Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories? 2.0

In partnership with the University of Sydney and UTS Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, Media Diversity Australia has released a 'report card' on indigeneity and cultural diversity in television news, with insights into what has changed, what has stayed the same and opportunities to lead the charge toward greater cultural diversity.

Who appears on our screens is more Anglo-Celtic, however there are pockets of progress

There was a slight increase of Anglo-Celtic TV presenters from 2019 to 2022. Appearances by TV presenters of Indigenous background improved overall but was inconsistent across networks.

The Anglo-Celtic category remained vastly over-represented on TV, across all states and territories.

The non-European category remained the most severely under-represented, particularly on commercial networks. The population is at least 19 times greater than what was shown on screen (1.3% share) on Seven Network, Nine and Network 10.

Network 10 has seen a decline in European and non-European on-air talent but a strong increase in Indigenous representation.

Nine is the only network to decrease its portion of Anglo-Celtic on-air talent.

No Indigenous presenters or reporters identified at the Seven Network which has the least on-air cultural diversity.

ABC is the only network to show an increase in non-European on-air talent.

SBS continued to have by far the strongest representation of non-European on-air talent (71%).

For NITV, Indigenous reporters and presenters are very strongly represented.
Indigeneity and cultural diversity among TV leadership remains poor, with Anglo-Celtic representation at levels well above the general Australian population. SBS remains the only network board to have representation of Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic, European and non-European members. Its board now has two Indigenous members, up from one in 2020.

There is a greater gender balance on the boards of the ABC, Network 10 and Nine.

In 2020, there were no women at national TV news director or head of news level; in 2022 there were three (SBS, NITV and Network 10).

Indigenous representation and cultural diversity among senior television news leadership teams is even worse than the board profiles.

Nine and ABC have Anglo-Celtic-only senior television news leadership teams.

Who frames, presents and produces stories in Australian television news and current affairs continues to be led and staffed by a largely homogenous group of individuals who do not represent the diversity of their audience. A likely consequence of this is that the stories told are limited. Evidently, Indigenous and culturally diverse individuals are less seen and heard in the media sector.
Non-European Australian audiences have least trust in news and are most concerned about representation

However, a clear majority of Non-European background respondents said they would like to see a greater representation of Indigeneity and more cultural diversity.

Female respondents were more negative in their perceptions of the barriers to career progression than their male counterparts.

There has been an increase in perceived barriers to career progression for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff behind the camera.

Encouragingly, there has been a more positive response by staff to the perceived representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in the media industry overall from 2020 to 2022.

A majority of respondents agreed that Australia’s Indigeneity and cultural diversity is well-represented in news and current affairs.

A higher proportion of respondents with non-European backgrounds have stopped using a news source because they thought it was biased.

Our findings show that there is some way to go, with a serious need for media leaders to support meaningful and informed adjustments, and strategic interventions to build a more representative industry.

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