**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: 179**

**Part C Submission Response**

When I fell pregnant with my first child I had worked for several years on temporary, short-term employment contracts for a NSW Government agency. While I was on maternity leave, and with my current contract close to expiry, a position became vacant there for a permanent position for which I was the first-placed candidate on an eligibility list.

The co-ordinator called me to say that, although she was obliged to offer me the job, she assumed I would turn it down because I was on maternity leave. When I asked if I could accept the position and defer my start until my maternity leave was over, (thus creating a temporary vacancy for the next person on the eligibility list), I was told this would not be possible as there was an immediate business need to fill the position. I was repeatedly told by various members of the organisation, including senior managers and HR, that I had no choice but to refuse the position. I told them I was not prepared to turn the position down as I wanted the job and that they would have to formally withdraw the offer if they would not allow me to accept it. It was not until I involved an external lawyer in the process that my workplace accepted that I was entitled to accept the position.

The entire experience soured the relationship between myself and my managers, made my return to work extremely stressful and uncomfortable, and effectively destroyed my chances of advancing within that agency.