Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review

University of Technology, Sydney submission to Australian Human Rights Commission, prepared by Joanna Leonard, Equity & Diversity Unit

- What are some **leading practices and strategies** to manage pregnancy, parental leave and return to work after parental leave in the workplace?

The University of Technology Sydney has a reputation within the sector as an organisation which promotes the advancement of women on merit, and which is a good place for women to work.

The University has a wide range of policies and procedures to support gender equality in the workplace and high level support for equity and diversity programs from Vice-Chancellor and executive staff.

UTS understands that academics are constantly juggling and (or) balancing their passions around their work and their families. The University also understands that combining family and career is one of the critical pressure points which can limit women (and some men with carer responsibilities), from pursuing their research careers in the way they would like.

The University has therefore developed a range of programs under the Research Equity Initiative, to better support academics who want to maintain their successful research career alongside family commitments.

The *Research Equity Initiative* builds on existing UTS services and support programs for women and staff with carer responsibilities, but significantly also delivers an exciting range of new programs which target the various stages at which evidence shows women face particular hurdles in their academic careers.

UTS supports academics whose careers have been interrupted by carer/family responsibilities with:
- A Childcare and Carers Support Fund(Conference Attendance): up to $2,000 to assist staff with primary carer responsibilities to attend important conferences and workshops
- Funding for Research During Parental Leave guidelines which will provide additional support for postdocs and staff who need to keep labs and research projects going while on maternity leave
- Research Re-establishment Scholarships of up to $15,000 to assist staff returning from maternity/parental leave to enable them to spend concentrated time on research

- A UTS Research Fellowship of $40 - $60,000 for mid-career staff whose careers have been significantly affected by sustained caring responsibilities, to re-establish or enhance their research careers
- Resilience training for postgraduate women including those with caring responsibility
- Mentoring/networking programs for academic women researchers

These new programs for researchers under the UTS Research Equity Initiative are in addition to the following policies and programs for all UTS staff:

[Parental leave:](#) UTS provides paid maternity leave or adoption leave of 20 weeks, which can be taken as 40 weeks on half-pay or a mix of full and half-pay; 20 days paid partner's leave and up to 104 weeks unpaid leave for the primary carer, in addition to the provisions of the national Paid Parental Leave scheme

Support and information to staff and supervisors: All staff applying for maternity/adoption leave is given a face-to-face meeting with Staff Services to obtain information and discuss options. Similarly the Human Resources Unit provides advice and coaching to managers and supervisors on managing flexible work and parental leave, and the UTS website has comprehensive information for staff about

Return to work support: Up to 30 days paid leave for phased return to work is available for staff to take as:
- Continuous leave for 30 days on full pay or 60 days on half pay; or
- A combination of continuous leave and phased returned to work for up to 30 days; or
- Funding equivalent in value to up to 30 days salary for professional and career development projects,

Flexible Working Arrangements
UTS offers a wide range of arrangements including:
- Part-time and part-year/sessional employment
- Job-sharing
- Alternative hours for support staff (e.g. compression of working hours into a mix of longer and shorter days or fewer days)
- Flexi-time and RDOs
- Flexible workload for academics