



Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga | The New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC) is committed to supporting and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity within the Aotearoa screen sector.

In 2019, the NZFC commissioned Kudos Organisational Dynamics Ltd to conduct a survey on Gender, Diversity and Inclusion. More than 800 New Zealanders representing diverse groups who principally work in the production of New Zealand film and television participated in the survey. *Kua Kōrero Kua Rongo | Being Heard* is an independent report authored by Australian journalist Sandy George that analyses the results of this survey.

A careful process was followed to design the survey, collate responses, and analyse data. COVID-19 caused a lot of disruption to the NZFC work programme, including the publication of this report. However, the NZFC has always been committed to presenting this report to the industry and the public as it is a valuable snapshot of the screen industry and many of the issues identified are still relevant in a post-COVID 19 world.

The NZFC has received valuable feedback from the industry on the design of the survey and the report. The NZFC acknowledges that the term ‘people of colour’ used in the survey and report is not an appropriate term to describe Māori. We thank the industry for this feedback and will ensure this is addressed in future research and surveys that are undertaken in this space.

Key findings from the report contributed to the development of [He Ara Whakaurunga Kanorau | NZFC Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#), released in June 2022. Under the Strategy, the NZFC will be implementing initiatives that seek to address the issues highlighted in the report. The NZFC will conduct a biennial Diversity and Inclusion survey to gain ongoing insight into the barriers faced by the Aotearoa screen sector, track progress and prioritise areas for improvement.

The NZFC looks forward to working in partnership with the industry to pave the way for a more inclusive screen sector through the initiatives outlined in He Ara Whakaurunga Kanorau | Diversity and Inclusion Strategy.

Mladen Ivancic
Acting Chief Executive

KUA KÖRERO KUA RONGO BEING HEARD

A report on a 2019 survey on **gender, diversity,**
and **inclusion** in the Aotearoa New Zealand
screen industry

KUA KŌRERO KUA RONGO

WHIRIA TE KUPU KI TE TIKA E WHAIMANA
ANŌ AI TE HERENGA TĀNGATA

BEING HEARD

RESPECTED, INCLUDED AND EMPOWERED

A report on a 2019 survey on gender, diversity,
and inclusion in the Aotearoa New Zealand
screen industry.

This report includes narratives that
describe experiences of discrimination, harassment,
sexual assault and bullying. It includes accounts
of racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia
and transphobia.



The survey was conducted by
Kudos Organisational Dynamics on behalf
of the New Zealand Film Commission.

"We have this survey because we have to own up to the racism, sexism and exclusion that exists in our Country and it's expressed in this industry, Sadly."

WOMAN

"If they (male producers) don't make a sexual advance while working alone with me, they will make inappropriate comments about my appearance/sexuality."

WOMAN, LGBTQIA+, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE, NEURODIVERSE

"Diversity and representation needs to happen at the top. Executives, managers, HODs, Boards and other decision makers must reflect Aotearoa's diverse society. Meaningful change will only happen when our production companies, funding bodies and screen organisations truly represent their constituencies. Representation matters not only in front of and behind the camera – but also who makes policy and controls the purse strings."

WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR

"I'd like to see it reach a point where we don't need to count, set quotas, operate schemes to support diversity, because it happens naturally — but I wanted that when I started in the industry 40 years ago and haven't seen much evidence to suggest it'll happen."

SURVEY RESPONDENT WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

"There is an INCREDIBLE lack of understanding in people as to the effect homophobic slurs or language can have on people in workplace, especially as people often don't want their language policed, (even though it's really just basic respect) and also tend to believe that they aren't doing anything wrong by using homophobic and/or racist language."

GENDER DIVERSE, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

"Overall, it's the desire to tell stories that explore a different perspective, and to give voice to those who seldom get to see themselves on screen. On the daily – this industry is full of so many wonderful people. I'm not gonna let some crappy statistics or a few jerks here and there put me off!"

WOMAN, LGBTQIA+

"Base decisions on the merits of a project, is it worthy, will it grow the industry providing work and opportunities, not what colour someone is, where they are from and how they choose to use their junk."

MAN

Tirohanga Whānui

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A diverse group of 809 New Zealanders completed the survey. Many responses describe experiences of disrespect, discrimination, and exclusion in the New Zealand screen industry. The real value of this research is that it hands the microphone to those who experience these issues, providing a rare chance to understand the personal and professional toll.

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Approximately 70% of the total sample are New Zealand European/Pākehā. Two and a half times more women than men filled out the survey. Almost six out of 10 of all respondents identified with at least one of eight diverse groups selected by the researchers. The biggest groups were LGBTQIA+, people with a mental health issue or disability, and people of colour – 16-18% of the total sample identified with each of these groups.

PREFACE: POWER UNDERPINS WORK PRACTICES

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A high level of bullying by those in power is clearly identified in the survey and questions about who holds power, how power is wielded and how it permeates the atmosphere underpins many of the negative comments about the work environment. An absence of accountability is raised repeatedly.

1. FOCUSING IN ON WOMEN

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Women in the New Zealand screen industry report high levels of marginalisation and unfair treatment. The data shows they experience negative situations more often than men, often get criticised for acting assertively even when in positions of authority, have trouble getting behind-the-camera roles unless the roles are perceived as “female” and are often subjected to sexist comments, stereotyping and demeaning gender-based attitudes. They report being very negatively impacted when they become parents and are unhappy with how girls and women are depicted on screen.

2. FOCUSING IN ON MĀORI

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Māori often mention that they are not getting a fair share of production funding to tell their own stories. They want more input on what Māori content gets made generally and more control on how it is made. At the individual level, they are much more likely to be subject to negativity than other screen industry personnel. Many of the concerns expressed by Māori women aren't much different to those of non-Māori women, but they point out that they have the additional burden of racism.

3. FOCUSING IN ON MINORITY GROUPS

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Many who identify with minority groups say they are constantly reminded in negative and disrespectful ways that they are different. They are excluded and discriminated against at high rates – and expect less fairness, equality and support. The more minority groups that someone identifies with, the worse they are treated. A positive is that optimism about the future exists within these groups.

4. FACTORS TO KEEP IN MIND**43****4.1 Solutions must be all encompassing and bespoke**

There is no one-size-fits-all solution to combat discrimination and exclusion. To create positive, permanent change, the whole industry has to get on board, including the powerful and those with lived experience of marginalisation.

4.2 Quotas are unpopular; hiring on merit is ill advised

Quotas and targets aren't favoured because of concerns that they go against industry practice and people will get jobs beyond their capability – something that's offensive to some. Many favour hiring on merit without recognising that merit can only develop if someone gets opportunity and experience.

4.3 Gruelling hours and tight budgets are widespread

Many in the industry experience very high levels of stress due to long hours, poor conditions, tight budgets and the rollercoaster ride of financial survival. This works against implementing change but change is likely to benefit all.

4.4 Generational change will bring diversity

Society is becoming more gender diverse and more ethnically mixed. This bleeds into the screen industry and could be accelerated.

4.5 Funding methodology must be part of any strategy

Content drives the industry and cannot be left out of any discussion. Respondents weren't directly asked for input on funding policy and decision making but many volunteered their opinions. Many are unclear on the funding criteria of the agencies.

I Ähwa Aro Mai Tolerated

“It is incredibly toxic for everyone and no other industry would tolerate some of the behaviours that are tolerated in film, but because film making has high stress, bad behaviour is **tolerated** and more often than not brushed over as “stress” when it isn’t, it is bad behaviour.”

MAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

Hei Maunutanga Introduction

This report examines the results of a survey of people who principally work in the production of New Zealand film and television. The research was conducted in 2019 and was designed to focus on gender, diversity, and inclusion. The survey's introduction stated that the aim was to take "a snapshot of people's experiences in the screen industry to assist us to identify people's needs and create a benchmark against which to measure progress in future years".

EXPERIENCE OF PARTICIPANTS



Five points about the research deserve emphasis.

1. A significant 809 New Zealanders responded to the survey and within this cohort there is considerable diversity.

In fact, the researchers go further: they say diversity is the mainstream in this group. How they come to this conclusion is explained in the next section. They also say that the level of diversity indicates that the industry as a whole is diverse.

2. Disrespect, discrimination, and exclusion exists in the New Zealand screen industry.

Data has been generated about people's experiences, many aspects of fairness and equality, how workplaces are regarded and so on. It is the findings around how poorly certain individuals and minorities are treated that stand out the most.

3. The real value of the research is that it hands the microphone to those most affected by discriminatory behaviour, including women, people of colour (POC), LGBTQIA+ people and those with a mental health issue or disability.

The questionnaire included multiple choice and yes-or-no questions, and statements that respondents had to rate according to their level of agreement. It also invited people to write from their own experiences and it is in these 90,000 words of real-life first-person narrative¹ that the personal and professional toll of discrimination and exclusion is starkly and emotionally conveyed.

Young women speak of unacceptable actions and attitudes towards them or aimed at other women and of being powerless to do anything about what's happening because the perpetrators are senior to them. People relay stories of being belittled on set. Māori talk of fighting for equality for years and getting nowhere.

Production is costly and risky and stressful, tight budgets leave little room for error and people are expected to hit the ground running. These are perfect conditions for a closed shop mentality, that is, the exclusion of newcomers and the sidelining of individual needs.

It is not known whether discrimination and exclusion in the New Zealand screen industry is worse than that in other like industries around the world – or in New Zealand society generally. While similar studies exist, they are not similar enough for proper comparisons.

4. A great majority of respondents are delighted to be in the industry.

In answer to the question “What inspires you and keeps you going in the industry?” a large proportion of people say they have an irrepressible desire to collaborate creatively on stories that grab and hold audiences and have a strong connection to New Zealand people and life. There is admiration for the creativity, talent, enthusiasm and energy of colleagues and the camaraderie of, as one respondent said, “making the seemingly impossible happen daily”.

Being grateful to be part of a highly creative and exciting industry and experiencing discrimination are not mutually exclusive. And having a group that feels supported to excel does not negate the experience of those who don't feel that way.

It would be surprising if someone did not respond sympathetically to the despair and the anger and frustration that is so clearly felt. How much to accentuate the negative was an ongoing question during the writing of this report.

¹ Comments prompted by the survey have not been edited in any way.

5. How power is wielded has a major impact on how the industry operates and recognising this is central to creating effective change.

Any report of a comprehensive survey is just one interpretation of the results. A dominant theme is how those who hold and wield power nearly always seem to lurk in the frame – and this is spelled out more in the upcoming preface. There is a lot of data on the extent to which New Zealand workplaces and work situations meet the ambitions of the members of different minority groups, and someone else may have chosen to drill down into this for example.

The COVID-19 pandemic began creating havoc several months after the survey deadline passed. It led to productions shutting down, unemployment, business closures and uncertainty across the globe. Because the danger is still present, the future remains unpredictable and the extent of the long-term fallout unknowable. Adapting is a priority generally. Adapting in a way that reshapes the screen industry to address criticisms makes good sense.

New Zealand and the world are undergoing change that is all tangled up in diversity and inclusion. Think #metoo and #blacklivesmatter.

In the case of New Zealand's production sector and other small national industries supported by public money, it is easy to argue that there is a responsibility to reflect on society, and maybe even help change it for the better.

For those with a more commercial point of view about the film and television industry, it is a business that depends on content tapping into the zeitgeist and, as some argue, diversity feeds creativity and creativity is at the heart of commercial and cultural success.

Sandy George

High-level graphs were supplied by Kudos. The NZFC have created some graphs that demonstrate specific data.

Ngā Aronga Nui

Definitions

Some of the terms used in this report are defined below, in line with the survey.

DISCRIMINATION

The process of treating a person in a way that disadvantages them, not due to their individual characteristics but because they belong to a particular group.

BULLYING

Repeated and unreasonable behaviour directed towards an individual or a group of people that can cause physical or mental harm. Bullying can be physical, verbal, psychological or social. This may include victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening a person.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Diversity refers to the mix of people within a community. Inclusion refers to the way this mix of people work together, regard and treat each other.

GENDER DIVERSE

A gender diverse person does not see themselves as just male or just female. All respondents were asked if they were gender diverse, a woman or a man. Any references to either, in the report, are based on self-identification.

INTERSECTIONALITY

A term coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw to describe the interconnected nature of social categorisations such as race, class, and gender, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

LGBTQIA+

This term is not used by all individuals, but it is used here (imperfectly) to stand in for: lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, agender, takatāpui and all other minority and indigenous sexualities, gender identities and sexes.

MARGINALISATION

The process of treating a person or a group of people in a way that puts them in a secondary position and makes them peripheral to the main action.

MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

A mental illness, a mental disability, or a period of compromised mental health. (eg depression, bipolar, a psychotic episode).

MINORITY GROUPS

Minority groups, in this survey, contain people whose sexual preference, gender, skin colour, religion, or physical or mental characteristics make it possible to classify them as a sub-group of the overall group. Any references to minority groups in this report are based on self-identification.

NEURODIVERGENT/NEURODIVERSE

Neurodivergent/neurodiverse (eg dyspraxia, dyslexia, ADHD, autism spectrum, Tourette's syndrome.)

Mō te tatauranga me ngā kaiurupare

About the survey and the respondents

Researchers of the independent research organisation Kudos Organisational Dynamics (Kudos) undertook the Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion in the Screen Industry Survey in the second half of 2019 on behalf of the New Zealand Film Commission (NZFC).

To properly contextualise the findings – and this report – it is necessary to know more about the derivation of the survey and who responded.

The survey was initially introduced by the NZFC to examine, mostly, gender inequality in the screen industry, but in the process of workshopping and creating the questionnaire the scope evolved to also embrace diversity and intersectionality.

Wide participation was invited as part of the August 2019 recruitment of respondents, via the mailing lists of the NZFC and other special interest groups. While anyone and everyone was invited to take part, the call-out reached more females than males, in part because of Women in Film and Television New Zealand's (WIFT NZ) enthusiasm for pushing the survey out to members.

During the research development, Kudos and the NZFC discussed whether the survey should be limited to specific demographics.

To provide comparative data and encourage inclusivity, the survey was open to everyone who wished to participate.

Industry organisations and guilds also helped spread the word about the existence of the survey – and individuals were encouraged to pass it on to others too. An estimated 2,000 people heard about the research.

Kudos added: "This survey is a listening exercise being conducted by the NZFC as part of its wider research and discussion around gender, diversity and inclusion in the screen industry. We want to understand your experience and hear your voice."

Two and a half times more women than men took part

511 women and 200 men completed the survey. 171 people said WIFT NZ was their principal body and this makes up 21% of the respondents.

Of all respondents, 46% come from Auckland and 35% from Wellington. Many from regional centres and the South Island used the survey as an opportunity to discuss geographical marginalisation.

30% of respondents were aged 20-29, 20% aged 31-39 and 30% aged 40-59.

About 70% of respondents are New Zealand European/Pākehā

By ethnicity the breakdown is New Zealand European/Pākehā (72%), Māori (12%), Pacific Peoples (4%), European – non-Kiwi (13%), Asian (11%) and other (5%) – 2% did not answer. Figures add up to more than 100% because it was possible to nominate multiple ethnicities.

In terms of employment, the biggest groups represented are screenwriters (33%), directors (26%), producers (25%), students/teachers/ education providers in filmmaking or related (14%), actors (13%), production (13%), cinematographers/ camera (10%) and VFX (10%).

22% of the sample advised they were employed outside of the industry and the comments indicate that some – but not a large number – left out of frustration.

The survey respected the privacy of those taking part

Because the aim of the survey was to investigate gender, diversity and inclusion in the New Zealand screen industry via the personal experiences and attitudes of those who work within it, a layer of personal information was sought. Normally surveys don't pry so deeply into issues of sexuality, ethnicity, mental diversity

or disability, but for the sake of the study, it was necessary to understand just how intersectional each diverse sub-group really is. Respondents had every right to opt out of the questionnaire, just as they had the right, when initially invited, to opt in.

According to Kudos, the Research Association of New Zealand Code of Practice and the overarching Privacy Act were adhered to.

Results are aggregated and no identifying data (names, places of employment etc) were singled out. The verbatim comments are ascribed to a gender, and any other identity such as ethnicity to protect the anonymity of respondents and encourage their frank answers.

One section of the survey, which was conducted online, was viewable by women only. This section asked those who identify as women to rank their top five from a list of potential strategies that could assist the promotion of the role of women in the screen industry.

Those surveyed are very diverse

The eventual mix of responses generated a sample that is characterised by diversity.

As Duncan Stuart from Kudos put it², there is a tendency to look for mean scores and average respondents in surveys and “this approach was diametrically opposed to the core theme of this particular study”. In his view, the correct way to study the data is to look not for a mainstream story, but to follow the experiences of people in the smaller streams, such as LGBTQIA+ people or people of colour. They face particular challenges and have particular stories.

The decision was made to focus on eight particular minority groups in the questionnaire – in addition to whether someone was male or female. Respondents nominated as many identities as they wanted. Some opted for as many as six groups.

² This information is contained in an email exchange between Duncan Stuart and the author of this report.

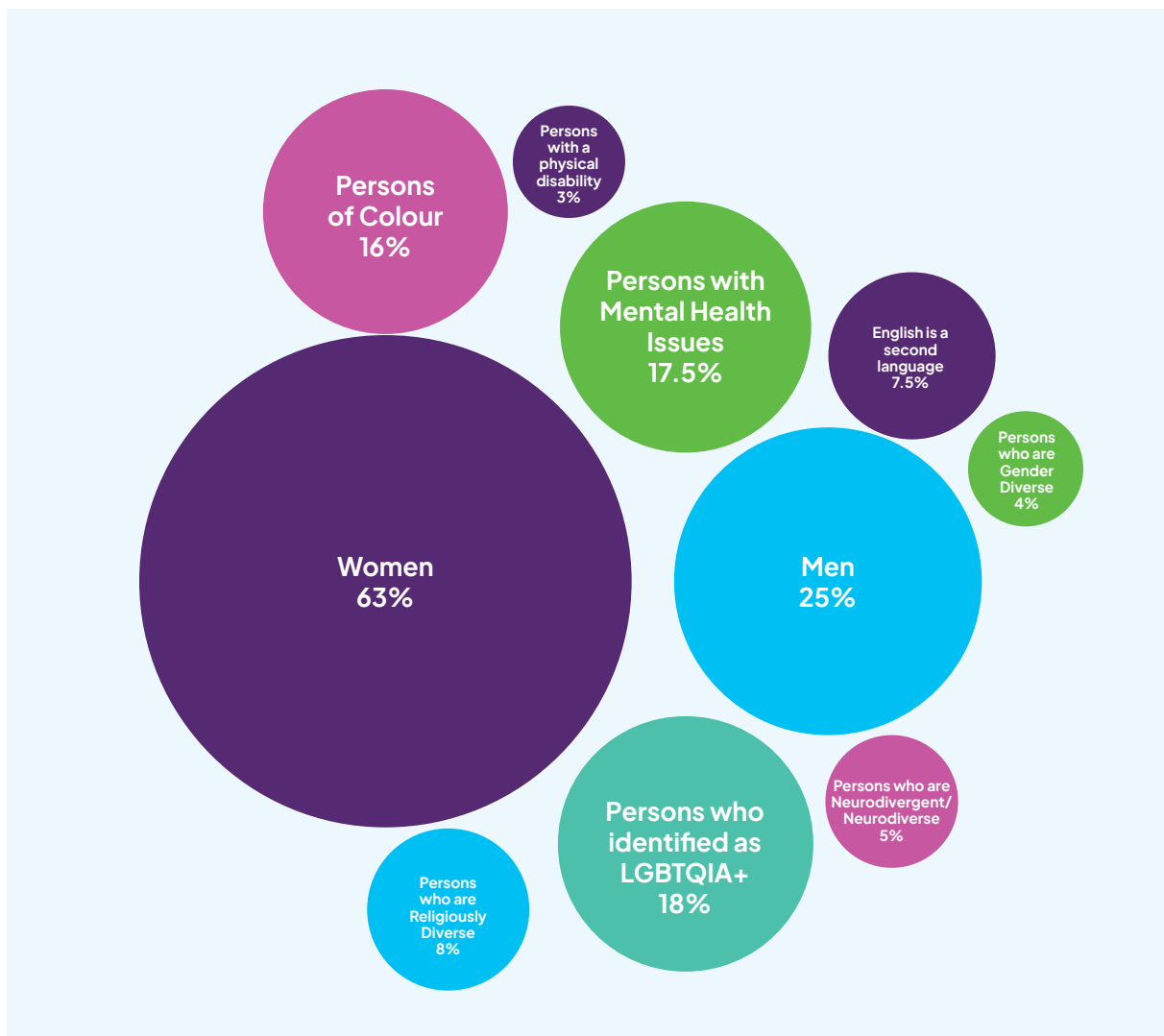


Figure 1. The percentage of each group that participated in the survey.

Figure 1 shows the numbers in each group in percentage form: women 63% (511); men 25% (200); LGBTQIA+ 18% (147); persons with a mental health issue 17.5% (142); people of colour 16% (127); persons who are religiously diverse 8% (68); persons for whom English is a second language 7.5% (61); persons who are neurodivergent/neurodiverse 5% (37); persons who are gender diverse 4% (31); and persons with a physical disability 3% (21).

The Kudos researchers assert that almost six out of 10 respondents could be described as diverse. As Kudos put it: “they are not ‘mainstream’ but (have) some unique mix of sexual preference, ethnicity, experience with mental or physical disability and possible deeply held religious belief” ³.

3 This quote is from a PowerPoint presentation by Kudos to the NZFC. The tagline used for the presentation was “There is no such thing as the average person.”

	LGBTQIA+	Gender Diverse	Person of colour (POC)	Woman in the screen industry	Man in the screen industry	Person with a Physical disability	Person with a mental health disability	Neurodivergent neurodiverse	Person for whom English is a second language	Religiously diverse	Other	None of the above
LGBTQIA+	147	84%	28%	18%	14%	43%	39%	53%	15%	30%	18%	-
Gender Diverse	18%	30	6%	4%	3%	29%	13%	24%	8%	12%	9%	-
Person of colour (POC)	24%	23%	127	20%	11%	19%	24%	18%	36%	25%	25%	-
Woman in the screen industry	62%	58%	79%	511	1%	76%	63%	66%	64%	61%	55%	-
Man in the screen industry	19%	16%	17%	0%	200	24%	23%	18%	28%	32%	16%	-
Person with a Physical disability	6%	19%	3%	3%	3%	21	8%	18%	5%	6%	0%	-
Person with a mental health disability	38%	61%	28%	18%	17%	57%	142	47%	16%	38%	16%	-
Neurodivergent neurodiverse	14%	29%	6%	5%	4%	33%	13%	37	5%	14%	0%	-
Person for whom English is a second language	6%	16%	17%	8%	9%	14%	7%	8%	61	13%	20%	-
Religiously diverse	14%	26%	13%	8%	11%	19%	18%	26%	15%	68	9%	-
Other	5%	13%	9%	5%	4%	0%	5%	0%	15%	6%	44	-
None of the above	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23
Number in Each Group	147	30	127	511	200	21	142	37	61	68	44	23

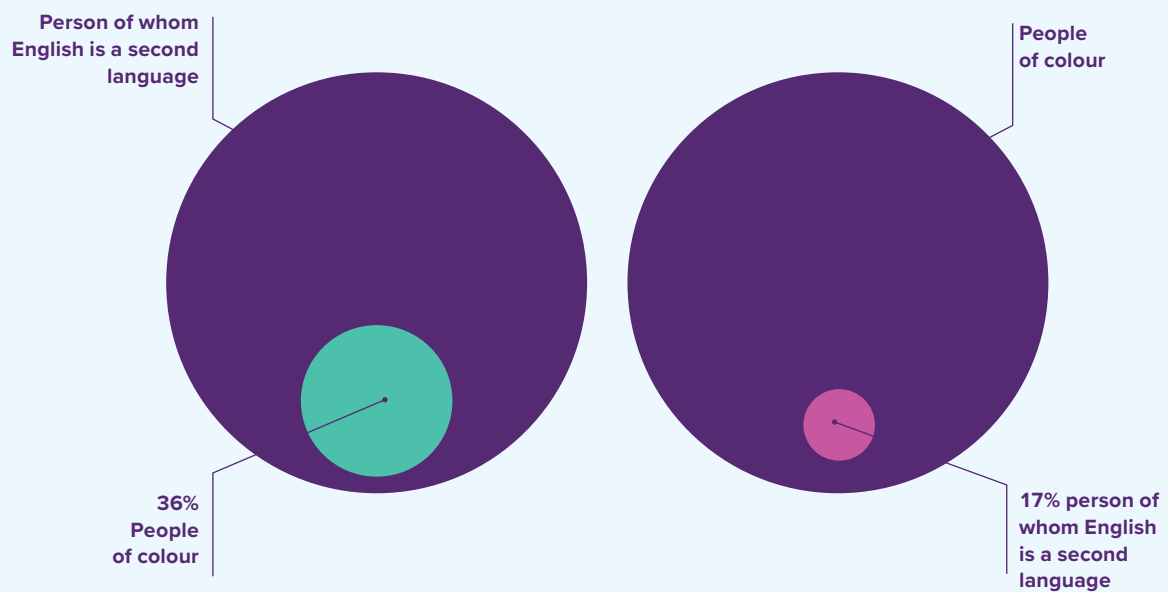


Figure 2. The intersections between minority groups.

Kudos makes this claim based on two findings. Firstly, 50% of all respondents identified with more than one group. Secondly, an additional 6% only identify either as LGBTQIA+ or as gender diverse, both of which are diverse groups. So, the “almost six out of 10” figure comes from adding the base 50% who identify with two or more groups to those 6% who don’t identify as male or female.

The researchers make much of the fact that the level of diversity in the sample means that diversity is the mainstream in the sample.

They also say that even allowing for non-responses, the data shows that there is a significant level of diversity across the whole screen sector.

Figure 2 examines the intersections between minorities. By way of example, 36% of those who said that English is a second language to them, also self-identify as a person of colour, and to 17% of the people of colour, English is a second language.

As stated, the whole point of the research was to hear from a range of people in the screen industry about their work experiences, not to ascertain the average experience of the average person – if there is such a person.

WOMEN AND MEN AND HOW THEY IDENTIFY

50% of the women surveyed identified only as female – whereas 58% of the men identified only as male.

20% of the women said they were also a person of colour, 18% were LGBTQIA+ and 18% had a mental health issue. Fifteen women identified with all of these groups compared to three men.

17% of men said they had a mental health issue, 14% were LGBTQIA+, 11% were religiously diverse and 11% were a person of colour.

Hei Whakataki: Nā te mananui te ahunganui

Preface: power underpins work practices

Hierarchies are generally deemed necessary in the workplace to ensure that work gets done. Whether on set or at a business or government agency, all jobs within a hierarchy come with a level of status and sanctioned power. Producers and CEOs have significant power. Heads of department have an amount in line with their responsibilities. Always there are people with little.

But irrespective of where power sits traditionally or officially, in practice it can be wielded with compassion or coercion. Some do not use the power at their disposal; others can and do overstep the boundaries of theirs because of entrenched fiefdoms, personality, connections, traditions, or other reasons.

The word “power” appears about 100 times in the 140 pages of single-spaced comments generated by the survey. Clearly, how power is exercised is very relevant to discussions about gender, diversity and inclusion.

“Just ask every producer, boss, person in charge to do a tally up of the people who work below them, and if they are predominately young, male and Pākehā, ask themselves why that might be, and what they can do to change it.”

■ WOMAN

“Most commonly I see men either intentionally or unintentionally being overly and unnecessarily domineering, arrogant and aggressive in work situations. In my opinion this creates a power imbalance and a hostile work environment where, regardless of your sex, gender identity, race or any other identity, if you are not able to play their power games you will effectively be ignored and overlooked.”

■ MAN

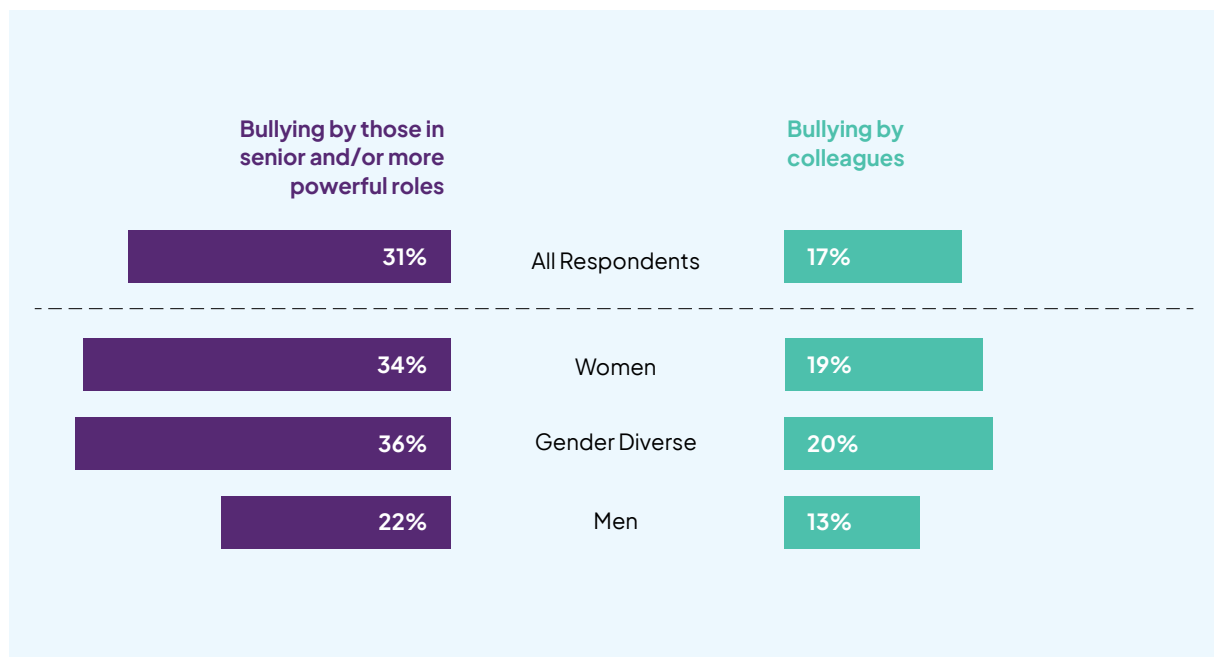


Figure 3. This graph shows the results of bullying classified by gender.

Respondents were asked whether they had experienced 10 types of negative situations devised by the researchers. Two of these situations were “bullying by those in senior and/or more powerful roles” and “bullying by colleagues.” Figures 3 and 4 demonstrate the destructive potential of power through the prism of bullying. Across the whole sample, one in three people were bullied “by those in senior and/or more powerful roles” but only one in six “by colleagues”. And whichever group is honed in on, this top-down bullying is more prevalent. In some circumstances the differential is two and a half times.

These statistics do not reflect well on those who have power in the New Zealand screen industry.

Stepping back and looking at the broad picture, those who hold power, how power is wielded and how power permeates the atmosphere, underpins many of the negative comments about the work environment.

“There is an ingrained sense of entitlement and bullying in some areas of the industry – particular from people in higher positions such as producers, line producers, etc. People in entry-level positions (runners, etc) can be worn down immediately upon entering the industry by toxic superiors and bosses. It is a big problem. It should not be the norm.”

■ **MAN**

The data does not show that the screen industry is “incredibly toxic for everyone” but the graphs show that the proportion of people reporting that they have been put into a range of uncomfortable situations is significant.

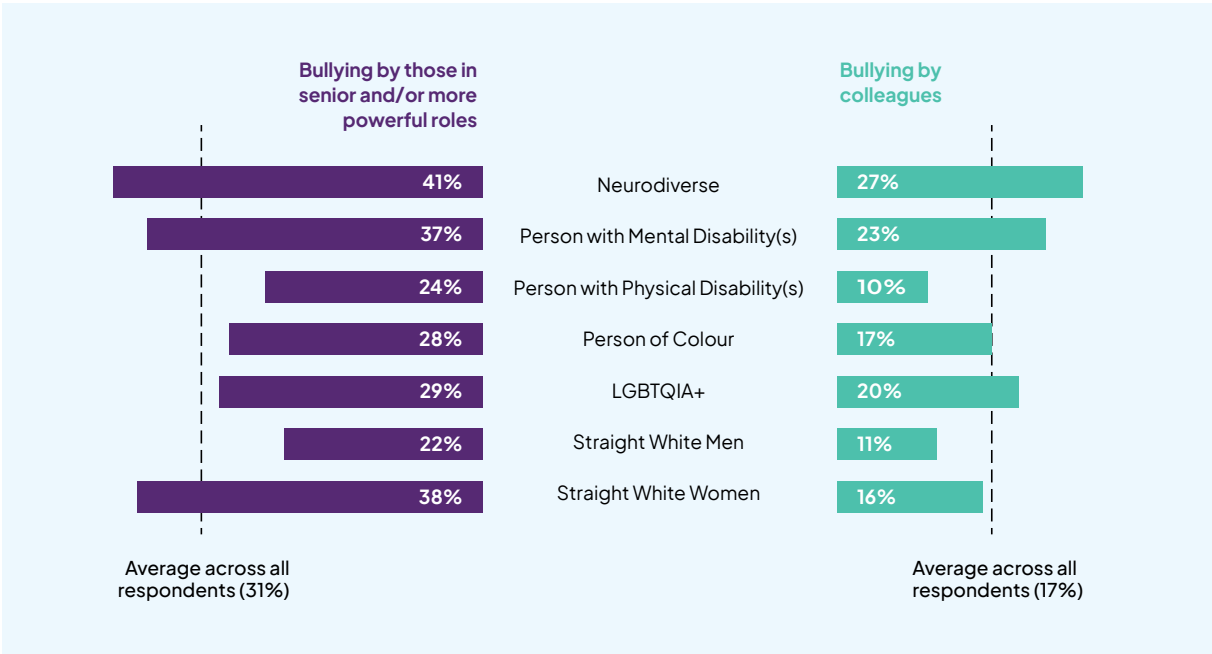


Figure 4. This graph shows the results of bullying classified by intersectional groups.

Most people are not being held accountable

A high level of annoyance comes through the comments on how rarely anyone is held to account. Often no-one actually even complains, he or she might know it is useless, not have the confidence to do so, or fear being labelled a troublemaker. When concerns are flagged, say respondents, action is rarely taken, especially if the perpetrators are senior.

“Changes I would like to see are those people that flaunt any rules, bigotries, intolerances named and shamed. I am tired of the few ruining it for the many and this needs to stop.”

■ WOMAN

“If you complain about work-place bullying, you’re told you’re not the first or the last person to be bullied by an individual and it’ll pass.”

■ WOMAN

“It is often a person with many years experience who takes advantage of their superiority to make comments that are unacceptable. These often go un-checked because of frequency and fatigue associated with calling them out.”

■ GENDER DIVERSE, LGBTQIA+, ENGLISH IS A SECOND LANGUAGE

One woman reports feeling bullied by a producer who, when confronted, fired her. Another says the rhetoric around the way people are excused is appalling. “He’s a nice guy really/that’s just the way it is,” is given as an example. Another describes a company head she once knew as being “a notorious womaniser and we all knew it”.

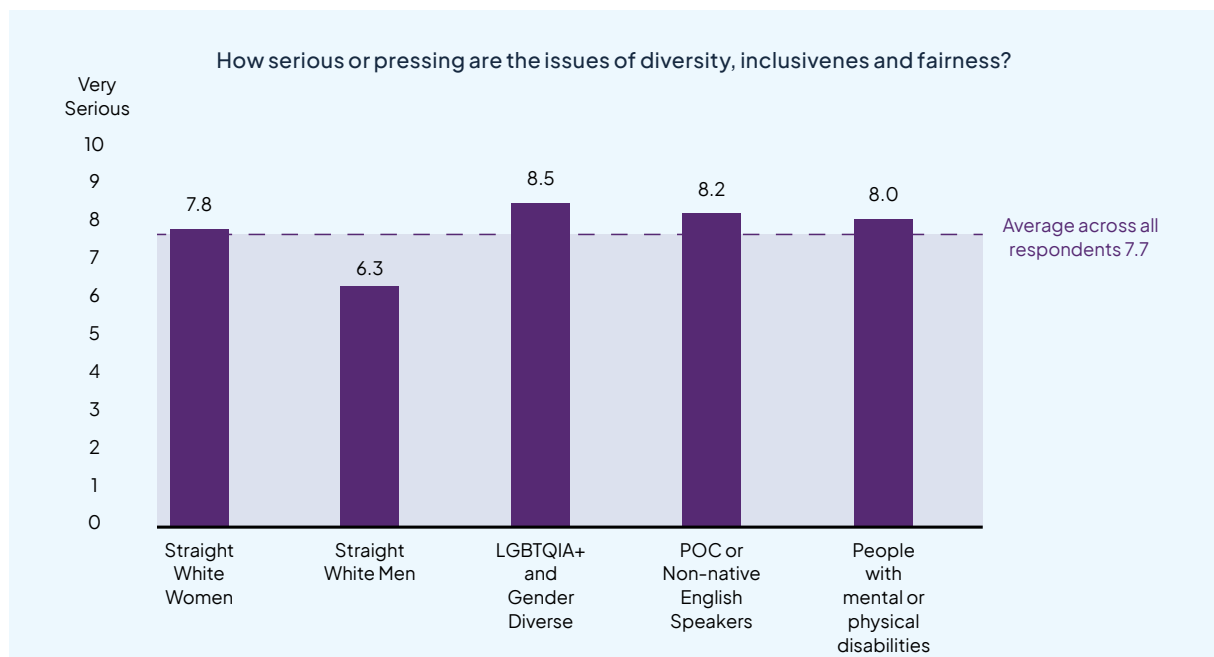


Figure 5. Respondents were asked how seriously they regarded issues such as diversity, inclusiveness and fairness.

Power can have a ripple effect

Those who have power can use it – consciously or not – to create an atmosphere that permeates the entire work environment. It is clear from the survey results that it is not uncommon for that atmosphere to work against inclusion.

One respondent spells out how the pecking order often found on sets can be disastrous for female directors. In this respondent's opinion, the Director of Photography's attitude creates the overall vibe and if he – because it usually is a he – doesn't have respect for the director it ripples down through the crew. It is insidious, it has been the tradition for so long that people have been conditioned to accept it, and it is enabled by the producer. Seldom does anyone speak up because everyone is trying to carve out their own space and not jeopardise future employment.

A female writer/director tells of getting a trusted male colleague on board and pretending he was co-director just so she could get the uncooperative all-male key crew to do what she

wanted via him. It was the easiest way to meet the deadline. Similar stories were told.

“... We need to overhaul the “system” or “pathway” currently in place for how to be a successful creator – women and people of colour and many other minorities DO NOT subscribe to the pre-decided way of working or succeeding. Until we do away with a system that only benefits some (because it was created BY that “some”) and actively keeps out others – that is to say broaden the minds of funders, networks, training institutions, etc – we will continue to see minorities and women kept out of the industry. I have come up against so many walls and “no’s” in this industry because I have a different way of working, and it wasn’t until a funding body took a huge punt on me only because I had trustworthy back-up (white men known to them!) did they realise I’m actually worth working with. It’s really indicative of how this industry functions that I had to team up with a group of white men to be taken seriously as a creator.”

■ WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+

Many comments indicate that power and how it is exercised ripples through permanent workplaces just as it does on set. Although it is not something that this report focuses on, there is considerable detail about workplaces in the survey findings.

The data shows that workplaces are comparatively good at accepting and supporting people of colour. That said, 20% or one in five people believe acceptance is absolutely or somewhat lacking – or patchy. The equivalent percentage for women is 27%.

The research points to considerable inconsistency between companies and finds that staff rate at least one third of them poorly. Those with 11-20 employees best met staff needs. Those with 200+ performed least well and 17% of the overall sample worked in such companies. The quality of the management has to be an influence.

“I work in a company that HOD’s 3/49 are female. VFX Supervisors 1/24 are female. Leads 16/202 are female. Company Directors are male Producers 4/12 are female. Production Managers and Department Production Managers 73/133 are female.”

■ WOMAN

“I work in a production office where I am the only female employee. I am the most junior, the most recent hire, and the most expendable. We share an office where my superiors make offhand sexist/homophobic/racist/xenophobic/ableist comments constantly. I do not feel like I am in a place to comment on this, or to ask them to stop, because it is a very small company and it would make my position very difficult. However it is getting so bad that I debate quitting every day I am at work, but due to the small number of consistently paying roles in this industry for women at my level I am staying here for the meanwhile. I resort to putting in earphones whenever their ‘banter’ or offensive commentary gets too bad.”

■ WOMAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

“There’s an insidious boys club in the higher levels of my organisation that consistently self protects and promotes.”

■ WOMAN

“I think all companies should be held accountable for lack of representation of genders and cultures that are clearly part of the community. There should be opportunities for childcare and support at all levels, to keep women in the workforce. There should also be active positive bias to ensure a diverse range of people are making shows, especially when the shows’ content represents this diversity.”

■ WOMAN

The groups who take lack of fairness, equality and support most seriously – some are shown above in Figure 5 – are the groups who most experience unfairness and inequality.

Figure 5 shows that seriousness is rated 7.7 out of 10 across the board. This compares to: an 8.5 rating from LGBTQIA+ and gender diverse people; 8.2 from people of colour combined with people for whom English is a second language; and 8 from people with a mental health issue and people with a physical disability.

Straight white men scored 6.3, meaning they were least concerned about the issues. While the research does not try to identify who holds the roles in the screen industry that come with the power to make change, it is safe to assume that straight white men would be well represented.

WARNERMEDIA LEADS THE WAY

There are some strong indications that improving diversity and inclusion in the screen industry has positive outcomes for business. When launching its first-ever annual report into diversity and inclusion in 2019⁴, head of the mass media and entertainment conglomerate WarnerMedia said the kind of change being implemented was creatively and commercially good for its content.

WarnerMedia employs tens of thousands of people. The 70-page document provided broad race and gender details about the corporate workforce in its global and US operations and about the people who work on content. The report highlighted a few standout shows, including *Crazy Rich Asians*, profiled many employees, and included details of community and training programs.

John Stankey, president and chief operating officer of AT&T and CEO of WarnerMedia, said this: “Diverse content is what connects both creatively and commercially with our audiences and we know the only way we can put the best content out there is to not only have the most diverse and inclusive workforce but to work with the most diverse and inclusive group of stakeholders.”

There is an overwhelming amount of data, commentary, academic and other reports about how Hollywood, the commercial mecca of filmmakers, is dealing with diversity and inclusion.

The Deadline article *Film & TV Diversity: What Changed In 2019 And What’s Next In 2020*, is a report card on progress in front of the camera, in the three key creative roles behind the camera, at awards ceremonies and elsewhere⁵.

KEY OBSERVATIONS

A top-down approach has to be part of any attempt to improve diversity and inclusion in the New Zealand screen industry because of the central role of power in successfully bringing about change.

Industry leaders and others with power need to be fully aware of the debilitating effects of discrimination and exclusion and its consequences; believe that change is necessary and that it will have positive value for everybody in the long run; and want to help drive a fundamental shift in attitudes.

Every company is different so each one needs its own bespoke plan, but rigorous self-assessment and serious intent has to be at the heart of every plan. Ongoing features might include careful tracking, consultations with staff on needs and barriers, ambitious and carefully targeted initiatives and a strategy for keeping the foot on the accelerator

The Menemene Tamu Smile more

“I am made constantly aware that males can behave in a certain way and be celebrated but if a woman is direct she is deemed difficult and is told to **smile more** and be nice. Men are celebrated and promoted for this behavior but women are made to feel small and are told to fall in line.”

WOMAN



Kia hāngai i tō te wahine

Focusing in on women

There are more women than men in New Zealand⁶. Yet the findings show that women are often pushed to the periphery of the screen industry because of how they are regarded and treated.

When thinking about the responses from the women surveyed, keep in mind that half of these women also identify with at least one diverse group, as explained previously.

In Figure 6 on the next page, the degree to which women experience negative scenarios in their current work situation is shown. In all 10 scenarios except one, a greater proportion of women than men are affected. The exception is racist comments “targeted at yourself or your particular ethnicity”, which is experienced by 13% of all women and all men.

Women experience “negative or stereotypical comments” relating to their sexuality at more than double the rate of men (22% compared to 10% for men) and “sexist comments” at their expense at more than triple the rate (34%, 10%).

Sometimes the men think they are being helpful, report some women. Examples include offering

to park a truck and carry a sandbag. At other times the behaviour is sinister. Examples include commenting on an actor’s breast size, talking openly about the “fuckability” of extras and ordering more cleavage to be in shot for no reason relating to character or the scenario being filmed.

AGEISM AGAINST WOMEN

Many of the older women surveyed say that the lack of reference to age-related prejudice against women is a serious shortcoming of the survey. Says one respondent, it happens just when women are “coming into their own” and have the most “value add” due to their skills and wisdom. It applies as much behind the camera as in front of it.

⁶ At the end of 2019 there were 2,437,700 men and 2,513,800 women according to Stats NZ. <https://www.stats.govt.nz/topics/population>

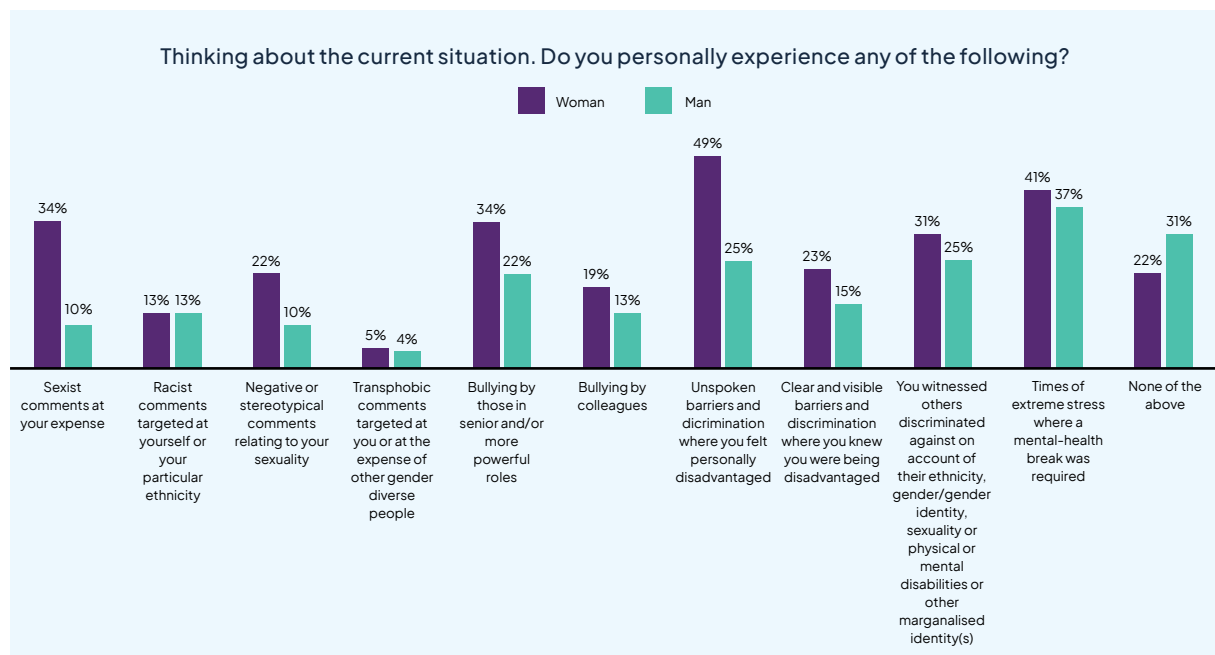


Figure 6. Respondents were asked whether they had experienced 10 types of negative situation devised by the researchers.

How women are represented on screen is resented

Considerable exasperation about how women are depicted on screen shines through in the comments. And it would be naïve to think there is no relationship between this and how women are treated in real life.

“I want to see quality, not just quantity, of female representation on-screen: diverse women, of all body shapes, fully clothed ... To let the next generation (of boys and girls) know that women don’t need to be borderline anorexic and/or show some skin in order to be worthy of our attention.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

“For New Zealand taxpayers supporting the screen industry to see themselves on the screen i.e. that our casts represent all that our society is. That younger women are not continually asked to be nude/perform sexually/be the eye candy. That older women, those who actually

spend their money going to films and theatre see stories that reflect everything that they are – not an idea of what an ‘old woman’ is.”

■ **WOMAN**

“I’m not okay representing myself or other women as weak or all ditsy barbies. More often than not they (men) produce ideas that have good intentions but don’t really understand that their definition of “hot girl” also means, stupid, not powerful or of a certain level that misrepresents and ultimately stereotypes women”

■ **WOMAN**

Many women speak of unwelcome physical contact, that is, being grabbed and kissed – or much worse – in private and public. (One of those who reports being sexually assaulted is a man.)

Predatory behaviour is rarely called out, many women report, and it is clear from the comments that the reasons are complex. Only two women say that the global #metoo movement gives them

hope; many more say that when women dare to speak out, they are commonly ignored, told they are overreacting or told that they can't take a joke.

Many say that when women act assertively from a position of authority – say as an executive in a corporate setting or as a producer – they are told they are being bossy. As one woman says, “my male colleague says the exact same thing, it gets heard, acknowledged”. The underlying message is that women have nothing to contribute.

“I have personally experienced sexual assault at the hands of higher-up or more experienced filmmakers. I was asked to keep quiet as they were gaining success at the time. However, I carry a lot of privilege as a Pākehā woman and there are many prevalent issues in the industry, not just that of misogyny.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

“... As a woman also in the post production field, I've felt I've had to work twice as hard to prove my technical knowledge, and have been spoken slowly to, just to make sure I “get” concepts.”

■ **LGBTQIA+**

“I find that even as a Producer, because I am young and female, male crew members will often treat me like a runner or assistant. Of course this is not the case with all male crew, some are quite the opposite, but I think there's a lack of respect for younger females in the industry no matter your experience. The thing they don't realise is that I won't be hiring them again on any production I work on in the future so they really should be careful how they treat people as you never know where you will end up!”

■ **WOMAN**

Women are limited by attitudes

Some of the women say that they are able to shrug off demeaning attitudes towards their gender. Others say they have escaped such treatment personally. But judging by the number of comments about it, there is a widely held belief that this negative attitude permeates the overall production environment and works against women.

PAY INEQUITY A PRIORITY IN CANADA AS IT IS IN NEW ZEALAND

The Canadian Media Producers Association focused on gender in a survey of 561 people in 2016. The results were published in the report *Women and Leadership: Gender Parity and Diversity in Canada's Screen Industries*.

Appendix A of the report details actions that have been taken across the globe and Appendix B of the report lists other global studies on the subject.⁷ Comparing the results of the different surveys is not straightforward given the differences between how questions were asked. That said, the majority of both Canadian and New Zealand women see addressing pay inequity as being the major priority.

Many examples were provided of how there are no opportunities to move out of perceived female roles such as art department, wardrobe, makeup, continuity and production and into more “male” roles such as camera and directing.

Getting these kinds of jobs on big budget films is especially elusive for women; on these films, wages are high, contracts enduring, and the experience provided on the latest gear invaluable.

⁷ <https://telefilm.ca/en/studies/women-leadership-study-gender-parity-diversity-canadas-screen-industries>

Women were presented with 13 strategies as part of the survey and asked which would best assist women in the screen industry. Closing the gender pay gap was ranked first by the most women and was often in the five most preferred strategies.

A big factor underpinning pay inequity is that women are clustered in jobs they say are undervalued. It is also mentioned several times that men are better at haggling.

“How does a chippie with barely any experience walk onto a set and immediately make more than a seamstress with 25 years of film experience and expertise?”

■ **WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR**

“Female Production Managers and PA’s working longer hours than anyone else on shoots are expected to do traditionally gendered ‘domestic labour’ tasks such as ‘bring the savories’/ catering, do the entire shooting crew’s dishes, clean the unit base toilets, because ‘that’s what Production do’ according to the all male Director/Producer/1st AD crew. Observed on multiple projects with the same leadership team a glass ceiling for female shooting crew – the same men get the HOD roles in camera, lighting and art depts, but women are only allowed to be their assistants.”

■ **WOMAN**

“I feel, to some extent, I am expected to take the safe path or enjoy organising as a woman. But I don’t.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

“It’s subtle sexism and bias rather than overt, but the outcome is a glass ceiling, slower career progression, and a higher percentage in lower skilled/rate jobs for women, and a disproportionate number of men being hired, promoted and ending up in senior leadership positions.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

THE PERSONAL PLAYS A PART IN FIXING INEQUALITY

Elizabeth Broderick is the former Australian Sex Discrimination Commissioner – and was the country’s first. She used a “Male Champions of Change” strategy to advance gender equality right across the business community. Her thinking was that it was illogical for women to lead the charge given men occupied the seats of power.

“I still remember one of the first men I went to was the CEO of IBM in our region. He had twins – a boy and a girl – and I started to explain to him the areas of inequality. He had probably known in his head about the numbers, but I think for the first time he felt in his heart that his daughter would never have the same opportunities as her twin brother, and that was just an appalling concept for him, and he said: ‘Yeah, where do I sign up?’”⁸

Lack of childcare is deeply resented

Both women and men comment that inflexible schedules and other factors make it impossible to work in film and be good parents but only women say they are severely disadvantaged when they become parents.

Women generally have more responsibility for childcare yet, as per Figure 11, despite the high number of female respondents, not one person who filled out the survey is on paid parental leave.

The survey results also showed that for those for whom access to childcare is relevant (64% of respondents), about 39% or two in five people report that at their place of work, childcare is totally or somewhat lacking.

⁸ https://apolitical.co/en/solution_article/australias-new-weapon-fighting-gender-inequality-male-ceos

The lack of childcare provision is actually felt more keenly in the larger enterprises with more than 20 employees and especially in enterprises with more than 100 employees.

One director was dropped by a commercials company immediately after telling them she was pregnant. “Call us again when the kid starts school,” she was told. One woman, upon having her daughter prematurely, was sent a letter to the hospital terminating her contract on a major drama series despite being “slave and hunter and gatherer” for her senior male bosses.

Respondents talked about the lack of access to childcare. One said on-set crèches are a necessity because no commercial facilities cater to film industry hours. Many women say that having a career in film is only possible once they have children if they decide that being an absent parent some of the time is acceptable.

“I am lucky to have found a role on the outskirts of the industry that is full time and salaried however if I had not found this role I would not be in the industry as I cannot juggle work, kids and mortgage on contract work = no security.”

■ WOMAN

“... crew members would be eager to contribute financially towards the care of their children but having something that is integrated into a production would be a huge factor in allowing parents of both genders to return to work or take jobs they would otherwise not be able to. It is important that this be available for everyone, not just for lead actors and directors/producers. There are several models in the US of this working, both on set and at film festivals etc. We can achieve amazing and crazy things when it comes to what's in front of the camera (shutting down roads, blowing things up) surely we can manage the care of a group of children!”

■ WOMAN

Many opinions have a man vs woman edge to them

Some respondents seem at pains to point out that women are also perpetrators of bullying, discrimination and exclusion, including of other women.

“You talk about women being a marginalised group but I don't feel like we are in the screen industry. Everywhere i look there are women in powerful positions – commissioners, producers, distributors and directors. Some of the worst bullying and sexism has come from women in authority against other women – and in several instances from non-mothers to working mothers.”

■ WOMAN

“We have had multiple examples of senior woman sexually harassing men, and or making sexually derogatory comments about men. It was something that was hard to deal with as we had grown from a small company and didn't have all our policies watertight. The marginalisation is more about an attitude where it was ok for woman to say things that if a man said it there would be outrage.”

■ MAN

“I was surprised to be effectively held back from progressing to higher roles by my female boss. I have to mind what I say with her, even when problem solving, as she is competitive with other women. So, bullying and mismanagement can come from any person. Look out for the good people / colleagues/ co-creators and put your energy there.”

■ WOMAN

50/50 X 2020 IS AN INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT

Anna Serner became chief executive of the Swedish Film Institute in late 2011. It didn't take long for her to announce that she wanted half of all funds going to female filmmakers by the end of 2015. For directors, the target was achieved in 2014 – up from 26% at the time of the announcement.

“Talking makes no difference. You have to act. Whatever you do, they will criticise, but you just have to live with that,” she told the media.

She and others launched a 50/50 by 2020 campaign for gender parity at the Cannes Film Festival in 2016. Many government agencies and others – and the US talent agency ICM Partners⁹ – got on board.

Deadline reported on a discussion at the Berlin Film Festival in February 2020: “All of the major festivals have now signed a pledge introduced by 50/50 by 2020 to increase the gender parity of its top execs and selection committees and improve transparency. However, it was pointed out on the panel that the executives running these festivals remain 70% male and 90% white.”

“It will take us generations, quick fixes won't happen,” said Serner in the article. “The thing about power is nobody gives it away willingly, you have to wrench it out of people's bleeding hands, you do that with data, building alliances, and having people speak up and stand up.”¹⁰

In contrast to comments such as these, however, scores of people say that everyone has to fit into the existing male culture in order to flourish, implying that throwing aside this culture would be a good thing.

Not surprisingly there is a lot of bitterness from men about how they are now regarded and about the anticipated unfavourable fallout.

“Demarginalising the marginalised shouldn't be about demonising – or at the cost of – some other group.”

■ MAN

“It is difficult as a white middle aged male screenwriter and director when producers tell you they don't want to take you on because they know they will currently get money from the NZFC for “brown women screenwriters and directors” – and that is direct quote. I support talented women everywhere, but the industry keeps swinging to extremes rather than being encouraging for all”

■ MAN

“It simply seems that in the current political climate to be a white-male is to be synonymous with all that is evil in the world. A view I find incredibly blinkered and tiresome. Through all my years in the screen industry I've always felt proud that the screen industry has for the most part been an incredibly welcoming place to people of all ethnicities, genders, and sexualities. Often, in my opinion, ahead of the rest of society.”

■ MAN

⁹ <https://www.icmpartners.com/news/icm-partners-50-50-by-2020-pledge>

¹⁰ <https://deadline.com/2020/02/times-up-swedish-film-institute-ceo-equalit-5050x2020-still-looks-a-long-way-off-berlin-1202866309/>

“... other middle-aged straight white men will make comments to me about not having many opportunities anymore. I argue against that point of view, but the wider community is going to have to work around the backlash of the previously-privileged suddenly feeling persecuted.”

■ **MAN**

“I support the inclusiveness efforts that many organisations are undertaking. However, it makes me feel – as a Pākehā, straight male who’s just turned 50, that realistically there’s little or no place for me in this industry. If you’ve “made it” by this stage (Taika Waititi, Peter Jackson, etc) you’re fine. If you’re an ethnic, sexual orientation, gender identity minority you’re actively encouraged/supported. If you’re not, you’re stuffed ...”

■ **MAN**

Both women and men use the survey to express the view that there’s not enough equality and inclusion in the screen industry for women and minorities. Only men say there is enough equality and inclusion.

Both women and men say those complaining about the screen industry need to toughen up or find something else to do, but this attitude comes more often from men.

Many say the best way forward is to invite men to change, in particular the gatekeepers, with the starting point being boosting their awareness with training in unconscious bias.

“I would like to see the men that are in leadership / senior roles advocating for the women in the industry – actively supporting and being included in the shift towards a 50/50 balance. This can only happen through education and training of these men in leadership / senior roles and specific education for the people that are the hiring decision makers, regardless of gender. Men play an essential role in the success of our goals as women in the screen industry – let’s create and lift up our manbassadors!”

■ **WOMAN**

“I think the focus for gender equality and inclusion needs to shift to males – if men are not on board and taught to understand the roadblocks for women, they will continue as always, and the power dynamic won’t shift enough to change anything in a significant way.”

■ **WOMAN**

“To call people out but do it compassionately. To view each moment if possible as a teaching moment, either for yourself or for the other person. To breathe and take your time with responses, figure out the best response in any scenario, sometimes that means safety first. To understand, believe and know your own worth. To go high when they go low. To use the anger or frustration it creates in you as a driving force for change.”

■ **PERSON OF COLOUR**

KEY OBSERVATIONS

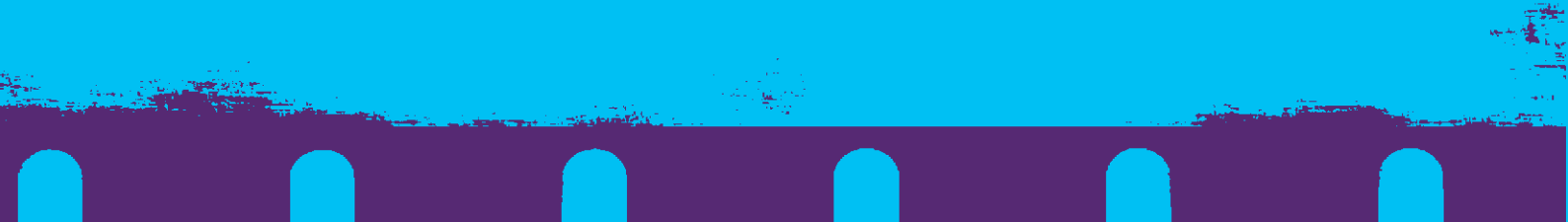
Expertise from outside the screen industry could be utilised to solve big issues such as the lack of childcare solutions, gender stereotyping and sexism – as well as racism, transphobia and other forms of discrimination still to be discussed.

Getting a group of senior men to encourage other men to see the prevalence of unconscious bias, sexism and discrimination towards women, would greatly help achieve positive change.

A code of conduct that sits within health and safety rules could help on production sets as could an off-site advice hotline and conflict resolution service.

He Tini Kānohau Diverse

“Who benefits from public funding for **"diverse"** productions, particularly Māori/Pasifika projects? Profits still end up in the pockets of Pākehā production companies. Who owns the rights? We need to be looking at economic benefits and ownership of IP, not just representation and appropriation. NO public funding designated for Māori/Pasifika/Asian and other diverse projects should go to Pākehā producers.”



2

Kia hāngai i tō te Māori Focusing in on Māori

An action plan and various funding initiatives were put in place to meet the objectives of Te Tumu Whakaata Taonga New Zealand Film Commission’s Māori strategy 2018-2021¹¹. The strategy and its execution are informed, in part, by the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Te Aō Māori, which acknowledges how all living and non-living things are connected. Built into the treaty, signed in 1840, was the principle that all New Zealanders, whether Māori or Pākehā are equal under the law.

There were 98 Māori who took the survey. They were generally older than the sample as a whole (86% were aged 30 or more compared to 79%) and the women-to-men ratio was higher (three times for Māori compared to two and a half times).

Māori were less likely – than the sample as a whole – to identify as being in one, two or three of the diversity groups (72% compared to 87% for all people). In contrast they were more likely to identify with no groups (11%, 6%), with four or more groups (15%, 6%) and as LGBTQIA+ or gender diverse (26%, 18% and 6%, 4%).

All respondents were asked whether they had experienced 10 types of negative situations devised by the researchers. In every case except one, Māori experience these situations

more often than the sample as a whole. The exception was “feeling personally disadvantaged by unspoken barriers and discrimination”. In four cases the difference is significant: racist comments targeted at yourself or your particular ethnicity (33% compared to 13% for all people); witnessing others discriminated against on account of their ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexuality or physical or mental disabilities or other marginalised identity (42%, 30%); negative or stereotypical comments relating to sexuality (28%, 20%); and clear and visible barriers and discrimination where you know you are being disadvantaged (29%, 21%).

¹¹ <https://www.nzfilm.co.nz/sites/default/files/2018-04/Te%20Rautaki%20English%20270418%20WEB.pdf>

Māori do not believe they are getting a fair share of production

To state the obvious, the end product of the industry is content for the screen. An overwhelming number of respondents say that the desire to tell stories is a key reason they are in the industry, but they don't stipulate what sort of stories. Māori, on the other hand, are more likely to say they want to tell "our" stories.

(Note that all the people quoted in this section of the report are Māori.)

"When I was growing up in the 80's – 90's there was very little Māori programming, I keep doing this for my language. people and culture."

"Yes, dealing with the NZFC institutionalised racism in all their funding processes has been by far the most extreme example of entrenched and ongoing discrimination against Māori and Māori women I have personally ever encountered. The worst part is they believe using te reo means they are not racist. Their appalling record in Māori women creatives speaks much more than this survey. Why is Merata Mita still the only Māori woman to direct write, produce a funded feature film after 40 years of tax payers funding? To borrow your words, this is serious, I and my colleagues are upset and yes we have been lobbying, writing, complaining, marching and protesting for over 25 years, The only change is the NZFC now uses Te Reo!"

"Māori continue to be underserved as an audience their stories benefit national identity and understanding – more funding for targeted Māori platforms and content. Especially woefully underserved groups like teens and tweens."

Very noticeable from the comments is that Māori believe they are not getting a fair share of production funding. The establishment of a Māori film commission is one strategy put forward for redressing this.

SUNDANCE IS A PROVEN MODEL FOR INDIGENOUS ADVANCEMENT

The Indigenous Program of the Sundance Institute¹², under the 18-year stewardship of director Bird Runningwater, has run mentorships, labs, grants and fellowships for indigenous filmmakers and helped to create more than 350 Native-made projects¹³. One fellowship carries the name of the late New Zealander Merata Mita, an advisor and artistic director to the National Filmmakers Lab from 2000 to 2009.

An injustice referred to repeatedly is that agencies and commissioners, and Pākehā companies that are "working the system" rather than committing to the Māori voice, choose what's made and how it's made, rather than Māori.

"Pākehā companies asking me to work on their Māori production then don't take advice or devalue the cultural practices. Little understanding or empathy for tikanga process."

"Working on a project that was meant to be predominantly in te reo and had been funded as such – on which the only Māori key creative was only contracted for 7 weeks out of the 20+ week schedule. It was a huge failing that the production company and producers involved had no comprehension of."

¹² <https://www.sundance.org/programs/indigenous-program>

¹³ <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/q-a-bird-runningwater-sundance-institute-s-indigenous-program>

“ALL key creatives should be Māori to access Rautaki funding (Writer, Producer, Director)”

One respondent talks at length about how years of grossly underfunded activity has given Māori practitioners the skill to pull together and work quickly and efficiently on low budgets to tell their own stories – but that this has led to some undermining of production values.

There are many references to how the rest of the industry has much to learn from Māori about their work processes.

“I see it all the time – people of colour being marginalised or their approach and methodology to storytelling being dismissed.”

“With increased opportunity for those previously disadvantaged there needs to be increased support, as often people will be less experienced because of lack of opportunity and deep seated cultural conditioning. There also needs to be consideration in terms of creative processes following a standard (patriarchal, colonial) route to create very different products. Ask what is right for the desired outcome? Many times projects are expected to follow the same process when their needs and way of working are entirely different, and need to be to create an authentically diverse product.”

Māori women have their own set of challenges

From analysis of the survey results, it seems that Māori women are more likely to reflect on their negative experiences as women than on their negative experiences as Māori. In these cases, concerns are often no different to those of non-Māori women. As spelled out in the previous section, women want more opportunity to work in technical roles; equal pay; and to be able to take time out to care for babies and young children without being penalized and to work family-friendly hours.

When Māori women feel subject to both misogyny and racism it is a potent indication of the potential damage of this kind of intersectionality.

“In one situation I was blacklisted for a period of time. In the past I have often felt that my voice as a brown female storyteller was diminished by male counterparts who were too occupied with their own world view to ever contemplate a different perspective. In consideration of this I have had to work harder than I would normally have to just to be heard. In saying that, things have started to shift recently (last four years) with a move toward more diverse voices both locally and internationally.”

“When working in a mainstream network you just get used to being the only brown woman and tailor your behaviour to that situation. In Māori organisations there can often be a negative attitude towards you if you are a woman and sometimes if you are not fluent in te reo Māori.”

“Māori women writers and directors are excluded from directing mainstream tv, ads and drama. We are capable. We need the support so we can financially support ourselves and grow in our skills. I would like the mainstream industry to stop doubting our abilities. It’s sexist and racist.”

“Being a Māori woman makes everyone think they can judge me.”

“... I’ve witnessed white males with less experience get swooped up quickly and I’ve witnessed Māori males with less talent and mediocre films get the wrap around support I have never had ... the industry still has ingrained sexism and the mainstream industry refuses to hire Māori women Directors.”

“I would like to be a part of the change to create an open, transparent, supportive industry. Where training and experience is adequately rewarded. To be the Māori Female CEO. To assist with distributing funds back into the community where we can actively support and foster young creatives who are the future of our industry. Telling stories and representing those who have had no voice.”

The majority of Māori surveyed believe that fairness and equality will improve over the next five years, which is promising.

The survey digs deep into perceptions about workplace culture in the New Zealand screen industry but sometimes the results are difficult to discern or even contradictory. When asked to rate aspects of their main place of work, Māori indicate considerable dissatisfaction about equal opportunity generally, equal training opportunities and equal pay/reward/recognition/progression for equal work. Specifically, 42% of Māori rate their workplace on these three aspects of equality as either being absolutely lacking, somewhat lacking or patchy. Yet workplaces get high marks when Māori are asked if they are “accepting and supportive” of people of colour at all levels of the organisation (82% said that either real steps are being taken to achieve this or that needs

are being met completely), of women (77%), of LGBTQIA+ (76%) and of tangata whenua (72%).

In a set of questions about whether workplaces are collaborative, safe, healthy, transparent, respectful and so on, the difference between what Māori think and what the whole sample thinks is not wildly different, although a greater proportion of Māori believe there is childcare support (36% compared to 23%), working conditions did show respect for those who need a mental health break (58%, 49%) and did meet the needs of those with physical disabilities (51%, 42%).

KEY OBSERVATIONS

There is a particular need to look closely at the extent to which Māori projects are supported, how decisions are made on what gets made and who controls the production processes and IP.

Māori report being very significantly discriminated against compared to the sample as a whole.

THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE HAS TARGETS AND STANDARDS

- The British Film Institute (BFI) set itself diversity and inclusion targets across all activities in 2017 with the aim of reaching them by 2020.
- 7% target for those identifying as D/deaf and disabled. (D/deaf encompasses all people with some type of deafness, ie hard of hearing and partially and profoundly deaf.)
- 20% target for those identifying as belonging to an under-represented ethnic group, being self-identified Asian/Asian British, Black/African/Caribbean/Black British, mixed/multiple ethnic and other ethnic people.
- 50-50 gender balance
- 10% target for those identifying as LGBTIQ+

The targets are based on the proportion of working age people in these groups in the UK. They apply to nearly 600 staff and on both sides of the camera for all projects that get development and production funding. The BFI notes that targets are not the same as quotas: “quotas can unintentionally induce people to ‘positively’ discriminate, which is unlawful’.

A promise was made when announcing the initiative that targets would be monitored, evaluated and made public. At the time of writing, the latest data was from 2018/19¹⁴.

The BFI also has diversity standards, a “flexible framework” applied to content and audience-facing programs and events and a contractual requirement for all BFI funding¹⁵.

For the record, if a BFI-style model was used, targets around ethnicity would be set in proportion to New Zealand’s five biggest ethnicities which, in the 2018 Census were: New Zealand European (64%), Māori (16.5%), Chinese (5%), Indian (5%) and Samoan (4%)¹⁶.

¹⁴ <https://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/diversity-inclusion/how-we-re-doing>

¹⁵ <https://www.bfi.org.uk/supporting-uk-film/diversity-inclusion/bfi-diversity-standards>

¹⁶ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/information-releases/2018-census-totals-by-topic-national-highlights-updated>

Tē Kitea Invisible

“I find the film industry a fairly hostile environment for anyone who cannot make themselves and their needs **invisible** – it is built to suit physically able men with few outside responsibilities.”

WOMAN, WITH A PHYSICAL DISABILITY, NEURODIVERSE

3

Kia hāngai i ō ngā iwi ririki Focusing in on minority groups

This report has so far dealt with how power can and does play a big role in discrimination and exclusion, the many ways that women feel marginalised despite being half the population and concern from Māori participants about not getting a fair share of production funding. Now the focus turns to minority groups.

The questionnaire asked respondents if there was “a key moment ... that stood out or exemplifies being in a marginalised group within the screen industry”. Written repeatedly in responses was that it was impossible to single out just one moment: “It’s systemic”; it is a “recurring theme”.

The quantitative findings show that people who identify with minority groups are constantly reminded by others, in negative and disrespectful ways, why they are different from what is perceived as the mainstream. The word “perceived” is used here because, as explained, the researchers argue that diversity is the mainstream in the film industry.

Nearly half (48%) of all gender diverse people say they have experienced “transphobic comments targeted at you or at the expense of other

gender diverse people” at their current place of work; 44% of gender diverse people and 38% of LGBTQIA+ people say they have experienced “negative or stereotypical comments relating to your sexuality”; and 41% of people of colour have experienced “racist comments targeted at yourself or your particular ethnicity”.

Minority groups bear the brunt of discrimination

In addition to reminders about their difference, people who identify with minority groups are subjected to exclusion at higher rates than others. This is clear from the aggregated answers to a question about experiencing “unspoken barriers and discrimination where you felt personally disadvantaged”: more than three in four gender diverse and neurodiverse people (76% for each) have had this experience, as have more than half of all physically disabled people (67%), people of colour (65%), LGBTQIA+ (55%) and people with a mental health issue (54%).

This section of the research relates to current work situation, not a person’s entire working life. In other words, it is a picture of the time the survey was taken.

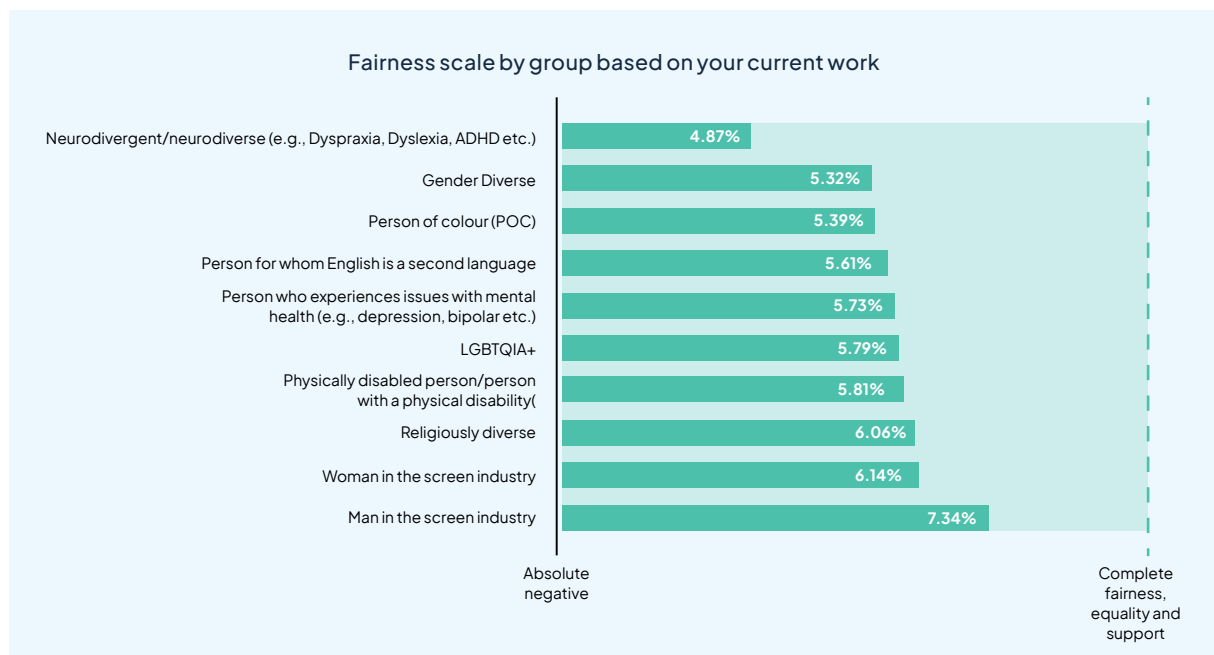


Figure 7. This graph shows the rating of fairness for each group.

Of the respondents, 49% of women, 25% of men and 43% of the total sample said they have felt unspoken disadvantage.

“We don’t see people with disabilities onscreen often, which means we’re not including them behind the scenes, which means they’re not being consulted about their barriers. The same can be said especially for trans folk and non-binary folk.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

“I have been aware of tension amongst heterosexuals when more than a small number of gay or lesbian people have been employed on a job. It’s as if it’s fine as long as they (heterosexuals) don’t feel outnumbered.”

■ **WOMAN**

“Being hearing impaired, I often struggle hearing mumbled instructions (even when wearing aids) which severely effects my ability to do the job well. On one occasion, when I notified my colleagues and boss that I was struggling to hear them, gesturing to my hearing aids, I was told blatantly I would not make it far in the industry. Luckily a colleague assisted me by relaying instructions I couldn’t understand.”

■ **MAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“People speaking on behalf of other groups. Mainstream groups trying to represent minorities without really asking the minority groups what the realities are, or letting them speak for themselves. In some ways I don’t really want to be part of something delivered for queer people that is organised by a non-queer person – it’s like they’ve turned up uninvited.”

■ **LGBTQIA+**

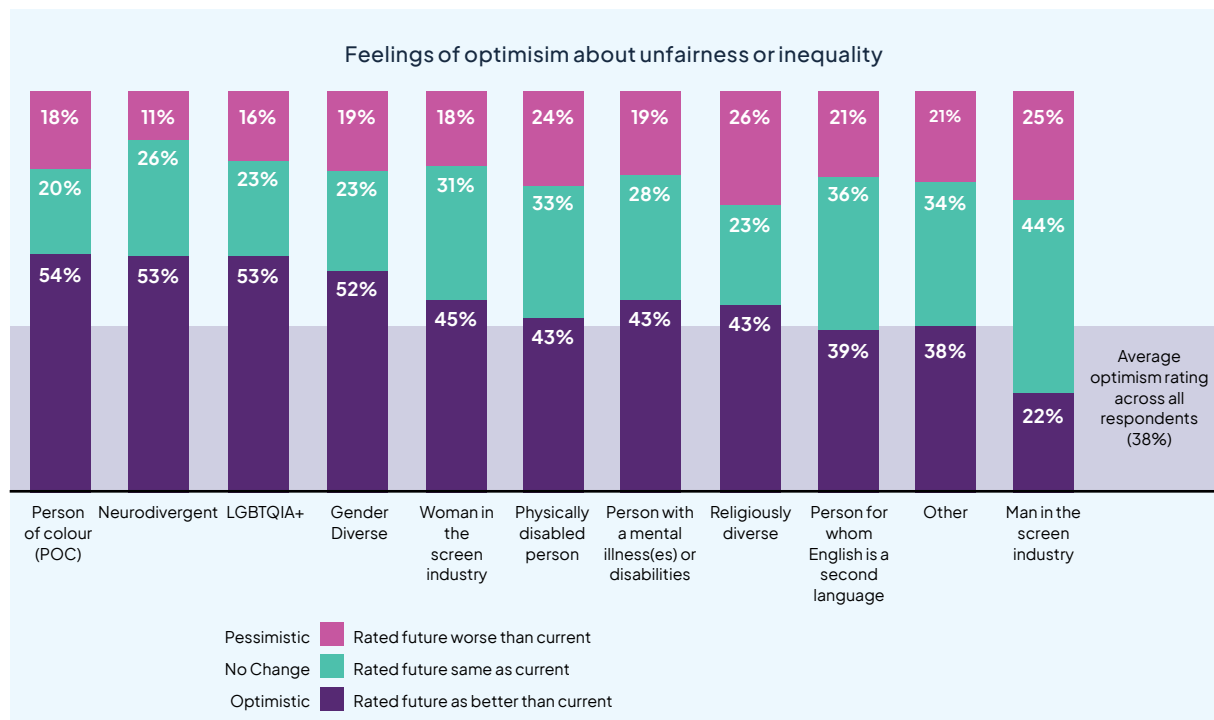


Figure 8. Men, by far, are the most pessimistic about the future. Two in five people overall expect things to improve on the fairness and equality front.

Fairness

Respondents were asked to think about the general level of fairness, equality and support they were experiencing in their current work. If they felt “absolutely” no disadvantage on account of sexuality, gender/gender identity, ethnicity, physical or mental health issue or other marginalised identity the rating should be 10; if “absolutely negative” they were advised to provide a rating of zero.

As already discussed, women often feel more undervalued and condescended to than men. The 511 women surveyed recorded an average fairness score of 6.1. Irrespective of the type of minority the women belonged to, their perception of fairness fell – for religiously diverse women the drop was slight at 6.0 but for neurodivergent/neurodiverse women it was a significant 4.6.

As a group the 200 men scored 7.3 on average for fairness. Those with mental health issues (6.9) and physical disabilities (6.7) are gloomier but not by that much; the same can’t be said for men of colour (4.6).

The researchers asked about “fairness in five years’ time” as well as “fairness today” to gauge optimism, an approach developed in 1965 by social researcher Hadley Cantril¹⁷, and also about the seriousness of these matters.

All groups indicate net optimism with higher scores given for the prediction of fairness in five years, but they are not in lockstep.

Further analysis by the researchers shows that 21% of all respondents felt things were going to get worse, while 34% felt they would probably stay the same. As shown in Figure 8, 38% were optimistic.

¹⁷ <https://news.gallup.com/poll/122453/understanding-gallup-uses-cantril-scale.aspx> Hadley Cantril’s approach captures a sense of optimism or pessimism, and the question enables researchers to fathom how many people are going up, versus how many see no change or a worsening situation.

Just as men and women expect less fairness if they identify with a minority group, so too does someone who identifies with multiple minorities rather than just one – although the rule doesn't hold fast in every situation.

LGBTIQ+ and gender diverse people score an average of 5.8 and 5.3 out of 10 respectively on fairness today but that drops when they identify with additional minority groups – if they identify as a person of colour, for example, it falls to 4.9. The only exception is for those who are also religiously diverse – a group featured in the research but not much in this report.

The general message is increased intersectionality brings an increased sense of unfairness. The average score (5.4) drops if they are also gender diverse or if English is a second language (4.4 for each), neurodivergent (4.0) or physically disabled (3.8). Note that there are less than 10 people in each of these four groups.

Again, a positive in the findings is that minority groups believe their experience of fairness, equality and support will be better in five years.

“I had a good friend who, after transitioning, was essentially harassed out of the workplace where HR was extremely unhelpful. Her voice suddenly mattered a lot less and she was mocked for standing up for herself and others.”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+, NEURODIVERSE**

“It's important to name White Supremacy in the Film Industry and Tokenism for others of Ethnicity.

■ **WOMAN**

“I hope that in the near future it doesn't matter who or what you are that all people are treated as equal. I don't generally tell people I'm a bisexual who has suffered depression based on wartime PTSD and is dyslexic because it should not have any bearing on my abilities and because as soon as you do people – and it's human nature, – instantly put you in a box and view you differently, The only ones who don't are the ones that have been there or have a profound ability to see the paradigm shift.”

■ **LGBTQIA+, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE, NEURODIVERSE**

KEY OBSERVATIONS

Introduce awareness training so that people understand what minority groups are continually exposed to and the personal toll.

Increased intersectionality brings an increased sense of unfairness but the findings on optimism are positive.

HIGH RATES OF MENTAL DISABILITY/ILLNESS IN THE INDUSTRY

Those with a mental health issue make up the second biggest minority group examined in the survey.

- 69% said they had experienced times of extreme stress where a mental health break was required, more than any other group.
- 9% said they felt it was unlikely they would be in the industry in five years' time, second only to the neurodiverse/neurodivergent (11%).
- 11% were currently unable to find work, the third highest proportion after persons for whom English is a second language (14%) and the neurodiverse/neurodivergent (12%).
- Respondents were asked to measure whether their current place of work or work situation met the needs and ambitions of those who worked there. Two of the least supported statements were: that the workplace is accepting and supportive of people with physical or mental disabilities/illnesses at all levels of the organisation; and that the working conditions show respect for those who need a mental health break.

Me Whaimana Empower

“**Empower** the disenfranchised to make their own changes, rather than trying to implement changes on their behalf.”

MAN

4

Kei te tahiwi ō whakaaro Factors to keep in mind

Anyone who knows anything about film and television development, funding, production and distribution, knows that there is much complexity to how each pocket within the system functions, and that it often seems remarkable that the industry manages to operate as a single organism at all.

Creative teams continually form and reform. An enormous amount of work must be done before projects have the slightest chance of going ahead. Certainty is non-existent and closing a production deal, which often has public and private financing, can be very challenging. The many production entities and the companies that supply them with services and facilities come in all shapes and sizes.

4.1 Solutions must be all encompassing and bespoke

Given the complexity described, there is no silver bullet or one-size-fits-all solution to what appears to be, from the survey results, quite widespread discrimination and exclusion.

Judging by the comments of respondents, it is easy to be swayed by the argument that fundamental and sustained positive change can only happen via determined and ambitious effort

that is significantly driven by those in power but also involves the entire industry.

One-off initiatives will not cut it. This is a long game. The industry has to be overhauled, with the first step being to embed respect and inclusion deep into the human capital and also into the work processes and mechanisms. It will not be easy.

“It’s the flavour of the month to be diverse but diversity is not superficial and involves changing deeply set views and structures that are not facilitative. ... comments and conversation need to start with those who have been in the industry long enough to talk about the institutional barriers and ingrained prejudices and who are courageous enough to raise them ins piste (in spite) of possible backlash against their personal careers by funders or others who are decision makers.”

■ MAN, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+

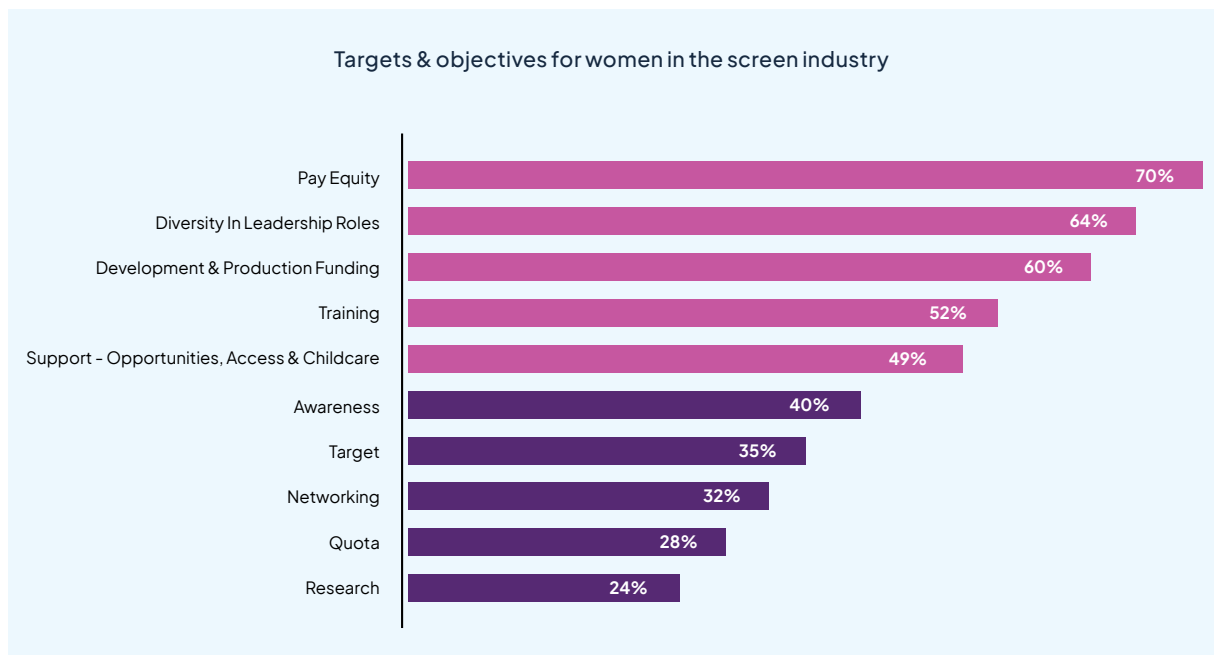


Figure 9. Pay equity is clearly uppermost in the minds of women: it is included most often among the five priority strategies and is ranked most important most often.

“I would like to see greater transparency and discussions about the impact of diversity, bias, social engineering vs capitalist venture, cultural hegemony and out-dated industry traditions and roles. A lot of diversity discussion feels like its a band-aid being applied to a wound that cannot be fully healed until a lot of different elephants in the room can be identified, addressed and talked about openly. Diversity creates opportunities and can nurture greater growth for the industry, but without a solid understanding of why we perceive the old model to be broken (beyond the fact that it’s unethical) will always make it harder for allies to understand their biases and how they are sabotaging the art-form, the industry and their own bottom lines.”

■ **MAN, PERSON OF COLOUR**

“Cultural change – development funds, conferences and programmes are fantastic, but I get disheartened as to whether they’re making a difference when I still hear sexist, homophobic, ableist etc. jokes and comments happening in everyday conversation, or certain assumptions being made about minorities based on internal biases. I think true change

will come from changing people’s attitudes and behaviours – they’ll happen in everyday conversations, in the dynamics within meeting rooms, in the language people use.”

■ **WOMAN**

As mentioned earlier in this report, different strategies for going forward were presented to the women participants and they were asked to select and rank the five suggestions that most “resonated”.

Did different groups favour quotas, for example, or was networking of most interest? A time frame of five years was mentioned as part of the question.

As shown in Figure 9, women were very keen to see pay equity. The actual survey question described this as “ongoing, meaningful progress to the closing of the gender ‘pay gap’”. Many women used the survey as an opportunity to comment on a related matter: the lack of transparency around wages.

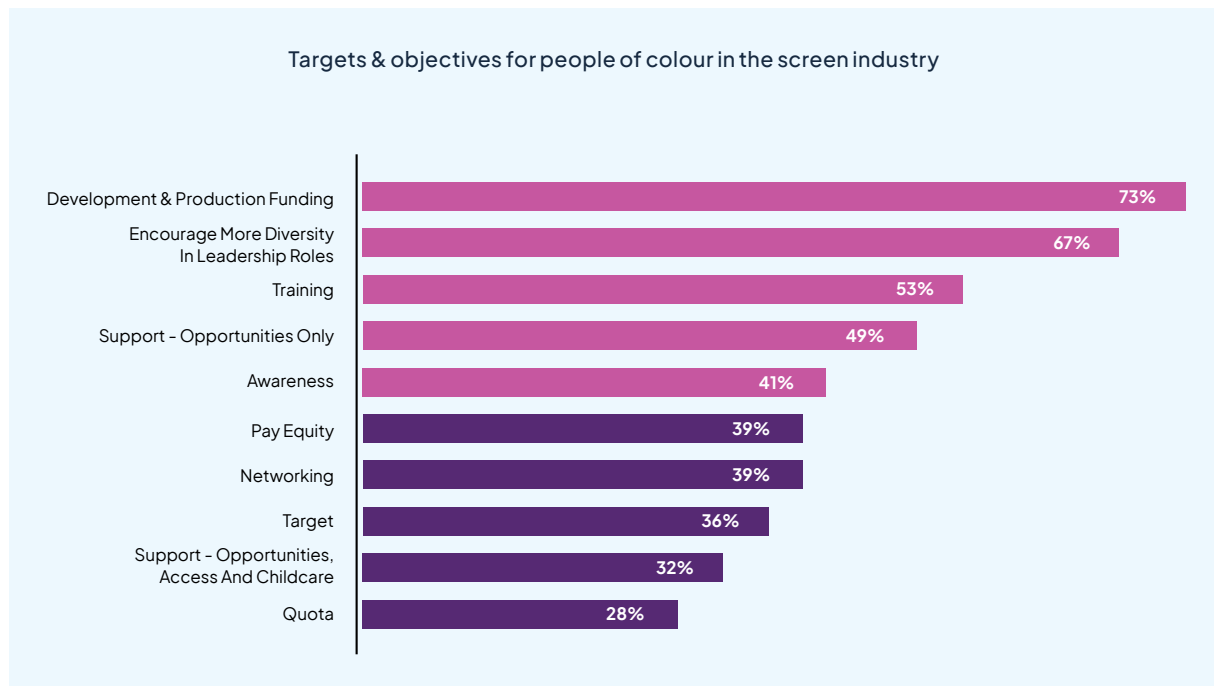


Figure 10. Here are the findings for people of colour.

In order, women also ranked development and production funding, training and diversity in leadership and awareness as most important. “Support – opportunities, access, childcare” displaced awareness as the strategy most often preferred by women, perhaps not surprisingly given the number of comments about how parenthood severely impedes career opportunities and advancement. In the questionnaire the actual wording was “Create effective development opportunities for women as well as an ‘access’ line in feature budgets for accessibility and childcare.”

The most important strategy for the majority of people who identified as “Māori, Pacific Peoples, Asian and/or as a person of colour”, as per Figure 10, was to “encourage more Māori and people of colour in leadership roles in the industry, significant decision-making forums that will change the way the industry chooses to reflect our voices and stories”.

INCLUSION RIDERS ARE ONE METHOD OF DELIVERING CHANGE

Stacy L Smith is associate professor of communication at the USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism and director and founder of the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative.

After extensive research on inclusion, or lack thereof, with a special focus on gender equality, she drove the availability of an inclusion rider. This is a provision added to an A-list actor’s contract that ensures there is a certain level of diversity among the cast and production staff.

As she said, the aim is to “reflect the world in which we actually live”.¹⁸

¹⁸ <http://assets.uscannenberg.org.s3.amazonaws.com/docs/inclusion-rider-template.pdf>

PARTNERSHIPS ARE KEY TO EFFECTIVE CHANGE ABROAD

The European Women's Audiovisual Network supports and promotes women and their work. Its partners include funding bodies and women's networks. <https://www.ewawomen.com/women-in-the-film-industry/>

The Creative Diversity Network's members and stakeholders are all the UK broadcasters <https://creativitydiversitynetwork.com/>

The Australian Screen Industry Group includes public and commercial broadcasters, government agencies, public broadcasters and various representative bodies. <https://www.sdin.com.au/chapter/> One of those members is MediaRING which develops, provides and enhances career opportunities for indigenous Australians in the media. <https://www.mediaring.net/>

"Ongoing, meaningful funding in production, development and access" came in a close second in terms of being most important and both strategies were at the top of the other graph. Training, that is "more internships and workshops to upskill", and awareness, that is "raise awareness about unconscious bias with screen industry organisations or gatekeepers", are ranked highly in both cases.

There is no better source of intel on what barriers marginalised groups face and what they most need than first-hand experience. This knowledge has to be utilised when plotting a way forward. Only self-determination can generate appropriate and effective change.

"I think it should be a requirement of funded projects for all crew members to evaluate/ assess directors', dps' and producers' treatment of crew. Professionalism and decency of the people in these roles should play a part in whether projects/people get funded again. If there are two or three consecutive projects of negative feedback re: abuse/harassment against crew members, professional development should be a requirement before having access to much sought-after funding."

■ **WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR**

"No on-set macho culture that alienates other identities that aren't cis, white, heterosexual, male. Zero tolerance for bullying and unethical behaviour that would not be allowed in a regular workplace setting. Ensure that people in positions of power must abide by strict ethical guidelines relating to acceptable behaviour towards others."

■ **WOMAN**

"Just more people of colour in top tier management. That is really the only way things will change, otherwise, everything is enacted through a white lens."

■ **MAN, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+**

4.2 Quotas are unpopular; hiring on merit is ill advised

Quotas are a much-touted mechanism for getting a greater variety of people into the industry or into more senior positions and they are being imposed by many government agencies abroad as a condition of funding.

Both quotas and targets were raised in this survey as strategies for going forward. Targets, which are less hard and fast, were favoured over quotas generally by respondents, but neither were warmly embraced. (Curiously, respondents did not consider that some sort of measuring stick and a plan for going forward has to be devised if they want more funding channelled towards particular minority groups.)

Many mentioned employment quotas when invited to comment on what changes they would like to see in the industry. Those mentions were both positive and negative but even those who supported quotas often seemed to do so grudgingly.

The case for quotas

“I think people with real power only change when either their own positions are threatened or when there’s money to be made. So probably their hands have to be forced by things like quotas (which I don’t really like).”

■ WOMAN

“Quotas. It’s the only quick way to get progress. Otherwise it happens glacially.”

■ WOMAN

“Quotas to be put in place for board representation, staffing in screen bodies and within crew roles. To have a policy which provides the maximum number of “support” in (for example: one or two) film/role/opportunity per calendar year to avoid having the same group of people supported each year.”

■ MAN, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+

The case against quotas

“... Offering jobs or opportunities because of race or sex is absolutely out of touch with how the film industry works. Producers and heads of departments want people who have the skills and efficiency to do the job which is an equal opportunity for all races and sexes. The only discrimination is if you can or can’t do the job. Giving race or sex an advantage over other skilled crew is incredibly unfair and will cause reverse racism”

“Forcing to remove people from positions because of their race or sex, not based on their value or contribution. We do this actively to ensure that applications appear to meet Diversity requirements.”

■ MAN

“... Attempts to create equal gender splits, or reach quotas based on diversity I believe will have a negative impact on the industry, and appear like people only get to certain places/positions due to their ethnicity, gender, sexual preference and so forth. This will create a completely separate issue of a lack of respect. Respect, in my opinion is the most valuable, intangible goal that we should be seeking for everybody. The quality of work should be the focus, not the quantity of women, LGBTQTI or people of colour included on-and-off screen.”

Many of those against quotas say they are concerned that people without sufficient skills will be employed and there will be a resultant backlash.

This was in sharp contrast to those who express resentment at the presumption that people who are marginalised do not have the necessary talent and skill. As one person pointed out, the notion that people are not capable because they are gay or have brown skin is utterly absurd.

It is a constant cry in the comments to hire on merit. But as many others point out, people who say this miss the point because they do not think about or accept that merit comes only after years of training, skills development and the kind of relationship building that leads to opportunities and experience. Socio-economic factors can also have a bearing on getting to a position of merit.

This is obvious in a highly collaborative industry such as film. Proving oneself cannot happen without opportunity – whether those opportunities are internships, entry level roles, promotions, or production funding. Saying hiring should be on merit has a real risk of perpetuating the status quo. There has to be intervention for change to happen.

28% of people of colour say they are in their current situation because people of colour were sought out, and 15% of gender diverse people successfully responded to a call specifically for LGBTQIA+ people. This is significant.

TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS AND SCHEMES

Inclusive Pathways Framework for Screen Storytelling Talent, a paper written for the Australian, Film, Television & Radio School by Georgie McClean, was published in 2016. It contains recommendations (pages 20-23) on training classified as either practitioner initiatives, organisational change or industry-wide.¹⁹

Trade magazine Screen International, working with Creative Skillset, ran a series of articles in 2017²⁰ on UK-based training schemes for under-represented groups in the screen industry. A top eight were chosen and cover directing, producing, leadership, new and emerging filmmakers, women, people with disabilities, BAME (black, Asian and minority ethnic) and the socially disadvantaged.

A recognition that ‘creative merit’ is not self-evident, but that nepotism (family involvement), patronage, who you know and class differences (e.g. Your family can support you while you work for free to get the foot in the door) as well as sexism, racism etc. play a major role in who gets to make a screen production or work in screen production.”

■ **LGBTQIA+**

*“Work on training; open up opportunities for those who want to grab them at that level and reach out to people who mightn’t be inclined to reach out for themselves. However, when it comes to funding and green-lighting projects, make it about how good the *work* is. Doing anything else is (a) unfair to those who are turned down despite producing superior work, and (b) is patronising and insulting to those who you’re telling don’t have to be as good because they tick boxes based on something they have no control over (gender or gender*

identity, sexuality, ethnicity, etc). That ceases to be about equality and fairness of opportunity and becomes about virtue signalling.”

■ **MAN**

“Stop pandering to the people with the loudest voice and support those who show real love and leadership through their actions and hard long term work. There is not enough done to praise the servants and too much to the stars both behind and in front of the camera.”

Encourage people of all genders and races to participate, upscale and excel. But be wary of the trendy swing – don’t push one group more than another to balance statistics at the expense of talent.”

■ **MAN**

“I believe that access to training and the opportunity to be part of the industry should be inclusive and equitable. Viewers vote with their eyeballs. It rarely matters how diverse / inclusive a product is, it matters whether its intended audience connects with it.”

■ **SURVEY RESPONDENT WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

Many who filled out the survey wrote of the need for high-quality, consistently available and industry-wide training, as illustrated by some of the comments above. They mentioned that it would help mitigate the risk of floundering when opportunities were presented and act as an indication of who had the commitment necessary to excel.

Another point made was that trainers have to be from the appropriate community, however well-meaning the alternative might be.

¹⁹ <https://www.aftrs.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Inclusive-Pathways-Frame-for-Screen-Storytelling-Talent.pdf>

²⁰ <https://www.screendaily.com/features/eight-uk-film-and-tv-diversity-training-schemes-you-need-to-know/5117252.article>

4.3 Gruelling hours and tight budgets are widespread

It is impossible not to notice from the findings that many people say they experience high levels of pressure while working in the film industry. This is irrespective of whether they identify with a minority group.

Many also believe that conditions are not good for mental health. Gruelling hours, the impact of tight budgets, a lack of consideration for family responsibilities and the rollercoaster ride of financial survival are among the factors most mentioned.

Some work practices were labelled as unjust by respondents, even exploitative, including employing the same people year after year on fixed-term contracts rather than as full-timers. This means they go without sick pay and other employee protections.

“There is a lot of talk about health & safety but we are ignoring the most obvious risk of all: the hours. We work long hours, often driving to and from work fatigued. There are many stories of crew crashing on their way to or from work after doing long hours, day after day. These long hours have a negative effect on people’s mental health, physical life & family life. We work in this industry because we love it, but we need to reduce the standard working day. Our standard is 10.75 hours, yet the majority of crew are required to do pre-calls and wrap, which means most crew would easily work 11 or 12 hour days. Then there is shooting over time, which makes the days even longer.”

■ **WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR**

“... Never worked in another industry that has so little care for your mental health or maintaining a personal life. If you complain, stick up for yourself or try to have any work life balance you’re weak and a failure and it’s considered that the industry just isn’t for you.”

■ **MAN, LGBTQIA+**

“I am interested in finding a new way to work. As someone who is working as a Producer, it is within my realm to try new ways of managing teams and creating inclusion. Young (40-) filmmakers and crew I have spoken to over the last 12 months are on the verge of burning out, they want to see filmmaking done differently, in a fairer more inclusive way. The industry in no way benefits sustainability with a focus on Human beings’ well-being. People are sick of the way the industry is currently operating.”

■ **MAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“... Even if you only have to travel 15 mins each way, which is rare in Auckland, you are away from your family for 11.25 hrs. So if you leave home at 7:45am, you’re not home again until 7pm. If, like me, you work in a role where your day is more like a 12-14 hour day, you need to leave home before your kids wake up and you don’t get home until after they’ve gone to bed. I want to know where the notion of a 10.75 hour standard working day came from, and I want to know why we can’t pull that back to, say, a 9-hour standard working day. I actually can’t believe that in 2019 we are working such long days... what happened to the Industrial Revolution and 8-hour days? Did the film industry not get the memo?”

■ **WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR**

“The over-riding issue is production budgets in this market are so small and so tight that it leaves no room for additional support, mentoring, health and safety, diversity programmes, inclusivity workshops etc. etc – all of this is not possible on the small production budgets we work with in New Zealand. We work with the most efficient people in the tightest timeframes and have no spare dollars for anything else. All of this is so important but needs to be funded outside of production budgets as these are constantly shrinking anyway.”

■ **WOMAN**

One analogy given is that the screen industry is a difficult-to-abandon addiction: highly enticing but hateful because of the high stress levels.

40% of all respondents have suffered a time of extreme stress where a mental health break is required. So too has one in three straight white men, despite them being comparatively less subjected to the kind of demeaning behaviour foregrounded by the survey. The picture painted in the comments also backs the notion that extreme stress goes hand and hand with the screen industry.

When asked how they came to be in their current work situation, 48% of the total sample agree with the statement “It is a role/job that I trained for and actively pursued”. No score was as high for any statement in the entire table and it rang most true for nearly all the diversity groups.

Looking only at people with a mental health issue, 58% were in tune with the statement. Given this level of determination to be part of the industry, the need to focus in on mental health support is not something that will go away any time soon.

“There is a subtle air of shame and unspoken feeling that it’s not ok to be ‘not ok’. We work longer hours than most, do not have allowance for sick leave, which creates this environment that we soldier on through sickness and any mental health issues like anxiety / depression / overwhelm. There is a fear that if you do, you will be seen as unable to do your job.”

■ **WOMAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“I was promoted and favoured in the television production company I worked for until I opened up about my anxiety and PTSD from past domestic violence, and since then I was treated differently and a month later I was essentially fired – every other staff members’ contracts were renewed except mine. It felt like bullying since I never let my mental health impact my work”

■ **WOMAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“I personally think the industry by nature is very hard on people with mental health issues. Long hours, late nights, early mornings, stress, disrupted routine. Actors, perpetual judgement and rejection. It’s not a safe place to be for people with depression, anxiety and other illness. I don’t know what changes could be instituted around those issues because sometimes it is the nature of the beast. In the early days some education on self-management may have been helpful. I think I have found that for myself now, but in my experience mental illness is common in the industry and allowing people to understand those issues better may make the industry more accessible to them.”

■ **MAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

Underlying a lot of the comments is the fact that the reality of many production environments works against implementing change. The intention behind drawing attention to the industry’s poor working conditions here, is to suggest that everyone will benefit if the stresses and strains are addressed in general – along with the disrespect echoing through the comments.

4.4 Generational change will bring diversity

Stats NZ’s 2018 General Social Survey shows that those in the population aged 18–24 are more likely to identify as bisexual or gay/lesbian than any other age group.²¹ Stats NZ also notes that population growth is due more to net migration than to the natural increase that flows from births minus deaths. This means that as the years pass, society is constantly getting a good dose of both gender and ethnic diversity.²²

Arguably, given that this is the pool that the industry draws from and that generational change and immigration is inevitable, the number of people in the industry that personify diversity will grow and their voices will grow louder and more demanding of inclusion.

²¹ <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-sexual-identity-wellbeing-data-reflects-diversity-of-new-zealanders>

²² <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/migration-drives-high-population-growth>

“It’s (the screen industry) unbelievably small, with budgets being squeezed, a lot of mediocre work being made and a lot of people fighting over very scant resources. Outsiders or newbies find they have to ‘get to the back of the queue’, as funding and job opportunities are given to people’s friends and those with whom they have existing or longstanding professional and personal relationships.”

■ **WOMAN**

“We need to find ways to make this industry more accessible and welcoming for all. For an industry that is set up to exclude that is a real challenge. However, for the industry to thrive and flourish it needs to embrace and celebrate the incredible richness of our diversity. That is the only thing that will enable our sector to survive and grow – the sooner we learn that the better. The next generation probably understand this more than any one – let them lead us in this new way forward.”

■ **MAN**

“It is great when people I’m working with already have an understanding of the systems of oppression at play in our culture, whether that’s racism, transphobia, homophobia, ableism, classism etc. They have educated themselves and know how to communicate with and work respectfully with diverse people. Sometimes I need people to share power with me, and sometimes due to my privileges, especially being Pākehā, I need to share power with others. For me, being non-binary, people can find it challenging, even impossible to simply treat me as a person, let alone a filmmaker. This makes it hard to know sometimes if a situation has been caused by transphobia, or something as silly as a missed email. I hope that people in the screen sector can commit to and advocate for LGBT+ community training (or even better, establish a gender diversity working group)

so that those in leadership positions and those working for them can come to know enough about the LGBT+ and gender diverse community and our needs to work well with us. The recent NZ on Air survey highlighted that gender diverse people account for only 1% of directing positions, and were not represented in producing or writing. This is shocking and shows that more needs to be done to seek out and hold a place for gender diverse and trans people. It is great to see the positive steps being taken to support more diverse storytelling in terms of culture, however, with more robust support of Māori, Pasifika, and People of Colour storytellers, including Asian storytellers bearing great fruit already. I hope this robust support continues, and increases at all levels.”

■ **WOMAN, GENDER DIVERSE, LGBTQIA+**

“... I see bright new people enter the industry who stand for each other and equality for genders. I see the support from my coworkers. I just don’t see the same attitude from anyone with a position of power.”

■ **WOMAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“Industry 101 training sessions for new crew such as the language and protocol of radios, introduction and interpretation of call sheets, who to go to for what, the lay out of tech and unit bases, movement orders and what to expect on location, managing pc envelopes, time sheets, etc. I’ve found myself going over a lot of these topics with new crew with one in tears of gratitude because no one had told her any of it.”

■ **WOMAN, WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE**

“As a young filmmaker and producer, I feel constantly intimidated by the industry and everything I don’t know. People seem very quick to criticise or judge you and there seems to be a pretty toxic culture online in the NZ Filmmakers group – particularly towards young or new filmmakers who don’t have budgets for creating films and ask for help/ advice or in-kind support. What is the right etiquette? What are the rules? It’s impossible to know without a mentor or some sort of system guiding you. I think part of the toxicity from people stems from the nature of our creative industry at large (i.e. Unsustainable/creatives not being paid/paid enough for their work).

But this isn’t just about pay and more about a general atmosphere I feel – I’ve been spoken to rudely just asking about the best way to transport talent, or asking someone for their rates or even being aggressively asked to just speak my mind, and then being dropped off a project when I did. I think the general culture in the industry needs evolve towards a kinder, more inclusive space where it should not be acceptable to talk to people in a derogatory fashion. I think if people were upskilled in the right environment with mentors, we wouldn’t have this kind of behaviour being normalised or being trickled down.”

■ WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR

GENDER DIVERSE PEOPLE ARE THE MOST PUT UPON

There are 31 gender diverse people in the total sample of 809 and for them the experience of being in the workplace is particularly crushing.

Figure 11 shows how commonly they experience the 10 negative situations presented in the survey and indicates that every single gender diverse person had experienced at least one of the situations – not the case with any other minority group.

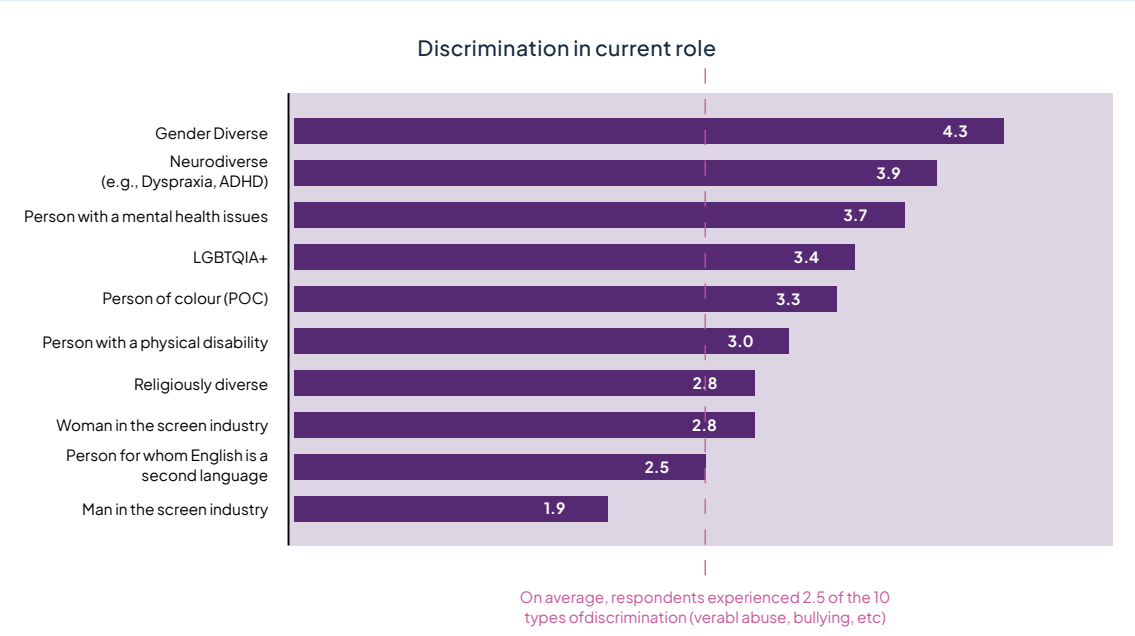


Figure 11. This chart shows gender diverse people experience discrimination and bullying more often than any other group.

Also, in a section of the survey about whether the “workplace or situation” met the ambitions and needs of those who worked there, gender diverse people scored lower than the average on half of the 12 questions.

4.5 Funding methodology must be part of any strategy

Ultimately, content is the focus of all industry activity. Ideas and concepts motivate and drive businesses and the workforce groups and regroup around development and production. Content and how it is financed cannot be left out of any discussion about the future landscape.

Respondents were not directly asked to comment on funding policy, decision making or needs but with 84% of those who filled in the survey being writers, directors or producers, many referenced the funding of content when asked what they wanted to change.

As already discussed in this report, Māori believe that they receive an inadequate share of resources and that funding decisions are made by the wrong people. There are also concerns around who has control of production processes and ownership of IP.

Women and people who identify with minority groups bring up similar points of view, providing many variations on comments such as “I would like to see stories about minorities actually being told by minorities” and “nothing about us without us”.

Some voiced their exasperation at themselves and their stories always being seen as “the other”, including one who noted that while it guaranteed constant work, it maintained social and racial hierarchies. Several talked of being boxed in by expectations. One of “being pigeon holed, stereotyped or typecast into creating content that is comedic just because I am polynesian”.

“Stop under-funding diversity schemes. Create quotas in each fund. The ghettoisation of “diversity” ensures that diverse people won’t be able to access main stream funding.”

■ **WOMAN**

“I would like there to be greater acknowledgment that many of us in the industry who aren’t Pākehā, cisgender, heterosexual, able bodied, middle class etc. We tend not to operate just as individual storytellers. Instead we commit to stories that can’t be told alone, and we draw on others’ knowledge, skills and passion, and reciprocate. This is a highly powerful way of working, and I would like the screen sector to acknowledge this more, to value what we bring to the table as a community of storytellers. Targets and celebrating individual success is fine, but at the end of the day we are working to a deeper kaupapa. I think the industry could learn a lot from how we are already working, and let us in to do the work that will only improve the future health and innovation of our storytelling culture.”

■ **GENDER DIVERSE, LGBTQIA+**

“I am a mixed race queer woman. I experience discrimination constantly. Whether it’s outright rejection or sometimes what I would consider worse: people using my name and my identities to tick their funding app boxes.”

■ **LGBTQIA+, PERSON OF COLOUR**

“Firstly, zero tolerance for the crappy behaviour that has seen the industry be a lads space for so long. Whether this is creatively in scripts and direction, on set from all cast and crew, or in the post production and distribution stages – we’re done with that now and that message needs to be unanimous. The gate-keepers of distributors / platforms / advertising \$ are still largely skewing white, young and male and so there is still a focus on developing stories for this market. This results in the creation of a lot of content that feels like things that have been made before, and largely keeps female and gender diverse ways of looking at the world out of contention, and those creators out of the writers room and directors chair. We need to get RISKIER, that’s where the magic will come!”

■ **WOMAN, LGBTQIA+**

“The years & years of an inadequate NZFC gender policy are like a chronic illness.”

WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+, WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY, NEUROLOGICALLY DIVERSE

“While there are steps to getting there, I think everyone should remember that the ultimate goal is fairness and inclusion across the board – and that goes beyond special scholarships or development funding for people of colour to make low-budget projects. So often I feel like I’m thrown in the “diversity” pile and that I’m expected to make loudly Asian or female work. I just want to make WORK and I know my work stands up well against everyone else’s. The ultimate goal should be for everybody to be going for the same funding/opportunities with equal likelihood that they’ll get it where their gender/ethnicity/sexual orientation/etc. is concerned. Diversity funding is an insult, women’s awards are an insult. It’s part of the process to achieve fairness, but these things are not long-term solutions. Diversity funding may as well be called “good, but not white good” funding.”

PERSON OF COLOUR, LGBTQIA+

As discussed earlier in this report, many women complain of how women are depicted on screen.

Surprisingly few women put the argument that the stories they wanted to tell were overlooked. Those who did also argued that this kind of work had a real chance of success precisely because of its difference. It fits what some others say, which is that New Zealand’s competitive advantage lies with niche films.

“... I need to see stories being funded that are of the enlightened feminine, that are not welded to the plodding five-part-plot, like your body is welded to gravity. It is no use having exactly 50% woman leaders in the industry, if they still have to put on their man-pants and tell man-stories in a masculine-linear narrative structure. ... You also think that you need to fund ‘manstream’ projects, because they will earn the money? But you really need to ask yourselves whether the fair to middling box

office take, project after project, is enough to warrant the continual suppression of the intuitive, innovative and potentially resonant break-through projects that may result from taking a few risks with ‘alternative’ stories.”

“... there is an ingrained unconscious bias against female point of view and women filmmakers in general. Women’s approach to storytelling is often perceived as not dramatic enough, that not enough happens. For many women writers, their focus is on stories important to women, the detail of relationships, intimacy, anxiety, forgiveness and the inner world which has a subtle arc and does not always ‘jump off’ the page. This kind of storytelling is often passed by, yet it connects with women’s experience and speaks to a female audience. The female audience is consistently undervalued even though there is clear evidence through research that women both in NZ and overseas make the purchasing decisions in households, and the decisions of which films to see. Numerous stories that speak to women have done well financially yet financiers (VERY predominantly men) have continued not to financially back female directors, female POV and films that speak to a female audience. Nor do these films receive substantial marketing support – which in turn affects box office. But most importantly financing is key – funding agencies can create programmes to develop films by women but unless they can be financed there will not be significant progression for women and other marginalized groups in reaching audience. The film industry is inherently sexist and biased in this way as well as racist. There is the constant burble about the “market”, the film festival circuit and the “market” is predominantly sexist, racist, elitist and fetishises and exoticises indigenous culture. I do hope that in the challenging times we see for films to make box office returns economic imperatives of capitalism to ‘grow the market’ and reach new audiences force those pale, stale male financiers to back diversity. I think there will be quite a lag but genuinely hope for ‘critical mass’ to create meaningful

change and not just the current lip service. This is a systemic and a societal issue reflecting white male privilege. It's a long road to men giving up that power base."

■ WOMAN

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH GOOD PEOPLE

Survey participants who had worked with mentors, were asked what advice they had received.

A key thread is that people are counselled to be themselves and stand up for themselves, develop resilience, learn to be confident, expect fair treatment, communicate effectively and trust that things are changing for the better.

A second key thread is to surround themselves with a positive and supportive network, to develop a team of trusted collaborators and to put the energy into the work. One woman talks of how "the old girls' network" helped her find her feet back in the industry after raising children and supporting her husband's film business. "It worked just as well as the old boys' version", she says.

The mentors also say be kind and fair, show respect and do not exploit others.

What screen content should and should not be funded by the public purse is often raised. The dominant view is that reflecting New Zealand's society is the priority, one person calling it "sewing diversity and a diversity of identity into the fabric of NZ cinema and TV".

The notion that film should have a positive influence on society and on people's lives got quite a bit of traction. As did film as an artform. In contrast, one person railed against ideology driving funding decisions.

"There's awesome outcomes when people see themselves and their peoples on screen".

■ MAN, LGBTQIA+

"... the power films have to make humanity feel less alone. I want my energy to go into something that matters and I believe art in all it's forms matters now more than ever."

■ WOMAN

Others see commercial potential is of great importance. A couple of people suggest that "New Zealand film" is defined too narrowly.

One respondent advocated for "one institution tasked with growing the industry commercially, and a completely separate one to promote culture". Whether all film proposals can neatly fit this scenario is questionable – and then there is the challenge of predicting success.

Other comments are all knotted up in whether agencies should lean towards funding low or high budget films.

A common perception is that young, diverse, and other excluded filmmakers have more chance of getting a green light if there is a big pipeline of low-budget films, in part because funders do not feel too exposed to financial risk. In contrast, those arguing for bigger budgets say money buys the production values that attract audiences and sales – and gives infrastructure and service companies a boost along the way.

A number of comments demonstrate confusion over the funding priorities of New Zealand's funding agencies. The confusion could be caused by a lack of clarity on policy, by policies not being well communicated or by policies not borne out by funding decisions – or something else entirely – but the confusion definitely exists.

EXCELLENCE PLUS EIGHT CONSIDERATIONS ARE USED IN AUSTRALIA

Many considerations go into funding decisions by government authorities.

Head of Production at Screen Australia, Sally Caplan, says excellence is the key criteria for choosing what feature films the agency will invest in or provide grant money to. She defines excellence as “a well-crafted script and a capable talented team likely to deliver the best possible version of the film, which will entertain and challenge, educate, provoke, move and/or amuse its intended audience”. She adds that projects have to be budgeted appropriately.

An eight-point checklist of other key considerations is also applied: cultural merit; level of regionalism; whether the project is commercial/market driven; the level of innovation and risk; whether it balances the slate in terms of being by and about females; whether it contains diversity; does it aid talent development or careers; does it support established talent.²³

The conviction that some assessment criteria exclude minority groups comes through loud and clear, as does the need to show sensitivity to marginalised people. They might not have the financial privilege that has helped others survive, including the person who says “I feel very lucky that I can afford to do the job I do.

“Funding/Workshops for Māori and Pacific female filmmakers to help them develop ideas during the pre-development phase from concept to fine-tuned competitive treatment. We earn the lowest average wage than any other ethnic and gender groups in this country. This means that when we sacrifice time to develop these ideas, we are sacrificing more (e.g For every \$1.00 a Pākehā man will earn, a Pākehā woman will earn \$0.87, Asian woman \$0.77, Māori \$0.72 and Pasifika \$0.67. This means that a Pacific woman must work more hours to cover the time she has sacrificed to develop these ideas than a Pākehā man and woman). Once you add all the other societal challenges that Pacific and Māori women face (more likely to be single Mothers, less likely to own our own home, more likely to experience depression etc etc etc) before we even get to the point of applying to funds the challenges we face are HUGE. This must be addressed if we are to encourage real equity within our industry.”

■ WOMAN, PERSON OF COLOUR

The need to support writers is frequently voiced – variations on “everything builds from the script” are common. A reminder: 33% of respondents are writers.

Other pleas are more idiosyncratic: a series that allows new voices to be heard, for example, and a feature entirely made by women. Some want help to build relationships with international streaming platforms and US agents.

²³ <https://www.screenaustralia.gov.au/sa/screen-news/2018/02-14-why-screen-australia-backs-the-films-it-does/part-1-excellence-is-the-key-criteria>

KEY OBSERVATIONS

- An all-of-industry approach is the only way to ensure that respect and inclusion becomes part of the DNA of the screen production landscape.
- People from minority groups should have a big role in deciding what sort of change is of most benefit. There would be much value in providing the relevant raw data to each group to help devise solutions.
- COVID-19 lockdowns have seen learning via videoconferencing and online communications blossom. This technology could be used to lower the cost of training and increase its accessibility, including to regional filmmakers. It could also enable a new kind of intensive mentoring.
- There are high levels of discomfort, disrespect, and distress in the industry generally. Change may help everyone to keep safe.
- Levers could be used to accelerate generational change. Young people already in the industry could be supported more, for example, and the targeted recruitment of more young people could be undertaken in conjunction with the tertiary sector and community groups. With guidance and training they are in a good position to create content that revitalises the national slate, attracts their peers and interests new distribution platforms.
- With so much of New Zealand's drama funding coming from government agencies, those agencies have a lot of power to make change on the gender, diversity, and inclusion front.
- Age-old discussions persist about commerce vs culture, low vs high budget and so on and agencies need to be clear about their views.

**For further information on this research
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