



'Long way to go' for women's equality

By Natasha Rudra

An overwhelming 92 per cent of women believe they do not have equal rights with men, a new International Women's Day survey says.

Women may also believe they are being set up to fail, with 41 per cent feeling they had been passed over for promotion at work because they were female.

Another 41 per cent said they lacked support at home, making it difficult to work longer hours and improve their standing at the office.

The survey of 500 women was carried out by marketing company Heat Group and Unifem Australia, the United Nation's women's arm.

Heat managing director Gillian Franklin said the results were

surprising.

"There is still a significant amount of work that needs to be done before women feel that they have equal opportunity and also to get proof with women in different positions. So we've got a long way to go," she said.

Mrs Franklin said businesses and government needed to support women who had children and careers, with initiatives such as tax-deductible child care.

"When women take themselves out of the workplace for those seven to 10 years that they choose to either not work or work part-time, when they come back in they almost never catch up. They're behind in training, they're behind in development, in income, they're behind in experience. So

that is lost to women forever," she said.

Women in the survey also cited a lack of women at the top, a lack of awareness of successful women and the lack of tax support as stumbling blocks to workplace equality.

Pay was also a hot topic, with 42 per cent of women feeling they were paid less than a man doing the same job. Another 54 per cent of women said they felt pressure to perform domestic duties, carrying out housework, cooking and caring for children.

Canberrans celebrated International Women's Day with a number of events yesterday, including a breakfast in support of the Canberra Women's Refuge.