

Submission
No 209

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

Name: Suppressed

Date received: 23/07/2008

Partially Confidential

I contacted you last week in regard to my own experiences of harassment and bullying whilst in the employ of the ASNSW. In our conversation I relayed to you some of the trauma I suffered as a result of management's inability to address reports of blatant and continuing displays of harassment and bullying over a two year period

You asked that I submit to you a submission outlining my experiences.

I have extensive documentation which I collected over this two year period. In my attempt to seek vindication and see the perpetrators held accountable, I pursued the matter through the official and correct channels (chain of command). At each step of the way I was required to provide a summary of my documentation and, in doing so, was required to re-count the trauma in detail. I did this on at least 5 occasions, which was extremely stressful and greatly affected my mental and physical health.

Throughout the whole ordeal, I sought out professional counselling to assist me in coping with the tremendous stress I was under. I was diagnosed with a major depressive illness as a result of harassment and bullying within the workplace. I suffered with sleep disturbances, nightmares, fatigue, memory loss and lack of concentration, anorexia, stomach and abdominal cramping, and eczema.

At each stage of the process, I was assured something would and could be done to relieve the situation and to bring those accountable to justice. However, even during the investigation, harassing behaviours continued to go unchecked. I co-operated fully with each stage of the investigation, and even allowed the ASNSW-hired psychologist to interview me in my own home and, at their request, without my counsellor present for support. The subsequent report – based on an interview that lasted only one hour – ridiculed my religious and moral beliefs, reported an unfounded personality disorder, and undermined my professionalism. I felt further violated and powerless.

As my situation became more and more unbearable, my doctor put me off under stress leave and recommended I not return to my current work environment. I was mentally and physically beaten and spent 5 months in a deep depression. I developed suicidal thoughts and acted out in attempts to self-harm. Had it not been for regular counselling sessions and the support of my immediate family, I would have taken my own life.

Senior management were aware of the attitudes and practices of certain officers on _____, and even commented that the work environment on this particular station was a known long-term problem. As the harassment continued, management could only suggest that I be relocated or resign. The actions of District Management protected those officers and centred around moving me on. Their conduct and total lack of support eventually forced me into seeking employment elsewhere.

I would like to see the ASNSW exposed for their abominable handling of entrenched harassment and bullying within the Service, however, I just cannot revisit the documentation again to provide you with an account of my experience. After 5 attempts, I could not handle another disappointment and defeat.

I hope many other officers have come forward to provide you with pertinent information for your inquiry. And I offer my support, encouragement and admiration to Phil Roxburgh who has been brave enough to pursue this to a greater level than I ever could.

I was hardly surprised to hear reports of harassment and bullying throughout the Ambulance Service of NSW, and I would like to hope that once exposed through this inquiry, changes will be implemented to ensure such behaviour is stopped...but I sincerely doubt anything will be achieved.

Regards,