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# Sex harassment shock

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A new poll has revealed almost half of Australian women claim to have experienced sexual harassment in the workplace.

And almost two-thirds, or 62 per cent, felt companies were not supportive of women making an allegation of sexual harassment.

The poll of about 500 women was carried out by cosmetics company The Heat Group.

The release of the poll findings comes in the wake of the \$37 million sexual harassment

case launched by former David Jones publicist Kristy Fraser-Kirk earlier this month against the retail giant's former CEO Mark McInnes.

Kaye Broadbent, a senior lecturer at Griffith University, said many companies still didn't understand the seriousness of sexual harassment, offering "token gestures" after complaints.

"There needs to be a zero (tolerance) policy towards sexual

attitudes," Broadbent said.

Katherine Graham, managing director of The Human Resources Centre, said its research showed sexual harassment claims had increased by about 30 per cent in the past two years.

She said while the David Jones case had generated a lot of discussion, it had not led to any immediate changes to company policies.

Graham said responsible companies already had bullying and harassment policies in place that

were regularly reviewed.

"Their obligation as an employer is to ensure that the employees are aware of and understand their policies and how they manifest themselves in the workplace," she said.

"It's in their interests to do that, because it assists them to avoid any claims later on."

Graham said harassment claims included cases of men to men and women to women.