



# Media Release

Monday, 21 October 2013

## **Pregnancy and return to work review accepting submissions**

Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Elizabeth Broderick has urged people across Australia to make online submissions to the Australian Human Rights Commission's Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review which has begun its consultation process.

"In particular, the Commission invites online submissions from women and men who have experienced discrimination while on parental leave or upon their return to work following parental leave, as well as from community organisations that work with women who have experienced discrimination," Commissioner Broderick said. "We will shortly begin consulting with employers through a separate online questionnaire as well."

Specifically, Commissioner Broderick said the National Review was interested in consulting all relevant stakeholders and hearing about: the types of challenges faced by women and men in the workplace while pregnant, on parental leave, or upon returning to work; by employers in managing pregnancy, parental leave and return to work in the workplace, as well as examples of leading practices and strategies in the workplace that can address these challenges; relevant data, case studies and trends; and any apparent gaps and practical challenges in implementing relevant legislative and policy frameworks.

A set of guiding questions have been provided at the National Review's online submissions page to help people compile their information.

"Despite the protections that existing Australian laws and policies provide to pregnant women, and women and men returning to work after parental leave, on occasion employees face discrimination," Ms Broderick said. "In the 2011-12 reporting year, 21% of complaints the Commission received under the Sex Discrimination Act related to pregnancy discrimination and family responsibilities and 21% of complaints investigated by the Fair Work Commission related to an allegation of pregnancy discrimination.

Further, data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics Pregnancy and employment transitions survey in 2012 showed that approximately 19% of women employees perceived experiencing some level of discrimination in the workplace while pregnant. Most commonly, this discrimination included missing out on the opportunity for promotion (34%); missing out on training or development opportunities (32%) and receiving inappropriate or negative comments from their manager or supervisor (28%).

The submission process is one part of the National Review, funded by the Attorney-General's Department, which aims to identify the prevalence, nature and consequences of discrimination in relation to pregnancy at work and return to work after parental leave. The review is scheduled to release a comprehensive final research report in June 2014.

Submissions will be accepted until 16 December and can be made at [www.humanrights.gov.au/supporting-working-parents-pregnancy-and-return-work-national-review-organisations](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/supporting-working-parents-pregnancy-and-return-work-national-review-organisations). The online questionnaire for employers will be launched shortly and will stay open until January 2014.

**Media contact:** Brinsley Marlay 02 9284 9656 or 0430 366 529