

## INQUIRY INTO EMERGENCY SERVICES AGENCIES

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I would like to put forward a submission into the inquiry into emergency services agencies. My employment relates to NSW Ambulance service as well as my personal experiences. I am choosing to remain anonymous, however if my name is required for purposes of submitting, I would kindly request my submission be made public without my name.

I am an employee for their [redacted] that is has such a prevalent and widespread reputation for bullying and harassment claims/grievances, there have been many news stories outlining events at the centre, as well as a rate of attrition both staggering in sheer numbers and a fiscal nightmare for all taxpayers. I have personally experienced verbal abuse, violence, and discrimination, both by my ethnicity and gender. I have had to take an abundance of days off, including up to several months unpaid due to my inability to cope with the stress and anxiety caused by my working environment. I've seen the suicidal depths the workers compensation system throws already hurting people into, so I have tried to avoid that at all costs, until now. I have seen far worse than I have personally experienced, I've even had a work mate attempt suicide by hanging due to the bullying. What I am not aware of are any instances where the policies or procedures in place were followed by NSW Ambulance. I am aware of multiple instances where the service has been dishonest in their reports of issues, evidence and in their handling of events, and with people dealing with life and death of the general public, the cause and effect of their mismanagement of abuse has consequences no one could pinpoint the extent of. When damaged people are making decisions that could cost someone else their lives, would you want the service responsible continuing with business as usual? Would you want someone who is trying to push through a panic attack or other mental trauma due to the suffering caused in their workplace to be the person handling the cardiac arrest of your mum or dad, your child, your husband or wife? It's happening every single day, we take a call every 28 seconds, and someone you love could very well be in the hands of those the service is responsible for damaging.

The ambulance service has decided to relabel bullying in an attempt to exclude it from existing in their organisation. Even some of the worst and repeated physical and verbal abuse, is immediately labeled as "interpersonal conflict". Their immediate next step is to mandate employees to a straight-talk session, where employees are to self-mediate the situation. When you consider, as in my case, a lot of these issues have involved physical contact and violence, or the threat of violence, it's not only inexcusable, it's disgusting to put someone who has just experienced something so violating and upsetting to go into a room one-on-one with the person responsible. Would you ask a domestic violence or rape victim to sit in a room with their perpetrator and "work it out"? No you wouldn't, because it would be inhumane and unacceptable, yet the ambulance service is not only intimidating people from reporting bullying, once you do, they put you on a path where you become a target for reporting it, you are not helped in any way. And when the dust settles there is a very small chance you'll remain, you'll become a person they will want to eradicate.

The ambulance service does not want bullying perceived in their organisation, and to sanitise their reputation, the victim becomes a target, as they stand to threaten it, and the confidential

information from the incident becomes internally widespread, meaning you are not just facing intimidation from your employer, you also have the peer initiated character attacks, gossip, and humiliation occurring simultaneously. You are literally attacked from all angles, which only gets worse if you ever enter the workers compensation system, which is another stacked deck for NSW ambulance, and an extension of further abuse and suffering.

One of my abusers was a “peer support officer”, who coincidentally was also my direct supervisor. How can you be an objective peer support officer collecting sensitive and confidential information to “help” and “support” employees, whilst also engaging as their supervisor? The “assistance” set-up within the framework of the standard operating procedures is faulty, and both a false token of good faith for inquiries such as this and intel for the attackers then it ever has been actual help to the employees. Even the EAP (employee assistance program) offers free confidential counseling, but those meetings aren’t always confidential, and employees aren’t told that honestly. We have no help. We have no support. And I can tell you personally, if you ever come forward with a complaint of abuse or bullying, you will be the person wiped out of your job, not the person who did the damage. This is an organisation aimed at the health and well being of the general public, but it is akin to the same tactics and cover-ups as the Catholic church when anyone comes forward internally or otherwise to report wrongdoing. The health of their employees does not matter, and in fact, it feels to be a culture where there is enjoyment gained from the power they hold to destroy someone who doesn’t fall in line, even when they’re being damaged beyond repair.

Bullying is verbal or written abuse, violence - including threats of violence, sexual harassment, humiliation or intimidation, homophobia and other hostile behaviour towards another relating to gender and sexuality, discrimination including racial discrimination, or cyberbullying - either online or via mobile phone.

I have witnessed or experienced all of these at \_\_\_\_\_ and every person, including a female who was explicitly sexually harassed in full view of the \_\_\_\_\_, was forced into a straight talk session with the male who harassed her, and subsequently bullied to the point of breaking afterward. The protocols are only there as a tick box measure for inquiries such as this and good PR, but make no mistake about it, they do not implement the procedures and there is no one overseeing their behaviour but themselves. There are no words to describe the brutality of the “support” NSW Ambulance service offers; if you stand up to be heard you will face the brunt of the entire service against you. The ambulance service isn’t skilled or interested in helping with or managing instances of bullying, harassment or workplace violence, they’re interested in concealing its very existence, again, much like the Catholic church does their abuse. They will never do the right thing as long as they’re allowed to be judge, jury, verdict. They are far too unregulated, unchecked and down right corrupt. Please, do whatever you can to end what’s happening there, please. I haven’t personally lost a friend yet, but the fact it’s a worry should be the biggest statement I can make to you. When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower. Please, fix the environment so many of our emergency first responders are struggling to

survive in. Lives are in danger, and not just the ones ringing in when we say “ambulance emergency, what town or suburb”. This time the emergency is our own workplace and we need your help to fix it. Thank you.