

**From:**  
**To:** [Committee, EEWorkplaceBullying \(REPS\);](#)  
**Subject:** workplace bullying  
**Date:** Monday, 18 June 2012 12:39:10 PM

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JE.

To whom it may concern

I have just received information from a friend about the committee into workplace bullying. As someone who has been the recipient of workplace bullying twice, I would like to offer my experiences as evidence that these have had a detrimental effect on my health and career. When I suspected the commencement of bullying in both workplaces I started keeping a diary of what was happening. Both occurred in Catholic Religious Institute girls' schools. In the first instance I was Deputy Principal Mission and in the most recent instance I was a normal classroom teacher and literacy support teacher for the school. I have significant documentation pertaining to each event and would be happy to share it with the committee but am unsure of the process.

In the first school, a rather prestigious Catholic school in the centre of , the Principal insisted that I sign a confidentiality clause which I did. She asked me to leave one week prior to her appraisal. She refused to give me a reference or allow me to ask any member of the Leadership Team or middle management staff for a reference. She even tried to put in a clause which would have silenced my daughters. The union refused to accept this as did I. I live with the threat of being sued if I disclose information which leaves me vulnerable. My payout was pitiful 6 months and given my age I was unable to secure employment for 9 months. I have been attending a psychiatrist and been on medication since.

I applied for other leadership positions for which I am extremely qualified but have had no luck. I have never used her as a referee but I am reliably informed that while she may not have said anything nasty all she has to do is respond negatively to the question, "Would you employ her again?". In the end I gave up applying for leadership positions. It appears that the Catholic system is not bound by procedures forbidding them to contact persons other than the specified referees.

I obtained a teaching position in another Religious Institute school by a wonderful principal. When she resigned at the end of 2009 a new

principal was employed. This person started her bullying almost instantly, refusing to sign my application for Experienced Teacher 6, claiming without evidence that I have poor staff interpersonal relationships. The person she cited unknown to her was one of my referees for that application. My application was successful. Last year she escalated her attacks on me, stood me down for a trivial matter – a joke I made with a young teacher about not bringing in morning tea any more ( this was a kindness in the first instance on my part) but the young teacher concerned was encouraged to put a complaint in writing. I was required to reply which I did and to this date the principal has not made a reply to my response. I was also required to attend mentoring sessions weekly with the deputy claimed I was not reflective, this in spite of the fact that my dissertation for a Master of Education in Language and Literacy was a reflective analysis of my own communication with urban indigenous adults seeking to enter literacy courses. I was also required to attend weekly sessions with a counsellor who found my attitude quite amenable, although I did not see her final report. In the end the Deputy said that I had not entered the process fully and had not been reflective. When the union asked him about the counsellor's report, he said that it had no bearing on his decision. At no time did he inform me who had difficulty communicating with me. The principal did not reply to my letters and placed 2 warning on my file. Overall they did not follow their own grievance procedures

Over the Christmas period 2011/2012 I was in Ireland taking care of my mother who is 91yrs, to give my siblings a break. I was informed by the union that the lawyers for the school were requested by the principal to find out what it would take "for a mutual parting of the ways." I was extremely stressed on my return and took my remaining sick leave. I am 61 yrs old and finding it difficult to obtain a job. My financial planning for retirement hinged upon working until I turn 65. I have a \$350,000 mortgage which all things being equal I could have paid off from my superannuation assuming that it would be accumulating. This time I insisted on a reference, the contents for which I supplied to the principal. I was given 9 months salary which after tax was around \$55,000 which I use to live and pay my mortgage. She did not require me to sign a confidentiality agreement. I have just been diagnosed with breast cancer and have a bi-lateral mastectomy.

I have been lucky to secure supply teaching occasionally over the past

few months. I feel angry that this principal has created a culture of fear among the staff especially the young teachers who will need a good reference if they are to successfully move out of the school. I am not sure what I can do but would be happy to provide whatever material necessary to assist the committee's inquiry. I need to point out that I have strong affirmations from parents and students which I have kept.

I look forward to hearing form you.

Yours faithfully