**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: 60**

**Part C Submission Response**

My problems only began when I attempted to return to work, and as the result of one person rather than the organisation, yet it is important to realise what one person can get away with when they are in a senior position.

During my maternity leave, my Melbourne based manager was moved sideways and a new manager was brought in from outside the organisation. What was unofficially reported to me at the time, was that the new manager was bringing another employee with him from his previous role, which would essentially negate my role in Sydney.

What I do know, is that when discussions between myself and the new manager commenced with regard to my return to work, all options except full time return to work at my previous location had been taken off the table. Moving to a depot closer to home was revoked as we had to ‘stay together as a team’. Keep in mind other members of this ‘team’ were in Brisbane, Adelaide and he was in Melbourne. There was only one other Sydney based team member and our work was in no way related and there was no reason for our collocation. Part time or working from home was denied as there was a ‘full time requirement’ for this role, a role which I had been struggling to find work for and had in fact been ‘sub contracting’ myself (for want of a better description) out to other departments prior to my departure on Maternity Leave. Redundancy was also denied despite the fact that ongoing redundancies are a fact of life in [the organisation].

I had no chain of command as our department had been restructured. I knew no one above him, or within the HR department to speak to. The stress on me at this time was enormous and which is ultimately what led to me walking away, instead of standing my ground and fighting for my right to return to work under what [the organisation] prides itself as ‘Flexible Working Arrangements’ but I have never forgotten that feeling of helplessness and being bullied out of a role unjustly.

My recommendation is that in big companies, there is a Return to Work After Pregnancy advocate (outside of the Human Resources branch) who is there to act as an independent 3rd party and make sure this sort of unfair practice and bullying need not happen. You cannot rely on the Human Resources department to act for the employee when they are paid by the employer.