



# Sexual Harassment, Criminal Misconduct & Bullying in Australian Live Performance

## SURVEY SNAPSHOT

Between 25 July and 17 November 2017, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance conducted a survey of Sexual Harassment, Criminal Misconduct & Bullying in Australian Live Performance.

1,124 people completed the survey.

### Respondent Demographics:

- 66% female, 28% male, 6% other.
- 80% have worked in the live performance industry for more than 5 years.
- Average age is 36 years old
- There were respondents from every state and territory

Half of the respondents work predominately in independent theatre (51%), 38% work in subsidised theatre, 22% work mostly in musical theatre and 16% are 'other' (most commonly opera).

82% of respondents agreed that sexual harassment, criminal misconduct and bullying is a problem for those working in live performance with 36% of respondents strongly agreeing. 4% disagreed.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

### Experiencing and Witnessing Sexual Harassment

At least 40% of respondents have experienced sexual harassment, almost all of these on multiple occasions. The most common forms of sexual harassment experienced were:

- Suggestive comments or jokes - 61% of those surveyed
- Unnecessary or unwelcome physical familiarity eg touching or brushing up - 49%
- Receiving intrusive questions about their private life - 49%
- Staring or leering – 42%

About the same number of respondents had witnessed or heard reliable reports of workplace sexual harassment. The most common forms of sexual harassment witnessed, or reliably reported to them, were:

- Suggestive comments or jokes – 58%
- Unnecessary or unwelcome physical familiarity eg touching or brushing up – 55%
- Intrusive questions or statements about your private life – 47%
- Staring or leering – 49%

📍 PO Box 723 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 ☎ 1300 656 513

**BUILT ON INTEGRITY. POWERED BY CREATIVITY. MEAA.ORG**



When asked **where** the most notable instance of sexual harassment occurred:

- 27% said in subsidised theatre
- 20% said independent theatre
- 13% said musical theatre
- 14% said 'other' and most common amongst these were opera and places of training

When asked **who** the perpetrator was:

- 35% said another cast member
- 18% said the director
- 10% said a member of crew
- 10% said 'other' and most common amongst these were teachers, conductors and photographers

## CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT

### Experiencing and Witnessing Criminal Misconduct

In terms of direct experiences of criminal misconduct, of those surveyed:

- 20% had received obscene communications
- 14% had been sexually assaulted
- 11% had been physically assaulted
- 9% had experienced indecent exposure
- 10% had been stalked by someone from work.

When asked whether you had witnessed or heard a firsthand reliable account of criminal misconduct in connection with work, of those surveyed:

- 21% had witnessed or knew firsthand of a person being sexually assaulted
- 16% had witnessed or knew firsthand of someone receiving obscene communications
- 17% had witnessed or knew firsthand of a person being stalked by someone from work
- 16% had witnessed or knew firsthand of a physical assault at work
- 16% knew firsthand of an instance of a person experiencing indecent exposure.

## BULLYING

### Experiencing and Witnessing Bullying

Of those surveyed 62% reported that they had been bullied at work in live performance. Sixty-three (63%) had witnessed another person being bullied. Bullying was defined in the survey as *when a person or a group of people behaves unreasonably and repeatedly towards a worker or a group of workers while at work, and the behaviour creates a risk to health and safety.*

When asked **where** they had experienced or witnessed the most notable instances of bullying in live performance:

- 27% said in subsidised theatre
- 20% said independent theatre
- 13% said musical theatre
- 14% said 'other' and most common amongst these were opera and places of training



When asked **who** the perpetrator was:

- 27% said another cast member
- 35% said the director
- 11% said a person in a technical capacity
- 11% said a member of the company
- 7% said 'other' and most common amongst these were conductor and teacher

## REPORTING AND COMPANY RESPONSES

### Policies and Procedures

When asked whether they were made aware of policies or processes for reporting and resolving allegations of sexual harassment, criminal misconduct or bullying:

- 58% said they were rarely or never made aware of any relevant policies or processes
- 17% said that sometimes they were made aware of any relevant policies or processes
- 11% reported that most of the time they were made aware
- 3% reported always being made aware of relevant policies or processes.

### Reporting

Of those who had experienced sexual harassment, criminal misconduct or bullying at work:

- 34% said they had reported or attempted to report the experience to the company
- 53% said they had never reported
- 14% did not answer

When respondents report these experiences, they report to a wide range of people including: Stage Manager (23%), Other employee on the production in a technical or crewing role (14%), Director (29%), Company Manager (39%), A member of the company's permanent staff responsible for employment matters (25%), A member of permanent artistic staff (17%), A member of permanent administration staff (21%), MEAA representative (9%)

40% of respondents say they have reported instances of experiencing or witnessing sexual harassment, criminal misconduct or bullying on more than one occasion.

60% of those who say they have witnessed sexual harassment do not report it.

The most common reasons for not reporting an experience of sexual harassment, criminal misconduct, or bullying include:

- Worried about professional repercussions (eg being 'difficult' or losing work) (43%)
- Didn't think anything could be done (36%)
- Worried reporting would worsen the situation (40%)
- Hoped it would resolve itself (14%)



## Response to Reports of Sexual Harassment

Of those who reported an incident of sexual harassment, criminal misconduct, or bullying, what was their experience of reporting:

- 47% said the situation was not handled well and for half of these respondents the situation got worse
- 25% said the situation was handled well but the situation was not resolved
- 11% said their report was handled well and the situation was resolved

Common issues raised by those who had made a report include:

- Complaint not taken seriously, acted upon or investigated
- Perpetrators not suffering any consequences as a result of their actions
- Companies not having sexual harassment policies and procedures in place

## GENERAL

Do performers think there is something about the creative process to consider here?

When asked whether the nature of an actor's work makes it difficult to know what is appropriate and what is not, approximately 48% agreed while 41% disagreed. Seventy-nine percent (79%) agreed that some people use the creative process as an excuse for sexual harassment or misconduct.

However, 78% say that bullying is not a natural or inevitable part of the creative process. Another 78% say that discussing boundaries and appropriate conduct in the rehearsal room will not impede the creative process.

The majority of respondents (at 34%) consider that sexual harassment and bullying seem to have stayed constant over time in the industry. Twenty-seven percent (27%) consider that instances of sexual harassment and bullying have decreased over the years but still consider it a serious problem.

### What to do about it?

- 80% say we need to empower cast and crew to speak out when they feel uncomfortable,
- 77% say having effective, easily accessible procedures and policies in place is crucial
- 71% say it is important to knowing who to report a problem to
- 70% say appropriate conduct should be discussed in the induction
- 2% say that recipients should grow thicker skin.