

Tips to assist mum's returning to work

By Melissa Martin, The Clarity Group, CDAА Member, June 2008

Having children changes your life forever and for many, their career no longer remains as the number one priority. Having said that, being a mum does not mean that you can't have a successful career or a job you enjoy when you are ready to return to work. Whilst the return to work process can be daunting, it doesn't need to be. The following tips may assist in reducing some of the anxiety associated with returning to work.

- **Organise your home life.** A key to enjoying your work and not spending time stressing about everything you will need to do when you get home, is to make sure everything is in order at home. Think about pre-cooking your meals or employing a cleaner to assist.
- **Find childcare you are happy with.** Prior to returning to work leave your child (or children) with the carer. This will not only help your child become accustomed to being left, but will also help you adjust to leaving your child. Another bonus is that it will also provide you with some spare time to go shopping for that new suit for work!
- **Think about the sort of work you would like to return to.** For many, this is a time that they consider a career change. Do you want to return to the same line of work you were in before your family? Or perhaps you are ready for a change?
- **Reflect on your current skills.** Spend some time reflecting on the skills you have which are relevant to the workplace. You may also want to consider a short course to up-skill. Many TAFEs and local community centres offer short courses which may be all you need to refresh your skills. In addition to increasing confidence in your ability completion of these courses demonstrate your commitment to returning to work to future employers.
- **Update your resume.** For some this raises questions about how to reflect the time you have had off. Your resume will now need to include a career objective which states the type of work you are seeking and the value you will bring. This is a good place to include that you are currently seeking to return to the workforce following the raising of your family. Under your work history include the dates that you have been at home. This may simply be included as "Maternity leave" or "Stay at home mum". List any volunteer or unpaid work for family or friends that you may have completed during this time.
- **Consider temping.** This is a good way to ease yourself back into the job market, and gain confidence in your ability again. Temping is also a great way to experience different industries, companies and roles which will assist you in determining the type of employment to seek on a permanent basis. It also provides you with some flexibility to ensure you are ready to go back to work and, for future employers, you will be seen as 'less risky' as you have experienced working again recently.