**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: 78**

**Part C Submission Response**

Challenges: I had some very stressful experiences with my HR department. They incorrectly calculated my maternity leave form - twice. Upon return to work from my first pregnancy I was told after 1 year of working part-time (at my request) that I would be required to resume full-time work two years after the birth of my child, while our Workplace agreement was unambiguous in stating that requests for part-time work would be granted for a period of two years after returning to work.

I questioned this interpretation and was told by the personnel officer (who left the room to check, at my request) that (unknown executive within organisation - name requested by me, but not given to me) had determined that this was how the [organisation] was interpreting this clause. I took my problem to my union and clarified that the [organisation] was in the wrong. It never got further than that because I became pregnant again and went on maternity leave a second time.

Whilst on leave my Manager contacted me to discuss my return to work arrangements - in the following week! The HR dept had struck again, and given my manager the incorrect information about the length of my leave (a period of maternity leave followed by fulltime long service leave, followed by part time long service leave), and she had then contacted me at the end of the fulltime long service leave, whereas I had another 3 months of leave to go before returning to work. As you can imagine when you are submersed in baby world, intrusions of this nature are unexpected, stressful and worrying.

Needless to say I now have complete lack of trust in my HR dept getting anything right, at least the first time. Other women at my workplace have experienced similar, if not worse, from the HR department or their managers. Every time we enter a new bargaining round for the next Certified Agreement, we find that such small things in terms of cost to the organisation (such as the 2 year policy mentioned above), yet hugely valuable to the employees affected by it, come under threat of being lost in order to make gains elsewhere. I believe this is a divisive policy that is deliberately utilised by the Managing Executive and/or their masters at the Department.