

**MEDIA RELEASE
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Sexual harassment rife in workplace: almost half of Australian women report

A new poll by leading cosmetic company, The Heat Group has revealed that a shocking 44% of Australian women have experienced unwanted sexual advances in the workplace. Furthermore, 62% of the 505 women polled felt companies were not supportive of women making an allegation of sexual harassment.

Gillian Franklin, leading Australian businesswoman and Heat Group Managing Director, believes these results are unacceptable and organisations need to take note.

“CEOs and management have the responsibility to protect their staff and create a safe environment where concerns can be communicated without fear.

“Business success relies heavily on the happiness of its staff and staff will not work effectively if they are afraid of repercussions when reporting incidents,” Franklin said.

Earlier this month a \$37 million sexual harassment claim launched against David Jones and its former chief executive Mark McInnes by former David Jones publicist Kristy Fraser-Kirk sent shockwaves through Australia's business community.

In the poll, 77% of women said they believed one of the key allegations made against the retail giant - that management were aware of the unacceptable behaviour of Mr McInnes and failed to take action.

Whilst the majority of women believed \$37 million to be an excessive claim, 44% hoped this would send a strong message to employers about the seriousness of the issue.

“These statistics highlight the need for urgent action by the Australian business community to tackle this distressing matter.

“Companies need to implement strict policies and guidelines to protect the rights of their employees.

“This poll shows that women are concerned about the handling of allegation claims and want more company accountability to combat inappropriate behaviour,” Franklin said.

About The Heat Group:

Heat is committed to improving the quality of life of Australian women and contributing to the economic prosperity of Australia. Heat engages with women every month via the Heat Poll - an on-going research initiative that taps into the views and opinions of Australian women, as well as the gender-specific issues they face.

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