**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 204**

**Part C Submission Response**

As a Commonwealth public servant, I have access to an array of resources and assistance both during pregnancy and upon my return to work. The assistance provided by my Department has been excellent. My main areas of concern are the attitudes of other women and promotion opportunities. It is my experience that other (older) women who did not have / utilise access to part time work when returning to work following the birth of a child have negative views regarding my use of part time hours. The general view seems to be that this would have severely hampered their career prospects, and thus was not a real option (this is their perception - the reality is of course difficult to ascertain. Certainly some of these women would never be suitable for further promotion, whereas others have subsequently been promoted). This issue is well documented in other contexts.

The second issue is the possibility of promotion for part time staff. I appreciate this is a very difficult issue with no easy solutions. However, the opportunity for part time staff to be promoted is very limited, and must be driven by the staff member. For example, for job sharing to be considered, the staff member must seek out someone suitable and then present a case to management. There is no 'top down' approach for part time senior management positions or job sharing arrangements. Notwithstanding that, please note that in generally my workplace is highly supportive of my choice to remain part time. My experience is that the immediate work colleagues have a significant impact on the success or otherwise of part time working arrangements. In my case, all immediate work colleagues have been extremely understanding and supportive, and regularly sought to ensure I had an appropriate work load, someone to assist in the days that I wasn't in the office if tasks needed to be done, and encouraged me to not think about or do work when I was not working.

My comments therefore relate largely to attitudes of colleagues in the workplace. I have been fortunate, and wish that all part time staff were able to access the policies, support and attitudes that I have been exposed to.