



04th April 2017

Standing Committee on Education and Employment
The Senate

C/o the Committee Secretariat

Dear Committee,

Thank you for your correspondence of 24 March 2017 and the invitation to respond to adverse comments made to the Committee on 14 March 2017.

I note the following comment by an official of HWU regarding Hepburn Health Service at page 36 Hansard transcript:

For example, there are at least five individuals who were victims of bullying and harassment at Ballarat Health Services that fled to Hepburn Health Service ...because it was a safe haven. Hepburn Health Service was a really good employer. Where do some of the bullies go? They are now in management positions. One of them is now the deputy CEO of Hepburn Health. How fearful do you think those individuals were who named these people in this report? As a result, now they are resigning from Hepburn Health and going somewhere else, or are totally disillusioned and leaving the industry altogether.

This is a reference to our current Deputy CEO at Hepburn Health.

The incumbent commenced employment at Hepburn Health on 21 November 2016. She ceased employment as the Executive Director Residential and Clinical Governance Services at Ballarat Health Services on 18 November 2016. As asserted by HWU, I am aware there were a number of investigations with respect to alleged workplace bullying at Ballarat Health Service. However, regarding the evidence given by HWU, the committee should be aware of the following:

- Our Deputy CEO was not the subject of an allegation of workplace bullying, and
- She was not the subject of a finding of workplace bullying.

Please note that I have spoken to our Deputy CEO in relation to these matters. In addition, I have confirmed the information set out above directly with Ballarat Health Service as well.



In addition, I am not aware of any one who has resigned from Hepburn Health Service as a result of our Deputy CEO starting work here. At any health service, there are always people coming and going; however, at the time that the Deputy CEO commenced we had a number of former employees of Ballarat Health Services and I am not aware that any have left.

In the view of Hepburn Health Service, HWU did not have a sound basis for making the claims regarding its Deputy CEO and Hepburn Health Service.

A term like 'bully' should not be used lightly or capriciously. It should not be used unfairly. To do so may, of itself, be unreasonable conduct that may have an effect of occupational health and safety.

On behalf of Hepburn Health Service, I ask that the Committee acknowledge our concerns regarding the HWU's assertions with respect to Hepburn Health Service and our Deputy CEO in particular. Specifically, that we believe the assertions made by HWU to be wrong and without reasonable foundation.

Yours sincerely,

Chris White

Chair of the Board – Hepburn Health Services