

Raising Films AUSTRALIA

Honey, I Hid the Kids!

Experiences of parents and
carers in the Australian Screen Industry

October 2018

PRESENTING PARTNERS



COLLABORATING PARTNER



FUNDING SUPPORT



Executive Summary

We need to care more about caring. In Australia, and around the world, parenting and caring is a crucial period and process in which inequality is perpetuated. Combining caring and labour is one of the most critical and vexed policy issues of the twenty-first century. This report concerns the impact of caring responsibilities on those who work in the Australian screen industry.

Nearly three-quarters of carers surveyed in this study (74%) report that their caring responsibilities have a negative impact on their career. Of these 86% were women. In particular, women working as freelancers on lower than median incomes experience a career penalty as a result of their caring (over 30% of carers who reported a negative impact on their careers belonged to this category).

This negative impact is further indicated by the number of women who reported nil to negative income and reduced employment opportunity while taking on caring responsibilities. Female carers with nil or negative income outnumber female non-carers in this income bracket more than 2 to 1.

Honey, I Hid the Kids!

It is especially concerning that many women report the elaborate lengths they go to in order to hide their caring status at work and keep their children “out of the picture”.

This admission of children’s invisibility is alarming. It reveals how care is devalued even by those who are doing it and normalises the idea that a productive environment is a world in which children and other dependents are neither seen nor heard (about).

Freelancers, the majority of the industry’s production workforce, already operate outside conventional maternity leave entitlements and guaranteed return-to-work provisions. This, in addition to fear that employers will discriminate against carers, contributes to a screen industry culture that lacks transparency and that limits the opportunity for open discussion about workplace flexibility or broader industrial innovation.

“In various jobs I have been extremely careful to not mention my child, virtually pretending not to have a child.”

Female Full-time Executive

This report takes a care-focused approach to understanding the lived realities of working in the Australian screen industry. Creatively reframing work-care dynamics is also about safeguarding the screen industry. Our long-term investment in substantial resources – both human and financial – should enable an inclusive, productive, resilient, sustainable and successful screen industry in Australia.

Not caring about caring however, means that this investment remains unrealised and is too often lost altogether. It perpetuates existing industrial and social inequalities. And given the importance of the screen industries to maintaining national culture, it diminishes us all.

This report then is not just about care, it is an intervention of care: it advances a screen industry that is invested in transparent and equitable work-care relations, that values all carers (inclusive of self-care), and that is directed to long-term sustainability (both individual and industrial) based on a better work-life balance in the screen industry.

“Parents and carers are an asset to all artistic industries. We are missing out on their skills and stories without them. We need parents and carers in the industry!”

Female Full-time Producer



Recommendations

Measures for supporting carers to return to work.	Industry incentives that reward inclusive production structures and processes.	Recognition of carers as productive industry members.	Actions to redress the negative impact of attitudes to carers in the workplace.	Introduction of care-sensitivity in funding agency processes.
<p>Funding incentives for inclusive projects which employ people who are returning to work from caring responsibilities.</p> <p>Subsidies for childcare provision on screen productions, on-site and at events.</p> <p>Flexible work arrangements such as job sharing or flexible hours.</p> <p>More predictable working hours to enable care arrangements to be made.</p>	<p>Innovative production methodologies that re-prioritise work (e.g. the approach adopted by the feature film production <i>52 Tuesdays</i>, or captured in <i>the topple principles</i>).</p>	<p>Opportunities for carers to participate in the industry in strategic roles that can be continued while caring such as professional advice and consultancy, formal coaching, assessment activities, script editing, sitting on advisory committees and juries, appointments to boards and so on.</p> <p>Subsidised access to industry events and networking opportunities to maintain reputational currency, industry skills and knowledge.</p>	<p>The provision of programs to support managers who have staff returning to work from carer responsibilities.</p> <p>Industry-wide workshops in which key industry leaders and carers work together on delivering strategies for a more inclusive workplace.</p> <p>Learning from other sectors who have already begun the process of cultural and industrial change in the form of knowledge exchange and education.</p> <p>More consideration for carers in regards to industry events such as timing, childcare facilities (including breastfeeding facilities), disability access, provision of communication tools (e.g. streaming and video conferencing).</p>	<p>Budget line item clarity in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The definition of approved childcare in the A-Z Budget. - Transparency around the eligibility of childcare as a QAPE-able expense. <p>Recognition in funding applications of career interruptions due to carer responsibilities (e.g. ROPE provisions in academic funding assessment).</p>

Key Findings

<p>74% state caring has a negative impact on their role within the industry.</p>	<p>73% find it impossible to difficult to vary the hours and amount of paid care they access.</p>	<p>60% of carers are freelance or self-employed. They state long hours, financial uncertainty and unpredictable work commitments are major concerns.</p>
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Challenges

The top 5 challenges from all respondents:

1. Long hours/weeks
2. Financial uncertainty
3. Evening networking/screening events
4. Lack of confidence/prejudice from funders/employers
5. Lack of access to childcare services

Solutions

The top 5 solutions from all respondents:

1. Carer provided on location/set as a line item in production budget
2. Greater availability of part-time/flexible roles
3. Flexible, short-notice, state-funded 24-hour child/elder care
4. Stronger union rules on early morning, late night and weekend work
5. Tax relief for child/elder care expenses (personal)

Method

The aim of the Raising Films Australia survey and report is to explore the experience and needs of parents and carers working in the Australian screen industry. The national survey, created in SurveyMonkey software, was launched on 10 May 2018 and closed on 18 June 2018 with a total of 618 respondents from all states and territories in Australia.

The survey was distributed via direct link to over 2500 people on the Raising Films Australia/Women in Film and Television (WIFT) NSW mailing list and over 5000 via its social media accounts. The survey was promoted by other organisations via mailing list and social media platforms including screen industry guilds, state screen agencies, unions, screen advocate organisations, film schools and film festivals. Key industry news outlets, including Inside Film, FilmInk and Mumbrella were notified. The survey link distribution reached over 25,000 screen industry workers and 400 businesses.

Headlines and key statistics were selected collaboratively by the report team and the final report was compiled in two versions – a six-page summary report and follow up comprehensive report. The summary report was launched at Adelaide Film Festival with the support of Create NSW, South Australia Film Corporation and is now available on the WIFT Australia website (www.wiftaustralia.org.au). The comprehensive report will be released in November 2018 and will inform the Raising Films Australia industry-wide forum to be held in December 2018.

Survey Background

This survey was based on a 2016 survey, *Making It Possible: Voices of Parents & Carers in the UK Film & TV Industry*, released by UK organisation Raising Films in collaboration with the University of Sterling. This survey was developed and adapted for the Australia screen industry through a collaboration between University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Raising Films Australia and WIFT NSW with funding support from Create NSW.

The Australian and UK surveys make for an interesting comparison. The UK report received a total of 640 respondents and the Australian survey 618. Both surveys found 'long hours' were the primary challenge for working parents and carers and 'flexible/part time/job shares' were a popular solution. Both reports yielded similar responses to the negative impact of caring with the UK presenting slightly higher at 79% in comparison to Australia at 74%. Broadly the working conditions, issues and solutions were similar between both reports. Both surveys revealed that financial relief was the primary consideration for carers although this was expressed differently. The Australian survey proposed budget support for paid care as the preferred solution (46% compared to third in the UK at 39%), whereas the top UK solution was tax relief for caring costs (51% of responses).

Additional longitudinal comparisons, based on two Australian reports *What Do I Wear for a Hurricane?: Women in Australian Film, Television, Video & Radio Industries* (1992) and *Women in Australian Film, Video and Television Production* (1987) reveal that long hours, the inability to travel and access to childcare were prominent issues in the industry at that time. The persistence of these concerns in this Raising Films Australia survey indicate that there has been little improvement for carers in the Australian screen industry over the past thirty years.

The Report Team

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Summary of Responses

Gender

This survey received a total of 618 respondents; of that 610 comprised of 'female' and 'male'. Eight respondents comprised of 'other' or 'prefer not to say'. Although women only represent 35% of the Australian screen industry workforce, the majority of the respondents to this survey are women. This reflects the unequal distribution of caring responsibilities that fall on women and accentuates the gendered dimension of caring and parenting experiences.

Note - Percentages are reflective of the sample only, and do not represent the gender proportions of the industry



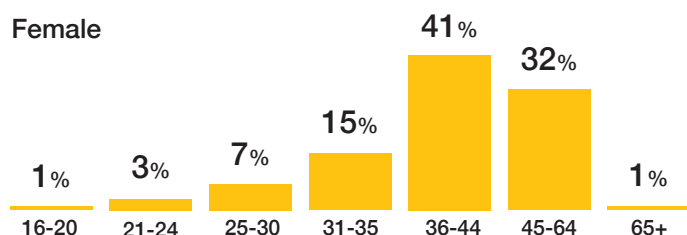
“...[I]t is near impossible to break the traditional mould of ‘mother as primary carer’ and ‘father as full-time worker’.”

Female in Education/Academia

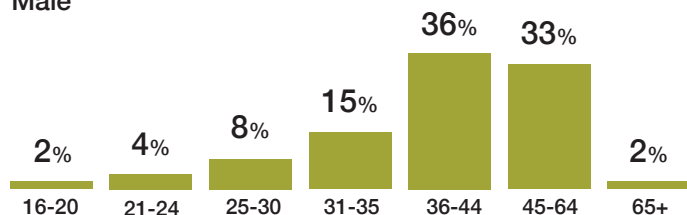
Age

The majority of the respondents were aged 31 years and older, which, as might be expected, locates them in child-bearing and raising years.

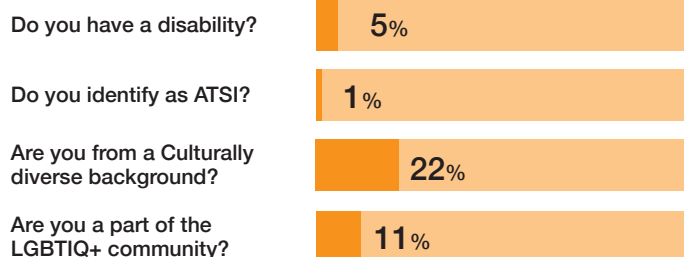
Female



Male



Identity



“Being a woman of colour, there is an increased difficulty in having funders seeing my stories as of interest to a wider (AKA whiter) audience - this, on top of my lack of availability given my childcare needs, leads to frustration.”

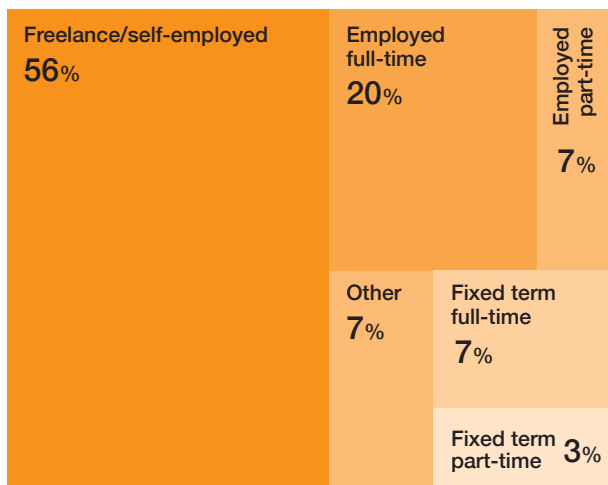
Female Freelance Writer

Summary of Responses

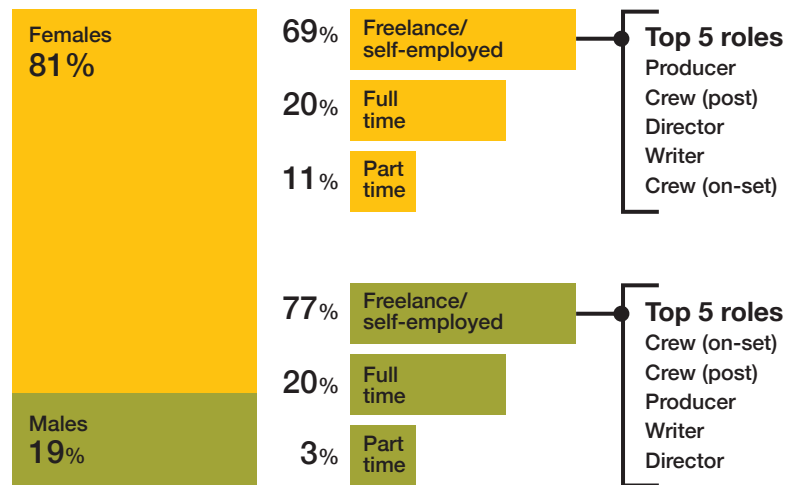
Employment

Over half the respondents are freelance or self-employed, which is broadly representative of the nature of the film and television industry. Many freelance respondents noted that the long hours and unpredictable work commitments impacted significantly on their ability to manage their caring responsibilities.

All respondents

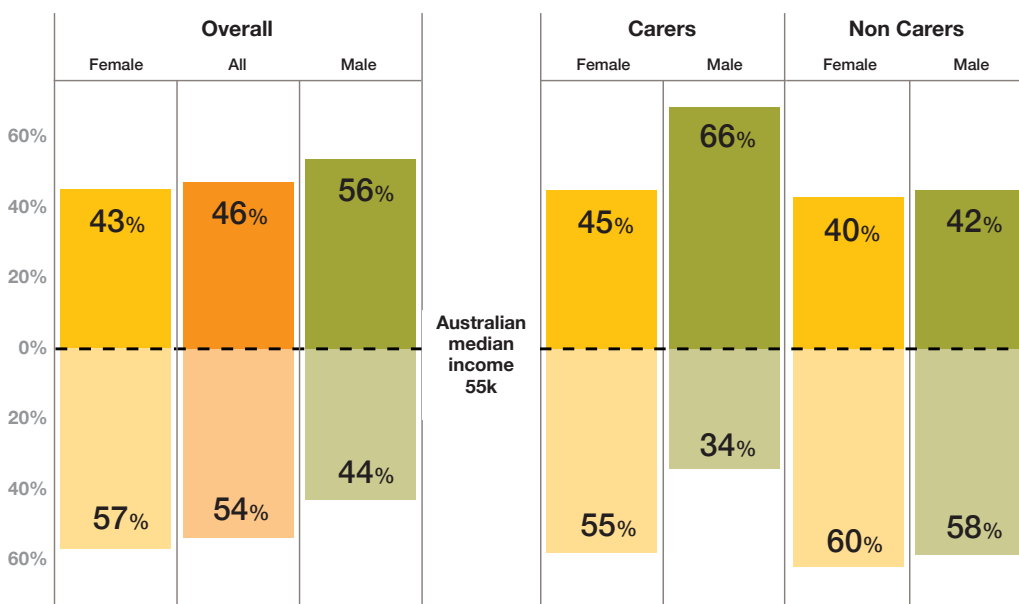


Carers



Income

A comparison of respondents approximate pre-tax earnings from the screen industry for the last financial year, grouped into carers and noncarers above and below the Australian median income (55k), reveals that male carers do not appear to be negatively affected financially by their caring responsibilities. In fact, their income is higher than male noncarers and would indicate they have benefited from a 'fatherhood bonus'.



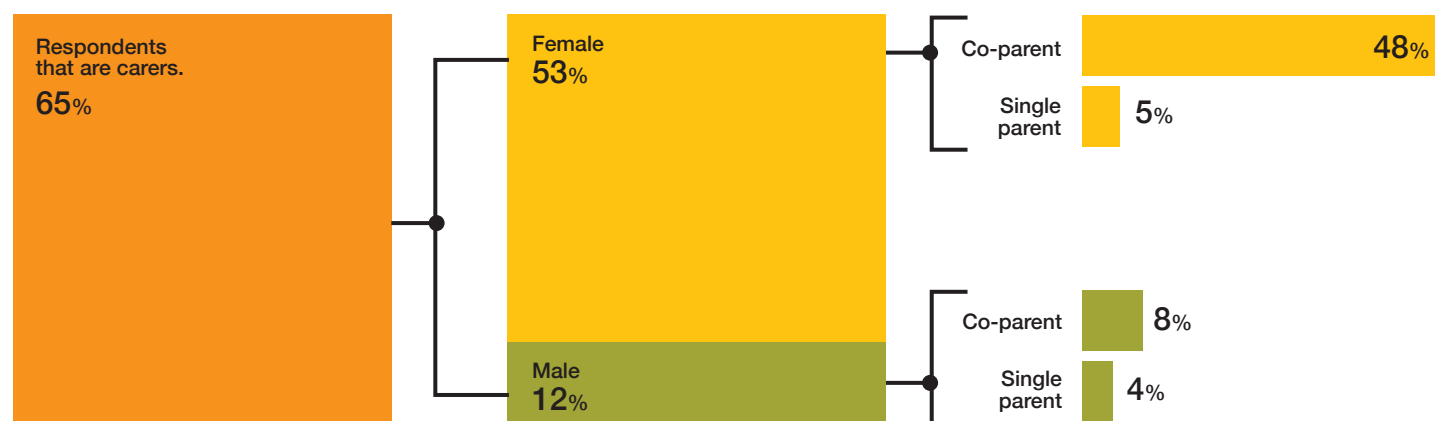
"...[M]any freelance workers take on more than a full-time load in order to survive/keep relationships with multiple employers alive. Some flexibility in delivery of deadlines that takes the 'freelance dance' into account would be helpful."
Female Writer, Carer



Summary of Responses

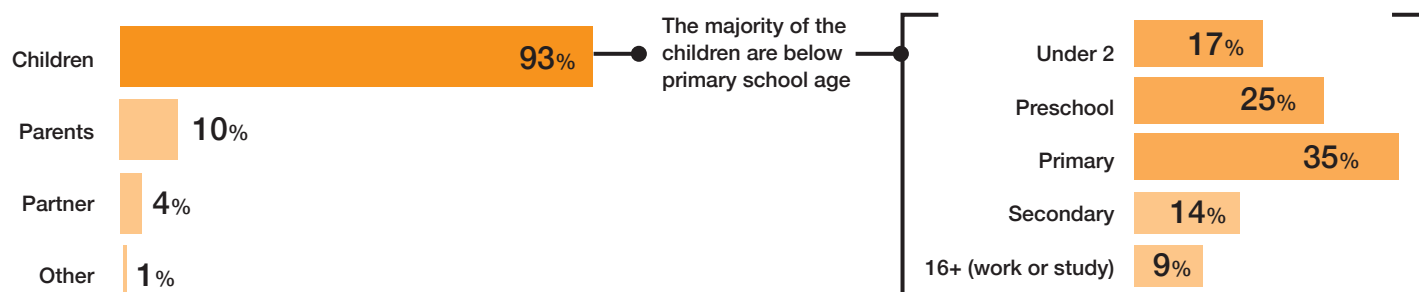
Carer Responsibilities - caring for a child or other person

Of the 618 respondents 65% reported having caring responsibilities. Of the 65% a significant percentage were women (81%).



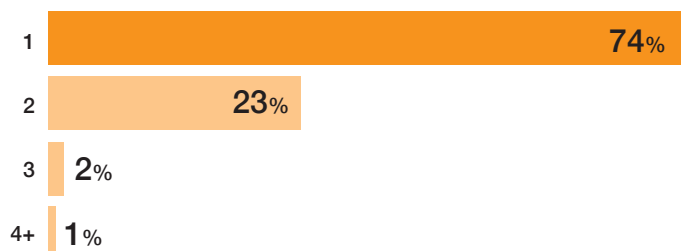
Dependents Category and Age Bracket

Of the respondents who reported caring responsibilities 93% of them were caring for children and 77% of the children were at or below primary school age.



Number of Children

The majority of respondents had one child in the age bracket of under two, preschool, primary, and secondary. Twenty-three per cent had two children within this age bracket.



Number of Dependents

Eighty-six per cent of respondents with dependents 16 years and above, elderly, with a disability or illness reported having one dependent.



References

Cox, E. & Laura, S. 1992, *What Do I Wear for a Hurricane?: Women in Australian Film, Television, Video & Radio Industries*. Australian Film Commission & The National Working Party on the Portrayal of Women in the Media, Sydney.

Marsh, M. & Pip, C. 1987, *Women in Australian Film, Video and Television Production*. Australian Film Commission (AFC) [Survey of the period 1985/1986 assisted by AFTRS], Sydney.

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