

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

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 21/08/2013

Partially Confidential

FORMAL COMPLAINT IN RELATION TO BULLYING BEHAVIOUR BY

:

I wish to lodge a formal complaint against _____ for continuing harassment and bullying behaviour towards me, over a lengthy period of time. I will provide a brief background of what has taken place to date.

BACKGROUND.

At the end of _____, I began working in _____'s team in _____. Prior to this, I had worked for _____ for approximately twelve months. I had a very good working relationship with _____ over this period.

Shortly after I started in _____'s team, I became aware that I had been allocated a large, unmanageable workload by _____. I chose to "put my head down" and work as hard as I could to manage this workload.

Over the next couple of months, I became aware that _____'s management style was autocratic, inflexible and impersonal. I found him aggressive, opinionated, arrogant and lacking interpersonal skills. I also found that he was displaying disturbing personality traits. On occasions, I was informed that _____ would ask other staff members questions like "What's everyone saying about me?" or "What's the gossip?" I felt that at least one team member was uncomfortable having to put up with this unnecessary behaviour.

On _____ called me into a meeting room to discuss some issues. Having felt intimidated by him for the past two months, I decided to tell him of my concerns about his behaviour, and that I felt he had been bullying me. His IMMEDIATE reaction was to call the Manager _____, _____, into the meeting room and demand that I tell her what I had just told him. I did exactly that. _____ asked _____ if he was paying attention to what I was saying, but he simply crossed his arms and said "I haven't got a problem, it's him that has the problem." I thought his actions simply reinforced my beliefs about his behaviour. _____ left the room shortly afterwards, and I asked _____ if he had anything more to say to me. He simply waved me away and snorted derisively at me. I then left the room.

I then sent an email to _____ outlining my concerns about _____'s behaviour. This email set out ALL of the concerns I had about _____'s inappropriate actions over the past two months. Around the _____, I started working for my current _____. I have been in _____ team for almost seven months now and have a very good working relationship with him.

Soon after moving into _____ team, whilst walking past _____ in the office, I felt his elbow come into contact with my upper arm. This contact was made with some force. I stopped but _____ kept walking. I shook my head in disbelief and decided to ignore it. I don't believe this contact was accidental and there was certainly no apology from _____. Fortunately, I mentioned the incident to several work colleagues at the time. Although no-one witnessed the incident, they were aware of my reaction to it. On 27th May, I told _____ about the elbowing incident.

She appeared concerned, and asked me if I wanted to take the matter further. I told her that I would prefer to ignore it and just get on with working in my "new" team. In _____ and _____ of this year, I was forced to take three separate periods of sick leave. This has NEVER happened to me before in three decades of working in the Public Sector. My doctor told me that I had been under a great deal of stress and my system wasn't coping too well with it.

My intention has always been to put all of this behind me and get on with my work and, more importantly, my life. By early _____, I was convinced that I had successfully done so, despite a couple of minor incidents. _____ has NOT spoken to me since _____.

In early _____, work colleagues advised me that they were concerned for my safety, advising me that _____ had been making inappropriate comments to them about me and that he had told one colleague that he had driven past my house to obtain my car registration number. Apparently he regularly refers to me, in front of other staff, as "Godwin" (as in Godwin Grech) and has asked one colleague on several occasions "What's your weird mate up to?" or words to that effect.

It is clear to me that _____ has no intention of letting this matter rest. Although I initially ignored his irrational behaviour, he seems to now be acting in a somewhat disturbed manner and is unable to "move on" from the whole affair. He has acted immaturely and irrationally at times, now I am starting to become apprehensive about what action he will take next. I have done nothing to aggravate him. I simply want him to stop this ridiculous behaviour and allow me the courtesy of getting on with my work, without being the subject of harassment and intimidation.

I now seek an assurance that something will be done about his behaviour, as I really do not seek conflict in my life and have begun to suffer minor anxiety and stress as a result of his determination to perpetuate this situation.

Statement –

Claims Intervention interviewed _____ on the _____ agreed to discuss matters relating to his claim for Workers Compensation.

1. My name is _____
2. I have been employed by WorkCover since _____ . I have been a _____ in the _____ for the majority of time since that date, apart from a _____ months stint in the _____ .
3. I have been a Public Servant since _____
4. A situation arose in _____ in regard to problems I am having with my former _____ , _____ .
5. In a meeting with him I told him I thought he was autocratic, inflexible and opinionated and that I found it difficult working with him. He then called in the Manager, _____ . At one stage in the meeting she asked him whether he was listening to what I was saying. _____ stated "I haven't got a problem, it's him that has the problem".
6. A few days later, _____ elbowed me as he walked past me.
7. A colleague, _____ , also has been harassed by _____ .
8. I moved to a different section in _____ , under a different _____ , and I thought the matter was finished.
9. However I have subsequently been advised that _____ has been past my house, taken the number plate of my car, threatened that he will break my jaw if he sees me in a shopping centre, and has accused me of being a paedophile.
10. Initially _____ was reluctant to get involved in the situation as he felt intimidated by _____ . _____ and I did not speak for around 7 months however at the Christmas party in _____ , we began speaking again.
11. He told me that when I was in Thailand _____ , _____ claimed that I was going over there because I was a paedophile.
12. I spoke with the Director of my Branch in _____ . She stated it was a personality clash and that there have been other false and frivolous accusations. I found her comments offensive and disturbing.

13. In _____ I lodged a formal grievance. I feel WorkCover has had ample opportunity to sort this problem out.
14. _____ was my _____ however I moved out of his section months earlier. He has proven he cannot let the issue go.
15. I am frustrated at the lack of feedback from management and the delay in the matter being resolved. I am aware that there is a process that has to be followed.
16. I have never had any other problems with staff in my 35 years with the public service.
17. _____
_____ I have passed him a couple of times since he has returned.
18. A colleague has said that _____ has referred to me as an _____ and as Godwin Gretch, which I understand refers to an informant in the Labour Party.
19. I have a very good sick leave record, however over the last year I have had to take a lot of sick leave. I have been having regular headaches.
20. My symptoms include headaches, I am angry, I have sleep problems, I am very tired, at times when I have been on leave I stay in my bed for an extended period of time. My Doctor says I am run down.
21. I eventually had 4 days off. I also have been referred to a Psychologist although I am not finding this particularly helpful.
22. The Insurer has suggested I consider going to the READ Clinic.
23. I am someone who does not like running away from things so I wanted to go back to work and not have extended time off.
24. I normally get on well with my colleagues.
25. Prior to my lodging a grievance, I believe _____ went to the _____ and told the _____ what was going on.
26. However in February 2010 they said they did not know who my "informant" was. I don't regard him as an informant, merely a person who can corroborate the information I have provided.

27. When I first spoke with the Manager about it, I was told that would probably not return to work, however he IS back, and I now think he may return to his previous workplace.
28. I go to _____ every couple of weeks to find out what is being done. I spoke to her yesterday morning and was advised that the matter is with the Director of Human Resources.
29. Initially the grievance was handled by a different person, but was then transferred to _____. I consider that it was not handled well in the early stages by the previous person.
30. _____ was given a copy of my grievance and denied the allegations. I believe that my information can be corroborated.
31. At one stage I had won a job at a high level, when another person was on leave for a while. I felt I coped well with this.
32. _____ once sent _____ an email titled "today is belt an employee day" which I consider was inappropriate.
33. I am afraid the situation will not come to any resolution and I do not believe _____ will be able to let it go.
34. At one stage a colleague said that _____ told him he wished he could ring my son and tell him what a dog his father is. I am very angry about my children being involved.
35. On the morning _____ came back to work I woke at 4 am and could not go back to sleep for a couple of hours. I have been having headaches.
36. I feel guilty going to _____ in that I know she is busy. However it is a situation I feel I do not have any control over.
37. I can speak to my current Team Leader and he is supportive.
38. The person in HR who was initially handling the matter was _____ has taken over this position, however he has not attempted to contact me or speak to me about the matter.
39. At one stage I wrote an email to _____ in relation to this matter. I believe _____ pressured her to obtain a copy of this email.
40. I have provided Claims Intervention with a number of emails.

Sign..... Date.....

I commenced working with WorkCover on
I was employed as
FIVE other people commenced on the same day as I did.
ALL of these people have now left WorkCover.
There were twelve people in the Branch at that time. I am the only one
still employed by WorkCover.

Prior to joining WorkCover, I had worked for approximately 31 years in various
Federal, State and Local Government positions.
Many of the positions I worked in were managerial roles.
Prior to joining WorkCover, I was employed in the Australian Crime Commission
(ACC).
I was required to undergo a strict security screening in the ACC, involving numerous
investigations into many aspects of my personal life.
I have NEVER experienced problems with "management", having worked closely in
the past with my managers to achieve optimal results.
I had always been regarded as a valuable contributor to any team I belonged to.

Within twelve to eighteen months, I had begun to notice that WorkCover was a
VERY DIFFERENT ORGANISATION.
The Branch reported to a new Director, who seemed extremely
autocratic.
One of the people who commenced at the same time as me, left the organization.
I had been taken into a room with a Team Leader and the Manager, and
told that I had "attitude problems" (which I refuted). This was my initial bullying
experience.
Staff morale began to plummet and people sought opportunities to work in other
areas.
I kept my head down and soon was rewarded with acting roles in higher positions and
received good feedback from my managers.

By February 2008, my marriage of 19 years had ended, partly due to the strain I was
experiencing with workplace harassment.
In November 2008, my father passed away. The harassment did not abate.
In May 2009, the harassment I had experienced culminated in me being assaulted
(elbowed) by my in the workplace.
My report of the incident was not treated seriously by the , dismissed as a
"false or frivolous report".
My health began to suffer during this period. I began to feel helpless, worthless and
degraded.
I took approximately 4-5 days off with stress and had two appointments with a
psychologist.
My grievance against the person who assaulted me, was found to be inconclusive.
I learnt that he had driven past my house and taken my car registration number, had
threatened to "break my jaw" if he saw me in public and had created a nickname for
me.
I continued to ignore him and simply get on with my work.

A "new" and were introduced into the Branch by the Director.
They were intent on bullying and intimidating all staff members.

During this period, to my knowledge, several other team members were referred for psychological counseling.

The Director was told that we would no longer answer to [redacted] and we were asked to report to the General Manager.

The newly appointed Team Leader asked another staff member to report to [redacted] on our behavior.

When challenged, the Team Leader denied the allegation, then attempted to have me counseled.

I have now been at WorkCover for SEVEN years. I have endured unspeakable degradation in this time.

I have seen many others receive similar treatment.

I believe that something MUST be done now to stop this bullying, harassment and intimidation continuing.

In many ways the organization is like an alcoholic, who refuses to accept that they have a problem, therefore will not take action to rectify the situation.

WorkCover's record in maintaining a fair, transparent and accountable system of selection and recruitment of staff is deplorable.

In many cases, the WRONG people have been selected for positions, without relevant experience, expertise or skills.

The organization appears to encourage an autocratic leadership style. I have not witnessed any decisions being made following even minimal consultation with staff.

Unfortunately, these managers then promote others "in their own image", so the autocratic leadership style is perpetuated.

Many managers have poor communication and interpersonal skills. They soon develop large egos. They do NOT like staff to question any decisions they make.

I have (personally) experienced some managers using the statement "If you don't like it, you should leave" when questioned about their decisions.

Bullying, harassment and intimidation is seen as a means of keeping people quiet and covering up errors or even corruption.

WorkCover definitely suffers from managers who become "big fish in a small pond" (possibly due to location issues).

Managers, realizing that staff who leave will probably have to commute to Sydney to get the same job opportunities, regularly use this as a source of intimidation.

Many staff put up with far more harassment and intimidation for this reason.

I have never worked for an organization where a culture of "us and them" is promulgated.

Surveys conducted with staff often portray low levels of job satisfaction, confidence in management and feeling valued by the organization.

WorkCover appears to be totally unaware of the concept that people who feel happy about their work perform better. Feel valued, empowered able to contribute.

The organization is in DIRE NEED of good, fair, honest, communicative "people persons" who work WITH staff to achieve better outcomes (through consultation).