**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 218**

**Part C Submission Response**

My workplace was quite flexible with my return to work although I have to work a few more hours than I would have liked in my part-time capacity.

The biggest issue I faced was the fact that my non-Government employer only provided 4 weeks Paid Maternity Leave. This is not sufficient particularly for professional people. When my daughter was 6 months old, she was still breastfeeding for 1 hour in every 2 hours during the day and I can't pump effectively so I could not return to work and continue to breastfeed her. So I took my full 12 months unpaid Maternity Leave but I had to borrow money from my parents to do so and am still paying this money back. Other people don't have that luxury, and this is dramatically affecting breastfeeding rates in Australia.

In Norway, the government introduced 80% Maternity Leave pay for all working mothers and breastfeeding rates have increased dramatically. This needs to be introduced in this country because the longer term health and other benefits of breastfeeding for both mothers and children would offset the additional costs of providing Maternity Leave pay.