

Summary prepared by the Commission of Inquiry into QPS responses to domestic and family violence

Case study 3 – Complainant experiences

After reviewing the Queensland Police Service files of the 2020 Juniper investigation into the [REDACTED] District [REDACTED] the Commission of Inquiry requested to speak to three of the complainants involved in the investigation about their experiences of the internal Queensland Police Service complaints process. The interviews took place on 22 September 2022. Each of the complainants indicated that they had been very reluctant to make a complaint and that their career had suffered because of their involvement in the internal investigation. Short summaries of each of the complainants' experiences are set out below.

[REDACTED] (Senior Constable)

I was definitely reluctant and scared to make the complaint. It's common knowledge amongst the police that if you make a complaint then you will be regarded as a dog and it will potentially ruin your career, however, it reached a point I felt I had no other choice.

Making a complaint in this case has definitely impacted my career. I was in the [REDACTED] It was my dream job when joining the QPS. The work there was what I was most passionate about. I worked hard and I won the position on merit and I loved my job. However, after making the complaint, the bullying and intimidation continued. I felt that I had no choice but to leave. The internal investigator (the investigation was still ongoing at this stage) also told me that he had concerns in relation to safety about me staying in the [REDACTED] I was asked if any alternative units, within the district I could transfer to, whilst the investigation was active. I suggested CIB, which was still a [REDACTED] and worked in conjunction with my unit often, but I was told that that move wasn't suitable because the CIB boss was friends with the OIC, the subject of the internal investigation. I was told that they could get me a job in Youth Justice or child protection, which were vastly different areas to my current role, which for many reasons, I didn't believe would be suitable at that time. I now work in General Duties in a different district.

They say that there is confidentiality in the complaints process, but I don't believe this to be true. The officers who are investigating the complaint, usually know, have worked with, or are friends with the subject of the complaint, especially if it is about a senior officer. During my matter, the District Officer at the time, which is the officer that I had to report the incidents to, was the [relative] of the subject member the complaint involved.

I have not had any contact with the Commissioner or her representatives in relation to the complaint. It is hard to say whether it would have helped or not. When the Commissioner was appointed, I was so hopeful the time had come where this behavior would no longer be tolerated and that this would be the start of major change. There are some amazing people in this organization who do some fantastic work, however unfortunately I still see this behavior on a very regular basis.

If I had known the outcome of the investigation, I never would have made the complaint, the consequences to myself and my career were not worth the outcome.

██████████ (Senior Constable)

I was a witness in the Juniper Investigation. The OIC's behavior was renowned in the ██████████ District, everyone knew what he was like and what was happening but until the Juniper Investigation, no one felt comfortable to make a complaint about it. This is just the QPS culture, everyone knows that if you complain you will say goodbye to your career.

That is what happened to me. Before I spoke out, I was a detective in a specialist unit but after giving evidence in the investigation (one of the subject members was my direct boss) I was forced out of the unit. When my boss found out that I had been interviewed he said, "You can pack your shit up and move it next door". I was also going for a promotion at the time and after finding out about my interview my boss told me, "You deserve this job but I don't know what is going to happen now." I didn't get the promotion and I was unable to stay in the unit.

I am now working in general duties. I have lost my detectives allowance and my plain clothes allowance, but my sanity is worth more than money. In the end I was willing to give up that part of my career in order to keep my sanity and get out of that office.

The Commissioner has not contacted me about the complaint.

██████████ (Senior Constable)

I was extremely reluctant to make a complaint internally or externally regarding my legitimate grievance and did not approach the internal investigators myself. It was only when my treatment was bought up in the course of the Juniper Investigation that I was interviewed, resulting in the identification of me being subject to negative and unwanted workplace behaviours.

I was placed in a situation where I was reluctant to seek assistance from my manager/s and could not feel safe or supported enough to speak out about what was happening to me. During this time I had to remain mute about my situation as I feared any repercussion would stop my chances of completing my detective training.

This is due to favouritism, nepotism and bullying within the office and the reality of being forced out resulting in losing my detectives appointment was a risk that I could not afford to take. I knew that I had to remain silent due to the fear of being pushed out of the office. I worked extremely hard to earn my detective's appointment and therefore attended work everyday after crying on my way to work knowing the situation I would be facing on a daily basis.

I knew that if I complained about my boss then my name and career would be jeopardised and ultimately would lose any chance of gaining my appointment. In the clearest terms, if I wanted to become a detective, I knew that I had to shut my mouth and stick it out until my training was completed.

Another valid and widely known reason that I was reluctant to make a complaint was that it is common knowledge that as a junior officer your complaint will go nowhere, it will get written off and you will be the one who is punished. You do not make complaints in the QPS in fear of retribution.

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The culture within the QPS is one of "its not what you know, it is who you know". Senior officers all know each other and all protect each other. In relation to my complaint, my boss (the subject of the complaint) was long term friends with the PPM and an ESC Inspector who was involved in the investigation.

Despite the investigation being conducted, it was clear that the result of the complaint was "written off". I received a letter advising that the complaint had been finalized but I was never informed of the outcome. I have heard that my boss and the OIC who were the subject of the complaint joking and boasting about "only getting an OLP out of it".

Due to this knowledge, I was correct to be concerned about the effect of making a complaint on my career. After making the complaint my name became known that I was "trouble" and a word to describe such people is a term *known* as "name is mud".

I eventually gained my detective appointment (despite the bullying). I loved doing my job as a detective but it became unbearable to the point that after making the complaint, I had no other option but to leave the office and take a lower ranking position.

This resulted in losing my detectives allowance and plain clothes allowance but had no other option as I could not be subjected to anymore negative workplaces behaviours. I am at a loss as to where to go now in the QPS and fear my name is "mud" which can result in a negative career path. Meanwhile, the subject of my complaint was given relieving positions at higher duties both while the investigation was ongoing and since it has been finalized. I was demonised whereas the perpetrator gained career growth.

I can recall when Commissioner Carroll was inducted, she stated one of her priorities was to address bullying in the QPS. Knowing that my complaint was highlighted to the Commissioner I had hoped that there may finally be an outcome that was deserved. However, in response, I received nothing but silence. I am utterly disappointed about the inaction the QPS take on bullying in the QPS. The only outcome of this investigation was that I was punished whilst the subject member was rewarded. This does not pass the SELF test and does not align with the QPS's motto of "Our People Matter".

QPS DFV Documents

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au>
 Sent: Thursday, 22 September 2022 3:56 PM
 To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gpsdfvinquiry.qld.gov.au>
 Subject: RE: [REDACTED] - workplace bullying

Hi Jane,

Answers attached. [REDACTED]
 [REDACTED]

Let me know if you need anything further.

Regards,

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@gpsdfvinquiry.qld.gov.au>
 Sent: Tuesday, 20 September 2022 15:15
 To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@police.qld.gov.au>
 Cc: QPS DFV Documents <[REDACTED]@gpsdfvinquiry.qld.gov.au>
 Subject: [REDACTED] - workplace bullying

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of Queensland Police Service. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Senior Sergeant [REDACTED]

We refer to the initial assessment investigation you conducted in respect of allegations related to negative workplace behaviour and bullying at the [REDACTED] District [REDACTED] in 2019.

We also refer to the emails you sent to the Police Commissioner's office on 27 June 2020 and 15 December 2020 in which you identified that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] had been negatively impacted, not only by treatment they had endured at the [REDACTED] District [REDACTED] but also as a result of having made complaints about those issues.

Could you please advise:

1. Why you took the step of contacting the Police Commissioner's office about those officers on 27 June 2020 and 15 December 2020;

There were several reasons why I contacted the Police Commissioner regarding my experiences with investigating bullying within the [REDACTED] District. These included;

- The sheer numbers of victims who reported long term bullying.
- The several witnesses who were too fearful to report anything out of concerns of repercussions
- The allegations that senior officers knew of the bullying behaviour but failed to act or intervene
- The fact senior officers under investigation for bullying were given higher duties
- The concern there was a permissive environment that endorsed and supported this type of behaviour
- That multiple victims felt compelled to leave their specialist positions and the [REDACTED]
- That multiple females left the QPS and their law enforcement careers specifically because of their unreasonable treatment.

- I also wanted to bring to the Commissioners attention the victims stories and more specifically the courage exhibited by [REDACTED] They stood up when many would not. That is the epitome of great policing.
- I felt it was vital the Commissioner be aware of all the aforementioned issues.
- I forwarded the second email because I never received appropriate follow up on the first email.

2.



3.

4.

5.

6. Where Senior Sergeant [REDACTED] is based now (if you know, and if he is no longer at the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], and whether the new role is a positive development in his career trajectory;
- Senior Sergeant [REDACTED] is now the Officer in Charge of [REDACTED] Police Station. This is a large station which means the officer now supervises a greater numbers of staff with a higher 'Officer in Charge' allowance.

7.



8. Whether you were contacted by the Police Commissioner's office (or someone delegated to contact you on behalf of the Police Commissioner's office) about the treatment those officers had endured, as identified in your emails of 27 June 2020 and 15 December 2020, after 16 December 2020?
- I was contacted by Senior Sergeant [REDACTED] (S/Sgt [REDACTED] cc'd in) of Juniper who reached out as a delegate of the Commissioners office to take up with me around September 2020. A meeting was arranged but the officers never attended. I received a few further follow up emails to advise me I wasn't going to be forgotten. I was never re-contacted and the meeting never occurred.

Finally, could you please advise, in your return email, whether you are content for us to provide your responses to the Queensland Police Service?

- I have no issue with my responses being provided to the QPS.

Regards,



Kind regards



[@qpsdfvinquiry.qld.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@qpsdfvinquiry.qld.gov.au)

Commission of Inquiry into Queensland Police Service responses to domestic and family violence

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