

FROM THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

There have been disturbing reports of emergency services personnel being subjected to bullying and harassment at work. I strongly condemn this unacceptable behaviour in this Department.

Workplace bullying and harassment is the repeated unreasonable and inappropriate treatment of a person by another or others in the workplace. Every employee is entitled to a workplace free from behaviour which intimidates, offends, degrades or humiliates them. This may include:

- physical or verbal abuse
- yelling, screaming or offensive/inappropriate language (including in emails)
- unreasonably belittling, humiliating or constantly criticising employees
- displaying written or pictorial material which is offensive
- excluding or isolating employees
- teasing or regularly making an employee the butt of jokes or pranks
- psychological harassment
- intimidation or threats
- assigning meaningless tasks unrelated to a person's job
- deliberately giving employees impossible tasks to set them up to fail
- deliberately and unreasonably inconveniencing particular employees; and
- undermining work performance.

If you believe that you have been subjected to bullying and harassment, again I urge you to come forward so that the Department can ensure that you are protected and that appropriate action is taken against the perpetrators. I also strongly encourage you to access the employee assistance scheme available within your division:

QFRS: Firecare – 1800 805 980

QAS: Priority One – 1800 805 980

EMQ: EMbrace – 1800 805 980

Public Service: Langmont Advantage - 1300 667 791

If you are a witness to bullying and harassment of another person, I consider it your responsibility as an employee to report this type of behaviour.

Any employee who is concerned about possible workplace bullying and harassment may raise their concerns with their supervisor/manager, their union or to me directly.

However, in recognition that some staff may feel uncomfortable using the existing processes, the Minister and I have agreed to establish a new independent panel from today to receive and assess complaints of workplace bullying and harassment and make recommendations to the Department for addressing those complaints.

This panel is independent of the QAS, QFRS and EMQ divisions and will ensure that complaints raised with them are managed appropriately. This panel will report directly to me and will initially operate for the next 6 months.

The panel will comprise of 3 senior departmental officers:

- Ms Fiona Rafter – Executive Director, Ministerial, Information and Legal Services Branch;
- Mr Terry Christensen – Director, Ethical Standards Branch; and
- Ms Tracey Davern – Director, Legal Services.

Employees will be able to directly contact the panel in the following ways.

Telephone number: 07 3247 8375

Email: alternativecomplaints@emergency.qld.gov.au

It is important that that all employees are able to come to work without fear of being bullied or harassed. However, managers and supervisors must be able to make the management decisions necessary for us to continue our day to day operations. Where a manager is being reasonable in their actions, I do not consider that the behaviour will amount to workplace bullying or harassment.

Once again, I urge you to report any instances of bullying and harassment. I am committed to ensuring a safe workplace for all staff and request your support in achieving this.