



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1

MEDIA RELEASE

Parliamentary committee recommends WorkCover NSW take action on internal bullying

Embargoed until 10.00 am
19 June 2014

An Upper House committee has called on the leadership team of WorkCover NSW to recognise the extent of workplace bullying in the organisation and take responsibility for addressing it. It has also recommended that the board that oversees WorkCover exercise greater accountability over the organisation.

The inquiry by the Legislative Council's General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1 was established after the Industrial Relations Commission (IRC) handed down its findings in relation to the unfair dismissal claim of a WorkCover employee, Mr Wayne Butler, in June 2013. The IRC decision was highly critical of WorkCover's treatment of Mr Butler.

'It is very clear to the committee, on the basis of the evidence before us, most particularly the very many personal accounts of bullying from past and present employees, that WorkCover has a significant organisational problem with bullying,' said Revd the Hon Fred Nile MLC, Chairman of the committee. 'This problem is a longstanding one and operates at a cultural level.'

'While WorkCover has made some progress since our inquiry commenced, this report makes thirteen recommendations that will assist WorkCover to truly move forward in addressing its problem of workplace bullying. Most importantly, more effective leadership and governance are essential.'

'We consider that the most important action that WorkCover must take is for senior management to genuinely accept that the organisation has a significant problem with bullying and to take ownership of it on behalf of the organisation. WorkCover should issue an apology to staff for past wrongs as an important first step in rebuilding trust with its employees. In addition, the Safety, Return to Work and Support Board should exercise greater leadership in addressing this issue.'

The unanimously adopted report was released today.

A list of the committee's recommendations is attached. The report is on the inquiry website: <http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/gpsc1>. Hard copies are available on request.

-ENDS-

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on 9230 2478 or 0418 619 731*

