

Raising Their Voices:

Independent Review into Sexual Harm, Sexual Harassment,
and Systemic Discrimination in the National Music Industry

NOTE: This is a report summary compiled by the Plain English Foundation.
For the full report, please visit musicindustryreview.com.au

Acknowledgements

Lead Reviewer	Alexandra Shehadie
Senior Expert Consultant	Sam Turner
General Counsel	Prabha Nandagopal
Expert Adviser	Bobbie Trower
Senior Researcher & Liaison	Grace Gardiner

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Overview

Findings

This review found unacceptable levels of sexual harm, sexual harassment and systemic discrimination in the contemporary music industry in Australia. The data reveals widespread risk, inequality and discrimination for many. Women and diverse, marginalised groups are more likely than men to suffer sexual harassment and bullying.

People in the industry are passionate and committed. But there are significant systemic risks and cultural challenges. These facilitate harm and unacceptable behaviour, and mean that perpetrators are rarely held to account.

Case for change

Changing Australia's music industry workplace culture requires urgent action. An industry-wide response is needed, and industry leaders and influential figures must drive the change and commit to safety, inclusion and respect.

The review has made 17 recommendations to achieve this. They reflect:

- the voices of the review participants
- advice of industry leaders, influencers and participants
- relevant policies and data
- best-practice examples from overseas and local industries.

Recommendations

The 17 recommendations are underpinned by 6 principles that will help the music industry take advantage of the momentum for change, improve its culture, and ensure that everyone can thrive and succeed.

Principles	Summary of recommendations
Industry-wide cultural reform	Establish a Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council to implement a code of conduct, an independent safe space, and awareness campaigns.
Courageous leadership	Acknowledge the harm done and commit to cultural reform.
A zero-harm approach	Treat sexual harm, harassment, bullying and discrimination as a workplace health and safety issue.
Diversity, equity and inclusion	Address the underrepresentation of diverse groups, increase women's participation and link funding to diversity.
Person-centric reporting	Ensure reports of harm are treated seriously, sensitively and promptly.
Monitoring and evaluation	Collect data on diversity and evaluate the industry's progress.

The following summary outlines the key findings, the case for change, all recommendations and our research methods.

1. Key findings

The review found unacceptable levels of harm and discrimination in the industry and pinpointed the cultural factors that enable these behaviours. It also identified how the industry can address these problems and why it is in a strong position to do so.

The survey data is sobering.

Sexual harassment and bullying are widespread

- 55% of participants reported sexual harassment or harm during their career in the music industry, including 74% of women and 39% of men
- 40% of women and 26% of men experienced sexual harassment in the past 5 years
- 76% of participants had been bullied during their career in the music industry
- 74% of participants had been bullied in past 5 years, including 81% of women, 67% of men and 86% of people identifying as additional genders.

Perpetrators are mostly male

- 74% of the perpetrators of sexual harassment were men (25% were female)
- 67% of those reported to be bullies were men (28% were women).

Bullies and harassers are often in senior roles

- 31% of bullying perpetrators were senior managers or business leaders
- 22% of sexual harassment perpetrators held positions of power.

Sexual harassment commonly occurs at music venues and events

- 72% of sexual harassment happened at music venues, festivals or on tour
- 51% of bullying occurred at an office or work-related event.

Perpetrators are rarely held accountable

People fear speaking out because they are worried about their career or wellbeing:

- 82% did not report incidents of sexual harm or harassment
- only 3% made a formal complaint about sexual harassment
- 57% of those who did complain were dissatisfied with the outcome.

Everyday sexism is widespread

91% of women experience sexism from senior managers, supervisors or other leaders, including:

- being paid less than male colleagues
- having fewer leadership opportunities
- seeing their contributions devalued through “mansplaining”, interruptions and over-talking.

Young people and people of diverse backgrounds are at risk

First Nations people, People of Colour, people with disability and LGBTIQ+ people often experience discrimination and are denied opportunities. Young people are particularly at risk of poor employment conditions as they often work unpaid.

Cultural factors normalise poor behaviour and facilitate harm

Factors that facilitate harmful behaviour in the industry include:

- its male-dominated culture, availability of alcohol and lack of workplace regulation

- inconsistent workplace requirements such as parental leave, flexible arrangements, and work health and safety protections.

The industry is ready for change

To effect change, a whole-of-industry approach is needed that takes advantage of:

- the strong appetite for widespread and sustainable cultural change
- the desire for industry leaders and influencers to champion and lead change.

2. The Case for Change

In the wake of #MeToo, many industries recognise the moral, legal and business imperative of positive, healthy workplace cultures that are safe for all. But the Australian music industry has not yet recognised this or made any industry-wide changes.

Some argue that the music industry is complex, and point out challenges such as:

- the large number and diversity of workplaces
- the high proportion of freelancers, 'gig economy' workers and small organisations
- the lack of job security for many workers
- the passion people have for music, which may lead them to accept poor practices and behaviour.

Yet all music industry workers have the right to safe and respectful working environments, and employers and industry leaders must ensure music industry workers' wellbeing is a priority.

Moral, legal and business reasons compel action

The human cost of allowing misconduct to flourish is devastating. Organisations and industries must take a proactive approach, and the music industry is no exception.

The business imperative of a safe, inclusive and respectful work environment is clear. Research by Deloitte found that in 2018, workplace sexual harassment alone cost the Australian economy \$3.5 billion, including \$2.6 billion in lost productivity.

Sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination at work severely affects people's physical and mental health. Because women (and people who experience other forms of discrimination) are more at risk, the impact on their participation in the music industry is profound.

The right to physical and psychological safety at work is enshrined in legislation and international human rights agreements. Yet the review found the music industry does not consistently apply policies and systems that protect its workers. As a starting point, the industry must ensure its workplaces comply with all legal requirements to guarantee workers' rights.

3. Recommendations

The full report makes 17 recommendations that provide a blueprint for the industry to become a global leader prioritising safety, inclusion and respect. These require courage, commitment and dedication.

Sustainable change requires industry-wide cultural reform championed by its leaders. Piecemeal, ad hoc strategies will not address sexual harm, harassment and discrimination.

Recommendations 1–8 are about setting up a Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council to drive reform. Recommendations 9–17 call on industry leaders, artists, music organisations, industry bodies, employers (and the Council) to take the practical steps.

Principle		Cultural reform in the music industry
Responsibility		Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council
1 & 2	Establish a Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council	to mobilise the industry, drive cultural reform and oversee of the report's recommendations.
3	Develop a Music Industry Code of Conduct	to prevent sexual harm, sexual harassment, bullying and systemic discrimination.
4	Consider options for compliance with the Code	to ensure organisations and individuals sign up to the code and comply with it.
5 & 6	Establish an independent safe space	that is trauma-informed, culturally appropriate and available for people to confidentially disclose and report harm covered by the Code of Conduct.
7	Identify options to independently investigate breaches of the Code of Conduct	to ensure a fair, transparent and confidential process, including procedures for handling historical incidents and sanctions for non-compliance.
8	Develop and implement 2 education and awareness campaigns	to increase awareness of the prevalence, nature and impacts of sexual harm, sexual harassment, bullying and systemic discrimination, and so employers and workers understand their rights and obligations in the workplace.

Principle		Courageous and inclusive leadership
Responsibility		Industry leaders, business owners, influential artists
9	Deliver a Statement of Acknowledgment	acknowledging the harm caused by sexual harassment, bullying and discrimination,

		including a commitment to reform and accountability.
10	Commit to cultural reform	by visibly prioritising prevention of harm, championing the Code of Conduct, supporting staff training, ensuring proportionate consequences for perpetrators, and reporting to the Council.

Principle		A zero-harm approach
Responsibility		Music organisations and business owners
11	Take a zero-harm approach to prevention	by treating sexual harm, sexual harassment, bullying and systemic discrimination as a workplace health and safety issue, and taking risk-based, proactive steps to prevent harm.

Principle		Diversity, equality and inclusion
Responsibility		Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council, industry leaders and business owners, boards, industry bodies, event organisers
12	Commission a review of the experiences of diverse groups in the music industry, designed and led by First Nations people	to address underrepresentation and treatment of First Nations people, People of Colour, people with disability and LGBTIQ+ people, and identify barriers to their participation in the industry.
13	Set targets and actions to increase women's representation	to include event programming, award nominations and leadership roles.
14	Link inclusion and representation to public funding outcomes	by asking funding candidates to sign up to the music industry Code of Conduct and meet criteria for gender and diversity.

Principle		A human-centric response to reports of harm
Responsibility		Music organisations
15	Adopt internal reporting and response mechanisms	to ensure reports are treated seriously and dealt with promptly, including through mediation and formal investigation.

Principle		Embedding, sustaining, monitoring and evaluating cultural reform
Responsibility		Contemporary Music Industry Cultural Reform Council
16	Develop a monitoring and evaluation framework	to regularly collect data on the representation of women and diverse groups in the industry.

17	Review the progress of cultural reform	by doing a follow-up review to assess how well the recommendations have been implemented.
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4. This report

This review was commissioned by a temporary working group on behalf of the Australian music industry. The group commissioned MAPN Consulting to:

- understand the extent of the problem
- identify strategies to prevent and respond to harm.

Aims

The review aimed to:

- elevate the voices of those who have experienced harm
- understand their experiences and expectations
- identify the drivers and risk factors
- assess the structures, policies and practices that prevent or respond to harm
- develop best-practice recommendations.

Methods

The review team took a mixed-methods approach to data collection, based on:

- the principles of independence, inclusion and confidentiality
- a commitment to voluntary, trauma-informed and evidence-based data.

The team prioritised the voices of First Nations artists and workers, People of Colour, people with disability and LGBTIQ+ people in data collection.

Primary data

- 266 one-on-one interviews online or by telephone
- an online survey completed by 1271 music industry workers
- 16 online focus groups with 52 participants
- written submissions from 25 individuals and 7 organisations.

Secondary data

- review of academic literature and earlier reviews of creative industries
- analysis of policies and processes in music organisations and comparable industries
- review of relevant laws and data
- consultations with music industry stakeholders and representatives from government, regulatory bodies and the academic sector.