**Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review**

Submissions from women and men who have experienced discrimination at work while pregnant, or while on or on return to work after taking parental leave

**Submission Number: 174**

**Part C Submission Response**

I had been working for 6 years in my first job as a dedicated and enthusiastic employee as well as a single mum of a young child. My organization [caters] for the health and wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their families. This career path is my passion to work with my people in growing a stronger community. There are other duplicate services that run around Australia so I am aware that parental leave entitlements may not exist at any of these organizations.

 I feel discriminated against as a young Aboriginal woman that being able to fulfil my work agreements that I am not able to fulfil my family commitments as well due to the lack of support for parents to grow families as well as work. Now that I am on maternity leave without any organization support for paid parental leave I am under a lot of stress with financial commitments that I can't fulfil.

There is a 9 year gap between my two children and I feel that I may not be able to spend at least the first precious 12 months of my newborn child's life as I may need to return to work much earlier. As a mother and within my culture these times are the most important of bonding and love and care between mother and child. Why do we need to return to work much earlier? My reason would only be because of the pressure and stress of everyday living expenses that are required to run a functional household to raise our families in.

I would like to see parents who are working to be supported with paid parental leave entitlements from their organization and the government. At the moment government entitlements offer a minimum salary but I am still under financial hardship. Why can't families be supported financially with their original salary income from work to sustain their everyday living expenses effectively and raise healthy and strong families.