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Re: Alchemy Centre, Burwood

Dear Ms Paroz,

I write in reply to a letter from Mr Richard Coleman in which he responded to some of the issues raised by the CEPU recently, and also in reply to your letter of last week. Mr Coleman has asked that I raise any further questions directly with you.

Unfortunately, Mr Coleman's reply does not address all of the issues raised by the CEPU, nor does it deal satisfactorily with the other issues it purportedly responds to.

We acknowledge EAP counselors have been on site at Burwood, however it would have been more than helpful if Mr Sandhu had actually informed staff prior to their arrival so they could make appropriate arrangement to speak to them. As a result of Mr Sandhu's poor communication, staff are not much further forward than they were, and their issues remain unresolved.

I would also like to make it quite clear that the CEPU supports employees' efforts to have group counselling sessions. I do understand the company's position in this regard, however, given the strength of feeling of staff on this issue and the seriousness of their complaint, I strongly suggest that group counselling be made available for those who are more comfortable in a group setting. Naturally, if an employee is more comfortable with individual sessions, then that should be accommodated.

Mr Coleman's letter is not clear as to how and when training will be made available by the DSOs. It is not clear if the one-on-one training referred to will be done when Consultants are taking live calls or if it will be in a training environment? As you are aware, the training originally delivered is the root cause of the OHS issues raised and it would be ludicrous for Telstra not to provide time off the phones for Consultants to be properly trained this time around. To not do so would compound the problem, not fix it.

Your letter addresses the request of the CEPU that the Performance Improvement Process be suspended, and that current warning be withdrawn until staff are adequately trained. Unfortunately your response completely misses the point and, at the same time, explains precisely why there is a problem at Burwood in the first place.

It may well be that "the performance framework Telstra uses is designed to ensure consultants receive the coaching and development they need to be successful in their roles", however, and you know this is the case, the inadequate training given to consultants prior to the introduction of the Siebel system did not equip them to do their job properly and has resulted in huge numbers of staff suffering various symptoms of stress as a result.

For Telstra not to suspend the PICM process whilst further training is being considered is not the hallmark of a good and considerate employer and is yet another example of why Telstra is considered by the general community to be a pariah when it comes to occupational health and safety in the workplace.

There is nothing in either your, or Mr Coleman's letters, that gives the CEPU any confidence that the employee's concerns at Burwood are being adequately addressed and the CEPU will now contact ComCare with the view to have the matter investigated by that authority.

Yours faithfully



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