

Submission
No 316

INQUIRY INTO NSW WORKERS COMPENSATION SCHEME

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 25/05/2012

Partially Confidential

workerscompinquiry - NSW Government planned changes to Workers Compensation

Gentlemen

I wish to make representation in respect of the NSW Government's planned changes to the Workers Compensation scheme.

I work as a paramedic in NSW and I am concerned with planned changes to reduce weekly payments, reduce medical benefits, lump sum compensation for permanent injuries and reducing financial help to the families of workers who have died as a result of their work.

I am also very concerned with proposals to end workers compensation protection currently afforded to workers injured on the way to and from work.

I currently work 2 x 10-11hr day shifts and 2 x 14hr nite shifts. I live 1hrs drive away from my current workplace and have no option to move due to my husband's occupation in the opposite direction and the non-availability of positions at closer ambulance stations. Currently I work 14hr nite shifts and then have to add 2hrs driving to each of those shifts at a minimum. Due to the nature of our work we are not always afforded the option of finishing on time and quite often work 1-2hrs overtime due to being on a job at time of knock off or being stuck at hospital in block due to lack of hospital beds. If I were to have an accident on the way home from work I believe that it would be directly attributed to fatigue. If the NSW Government were to withdraw benefits paid to parties injured as a direct result of travel to and from work I believe there would be many families placed into considerable hardship who would then be placed in a position of having to apply for benefits from the government to survive.

As a paramedic for the past 7 years I have been subjected to sexual assault, physical assault and very often verbal assault from patients, not to mention the many hazardous and mentally anguishing positions we find ourselves in attempting to rescue, treat and save patients.

I am in a position of having sustained a work injury as a direct result of an attack from a patient which has resulted in me having two surgeries on an injured knee and my specialist now informs me that it is likely I will have to undergo a third, not to mention the ongoing osteo arthritis that will be formed in my knee due to the injury. I am in a position of not being able to do all the things I used to do prior to the injury and this has affected my

work, my mental health and my marriage.

The ongoing affect of a serious injury sustained at work on a worker is extremely significant, not only physically but mentally.

I was injured in the line of duty as a paramedic attempting to help another human being. I joined the ambulance service to help other people but I had no idea that I would become a victim on so many occasions.

Having spoken to many other paramedics, we all carry injuries on a daily basis due to the nature of our work and we are all affected in some form mentally by the varied cases we attend.

It is not only paramedics who endure long hours of work, doctors, nurses, builders, mine workers etc are also subjected to long shifts and travel to and from work in fatigued states.

I believe that the planned changes are inhumane and the government should look closely at how WorkCover has managed their administration and the insurance agents that manage claims.

The Government should be looking more closely at how it spends funds on MPs with continual travel roort claims, use of funds by parliamentarians for prostitutes, and the long standing free travel for parliamentarians that have stepped down from office. This is an area that requires further scrutinisation and change, NOT ripping off the people who care for other community members, receive low wages and merely try to do their job in exceptional circumstances.

I hope that you take my submission into account when making decision regarding these changes.

Regards