

MEDIA RELEASE

95% of staff in schools experienced workplace bullying

09 May 2012: Over 95 per cent of staff in schools experienced some form of workplace bullying, with a zero tolerance approach needed to stamp out this behaviour, according to a book being launched in Sydney tomorrow by General Peter Cosgrove AC, MC.

Written by Dr Dan Riley, Dr Deirdre J Duncan and John Edwards, and published by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), *Bullying of Staff in Schools* aims to assist school employees to understand the phenomenon of staff bullying, its existence, the forms it takes, and its impact on staff and their schools.

The book draws together responses from over 2500 Australian government, Catholic and independent school employees to 42 separate kinds of bullying behaviour, revealing that over 95 per cent of respondents had experienced at least one of those behaviours. Over 75 per cent of respondents experienced a third or more of those bullying behaviours.

Speaking ahead of the launch, book co-author Dr Duncan said bullying behaviour is largely invisible in the school workplace—except to the target—because it is so typical of the behaviour encountered there.

“In many cases the bullies are quite unaware of the fact that their behaviour is seen as bullying,” Dr Duncan said. “Bullying behaviour needs to be named and shamed if it is to be eliminated from the workplace.”

According to the research, the types of bullying behaviour most likely to be experienced by staff in schools are the questioning of one’s professional judgement and being set impossible targets, deadlines or workload. Over 80 per cent of respondents had experienced these behaviours.

The least experienced types of bullying behaviour were those actionable by law under the sexual harassment and anti-discrimination legislation or criminal action such as assault. Dr Duncan said this suggests simply having a school policy on staff bullying is not sufficient to ensure a bully-free workplace exists.

“If location, location, location is a guiding principle for real estate investment, then education, education, education is the mantra for investing in a bully-free workplace,” said Dr Duncan.

Dr Deirdre J Duncan is an Adjunct Professor in Educational Leadership at the Australian Catholic University. Dr Dan Riley is an Adjunct Senior Lecturer at the University of New England. John Edwards is a statistical analyst with over 20 years experience teaching in secondary schools and has lectured in research methodology at university.

Bullying of Staff in Schools (ACER Press, 2012) is being launched at ACU North Sydney campus at 10am on Thursday 10 May. Print copies can be purchased from the [ACER Online Shop](#) or by contacting customer service on 1800 338 402 or via email on sales@acer.edu.au

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Media enquiries: Megan Robinson, 03 9277 5582 or 0419 340 058 communications@acer.edu.au