SUBMISSION TO THE SENATE EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE REALATIONS REFERENCE COMMITTEE

My name is Elizabeth Ayling

From Oct 4 2006 to Oct 19 2012 I worked for the Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol, Permanent Part time 3 days a week (Mon-Wed-Fri). Previously I worked as a casual from Feb 6 2006 with the QBFP and the DPI, as an Administration Officer 5hrs per day Monday to Friday.

From day one when the govt was elected the feeling of uneasiness in our office was there.

The office consisted of the 3 positions and mine. Please note that there was and still is one vacant position

Around July 2012 many rumours were floating around all government departments and regional offices, our office started to hear from our network of colleagues that our office could be closed. We were led to believe that this meant closing our office and the 3 people involved would be relocated. This concept had been put forward previously by numerous senior administration personnel from various Departments without any consultation down line, or with any stakeholders including the professional fishers of the area and the local community, and found wanting when attempted to be implemented. It would appear to me that nothing changes with regard to the consultation process with a change of government.

After becoming extremely concerned about not knowing what was going to happen to his District, a phone call was made. In this phone call we were assured my that our positions were basically safe. Also was told that he could not let him know any details of any proposed restructure as he did not know anything himself. This I believe turned out to be untrue as I was to learn later that anyone above my immediate supervisor was sworn to secrecy and that they had fully participated in all the negotiations for the departmental restructures including all redundancies.

August came with more and more rumours. This led to constant angst on my part as I did not know what was going to happen to my position or myself. No one was talking to us, not even the unions, especially where I was working... The rumours just kept on flowing not just for the demise of my office but the whole of the Department. We do know now that Supervisors were given the task of closing us down and that they wanted the office closed and transferred to. There was no communication or consultation with the staff involved.

On Sept 11 2012, a non working day, I received a phone call from saying that I would be offered a redundancy and that he was coming to see us personally on the Wed to speak to the personnel. This did happen. I was told that a redundancy was the only option as going into the pool would not suit me because of my age and the fact that I owned a house in the town and there was the slight possibility that I may be offered a position in some remote part of the state. It was indicate that they had tried to get me transferred to but to no avail.

I do not feel that was a realistic option in the first instance and he was only trying to remove his personal touch from my eventual demise.

At the same time the other staff in the office were offered redundancies, or going into the pool or transferring to.

On The Thursday one staff member was told that he should not have offered him the redundancy and that his only options were to transfer or resign. Another officer accepted her offer which was to be indicated by an email by noon that Friday. As soon as the email was sent staff member received a phone call informing her that the offer of redundancy had been removed and her only options were transferring to or resigning. Staff member initially transferred but has since resigned. Both these people were given no support to my knowledge. The STRESS levels in the office and at home for all of us were most severe.

I took the redundancy indicating in an email that Friday by noon. I was given to the 19th October to leave my place of employment. This was the date that the office was to close. I believe it was only a token gesture giving me that finishing date and also to help with clean up of office which was left to us to do. (Staff members would have wanted it that way). Up until January This year the office was still being used by a Department of Transport person. Do not believe the savings they said would happen by closing the office have been achieved. The only savings I can see was the saving of my part time wage. I was given no support by the Department or the union, basically it was explained , what could anyone do as the office was closing. My two colleagues were going through their own personal dilemmas and we tried to support each other as much as we could.

The area is now serviced from another station...

The restructure of the Departments was only confusing. Working in a small town in North Qld no one wanted to know. You could not go anywhere for training etc as they had cut all funding that I understand. (Example put in for the emergency relief volunteer programme, training in Brisbane and no funding to get there).

Really we did not know which department we were in at times DEEDI DAFF FISHERIES QBFP were all considered my employer in the time I was there.

To this date I really have had no one talk to me about my redundancy, about the personal consequences afterwards or just how I feel, I would hazard a guess that they expected you to contact them but, as usual nobody informed me who to contact.

I loved my job and would have loved to have of continued my employment with the department or another department somewhere in town, but that was not ever really considered.

I felt that a redundancy was the only option that was offered to me.

Yours sincerely

Elizabeth Ayling