**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: 46**

**Part C Submission Response**

My experience was 15 years ago and not with my current employer.

I was working for a State Government funded not for profit organisation in a regional town. I had worked there full time for 2 years after moving from Sydney and I was 26 years old. I announced my pregnancy in early 1998 and was due to give birth in late 1998. Paid maternity leave was not offered, and was not discussed with me as an option, however I was told that my job would be held open for me to return but on the condition that I return full time. I knew that I would not be in a position to return full time as we had no family support and I did not want to put my baby in full time day care so I resigned.

Looking back, I can see I was naive not to pursue this at the time, but I don't think that information about rights in the workplace was as readily available and as easy to access as it is now - and I certainly wasn't encouraged by my employer to seek this information out.

 I can see great improvements have occurred since then, but I worry for some of my younger colleagues who most certainly are supported by the workplace during pregnancy and return to work for the first 12 months (much more than I was) - but at the end of this period they are forced back into full time work.

 I would like to see more opportunities for job sharing for parents for 5 years after birth. I was fortunate to work in a job share arrangement after the birth of my second child while working at a regional University. The Executive Assistant position was advertised internally as a job share position as the holder of the position wished to reduce her hours. I was in an admin role at the time and successfully applied for the position. The University and my line manager were extremely supportive of both me and my job share partner and it was one of the most positive experiences of my career. I have since moved on to a Senior Executive Assistant role in another organisation and I would not have the opportunity to work as I do now in a position that I love if I did not have the job share opportunity as a young mother.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.