

**FIRST REVIEW OF THE WORKERS COMPENSATION
SCHEME**

Name: Name suppressed
Date received: 20 September 2016

Partially
Confidential

Parliamentary Inquiry into NSW Workers Compensation Scheme

Submission by _____ **- I request that my name is withheld in relation to the information below.**

Brief history of policing career in NSW Police

I was a NSW police officer for 11 years. I worked in various areas but for most of my service I was a detective. My rank on discharge was Detective Senior Constable.

Experience with EML–Workers Compensation

As soon as I left work I was contacted by a EML caseworker and told that a investigator would contact me to take a statement regarding my work history and why I was unable to work.

I was contacted by the investigator who wanted to come to my home to take the statement. As I was unable to go out or even open the front door to anyone, I requested that I answer the statement questions via email. This was agreed to by the investigator.

I found the making of the statement very upsetting as I had to recall all jobs that I had done which lead me to having PTSD/Depression in the first place. I was having suicidal ideations at this time, writing about it caused this to increase.

Right from the start my case worker at EML was trying to cajole and pressure me into returning to work. I found this very stressful and detrimental to my health. I recall that many times when I spoke with the case worker, I would either burst into tears on the phone or after the phone call. I would be very distressed for many days after these phone calls.

At this stage I had only been off work a few weeks and I was very unwell. I could barely perform basic functions and recall going hungry many times because I did not want to leave the house to get food.

When the case worker was pressing me to give her answer about whether I could return to work, it was making my health worse. The pressure from the case worker was undermining the work my treating Doctors were doing to stabilise my mental health.

I had always been a very hard worker so telling the case worker I could not return was soul destroying. I felt enormous guilt about choosing my own health over being at work. I felt I was letting my victims down, my colleagues and the police. The pressure I was receiving from the case worker was causing me to feel suicidal. There were many times I need to ring my psychologist after speaking to the case worker as I was so upset.

I was sent to see vocational assessors who also put me under pressure to return to work. The assessors came up with jobs that I could not do but put pressure on me to do them. Going to the vocational assessments was making me regress due to the pressure I felt to return to work. I later learnt that I did not have to go to these appointments if I was not ready. I did not know this at the start as the case workers made out that I had no choice but to go.

I had suffered from shoulder and neck pain for many years as a result of an incident whilst at work. I had made a HOD claim in 2010 relating to this incident, due to the increasing pain in my shoulders and neck. I remained at work on full duties as I did not want to cause more pressure for my work colleagues. EML paid for me to see a Physiotherapist once a week. I also went to a massage therapist and a Myotherapist, which I paid for myself. EML later began to pay for the Myotherapy, but this was only after continually asking them to pay.

For the first few years on workers compensation the case workers just did not understand why I had severe pain in my shoulders and neck. I was sent for scans and to orthopaedic surgeons in an attempt to find a physical cause. Because of the case workers lack of medical knowledge they did not grasp what was occurring. I found it very

difficult to explain my condition and could tell that the case worker either did not believe me or was dumbfounded by it. This was very frustrating as they often changed case workers so you would have to explain all over again.

My G.P. and I had to and still have to ask for various treatments to reduce the pain. Due to the case workers changing all the time there was not consistency with the treatments. I went for over 12 months with no treatment at all, despite asking repeatedly for EML to pay for treatment. During this time I had to pay for my own treatment as I was still in severe pain.

The case workers would try to delay making a decision about treatment. They were very evasive in not saying one way or another whether they would agree to treatment. In the end I had to get a solicitor involved before they agreed to more treatment. The lapses of treatment meant my overall recovery both psychologically and physically. had been setback.

EML have conducted surveillance upon me over the years which has had a very detrimental effect upon my mental health. Due to being very paranoid as a result of the PTSD and my policing experience, I could detect surveillance easily.

I have had panic attacks and gone into fits of rage at the surveillance operatives. This has caused me to approach them and be very aggressive towards them. Once I was triggered by the surveillance, it would take days and some times weeks to settle down. The surveillance has had a very detrimental effect on my condition and thus my recovery.

When I was a police officer I was respected for my integrity. As soon as I left work due to my mental health condition and thus being part of the workers compensation scheme, I was seen as a liar who needed to be put under surveillance. I found it extremely ironic and saddening that on a day a few years ago, I received (in the post) the National Police medal for diligent and ethical service. On the very same day I noticed I was again under surveillance.

Overall in the last 5 years I have found the workers compensation case workers to be more of a hinderance than a help. They have delayed treatment for my physical condition due to their lack of medical knowledge and understanding. They have sent me for assessments that I did not need, again this is due to not understanding my medical condition. They have authorised surveillance on me that has caused my mental health and well being to be detrimentally effected. They have put me under pressure to return to work from the very first contact with me which has caused me to have panic attacks and suicidal ideation.

The case workers lack of knowledge of mental health has been obvious from the beginning. Case workers have told me that they are stressed too so they understand about anxiety and PTSD. One case worker told me that she was convinced that her house was going to burn down so she put all her belongings in her car before going to work. This was her way of saying she understood my mental health issues. I found these comments very inappropriate.

I have many emails where I am requesting treatment for my physical pain and being fobbed off by the caseworkers. I have had at least 8 to 10 case workers over the years. They seem to change every 3 to 6 months. Many times I was not given notice and only found out by contacting EML myself.

The experience of being on workers compensation has been a demoralising one. It has been obvious that my health and my recovery is a pale second to the case workers wish is get me off their books.

Kind Regards,

