

****EMBARGOED 5AM (AEST) SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2016****
MEDIA RELEASE

One in three working mums battling a “baby ceiling” in Australian businesses

A new national poll of working mothers reveals discrimination due to pregnancy or family caring duties continues to be rife in Australian workplaces.

The ReachTEL poll, conducted on behalf of leading parent advocacy group The Parenthood and employment law experts Maurice Blackburn Lawyers, surveyed 1087 working women with children under the age of 18.

It found:

- 1 in 3 (34.4%) working mothers have been discriminated against or have experienced discrimination in the workplace as a result of falling pregnant or because they have children.
- Almost half of those surveyed (45%) know a working mother who has been discriminated against in their job because of children.
- More than 53 per cent of younger working mums (18 – 34 age group) feel they have been overlooked for promotions at work because they have children.

Executive Director of The Parenthood, Jo Briskey said she was shocked but not surprised by the level of discrimination experienced by working mums across Australia.

"These results are a stark reminder of what mums have to put up with in the workplace that dads just simply don't," Ms Briskey said.

"They show us how far we have to go before we achieve true equality for both working mums and working dads."

Committee Chair in the Women's Network at Maurice Blackburn, Lawyer Anika Wells says it is important for women to remember that both pregnancy and family or carer responsibilities are "protected" attributes under Australian law, which makes it unlawful for anyone to discriminate against you on this basis.

"Discrimination comes in many forms – it can range from negative attitudes and comments, to the loss of opportunities and career advancement right through to outright redundancy or dismissal. We know it can be insidious and sometimes it can be hard to prove – but the laws are meant to be there to protect you," said Ms Wells.

Recently, Maurice Blackburn successfully negotiated a multi-million-dollar financial settlement for a senior executive employed in the property industry, who was unlawfully discriminated against after taking a period of parental leave.

The Parenthood's Jo Briskey is urging the Federal Government and Australian business to take heed of these disturbing figures.

"We are not going to achieve gender equality in the workplace by slashing paid parental leave or failing to address the ever increasing cost of childcare – we need to see greater family friendly workplaces across all sectors and industries" warns Ms Briskey.

END

**INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY: 11.15AM (AEST) SUNDAY 6 MARCH 2016 AT THE STATE LIBRARY OF QUEENSLAND,
STANLEY PL, SOUTH BRISBANE.
CONTACT: JO BRISKEY – 0423 262 449, ANIKA WELLS - 0488 111 316**

EXTRACT FROM SURVEY TAKEN 3 MARCH 2016

Question 2:

Have you personally ever experienced discrimination in your workplace as a result of falling pregnant or because you have children?

	Total	18-34	35-50	51-65	65+
Yes	34.4%	42.9%	34.5%	18.6%	5.3%
No	65.6%	57.1%	65.5%	81.4%	94.7%

Question 3:

Do you know any women who have experienced discrimination in their workplace as a result of falling pregnant or having children?

	Total	18-34	35-50	51-65	65+
Yes	45.2%	55.3%	45.9%	21.8%	21.1%
No	54.8%	44.7%	54.1%	78.2%	78.9%

Question 4:

Do you feel you have been overlooked for promotions or opportunities to progress your career since having children; or are you concerned that you may be overlooked if you have more children?

	Total	18-34	35-50	51-65	65+
Yes	40.9%	53.0%	38.9%	29.5%	5.3%
No	59.1%	47.0%	61.1%	70.5%	94.7%