**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: 23**

**Part C Submission Response**

Challenges

•What kind of challenges did you face in the workplace during pregnancy, while on parental leave, and upon returning to work after parental leave? Please provide details including:

•specific challenges

My contract was not extended despite there being positions available to do so. This meant that after more than 5 years in the organisation (mostly permanent) I was not paid maternity leave (I was eligible for maternity leave if my contract had been extended). I was told only days before my contract ended that there was no extension. This left me in limbo with no hope of finding another job.

•consequences for you, your family and your career

My contract ended around 3 months prior to the birth of my child. This meant that I could only afford to stay at home (and with a big financial struggle) until my son was 6 months old. It meant that I had to seek a new position that was both part-time and accommodating to having a very young child. It also impeded and limited the length of breastfeeding. Finding a new position was more difficult due to requiring flexibility. My child was unable to attend daycare due to health concerns until he was 1 and this further limited the positions I could apply for.

•what action (if any) you took in response and the outcomes of this action

Due to complications during pregnancy, the issue was not pursued.

•what workplace measures would have helped you to respond to the challenges you faced

If I had been in the union at the time I am sure there would have been a different outcome.

Information and support

Nil.

•What information or support was provided to you about your rights and entitlements while pregnant, while on parental leave and upon returning to work after parental leave? Who provided this information?

No one. It was investigated independently and discussed with management.

•If none was provided, what information or support would have assisted you?

A discussion with management stating expectations

Good practices that assisted you

None.

•What policies, programs or support did or would have assisted you while you were working while pregnant, on parental leave or after returning to work following parental leave?

In my new job post-birth- flexible hours and working from home.

Recommendations for the National Review Report

Encourage flexible working practices. Stop discrimination against pregnant women and working parents by toughening legislation and not allowing workplaces decide what is appropriate and what is not.

Education for employers and employees about maternity leave and returning to work.

•What sorts of outcomes or recommendations would you like to see from this National Review?

As above