

**Question on Notice
No. 705
Asked on 12 May 2005**

QUESTION:

DR FLEGG asked the Minister for the Environment, Local Government, Planning and Women (Ms Boyle)—

With reference to the recent staff survey of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) conducted by the Queensland Public Sector Union after persistent reports of bullying—

- (1) What new processes will be implemented at the EPA to prevent this culture of bullying continuing?
- (2) Why has it taken so long, with approximately 45 per cent of the staff responding to the survey, with many being directly affected by bullying, before the Government will stand up and take notice?

ANSWER:

- (1) & (2) The Environmental Protection Agency treats seriously unacceptable workplace behaviour by any Agency employee.

Extensive policies, guidelines, tool kits and fact sheets are available for managers and employees to assist in eliminating unacceptable workplace behaviour. Internal training and external support through an Employee Assistance Program and a panel of independent equity service consultants support these employee tools.

Newly appointed employees attend a compulsory corporate orientation program in Brisbane that includes Code of Conduct training. This training addresses unacceptable workplace behaviour.

For three years, the Agency has undertaken a leadership development program for senior management and a frontline management program for supervisors. Both programs equip Agency management and supervisors with enhanced people management skills.

Code of Conduct training has been delivered throughout the State and interactive self-paced CDs have been developed for remote locations.

Where there has been a complaint of unacceptable workplace behaviour the Agency engages independent consultants to conduct an investigation and where a complaint is established on the

balance of probabilities, action is taken by the Agency that is fair and proportionate to the circumstances.

The Director-General met recently with the Queensland Public Sector Union to listen to their concerns and he detailed the strategies and programs in place within the Agency that address issues raised by the Union.

Whilst an analysis of exit questionnaires and grievance data does not support the existence of widespread bullying or harassment, the Agency will, through the health and safety cultural change strategy continue to develop and implement pro active programs to ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all its employees.