



Richard Evans AM and Eric Lassen
Live Performance Australia
Level 1, 15-17 Queen St
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By Email:

Dear Richard and Eric,

MEAA Equity has recently conducted a survey of performers currently working in the Australian commercial theatre industry on their experiences of call times.

This survey has confirmed the following concerns:

1. Miscalculation of actual hours worked;
2. Cultural issues and indirect discrimination;
3. Cost of makeup to performers;
4. Health and safety; and,
5. Respecting the half hour call.

The purpose of this letter is to make the LPA aware of these concerns that are consistently held by our members. As the representative body of live performance producers in Australia, we ask that you ensure your members are upholding the current standards set out in the *Performers Collective Agreement* (PCA)

Equity members will also be contacting their employers asking that they immediately address these issues to ensure that the standard set up by the PCA is upheld, and that call times are safe, fair and equitable for all performers.

These issues will also be the basis of priority claims which will seek to improve call times when bargaining commences next year for the updated PCA.

Miscalculation of actual hours worked

The results of the survey indicate that some LPA members are not properly accounting for all actual hours worked by cast.

21% of all respondents said they would 'always' exceed either their 8 daily credited hours, or 38 weekly credited hours, and over 30% said this would happen 'often'.

Frequently, the hair and makeup requirements of a show require performers to arrive at the theatre and start work before their scheduled call time.

As outlined in clause 28.3 of the PCA, all performance-related hair and makeup work must be counted towards the 'actual hours worked from the beginning of a call, rehearsal or performance'.

If a performer requires more time to meet the hair and makeup standard set by their company, then that performer cannot be penalised by having to do this in unpaid time.

Cultural issues and indirect discrimination

The results indicate that women, gender diverse people, and culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) are disproportionately affected by insufficient allocated time for preparation than their cisgender male counterparts.

25% of women and gender diverse people said they would 'always' exceed either their 8 daily credited hours, or 38 weekly credited hours, and over 33% said this would happen 'often'. This is contrasted with only 10% of cisgender men stating 'always', and 21% stating 'often'. Respondents have indicated that



these additional hours are not being recorded by their employer, and they are therefore not being paid for this time that exceeds ordinary hours.

28% of CARM-identifying people said they would 'always' exceed either their 8 daily credited hours, or 38 weekly credited hours, contrasted with 20% of non CARM-identifying people.

Over 20% of women and gender diverse respondents said they had been reprimanded for not having their hair and makeup to a high enough standard.

One respondent noted that the reason she hadn't personally been reprimanded was because she always arrived at the theatre 45 minutes to an hour early to do her hair and makeup preparation.

Respondents reported that there is a lack of consideration and knowledge for the specialised hair and skin care needs of CARM-identifying performers in comparison to their non CARM-identifying co-workers. MEAA members not only want to see greater diverse racial representation on our stages, but also greater diversity in our creative, hair and makeup teams and a culturally safe backstage where the needs of CARM-identifying performers are met.

Further, the disparity between the hours worked in unscheduled and unrecorded time by CARM identifying and women and gender diverse performers compared to non-CARM identifying and cisgender male performers indicates that there may be a pattern of indirect discrimination. MEAA and its members are keen to work with LPA and its members to prevent this from occurring.

Cost of makeup

When supplying their own necessary makeup, hair care and skin care supplies for a production, women and gender diverse people are paying a significantly higher cost than their male counterparts.

Over 80% of women and gender diverse people are spending greater than \$50 per month on show related makeup, hair care and skin care supplies for a production, and 47.1% of those performers are spending greater than \$100 per month.

In contrast, only 29% of cisgender men are paying greater than \$100 per month, and only 4% great than \$100.

While members understand that there is currently no contractual obligation to pay for a performer's general face makeup, proper makeup and skin care is a health and safety concern for performers. As performers are wearing their stage makeup for up to 9 shows a week, sometimes with multiple 'faces' in one performance, it is crucial that the makeup used and provided by the company is of a high enough standard that it is non-irritating to their skin.

Health and safety

The results indicate that many performers are not provided sufficient time to safely warm up – both physically and vocally –within their performance call time.

For vocal warmups, 47.2% of respondents said they had less than 5 minutes scheduled, and for physical warmups, 38.5% of respondents said they had less than 5 minutes scheduled.

Additionally, 36.7% of respondents said their warmup times were 'often' cut short by the company for spacing, rehearsing, notes or other show-related reasons.

Whilst warmup requirements vary from show to show, providing sufficient warm up time is critical to mitigating and controlling injury risks.

Survey respondents reported that, where warm up times were insufficient, performers were compelled to undertake this in unscheduled time.



As has been previously discussed between LPA and MEAA, MEAA members have instructed that they are wanting to implement a more organised system of health and safety representatives as per the Fair Work Act and the PCA.

MEAA would like to work further with LPA to assist producers in helping to set up a more organised system and to ensure that performers receive adequate warmups before performances and rehearsals to protect performer health and safety and the longevity of a production.

Respecting the half hour call

The half hour pre-show call is 'performers' time', and critical to the physical and mental preparation a performer must undertake, contributing to the psycho-social safety of a production.

Equity members have increasingly reported that this time is being taken up by creative teams for notes and other company business, causing unnecessary additional stress to performers, eroding the ability to prepare, and compelling them to push other duties into unscheduled time.

Performers will be asking their employers to respect the half hour pre-show call.

We look forward to discussing these issues further with you and your members over the coming months.

Sincerely,

Equity member signatures