

Submission  
No 208

**THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS OF THE NSW  
AMBULANCE SERVICE**

Name: Suppressed  
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Partially Confidential

23<sup>rd</sup> July 2008

Ambulance Service of NSW.

Thank you for contacting me and enabling my late submission to communicate my experience with bulling and harassment whilst employed with the Ambulance Service of NSW.

I joined the NSW Ambulance Service in 1988 as a young probationary I had aspirations to deliver patient care to the best I can.

After my probation I gained a transfer to the Hunter region where I worked alone regularly. It was during this time I started to question the single officer responses, initially citing delays in getting patients to medical treatment.

I was told to leave it alone and get on with my job. It was a short time later that I was sent to a major accident arriving alone where I felt useless, out of radio range, alone treating injured and dying people. I communicated these feelings to a peer support officer and attended an employee assistance program confidentially, where details of my attendance was discussed amongst staff by the confidential peer support officer. Though I was not alone the welfare of other staff and their rehabilitation at rehab centres or after self harm were regularly disclosed. I felt I had to complain about the situation of single officer responses, after which felt like a giant weight had been lifted off my shoulders and that this may lead to a better system of patient care and removing the need to have to talk about these stresses.

After complaining I received a visit from a Superintendent who told me that disclosure of the problems associated with single officer responses or inadequate radio coverage is a sackable offence. The single officer responses included treating and transporting patients alone, some times requiring the help of bystanders to drive the ambulance while the patient was resuscitated in the back. Other incidences include delivering a baby alone, and resuscitating alone. Many of the cases where single officer responses where detrimental to the patient ended up in the newspapers after being contacted by frustrated bystanders or relatives.

One occasion I to attend a Coroners court following a fatality of a young boy who resemble a family member.

The night before I was to attend the coroners court I received a call from a Superintendent telling me what I am and are not to say, and that nothing was wrong with the radio coverage and that I would suffer if I put them in. In despair with nowhere to go many things cross your mind, a sense of hopelessness where you just want to go away. Despite a sleepless night contemplating alternatives and discussing these with a close colleague I attended the court and told the truth, truth that was quoted on the opening news opening on TV. At the same court case Superintendent resignation was communicated by the court to the gallery.

But this was not the only harassment I saw, Other staff I witnessed being bullied and harassed included a lady that felt the rathe following complaining about EEO, I remember a senior officer gloating about how he recommended her claim for Workers Compensation was to be deigned and that he was to enjoy watching her rot on Sickness Benefits going broke while her claim is processed. This lady was most proficient Ambulance Officer I had seen and I aspired to be like, she latter left the Ambulance Service signing a nondisclosure clause after a long protracted EEO case.

I witnessed an unfair dismissal case where the Officer was successful in being reinstated, a reinstatement that lasted as long as it took to have him sacked for stolen property. The stolen property case was heard at court and thrown out as the first aid equipment in possession was consistent with an Ambulance circular stating that it was an approved practice.

Another staff member I communicated with regularly was being harassed to drop his complaint that he was being assaulted at work by a colleague. Tontine therapy was the term used, and the precursor was a quietly spoken 'its time' time being for having a pillow forced over your head suffocating you why you got punched in the stomach.

As the harassment occurred I complained to management via incident reports and formal complaints, all of which I still retain copies and will provide to you if would like. Though I understand this enquiry is to address the systemic issue and not 'water under the bridge' water that involves peoples lives.

To date I still converse with past colleagues who express frustration of the hopelessness and want to get out and get away from the harassment, staff talk of others that have taken their lives.

I hope this helps, please feel free to access all my memo, reports, and for additional reading access the news articles and court transcripts I make reference to.

Thank you