



6 June 2017

NSW Rural Fire Service Parliamentary Inquiry

Parliamentary Inquiry into Bullying in Emergency Services Agencies

The NSW Government has announced it is conducting a Parliamentary Inquiry into bullying in emergency services agencies, including the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS). The Legislative Council Legal Affairs Committee will conduct the Inquiry to report on the prevalence of bullying, harassment and discrimination, as well as the effectiveness of the protocols and procedures in place to manage and resolve such complaints within emergency services agencies. The full terms of reference can be read [HERE](https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2442#tab-termsofreference).

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The PSA has raised bullying issues with the RFS numerous times in various platforms aiming to implement good prevention policy and stronger support mechanisms for those who have been affected by bullying in the workplace.

Specifically, the PSA requested the election of Health and Safety Representatives and the establishment of

a Workplace Health and Safety Committee. Bullying is a work health and safety issue. To combat it, the RFS needs appropriate processes and mechanisms in place to address it. This is yet to be done.

The PSA also notified the RFS of our intention to renegotiate your Award. Bullying behaviour flourishes in environments where entitlements are vague and where duties and systems of work are unclear. Negotiations have since broken down due to RFS lodging a dispute in the Industrial Relations Commission regarding current working arrangements.

The results of the People Matter Surveys reflect a bullying culture within the RFS. The current Service Standard lacks any strategy to deal with the causes of bullying and fails to address the real issue; that RFS staff have little or no confidence their complaint will be handled quickly, fairly and confidentially, or that it will have any positive result. In fact, staff fear if a complaint is made it will lead to victimisation and a worsening of the bullying behaviour.



The PSA will be lodging a submission on behalf of members, your contribution to that submission can be sent to RFS@psa.asn.au (all contributions from members will be strictly confidential). **Please note this email address is specifically for the RFS submission only and the email account will be closed on 24 July 2017.**

The PSA also encourages members to make their own individual submissions to the Inquiry. Those submissions can be made [HERE](#).

<https://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/committees/inquiries/Pages/inquiry-details.aspx?pk=2442#tab-submissions>

You can also request your submission to be confidential. See the Submission Guide for more details.

Members should also register their concerns with the PSA MSC on **1300 772 679**.

All matters will be treated in the strictest of confidence.

If you are a non-member and have concerns around this or other issues we encourage:

What can you do?

- Give a copy of this bulletin to your colleagues.
- Print this bulletin and put it up on your notice board.
- Ask a colleague to join the PSA.
- Get involved as your Area Contact
- Not a member? [JOIN](#) online!
<https://membership.psa.asn.au/register>

