

Appreciation from Michael Quilty

Dear Ian,

I am writing to you to thank you for your assistance in dealing with the very stressful and intimidating incident that I was recently involved in at my workplace. I would like you to submit this letter to the editor of the Plumber's magazine as I feel it is important for members to understand how valuable union membership is to the working man.

I have been working in the public sector for 26 years in various government instrumentalities. I have been employed at my present job for 17 years without blemish.

Without any prior notice or consultation my employer forwarded an incident involving my plumbing supervisor and myself to the internal audit section of the government department where I am employed. The incident related to an overtime discrepancy that had occurred nearly 12 months ago. The internal audit branch subsequently contracted my case out to an external forensic consultancy company.

I was first alerted to the incident by E-Mail by internal audit and directed to contact a forensic investigator who in his initial call to me left me in no doubt of his intentions. It was quite an intimidating call. His plan was to interview me in regard to the incident, that had been reported 12 months ago under the terms of criminal intent before deciding on his next direction which I was informed could involve my case being forwarded to a board of control or the ICAC. I immediately contacted my union organiser, Ian Wright.

Ian Wright responded to the devastation I was feeling with understanding and strong support. He discussed my case with Tony Murphy, the Federal President of our union and the fight back started.

Tony Murphy in all his time with the union could not remember a more exaggerated, time and money wasting exercise that this government department had embarked upon in handling such an incident. It was bureaucracy at its most frightening and I was its intended victim. Tony decided to approach a senior manager in the internal audit department to ascertain why such drastic action had been initiated over an incident that at most would normally have resulted in a local investigation and should only warrant as a penalty a letter of caution. I understand that after a very lengthy conversation Tony convinced the official of issuing such a letter.

Without the assistance of the union I would not have been able to achieve this outcome and would have been subjected to weeks of stress as I battled my way through the trials of an intimidating investigation with implied dire consequences by a hired forensic consultant. Never have I appreciated my union membership more than I do now. The union was there for me in my hour of need. The union protect your rights and your income when they are threatened.

I believed I worked in a fairly protective industry in the public sector as things usually are smooth running. It just goes to show that you never know when and where the services of the union officials will be called upon.

Finally on behalf of my family and myself I extend a wholehearted thankyou to Ian and Tony and the team at the Plumbers Union.

Your sincerely
Michael Quilty