



MEDIA RELEASE

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PREGNANT WOMEN AND MOTHERS SHUNNED IN NSW PUBLIC SECTOR

The level of discrimination directed at pregnant women and mothers returning to the workforce in the NSW public sector is at shameful levels, according to the Public Service Association of NSW (PSA).

A recent survey of female members conducted by the PSA to inform its submission to the Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review found:

- 77% of respondents said they had missed out on an opportunity for promotion while pregnant.
- 71% of respondents indicated they had missed out on training or developmental opportunities whilst pregnant.
- 79% of respondents had been subjected to inappropriate comments by supervisors while pregnant.

Respondents also shared a wide range of personal experiences of discrimination, including denial of promotion or training, inflexible work experiences and inappropriate comments and actions.

PSA Womens' Officer Jenny Singleton said the main challenge facing women in the public service was the lack of access to flexible working arrangements.

"Survey results and our experience with members have shown discrimination against pregnant women and mothers is still alive and well in NSW," Ms Singleton said.

"Despite expectations the NSW government will be a model employer when it comes to support for pregnant women and mothers, in practice it is falling way short.

"Women have a right to request flexible working arrangements but employers can, and frequently do, refuse for a wide variety of reasons including the catch-all for 'operational reasons'.

"This means women are not in effect requesting but begging for flexible work arrangements.

"The toxic culture of job cuts and insecure work is also a barrier to the arrangements and support needed by women with children for ongoing careers.

"Outdated views on pregnancy and women with children in the workforce have no place in the modern NSW public sector, where women make up the majority.

"The PSA urges the O'Farrell government to urgently address the discrimination faced by pregnant women and mothers at work and help unlock a more productive and diverse public workforce," she said.

View full PSA submission to Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review here:

<http://psa.asn.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Submission-Pregnancy-Return-to-Work-2014.pdf>

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