you do it or you begin the whole process again. Filling in this declaration is awful you know it isn't right, and having fought to do the right thing it is an ignominious end to things. However 12 years after the bullying process had begun there was some vindication.

## Legislative breaches

WorkCover as my employer breached multiple areas of the OHS and Return to Work legislation without any due regard for their obligations or the impact on me.

WorkCover knew that the staff in [redacted] were ostracising me as a result of my success in gaining Regional Inspector. Instead of addressing this issue with the perpetrators they facilitated the bullying by moving me to an area with new and foreign duties, which they knew I had not been trained for.

They did not provide me with appropriate workplace training and supervision to equip me to deal with the new duties they allocated.

They were aware of the bullying which subsequently occurred in the [redacted] office as a result of my colleagues being dissatisfied that I could not fully perform the generalist inspector duties, due to my lack of training. Because I was a specialist in workers compensation many colleagues and other stakeholders sought me out for my specialist knowledge. My [redacted] colleagues were resentful of the additional burden this placed on the phone lines and their time etc.

Although being a Regional Inspector, I was expected to do routine inspector duties rather than the specialist duties of the Regional Inspector role I had obtained. Other Regional Inspectors were utilised at their appropriate level, consistent with our position.

When training was finally offered in 2006, the intention was to have a junior inspector provide the training, rather than another Regional Inspector provide training commensurate with my level. Normal protocol would be to have someone at the same level or higher to provide any training.

Documentation left on top of the photocopier showed that highly personal disparaging remarks were being made about me by that same inspector (nominated to train me) and another staff member. It was also noted in the email that my Manager was giving me a hard time. It greatly affected me to find this. No action was taken to stop this bullying and harassment.

On my last day at work 28 May 2008, after a meeting with a supervisor, I notified [redacted] of my memory loss. Later after having completed my reports I drove myself to hospital, again notifying the supervisor. [redacted] did not fulfil her required duties by making formal notation of my reports about my health. This failure hindered my subsequent workers compensation claim as WorkCover then claimed that I had made no notification. The supervisors' emails tell another story – [redacted] did not however record my notification in the proper place on the online service centre.

In full knowledge of my stress related heart condition, WorkCover wrote me a letter worded in such terms that were assured to cause maximum stress and distress. File notes indicate that managers knew this would stress me. They also knew that I lived on my own in a remote location, to where they sent the letter. To me the letter was threatening and somewhat abusive. They questioned the validity of my sick leave claim despite having valid medical certificates outlining my condition and unfitness for work. There is a formal process for challenging medical opinions – instead of following this process they chose to send me accusatory letters in the full knowledge that it could make me more ill. I consider this an abject failure of their duty of care to me.

My supervisor made negative workplace decisions against me based on [redacted] personal and subjective opinion despite there being available objective documented formal evidence on which to base the decision making process

Although WorkCover allocated a return to work officer, that officer was unable to communicate with me in a supportive manner. My requests for a specific manager to be the contact person for me were refused and instead that manager was instructed that I was not to contact me at all, causing further isolation.

Failure to identify or offer suitable duties consistent with WorkCover's own Return to Work Program

The sum total of these breaches of the safety and workers compensation legislation are that WorkCover failed to provide me with a safe and healthy workplace. These breaches are not necessarily complete, but those that come to mind at this time.

## **Conclusion**

The actions and inactions of WorkCover managers caused me to lose confidence and self-esteem. My career was prematurely taken from me. I had no opportunity to say goodbye to my friends and colleagues. No opportunity for closure. To this day I become extremely anxious at the sheer mention of WorkCover and I am unable to make contact with ex-colleagues through the workplace due to the feelings of terror that arise with contemplating a phone call to the workplace. I am still unable to drive anywhere near the various WorkCover offices due to the unmanageable fear. Sadly I have been unable to maintain friendships even with many people who have left the organisation, because the spectre of WorkCover looms over me.

I am on medication and probably will be for the rest of my life as a result of the way I have been mistreated. In purely financial terms I estimate that WorkCover has denied me around \$700,000 in lost earnings and superannuation. For a considerable period of time I was denied enjoyment of my life. It has taken many years for me to be able to go about my life without WorkCover feeling like a constant and ever-present threat. Unfortunately I doubt I will ever be that confident, self sufficient person I was and my life has changed irrevocably in the most negative way because of WorkCover

It has in fact taken me a lot longer than anticipated to write this submission because on multiple occasions I have become too stressed to continue when my heart pain symptoms returned. In fact you probably wouldn't be receiving this at all if a friend had not assisted me to get it all down on paper and to talk me through the most stressful parts. I felt that I had to continue out of a sense of duty to try to protect others from a similar fate. There are so many more things I could say but I must trust that others will raise those things as I have reached the end of my tolerance for this task.

Everything in my story relates to my time at WorkCover in one Team/Region only and those Managers in that Region/Team throughout the events related, some of whom still serve in those positions. It should be remembered that their direction, control and supervision comes from their Senior Manager in the WorkCover Head Office

I thank you for the opportunity to tell my story and I implore you to do something to make a difference.

8 September 2013

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I have subsequently thought of further issues which I very much wish also to include as part of this Submission, and to be taken into consideration.

#### OTHER ISSUES RELATING/CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORKCOVER WORKPLACE CULTURE

1. Complaints are often made against WorkCover Inspectors either as a result of a workplace visit and handling of a complaint or through a Ministerial File. Having been the subject of a vexatious complaint I can testify it was a particularly unpleasant experience. I felt I was considered guilty by WorkCover Managers from the beginning and treated very much as though I was in an adversarial arena. I was never advised that I was found in no way "guilty" or apologised to. You just wait and wait and wonder what your fate might be, even knowing that you have done nothing wrong.

Also in relation to complaints, despite a direct line manager signing off on the inspector's activities and actions on a complaint, it is the inspector who is grilled and treated as "guilty". My question is where is the line manager's accountability in the matter?

Incidentally the investigation I went through was a complaint I asked not to be allocated because I lacked sufficient skills about the issues raised at the workplace. Ironically I am then punished and found not guilty but "unprofessional" with no explanation for this. I found this information as a result of my GIPA application.

2. WorkCover has a practice of allowing inspectors to apply for temporary positions elsewhere in the organisation for example to expand their knowledge or perhaps work in a less stressful or busy office. However it was never practice to backfill position so that an office could be less one or more inspectors at any one time and thus under greater pressure to accomplish the same amount of work with less resources thus allowing potential bullying to creep in as the pressure feeds down the line.

3. On one occasion Manager in the team told me he does not believe that psychological injury exists and people should just get on with it (life) and that he didn't tolerate it. That person and his attitude of course can do great harm and one would wonder how bullying and subsequent injury fares under his management. What of the people?

4. The more compliant and respectful you are specifically my experience in my Team/Region shows, the more likely you are to be the target of bullying particularly by Managers.

5. "Sorry" and "Apology" "Apologise" are unknown words and unlikely to be heard in WorkCover. A genuine apology goes a long way to healing. There are many persons who have and are employed by WorkCover who are owed such an apology. One wonders whether it might be forthcoming now.

6. When I was located in the office, the never came into the office and spoke to the staff in a general way or even did a quick good morning around. certainly never said Goodnight. Rather than access the exit door through the office, used to leave so peo-

ple couldn't see through a utilities area. That way staff wouldn't know if was in the office or not. I am advised that still does this. There is no goodwill between the holder of this position and staff based in Region. A story which illustrates this in a small but important way is that traditionally on the last working day before Christmas the staff based in held a Christmas lunch, at the staff's own expense. This has banned that from happening. It was one occasion when the staff were able to be altogether in a positive way.

The position is responsible for lots of people and the holder needs to have good people skills and have an open door policy. Good people skills and management from this position would make a real difference in this Region to many of its issues including bullying. Rather than managing by bullying and brow-beating staff into "submission" "Stomped all over" are words recently used to describe how a staff member felt about the management style.

7 WorkCover has always recruited high level achievers, and people with great, skills and initiative into the Inspectorate. The recruitment process has always been highly competitive and difficult with huge numbers of people applying to become a Safety Inspector. However once in the organisation they are often treated like "clones" and showing that initiative frequently has negative impact for them. If you don't fit the mould you become a "non-performer" and are punished. One high level line Manager with direct responsibility for the inspectorate referred to then as "the kiddies". There are of course other inspectors who rise meteorically has they adopt the same bullying, heavy handed approach as their senior managers.

8. Inspectors as well as being under pressure due to colleagues acting in other jobs were frequently subjected to rotating Managers. Thus an inspector might complete a file or investigation only to be told by a new Manager to do their report or any other facet of the investigation in a different way, the way he or she liked it in. Then the inspector might have another new Manager only to have to change their style again. The office I worked in had a stream of Acting Managers due to the substantive position holder acting in another office/position.

One inspector was bullied and harassed in an ongoing way to keep changing her documents. Other less compliant and mostly male inspectors were left alone, however that is not to say they too might not have been bullied at some stage.

9. One I worked under was terrified of the . Sadly that inspector is now dead as a result of a heart attack. I took a call as Duty Officer, which I recognised knew had the potential to become a major issue. I advised the that I had taken the call, its contents and that I was referring the matter for its profile and potential escalation to the . went to pieces saying we would handle it locally and not to contact the . I was stunned by the fear showed, but explained as a Regional Inspector I had to refer the matter on. The matter did escalate thereafter. The severe reaction at just the suggestion of potential contact with the caused in left a lasting impression on me.

10. I mentioned timesheets in the body of my submission. In multiple internal correspondence and even in the WorkCover referral letter to Healthquest it was stated I had outstanding timesheets. I actually had submitted the timesheets to a senior staffer in HR months and months before, when they were due. No-one ever rang and asked me to establish the truth. Instead they were happy to defame me with no right of reply. Certainly the Health Quest doctors did not need to know about timesheets, what relevance could this have to assessing my fitness to continue work. Many of WorkCovers Managers lack true management and people skills and thus resort to micromanagement. What is sad, is that they supervise many high level, intelligent and articulate people who are used to managing their work loads and work lives as a matter of course but are humiliated by the micro management. One very senior inspector who has many, many years' service and significant

high level achievements in their specialty relating to an area of occupational health and safety that is very high profile and much in the news, has recently departed the organisation as a result of that micro-management. This person has written papers, addressed conferences etc. but was so under the microscope on a daily basis when a new manager was appointed despite their love of working in the organisation, felt they had to leave to survive, given their health was beginning to suffer in a potentially serious way because of the unnecessary daily scrutiny and judgement calls on their qualifications, skills and experience. I have asked that person if I might relate what I've written and they gave their full permission and asked me to relate another incidence of unreasonable issue in relation to timesheets.

Previously as a Manager and supervisor of staff in the same Team/Region I was located they supervised one staff member who was consistently in the office for long hours, had a very strong work ethic and lost multiple hours per month because of the hours they put in. That officer had a medical appointment one afternoon which this Manager okayed on the timesheet only to have the most Senior Manager in the team insist this person take leave to cover their absence. The other Manager states they argued the unfairness of the situation but the Senior Manager of the Team/Region insisted. This is another example of the timesheets being problematical in their limitations and the lack of flexibility in Managers and the way they relate to staff.

11. When I was advised I was being sent to HealthQuest for medical examination "for fitness to continue" I was wearing a cast on my arm as I had sustained a broken arm when I tripped and fell. The cast was due to come off within a day or so of the appointment. I rang HealthQuest and checked that I could still be seen within a short timeframe of the appointment if it were cancelled and re-made after my cast was removed. Yes, I could get an appointment very quickly after the cast was removed.

I then rang and wrote to WorkCover requesting that I be allowed to postpone the appointment for a very short time so the cast could come off and I could have some physio then I could drive myself to the appointment without worrying I might reinjure my arm whilst in the very busy Sydney city. I was refused and a further written request was made by the Public Service Association on my behalf, that request was also refused. Instead WorkCover Human Resources (HR) told me that would fly me to Sydney and back for the existing appointment. I advised HR the airport was about 60kms away from where I lived and I had no way of getting there as I couldn't drive due to the cast on my arm.

Then they said they would organise a car to drive me to Sydney and back, again I requested a short postponement of the appointment. They were adamant I would go on the day planned, no ifs or buts and one HR member said the hire car was only required because I was "being difficult". I asked if someone could go with me and was told NO. Whilst it may seem and sound silly, I was terrified at the prospect of being in a car with a total stranger for nearly 7 hours. In the end I ignored the NO and took someone with me.

When I advised \_\_\_\_\_ that I had sustained a fall and of my injury, \_\_\_\_\_ said "Not from a horse I hope". What difference would it make how I broke my arm? It seemed \_\_\_\_\_ irrationally and subjectively decided that it was inappropriate whilst I was on sick leave for a work stress related condition to be riding my horse. This, despite the clearances from my doctor and specialist, of which \_\_\_\_\_ was fully aware but chose to ignore.

There was no good reason to use the public purse to a cost of approx. \$800 just to insist I did precisely as directed and to bully me. The outcome of the HealthQuest visit made no difference to my returning to work. Even the HealthQuest psychologist expressed his concerns to me about the process. It just illustrates yet another WorkCover "you will do what you are told" moment.