

Mates over Merit?

The Women in Media Report – A study of gender differences in Australian media

This data was collected via a national online survey of around 1,000 women in media at the end of 2015.

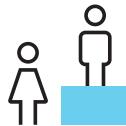
The survey was developed by Women in Media, a national mentoring and networking initiative run by women from across the media spectrum, backed by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

Respondents to the survey believe discrimination remains rife in the industry.

"Mates over merit" was a frequently expressed sentiment. Many noted the declining number of women "as you go up the food chain". For those with a long career, the issue of ageism is of increasing concern.

Despite policies to prevent discrimination, barely half of respondents rate them positively: only 11% said they were "very effective".

There is evidence of a significant gender pay gap in the survey data, reinforced by research from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency revealing a 23.3% gap in Information, Media and Telecommunications.*



THE GENDER PAY GAP IN INFORMATION, MEDIA AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS IS 23.3%*



In an industry impacted by the 24-hour news cycle, flexible work is often "on paper, not in practice", because of a culture of 'presenteeism'. According to WGEA data, media employers with more than 100 staff offer better primary and secondary carer leave than much of the private sector. Despite these benefits, one quarter of women who've taken maternity leave have experienced discrimination returning to work.

Engaging with audiences online is part of the job. Sadly, 41% of respondents have experienced harassment, bullying and trolling on social media, from mild instances to death threats and stalking. Several women say they have been silenced, or changed career, because of this harassment.



41% HAVE EXPERIENCED HARASSMENT BULLYING AND TROLLING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

*https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2014-15-WGEA_SCORECARD.pdf (page 13)

Only 16% of respondents were aware of their employer's strategies to deal with social media threats. But responsibility extends beyond the media sector, to law enforcement agencies and owners of platforms. And nearly half of the female respondents (48%) said they'd experienced intimidation, abuse or sexual harassment in the workplace. Sadly, one in three (34%) don't feel confident to speak up about discrimination.



48% OF WOMEN RESPONDENTS HAVE EXPERIENCED INTIMIDATION, ABUSE OR SEXUAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORK PLACE

Overall, progress on equality in the media is disappointingly slow. It's clear that structural discrimination, and entrenched workplace cultures, keep women in lower paid, less powerful, positions.

WOMEN IN MEDIA IS CALLING FOR:



Audits, and action, on the entrenched gender pay gap



Improved strategies for social media harassment



Anti-discrimination policies to be put into practice.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was developed by the national steering committee of Women in Media, and researcher Beverley Uther.

The data was collected from 1,054 Australian journalists between September and December 2015.

The majority of respondents (91.8%) were women, from a wide range of age, sectors, and experience.

Quotes, while anonymous, are given context by attribution to role, years of work, and medium.

Thanks go to National Convenor of Women in Media, Tracey Spicer, National Patron of Women in Media, Caroline Jones, Beverley Uther from Fairfax Media, Marketing and Communications Manager ANZ for Isentia, Claire Waddington, MD at REPUBLIC Consulting, LJ Loch, Ogilvy Public Relations, and the union for media professionals, MEAA.