

**Submission
No 290**

**INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION
SCHEME**

Name: Ms Dianne Carroll

Date received: 24/05/2012

Joint Select Committee on the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme
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To Whom It May Concern:

I am respectfully requesting that my late submission accepted by the Committee for consideration and would love to have the opportunity to attend a hearing in person to provide and further expand on the information provided.

I was employed by The Department of Community Services from 1997 until I succumbed to a mental breakdown in October 2008. I commenced initially as a caseworker, becoming a substantive Manager Caseworker – Child Protection in March 2003. I am able to provide the Committee a comprehensive copy of documents relating to the incidents leading to my medical breakdown.

I was fortunate in that an appointment for the following day had been previously made a number of weeks prior to my breakdown with a counsellor, (Ms J Peckham) who had been assisting me, over the years in dealing with a number of child deaths and other related work issues. Ms Peckham assisted in making an appointment with Dr Melinda Prince who became my treating Doctor till she left on maternity leave. I am currently being treated by Dr Cooper. I have nothing but praise for these professionals in assisting my recovery.

My compensation claim was accepted by Allianz in October 2008, which was followed up by an assessment in November 2008 by Dr Christine Saunders as directed by Allianz.

The insurance provider was managed reasonably consistently by a caseworker through Allianz. I was initially allocated a Rehabilitation Provider caseworker (from a company that I am unable to recall their name). I was not satisfied with their case management and I changed to Workers Health Centre (WHC) at Granville in 2009. During this period (2009 till 2010) I had two (2) case managers, both of whom produced very different vocation assessment reports. At the end of 2010, due to conflict with WHC I changed Rehabilitation Providers, going to Remote Focus based in St Leonards. Remote Focus provided three (3) vocation assessments that I did not believe were appropriate and provided written feedback to their service in relation to that.

In July 2011 the insurance provider changed over to QBE. During this time I had a number of different caseworkers allocated, this caused issues as I was not informed of the changes in staff, leaving messages that were not returned, only learning of the changes when following up on my enquiries. During this period Rehabilitation Provider also changed to Procure – based in Parramatta and Alexandria.

The issues I have had with the Workers Compensation system over the number of years which I believe have impacted on my ability to return to appropriate work, continuing aggravation on my mental health status, financial loss/disadvantage and my family relationships.

- Inconsistent information being provided by Insurance Providers, Rehabilitation Providers
*Informed by Allianz that I was not able to do volunteer work – QBE stating on 23/5/12 that this is not the case and they would encourage this (came up at a meeting when brought up by me – not informed by case manager).

* Who's responsibility for certain tasks – Insurance providers say Rehabilitation Provider and they say it the Insurance providers.

* Vocational Assessments, what jobs are appropriate, not being realistic, lack of retraining options.

* Rehabilitation Providers stating 20% of jobs advertised while 80% hidden job market – lack of timely assistance in being able tap into that market.

- Lack of accountability – QBE stating they do not take/keep minutes of meetings.
 - *Do not appear to have any standard “Policy and Procedures”
 - *Rehabilitation Providers not being able to substantiate how they complete Vocational Assessments – very generic.
- Not being provided information such as psychiatric assessments, minutes of meetings, monthly progress reports (from Rehabilitation providers), vocational assessments (informed they are not for my benefit but for the insurer)
- Lack of support in applying for positions – when applying by oneself not able to take advantage of Workcover special options for employee's.
- Delay in providing assistance – rehab – vocational assessment – work trial end November 11 – now 23 May 12 and still not vocational assessment,(informed verbally what options were) – informed the Doctor needs to sign it off but was not available when I attended appointment. It took a further two (2) weeks and many discussions with QBE and Procure in organising a meeting to discuss ‘verbal’ job options on 23/5/12 but then informed that they are not able to discuss any of the assessment without it being signed off by Doctors – wasted time – benefiting only the Rehab Providers as I had already informed them I had been applying over a number of years for the same positions and I did not have the skills or qualifications.
- Not having any ‘voice’ in vocational assessment
- Complex system that is not easily understood – Insurance providers, Rehabilitation Providers, Workcover, previous employer, treatment providers – lack of coordination between parties.

I thank the committee for considering and including my information in the enquiry.

Yours sincerely

Dianne Carroll