

Submission
No 7

INQUIRY INTO BULLYING OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Name: Name suppressed
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February 13, 2009

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

Inquiry into bullying of children and young people

SUBMISSION: Bullying involving [sporting administrative body]

PRELIMINARY

I confirm to the Honourable Members my understanding that it shall not be investigating individual cases.

In this document no derogatory inference to any person or organisation is intended. My task is to outline organisational abuses which amount to very serious bullying. I have spent many hundreds of hours working to find a way to resolve these issues, including with the parties concerned. I think that there may be many avenues of complaint for people suffering bullying, especially from individuals, but very few accessible resolution processes for those being bullied by powerful and influential organisations. My son's situation is an example of how individual cases can fall through the net.

What I have stated here is fully the truth, but it is only the tip of the iceberg insofar as my son is concerned. I have been working for a resolution right up until _____ which just made

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it finally clear that a direct resolution with _____ was in all probability not going to be possible. I regret any inferences drawn but having a serious duty to my son, and having worked so hard to seek a resolution. I certainly don't apologize, however.

As an example setting out the general context of the submission, the following is the text of an email I sent seeking help.

I am a parent looking for answers to my 13 year old son's predicament. He has been victimised for the past 2 or 3 years by various _____ administrators or bodies sometimes in collusion or concert, or as individuals. I feel that I can prove this. Since the harassment is not based on sex, marriage etc. the antidiscrimination provisions don't seem to apply. I have tried to resolve issues by verbal then written complaint but they just won't stop. He now seems to be developing psychological issues including crying, not feeling right, and getting very fidgety and lacking confidence in his sport. He is a top performer but he is being very significantly detrimented. ...

and further ...

I would like to get these people before the court arbitration in sport

They do not have "child protection officers", searching the complaint, harassment, discrimination etc come up empty. I phoned my call. Can you help urgently and meaningfully please?

_____ websites for the words and they have not returned

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A search for the string "child protection" on the website produces nothing about, even as late as today. Sometime ago I contacted their responsible person but my two calls were never returned. The website also have not a word on child protection or any method to make suggestions or complaints. Neither has any documentation about their structural arrangements of affiliation etc etc. There is no way for us to know who to complain to or what rights they claim to have. seemingly invents powers that they just do not have.

Two years ago when my son was aged just 12, I wrote to someone

*"My son .
finest professionals in years to come.*

He is going to be one of Australia's

improvement whatsoever. During this period
to the attention of

and yet some two years has transpired without *any*
developed severe psychological issues which I brought

It has not helped that he has had to endure an ongoing barrage of bullying.

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INTRODUCTION

My son has had to endure years of malicious and intentional bullying at the hands of an adult who holds the powerful and influential position as head of He is protected from scrutiny by the fact that firstly he *is* the boss and secondly because no significant government oversight exists. There are no clear laws available for police to undertake prosecutions or even investigations. The laws concerning apprehended violence *do* include psychological matters, but a personal apprehended violence order cannot be taken against an organisation. The equal opportunity anti-discrimination laws which can be taken against organisations are extremely narrow and cannot be applied according to authorities.

One can understand why the legislators have narrowly defined the laws caring not to open the floodgates. It is my assertion that when ongoing bullying is coming from a powerful adult or an organisation then there is a very clear need for statutory protections. Also in regard to legislation, the commonwealth ratified the international agreement on the rights of the child. Both commonwealth and state governments have power to enact suitable legislation.

There hasn't been sufficient oversight of

The governments fund and support these organisations as self-governing bodies and so rightly has a very high expectation of them to act fairly and to comply with government policies of equity and in relation to children.

It's bad enough when a boy or girl picks on (bullies) another child. But when an *organisation* feels empowered and impervious enough that they can do anything they want, now that is a lamentable situation. It is not easy to complain about one's own sport. I have had to weigh up long and hard whether to raise my concerns. Having so decided I make myself available for questioning if desired. It's also very hard to explain to a child why you can't stop the bullying. How you are powerless to stop the culprits. All the talk all the cajoling in the world has been fruitless.

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Had the obvious detriments of complaining not been so unpalatable we could have complained much earlier. Had they used a suggestions box, or even had a formal channel for complaints. But no. I made every attempt to amicably resolve a few simple issues but they were seemingly kept going. I wrote to two years ago as a *pleading* for fairness, an amicable outcome concerning what I termed "victimisation". But since writing the detriments suffered by my son just increased in an unrelenting fashion. I have therefore to believe that that letter was unacceptable to and that the increased attention was punishment.

I have been loath to take these issues outside of

primarily out of concern for the coming retribution. It happened last time and we fully expect it again. In recent days it has been made clear to me and separately to that they intend to reinstate their persecution and bullying behaviour.

Hence this reluctant letter.

CAUSES

I hold primarily responsible. In our dealings I have found him to deny being told certain matters, to be inflexible, to always accept the side of any argument which is against . He has been unrelenting in his pursuit of

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EFFECTS ON MY SON

The effects on my son are extremely clear to us, including:

- for a time had been self-harming
- developed and expressed suicidal tendencies
- attendance and performance at school has suffered very significantly
- had an increase in absences from school
- had serious behavioural problems at school which he never had before
- stopped playing completely for some time, returning only gradually and with apprehension
- He said that he didn't feel right, and that he felt strange
- He was crying and was unable to state why
- [sport] development has been seriously delayed and possibly permanently impaired
- self esteem instead of blossoming has been seriously damaged, and
- relative standing : has been seriously damaged.

I am a 3rd person but affected party none the less.

- I have lost literally many hundreds of hours sleep with feelings of anger, frustration and helplessness
- I have had to spend a few thousand hours writing up and recording these and many other issues

As a result of this submission I fully expect many further serious detriments or lack of equitable access to the fruits of his endeavours. acts as gatekeepers to many important benefits.

PRIVACY

As an organisation, privacy is not their strong suit. At various times over the years I have seen most junior players' details

needs to know

This information is in excess of what anyone

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I was always under the impression that only information directly necessary for the functions of the organisation should be kept. But [redacted] has a collection of reports which he unnecessarily sought out and kept and then used to my sons detriment. I do not have the vast majority of these reports nor have I seen many. I always thought that copies of information were to be provided so that material could be challenged. All of the reports are untested, none would pass muster if the rules of evidence were applied. [redacted] doesn't know their veracity either because he has asked me to explain them.

[redacted] I presume that most would be libellous.

SOME OTHER COMPLAINTS

[Omitted by resolution of the Committee]

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[Omitted by resolution of the Committee]

MEETING IN 2008

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If it was just a matter of saying goodbye to _____ then that might somehow be tenable even if grossly unfair. But quite unfortunately _____ has seen fit and has a propensity to get himself involved in _____ . So even if we "resigned" he _____ would be in an influential situation which could in my view never ever be to benefit.

DIFFICULTIES IN RESOLVING PROBLEMS

There is a miasma of regulations and controls _____ that is impossible for even a trained lawyer to comprehend. Attempting to deal with an intricate interwoven web of _____ bodies is impossible. Legislation protecting human rights in NSW and Australia is nil or at best extremely narrow. Despite the fact that we are entitled to have our privacy, mental health, and human rights protected, and children in our society are supposed to be a special case and to have people who work with them screened, there is little short of a full-blown court case against many influential and powerful people, all who have memories, contacts, powers, corporate memories and the like.

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[Omitted by resolution of the Committee]

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failure to improve his mirrors the arrival of
a state of denial when I have more recently discussed matters.

has been in
has never done one single thing for

It is galling to see all around him get all sorts of benefits.

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DETRIMENTS AND FAVOURITISM

Those who have benefited from _____ reads as a who's who of _____, and a happy favoured few have received an overly generous share of benefits.

I have heard complaints, and a few people have complained directly to me about this favouritism and possibly paternalism. A small few have said to me that _____ is being victimised and I must agree.

It's just like he was invisible or didn't exist!

Two years ago _____ had had to endure so much that I felt obliged to write to _____ about the victimisation. I recall hearing "get rid of him" and I received a nasty reply stating in part that the problem was with my son. The bullying then just seemed to accelerate markedly. It wasn't long thereafter that a written complaint about _____ showed up

It seems to me that someone is indeed trying to drive him out

Most of the attention has come from the head of _____ He seemed to direct his attention to _____ from the day he first played with them, and indeed _____ had just been appointed. I have heard a number of people complaining about the detrimental attention some children received and also many comments about favouritism. However a number of officials would have seen examples or been involved in various detriments to _____ Maybe they think that they or the detriment is justified...

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said to me that where's there's smoke there's fire. I have heard him say on several occasions to me and the same words from other officials "banned from there must be a problem".

It was clear to me that the only way could get back into was to cow-tow yet again to wishes.