

## Press Release

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### **SURVEY – ‘Pulse’ survey highlights continued challenges of child care, flexibility, recruitment and workplace policies**

CareerMums recently conducted another ‘pulse’ survey to tap into challenges faced by parents returning to work. Overall, there were 420 respondents and the key themes included:

1. Work from home arrangements for some of the week was the most popular flexible work arrangement;
2. A lack of support by employers in attracting their staff back to the workplace after parental leave;
3. The cost of child care and the failure so far of the 50% child care rebate to entice mothers back to work;
4. The lack of assistance from recruitment firms in connecting return to work parents to flexible roles.

Kate Sykes, Founder of [www.careermums.com.au](http://www.careermums.com.au) said **“There are some quite straightforward means to overcoming these persistent challenges. Employers and the Government need to make some simple and long overdue changes to practices and policies which will only improve productivity. There is a hidden workforce that is ready to work. Let’s start using home grown talent before we become too reliant on importing it.”**

72% of respondents found that finding a flexible job was one of the biggest barriers in returning to work. The types of work flexibility our respondents were looking for included: work from home arrangements some of the week (54%), part time reduced days (51%), part time school hours (41%), part time reduced hours (30%), stop working during school holidays (26%), and job share (23%).

‘Stay in Touch’ programs are critical in retaining employees on parental leave. Unfortunately, only 15% of respondents said that their employer offered support in planning a return to work strategy.

The cost of child care continues to be one of the biggest barriers to returning to work according to 40% of respondents. In addition, the 50 per cent child care rebate has made no difference to returning to work for 67% of respondents. Only 2% of respondents stated that it has made huge difference. This indicates that Government must revisit the way it is addressing the fundamental problems with Australian child care including the over-privatisation of child care centres, and the ability to monitor and control child care costs.

Finally, recruiters are in a great position to persuade their clients to implement more flexible work practices and attract great candidates. However, survey results indicate that this is not happening. Over 72% of respondents who approached a recruitment firm stated that recruiters were unhelpful in assisting with their flexibility requirements.

[www.careermums.com.au](http://www.careermums.com.au) currently has close to 11,000 registered job seekers looking for flexible and part time work. In addition, CareerMums provides consulting services to businesses to attract, nurture and retain working parents via their Working Parents Toolkit and The Flexible Work Proposal Toolkit - [http://www.careermums.com.au/content/emp\\_consulting\\_services.php](http://www.careermums.com.au/content/emp_consulting_services.php)

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