

THE PRESSURE POINT REPORT

AUSTRALIAN SCREEN INDUSTRY MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING SURVEY

PRELIMINARY SURVEY FINDINGS 2025

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and acknowledge their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past and present.

CONTENT WARNING

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Executive Summary

The preliminary results of the Australian Screen Industry Mental Health & Wellbeing Survey come from a comprehensive study developed and implemented over two years within the Australian screen industry. The survey highlights some positive aspects regarding job engagement, social support and some aspects of job satisfaction within the industry. Presented in The Pressure Point Report, the survey also reveals and sheds light on significant challenges regarding mental health, workplace culture, and working conditions within the Australian screen industry. The findings underscore systemic issues that impact the overall wellbeing of workers, reflecting an ongoing need for system- and organisational-level interventions that go well beyond support at the individual level.

Why was this research conducted?

Previous research both in Australia and internationally indicates that mental health and wellbeing in the entertainment industry is generally poor and is still recovering from the impact of COVID-19. However, a comprehensive understanding of mental health in the Australian screen industry is lacking at the national level. With this in mind, the aim of this study was to investigate the mental health and wellbeing of individuals who work in the Australian screen industry, including filmmakers, actors, associated screen crew, production companies, service providers, and other associated businesses and institutions. The aim included the identification of factors that contribute to their relative health and wellbeing or ill health and stress.

Who took part in the survey?

The survey was open from June to November 2024 for individuals aged 18 and over, studying or working within the screen industry in Australia, with a total of 1367 individuals participating. After data cleaning and statistical screening, 864 responses were retained for analysis. The participants included workers from all sectors including film, games, animation, actors, service providers, suppliers, students and educators.

What is in the preliminary report?

The Pressure Point Report presents some of the initial results and key findings. Additional results, including thematic analyses and further implications, require further analysis.

Notes: For ease of understanding in the preliminary report, In the statements of results below, “Disagreed” is a combination of Strongly Disagree and Somewhat Disagree, and “Dissatisfied” is a combination of Dissatisfied and Strongly Dissatisfied and so on. Where the sum of percentages are over 100%, participants have identified to belong to more than one group or multi-choice answer.

SUMMARY KEY STATISTICS

Our findings in The Pressure Point Report highlight the following most critical areas and key statistics relevant to the industry as a whole.

1. Engagement

76% of participants reported feeling proud of the work they do, often or all the time.

2. General Mental Health

72% disagreed that the Australian screen industry is a mentally healthy place to work.

3. Burnout

57% reported feeling worn out at the end of the working day, either a lot or all the time.

59% are struggling with work/life balance and reported to have little to no life outside of work.

4. Intentions to Leave

36% of participants have considered quitting their job often or all the time in the past six months.

1/4 of the screen industry workforce are planning their exit within six months.

5. Negative Workplace Acts

Work Culture

62% face pressure not to claim basic entitlements like sick leave, holiday pay, or travel expenses.

48% assigned tasks with unreasonable deadlines on a frequent basis.

Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination

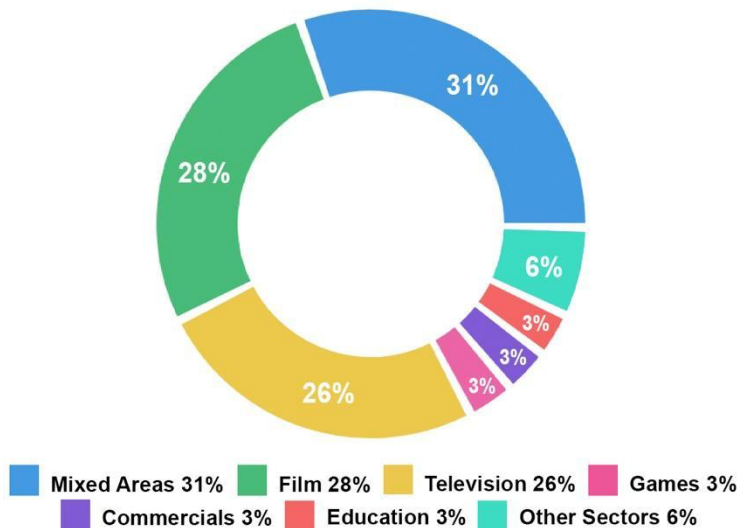
48% experienced bullying in the past year

“Being a former trauma informed Counsellor, with a long background in the health, community services, sales and education, I’d have to say that all aspects of the film, tv and theatre, dance and live performing arts events industries are still decades behind other industries on work life balance, mental health, workplace and industry culture and psychological safety.”

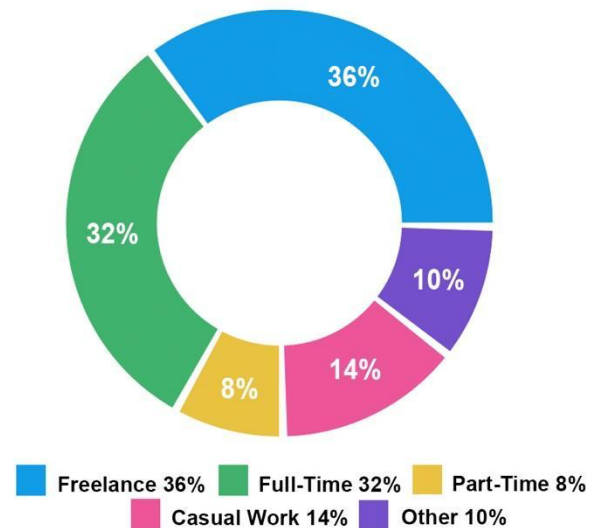
PARTICIPANTS | DEMOGRAPHICS

The Australian industry is dynamic and is made up of many roles and types of working arrangements making it complex to navigate, research, and support.

Screen Industry Sector Distribution



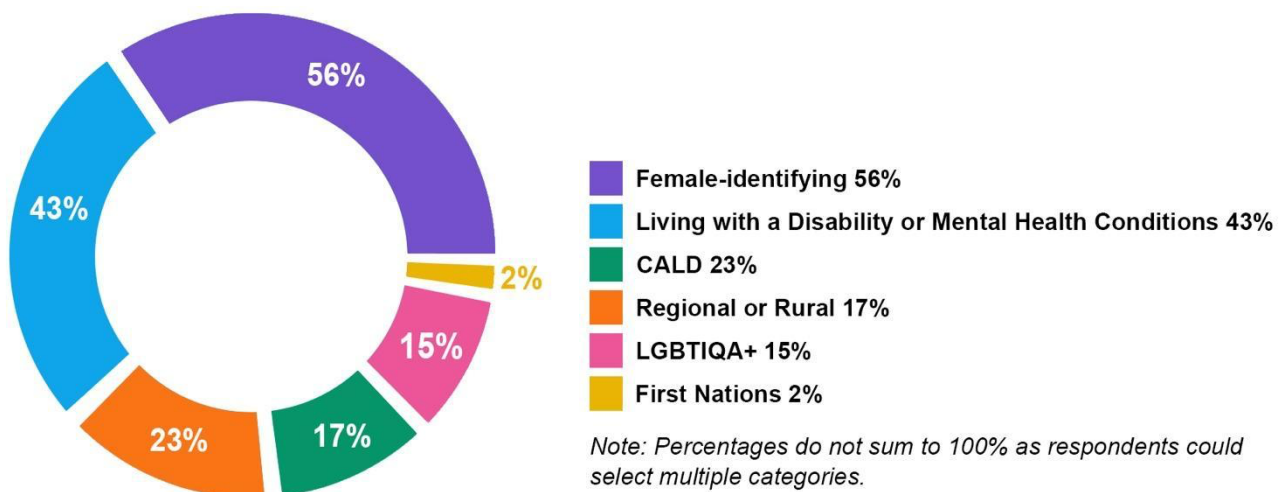
Screen Industry Employment Type



Note: 'Other Sectors' include Corporate Videos, Marketing and Publicity, Animation, Student/Intern, Screen Agency, Supplies, and miscellaneous categories (each representing less than 2% of respondents).

The survey captures a wide cross-section of industry voices, providing valuable insights across different demographic groups including women, people from culturally diverse backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people living with a mental health condition, impairment, or disability, and regional practitioners, though First Nations and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Island storytellers' participation was notably limited. Due to low First Nations participation, further targeted engagement is planned to better understand their unique experiences and ensure their perspectives are accurately represented.

Diversity in the Screen Industry



INDUSTRY KEY FINDINGS

THEME 1: PASSION & ENGAGEMENT

Engagement

Overall work engagement (based on measures of vigour, dedication, and absorption) reflect a passionate and highly engaged workforce, which appears to be higher than most other sectors of the workforce.

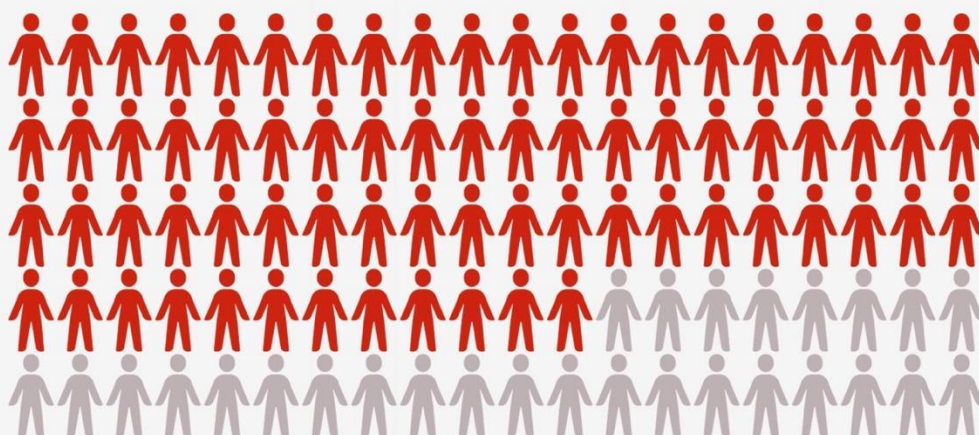


76% of screen industry workers reported feeling proud of the work they do.



69% were immersed in their work.

The Paradox: Passion vs. Wellbeing



72% of respondents say the Australian Screen Industry is not a mentally healthy place to work.

"I have been in the industry for 32 years both in Australia and overseas – there is NO denying that it is exciting, highly creative and interesting – well paid at its best – stressful with extreme conditions, long hours and very little job stability that brings out the worst in people at its worst."

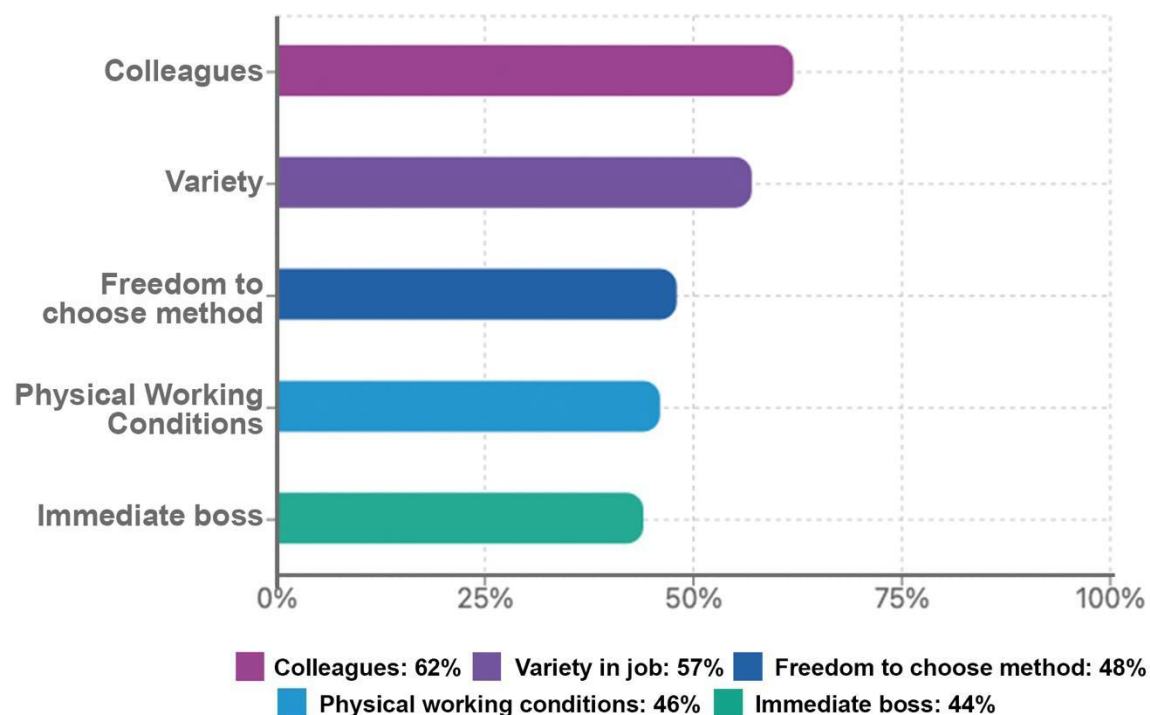
THE PRESSURE POINT REPORT

Work Satisfaction

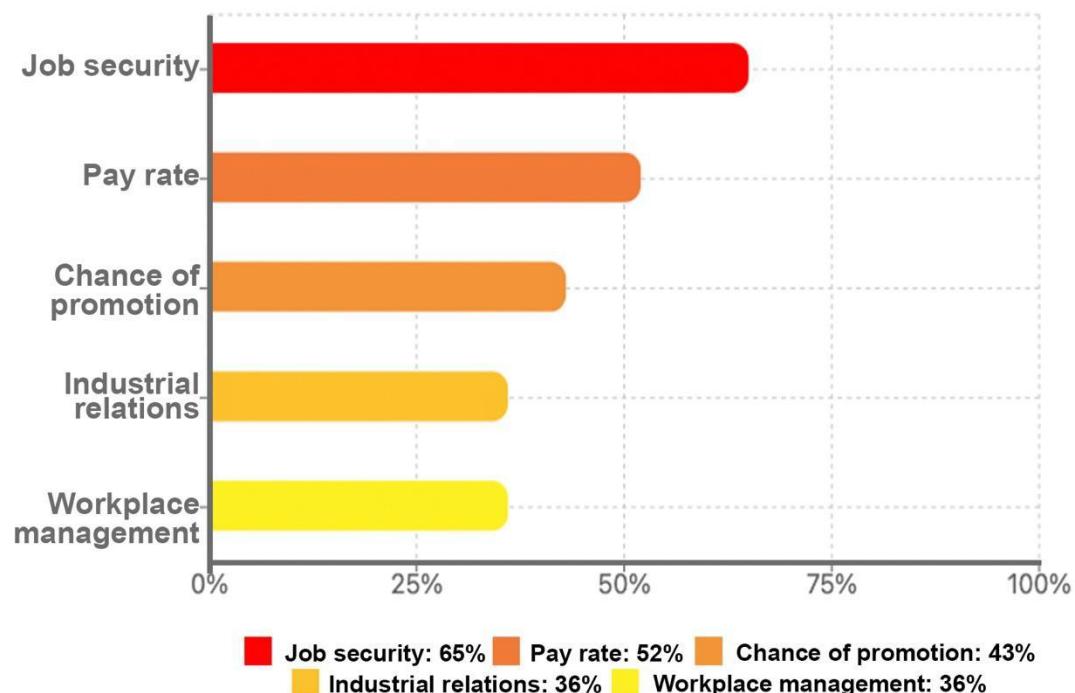
Screen Industry professionals derive significant workplace satisfaction from positive colleague relationships, job variety, and autonomy in their work approach. However, they express considerable dissatisfaction with their employment stability, compensation, and advancement opportunities.

Screen Industry professionals value good colleagues, variety, and autonomy, but face frustration over job insecurity, low pay, and limited growth.

Work Satisfaction



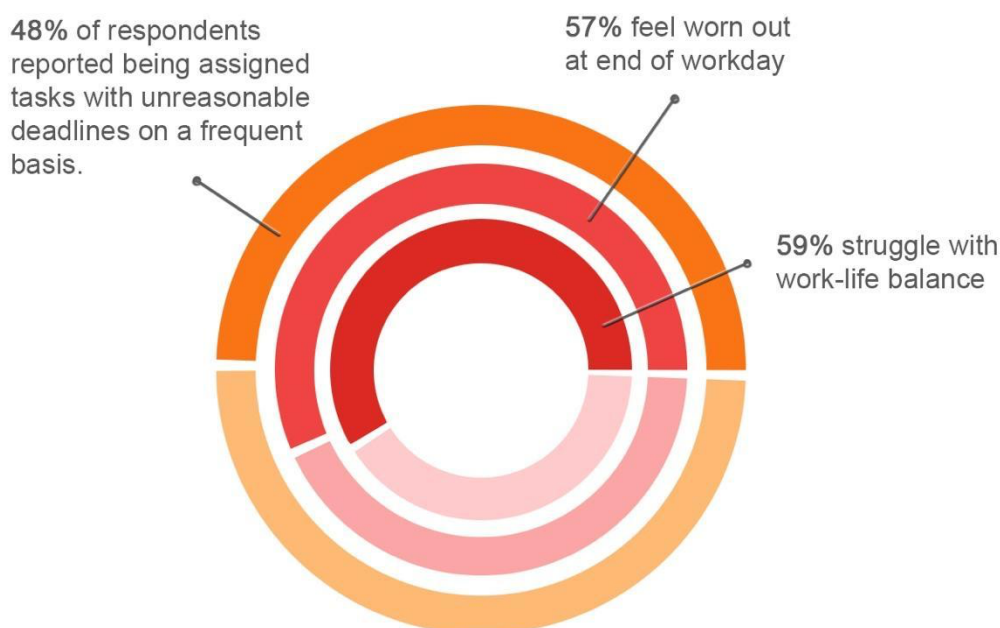
Work Dissatisfaction



THEME 2: BURNOUT & CAREER SUSTAINABILITY

Burnout

Workers across the Australian screen industry are experiencing critical levels of burnout, constantly struggling against unrealistic deadlines that leave them completely exhausted by day's end. Many find it nearly impossible to maintain any meaningful life outside of work, missing important personal events and family moments due to professional demands. The severity of burnout in the sector has reached alarming levels, comparable to the well-documented exhaustion experienced by healthcare professionals worldwide.

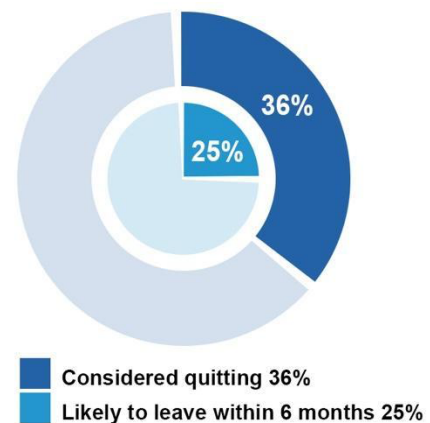
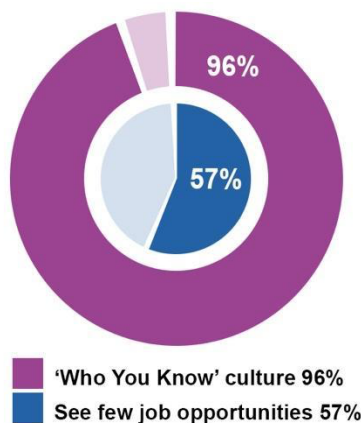


"After 38yrs in the Industry as a Gaffer & Lighting Services supplier, I find myself emotionally & financially totally exhausted, because of the enormous demands & fickleness & complete lack of security of employment we face. It may be easy for some who only have a mobile & laptop, but for those like me who invest so heavily because of the demands, it's devastating, & I now find myself at retirement age with no Home, no Marriage, no Family, no Work, & no financial security whatsoever. So if you want to talk about stress & Mental Health, chew that over?"

Career Sustainability

The Australian Screen Industry stands at a critical juncture with a significant portion of professionals actively contemplating leaving their roles, and many already planning their departure within months. This concerning workforce instability exists within a professional culture where networking and connections are perceived as essential for advancement rather than merit or expertise. Looking ahead, many practitioners see a troubled future with restricted professional growth opportunities, raising critical questions about the sustainability and direction of the Australian Screen Industry.

Workplace Culture and Intention to Leave



“An incredibly tricky industry to navigate where promotion seems to be tied to access and association. Not what you know, it's who you know. Incompetence is rewarded if you have the right connections. No clear path to success. Endless and extremely often unrealistic deadlines. Extreme exploitation of labour and skills during the first decade of my career. All culminating in an over competitive, narrowly focused and stress filled industry that acts more in lip-service than cultivating a healthy, vibrant and psychologically safe industry.”

THEME 3: GENERAL MENTAL HEALTH IN THE SCREEN INDUSTRY

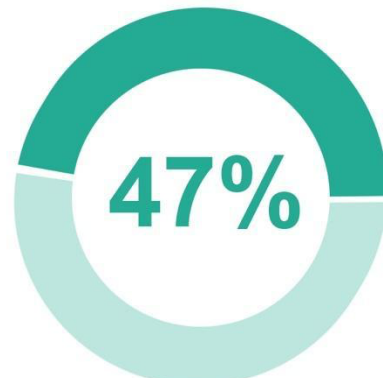
¾ of our workforce have needed mental health support specifically because of their work in the industry.

General Perceptions

The Australian screen industry faces a significant mental health crisis, with most professionals viewing it as an unhealthy work environment where psychological wellbeing is not prioritised by management. Many screen industry workers report deteriorating mental health including depression, confidence loss, and decreased happiness, directly attributing these issues to their industry work. While most professionals feel they need mental health support due to their screen industry careers, they overwhelmingly seek help from external sources like mental health professionals and friends rather than workplace supervisors, highlighting a concerning disconnect between industry leadership and worker wellbeing.



48% of respondents reported losing confidence in themselves over the last few weeks.



47% felt unhappy or depressed more than usual.

Psychosocial Safety Climate

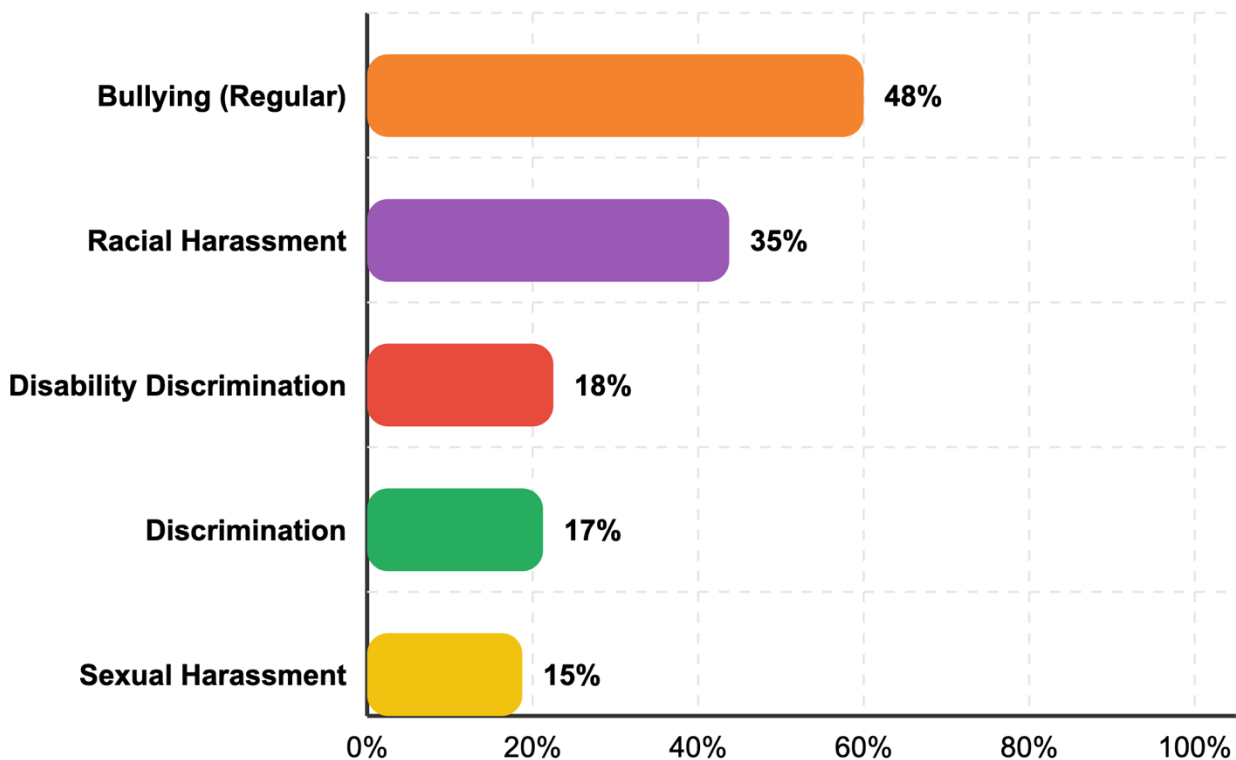
- 72% disagreed that the psychological wellbeing of workers is a priority for their organisation.
- 40% of respondents disagreed that management acts quickly to address psychological health issues in the workplace.
- 47% disagreed that people working in the Australian screen industry have supportive attitudes towards people experiencing mental health issues.

THEME 4: NEGATIVE ACTS, BULLYING, HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

General Perceptions

Our findings as part of the Pressure Point Report, reveal a deeply troubling workplace culture characterised by widespread bullying, harassment and discrimination, with underrepresented groups disproportionately affected. The current reporting system appears fundamentally broken, with many choosing not to report incidents due to legitimate fears of career damage and scepticism that meaningful change would result.

Workplace Culture



"Years ago I was physically assaulted by a crew member and it was not dealt with nor apologised for. In fact, the head of the department actually defended his colleague which was gob-smacking. Also I have been abused verbally by a Director in front of others a number of times – years ago. Producers did nothing nor apologised to me. I quit. I have seen positive change in the current climate, now that we are in 2024 but people can bully you or disparage you in more subtle ways these days."

Gender Spotlight

Women in the screen industry face significant mental health challenges and workplace adversities compared to their male counterparts, experiencing greater issues with unmanageable workloads and poor work-life balance. The gender disparities extend to alarming differences in sexual harassment experiences, with women reporting incidents at more than triple the rate of men, while qualitative evidence suggests an underlying gender pay gap throughout the industry.

No is not an option in this business, the pressure to achieve deadlines that are near impossible causing you to work long hours and weekends unpaid. As a female I find more is expected of me performance wise and I am often paid less as my male contemporaries. There is a pressure to prove myself.

Gender Disparities

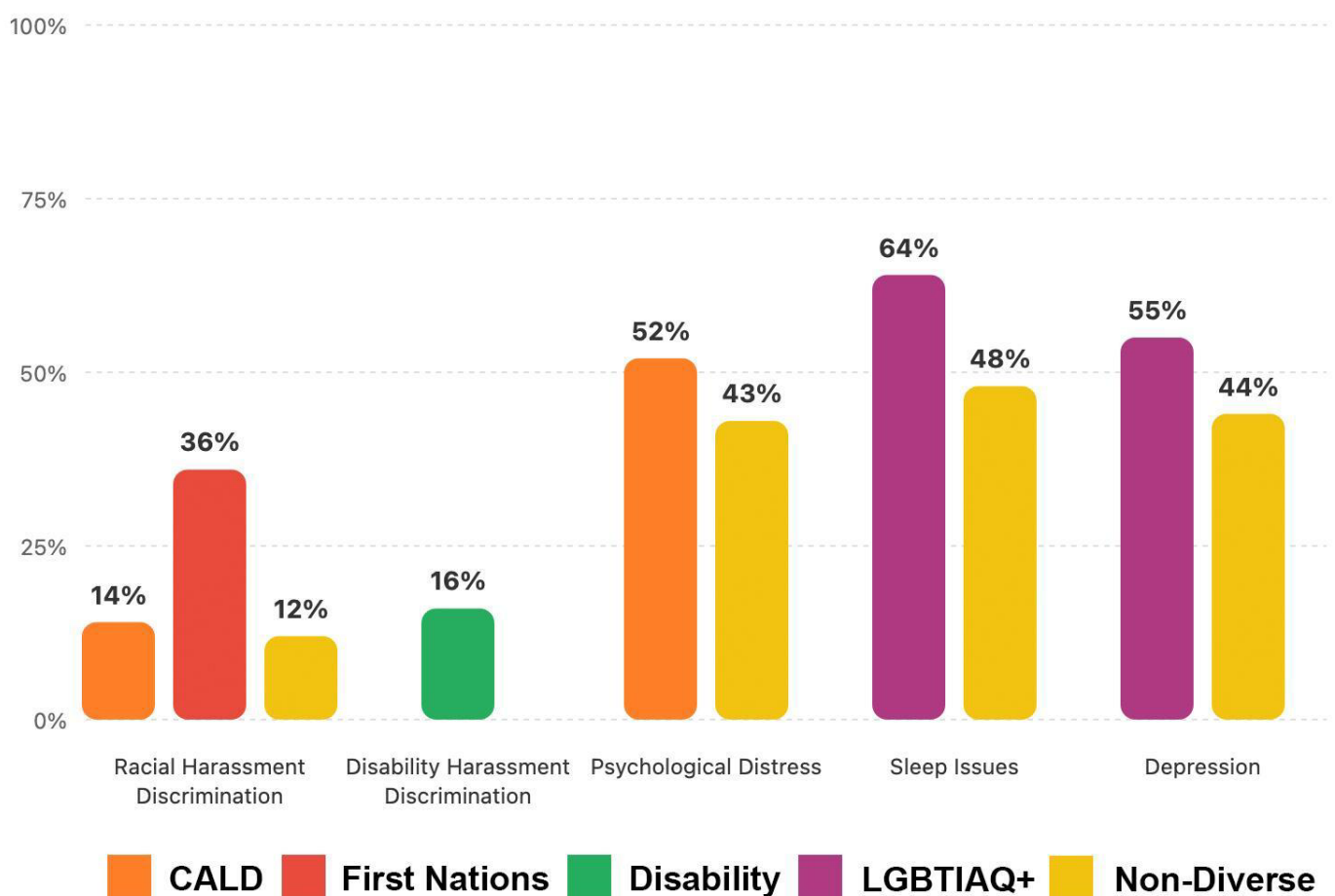


"I have witnessed disturbing ridicule towards women on set from all genders, gang mentality and disturbing behaviours by individuals to put down other crew members (usually female) in order to elevate themselves to ensure they are selected for the next job. It needs to be addressed. Crew working hours and travel times need to be addressed. Crews are exhausted which fuels poor behaviour".

Diversity Spotlight

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, LGBTIQA+, and practitioners with disabilities face significantly higher rates of negative experiences and subsequent mental health challenges.

Diversity Disparities



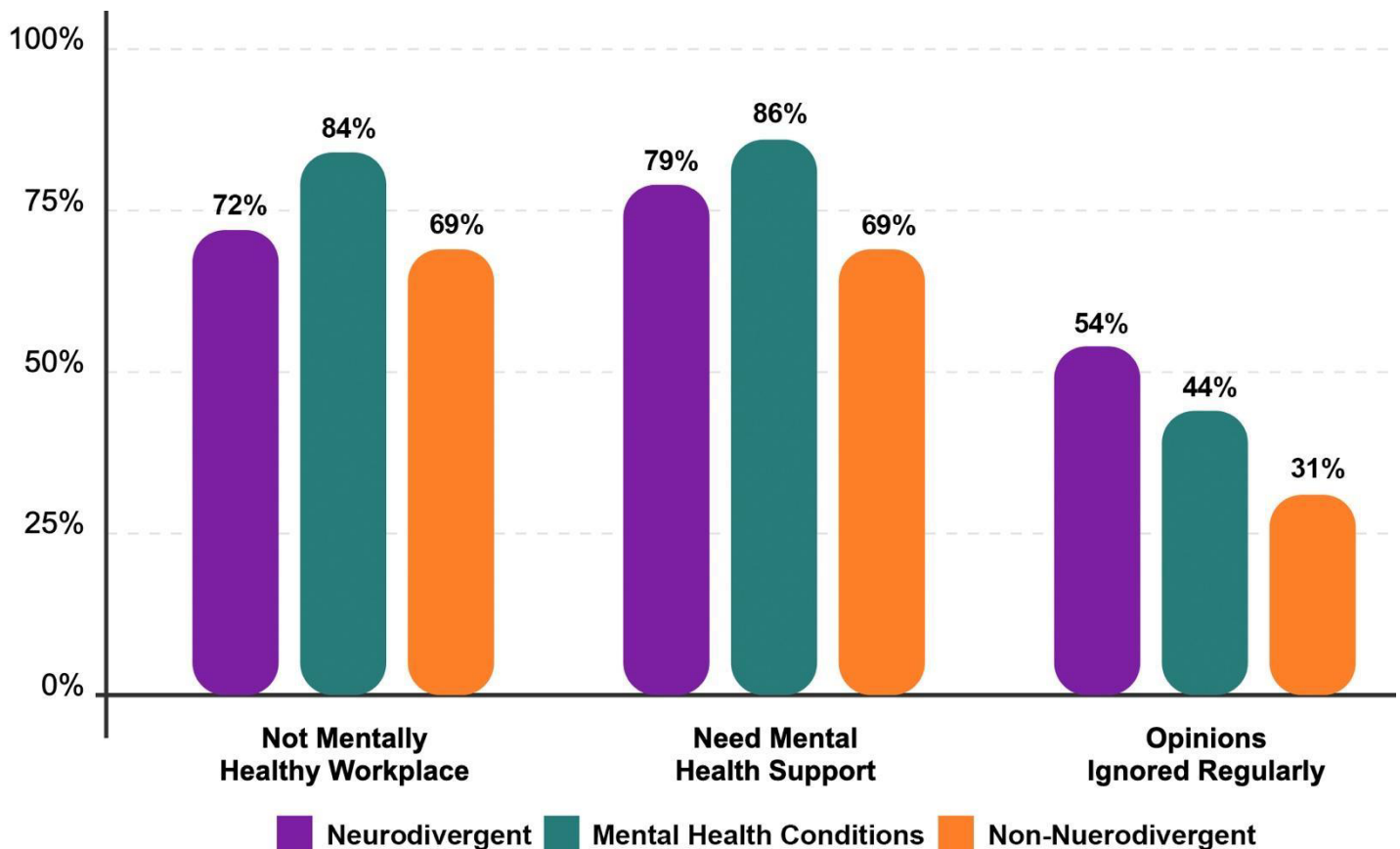
“Most of the disability and mental health related problems are very systemic and deeply internalised over the industry subculture. There is no governmental effort on supporting casual, or part-time roles over the industry so disabled people could have more sustainable workloads. It is almost impossible to find a part-time or casual industry related job and disabled people face the same heavy demands as others face.”

Neurodivergence and Mental Health Conditions

Industry professionals with mental health conditions or who are neurodivergent disproportionately experience negative workplace environments in the screen sector, reporting the highest rates of adverse interactions. These vulnerable groups consistently indicate that their professional opinions are routinely disregarded, further exacerbating their challenging workplace experiences.

“The drug and alcohol addiction of coworkers is spiralling out of control on a terrifying level as a result of extremely poor mental health support in the industry.”

Neurodivergent and Mental Health Conditions



“This production directly contributed to my trying to end my life at the end of the production.”

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Pressure Point Report highlights significant mental health, workplace culture, and job satisfaction issues within the Australian screen industry. High rates of bullying, harassment, and discrimination, coupled with poor work-life balance and job dissatisfaction, point to a need for urgent systemic reform. This industry needs more than a quick fix—it needs real, lasting change. While workers take pride in their work and continue to be engaged, the industry must prioritise improving workplace culture and resilience to create a healthier, more supportive environment that retains talent and enhances overall wellbeing. That means calling out toxic behaviour, backing workers with proper mental health support, and creating fair, safe conditions where people are treated with the respect they deserve.

The industry is made up of a variety of work types with varying challenges across departments and requires a comprehensive, holistic approach, involving education, skills training, support, and systemic reform at all levels – individual, production company, on-set culture, and governing policy – with the broader systemic levels of reform being the most powerful and long-lasting, yet the most challenging to achieve. The industry has reached a critical pressure point, where meaningful action can no longer be delayed.

Based on the survey results, the following general recommendations are the critical areas to focus further research and consultation to find prevention, mitigation, maintenance, and support strategies to create transformational change and help improve mental health and wellbeing outcomes in the Australian screen industry.

“I believe that we have a fundamental structural problem in the Australian screen industry that leads to poor mental health and wellbeing outcomes: it is dependent on the underpaid labour of contractors. The contractors are chronically underemployed but then overworked when engaged and are treated as an expendable and easily replaceable resource. These labour conditions are systematically inimical to good mental health. The pathway to success and popularity involves staying silent and absorbing unfair, harmful or even dangerous conditions. It is also the pathway to burnout and poor health.”

Overall recommendations

1. Mental Health Advocacy Group

Establish a mental health advocacy group that meets regularly to address issues relating to mental health in the industry.

2. Sustainable workload management practices

Implement sustainable workload management practices that enforce health & safety limits.

3. Psychological Safety Framework

Create a robust, practical psychological safety framework to report and address issues without fear of retaliation.

4. Mental Health, DEI, and Workplace Training

Provide comprehensive and inclusive mental health and workplace training for Heads of Departments.

5. Policy Reform

Collaborate with partners to instigate policy reform, implement industry governance, and provide ongoing industry support.

Content warning:

Some content contained in this report may have caused distress.

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Support Act Wellbeing Helpline - 1800 959 500

Lifeline - 13 11 14

Suicide Call Back Service - 1300 659 467

MensLine Australia - 1300 78 99 78

Beyond Blue - 1300 22 4636

Qlife - 1800 184 527

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