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Wake up to women

Sexual harassment claims ignored

Torny Jensen

An alarming 44 per cent of female workers claim they have been sexually harassed in Australian workplaces.

And two-thirds of women feel companies are leaving them in the lurch when it comes to investigating claims of harassment.

The startling figures come from a survey of more than 500 women by cosmetics company, The Heat Group, in reaction to the high-profile David Jones sexual harassment case.

Most women surveyed felt the \$37 million claim against the company was excessive, but

44 per cent said they felt it would send a strong message to other companies.

"I do think there is a lot of awareness in the community and no doubt the David Jones case has put the issue on the agenda in every board table around the country," Heat Group managing director Gillian Franklin said.

Kaye Broadbent, a senior lecturer at Griffith University's Business School, said many companies were still not understanding the seriousness of sexual harassment and often offered workers "token gestures" after complaints.

"There definitely needs to be a zero (tolerance) policy towards sexual attitudes," Broadbent said.