

**"I had lost my employment, my harassment complaint wasn't taken seriously... It seemed like the end of the world for me"**



If you are being harassed or bullied in the workplace and need support, please phone 02 9987 0504 to have a confidential chat with a social worker.

ALECIA, REGISTRAR AND MOTHER OF THREE

**MBANSW** is funded by doctors like yourself who understand the importance of offering a helping hand at the right time, thereby maximising the chance of a colleague's recovery and return to work. By donating to the MBANSW Annual Tax Appeal you can help us provide counselling and financial assistance to more families like Alecia's when they need it most.

**For example, over a year, a monthly donation of:**

**\$25**

Will enable a doctor not working through illness to keep their health insurance current

**\$150**

Will provide fortnightly counselling to a doctor experiencing severe grief

**\$50**

Will contribute to the weekly cost of a doctor's prescribed medicines during treatment

**\$250**

Will pay the rental bond for a doctor escaping Domestic Violence

**\$100**

Will cover the monthly utility bills for a doctor unable to work due to an accident



With thanks to donors just like you, MBANSW is celebrating 125 years of caring for and supporting doctors and their families in NSW and the ACT.

We want to continue this but we can't do it without you.

Demand for our services has increased by 54% in the past 12 months alone. If you are in the position to support your colleagues by committing to a regular donation, it will ensure we can plan our growth to meet the increasing need. Even small donations made monthly or quarterly, make a big difference! However, if you cannot make a regular commitment, your one-off donation is still important to us and greatly appreciated.



**Please make your secure tax deductible donation online now at [givenow.com.au/mbansw](https://www.givenow.com.au/mbansw)**

*You will be issued with an immediate tax receipt. If you prefer to donate by post, please complete the donation slip over the page and use the reply paid envelope enclosed.*

# Supporting doctors experiencing workplace bullying and harassment\*

In her late 30's, Alecia's life was going pretty well. Happily married, with three small children and only months off realising her lifelong dream of qualifying as a specialist, she was working in a busy regional hospital in NSW. While her high standard of work was acknowledged by her peers and senior colleagues, she had experienced a number of incidents of harassment and bullying from her older, male supervisor (who had been associated with the hospital for many years). As the harassment and bullying continued, she found it difficult to work. With the encouragement of a colleague, she made a formal complaint to the hospital's HR department.

## An investigation followed and her assertions were upheld.

However, to her surprise, the supervisor remained in his position with very little consequence. Her request to report to an alternative supervisor was not approved and subsequently he alleged she was underperforming. Only three months out from qualifying, Alecia became fearful for her future career prospects. Being the primary income earner, Alecia and her husband decided to move the family to Sydney to seek alternative employment.

## And then COVID-19 hit.

Gaining employment in a pandemic, just three months out from qualifying, proved to be more difficult than Alecia had anticipated. Each prospective employer required a reference from her last supervisor. Having exhausted all the family savings in the move to the city, the family were now in financial distress.

A colleague suggested she contact MBANSW.

*"To be honest, I approached MBANSW without much hope. At the time, I had lost my employment, my harassment complaint wasn't taken seriously... It seemed like the end of the world for me. It was just a 'last try'. However, after speaking with MBANSW, I perked up... the warmth in your social worker's voice generated some energy and hope."*

With Alecia's consent, MBANSW successfully advocated to her prospective employer to consider job references from other senior colleagues. This worked and she received a job offer. At Alecia's request MBANSW provided information from the HR investigation to the professional registration body to protect Alecia from any reports made by her former supervisor regarding her capability to practice. We also provided short term financial assistance to meet the basic family needs whilst she was not working. MBANSW also encouraged her to seek financial counselling to set up her finances to be more robust for the longer term.

Our journey with Alecia has taken 15 months. In that time our social worker gave her a safe space to share her feelings and explore alternative options. In March, we were delighted to receive an email from her thanking us for our assistance.

*"Advocacy from MBANSW was totally unexpected. It changed the trajectory of my career... It is my endeavour to be the best doctor I can and to return the services and level of care that I received from MBANSW ... I love to wake up every morning just to go to work. Thank you for being on this journey with me."*

\*Bullying in the healthcare sector is an under-recognised and pervasive problem. Statistics indicate at least 34% of people have experienced bullying and 16% have experienced harassment\*\*.



**Make a secure one-off or regular donation at [givenow.com.au/mbansw](https://www.givenow.com.au/mbansw) or complete the donation slip below**



**Yes, I want to help fellow doctors who are in crisis this year**

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible and a receipt will be emailed to you for tax purposes.



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