



# Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?

## 2.0

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## ABOUT MEDIA DIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

Founded by journalists in 2017, Media Diversity Australia (MDA) is a national not-for-profit organisation, working towards creating a media landscape that looks and sounds like Australia.

We have expertise in delivering evidence-based research, bespoke programs, strategic memberships and partnerships that disrupt the status quo and pave pathways for diverse representation across Australian media.

We have a vision for a media industry with full and equal participation for culturally diverse people at all levels.

To achieve our vision, our activities focus on three areas:

- 1. Setting the agenda:** We advocate for the value of cultural diversity and the opportunity for change, so that diversity is recognised as essential to the media's role and success.
- 2. Creating pathways:** We deliver relevant, quality programs for media professionals to support their full and equal participation in the industry.
- 3. Partnering for change:** We are an honest partner for media organisations seeking to drive change, to support them to deliver on their commitments.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the survey and interview participants for their time and generosity in building an understanding of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in the media. Special thanks also to Andreea Constantin, Christine Han, Sally Hanna Osborne, Georg Tamm, Elna Tulus, Jennifer Veres, Coralie Williams and Daniel Ji for their research assistance, and to the Deakin University eResearch team of Dr Jerry Lai and Dr Andrew Goh for technical support. Finally, thanks to the MERCI@WorkResearchGroup, University of Sydney.

This research was supported by a University of Sydney Business School Industry Partnership Grant, Google News Lab, the Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Telum Media and Isentia.

This report was researched, written and designed on Gadigal and Wonnarua land. Sovereignty over this land was never ceded. We wish to pay our respect to elders past and present, and acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' ongoing struggles for justice and self-determination.

Designed by McGill Design Group 0417 730 464

Google  
News Initiative



Isentia

Telum Media



*Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories? 2.0* examines the Indigenous and cultural diversity of Australian news and current affairs television media.

*Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories? 2.0* compared results from the landmark report *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories (2020)* to evaluate progress, identify the opportunities for improvement while also building on previous findings with new insights.

Our findings show that overall Australian news and current affairs fail to represent the society they serve.

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# Executive summary

## WHO GETS TO TELL AUSTRALIAN STORIES? 2.0 EXAMINES THE INDIGENITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY OF AUSTRALIAN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS MEDIA – AND ASKS, “DO AUSTRALIAN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIR NEWSROOMS REPRESENT THE SOCIETY THEY SERVE?”

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

This report has three parts. Parts A and B provide evidence from five studies combining qualitative and quantitative data<sup>1</sup>. We compare results from *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* (2020) to evaluate progress and identify the opportunities to do better in the representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in Australian newsrooms. Part C provides an international comparison drawing on a literature review and document analysis.

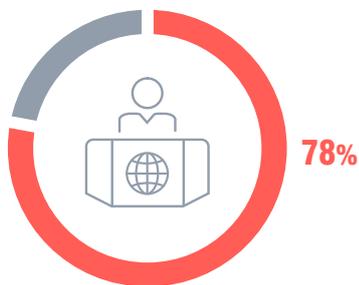
***Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories? 2.0 (2022)* provides an update on what has changed, what has stayed the same and the opportunities to lead change.**

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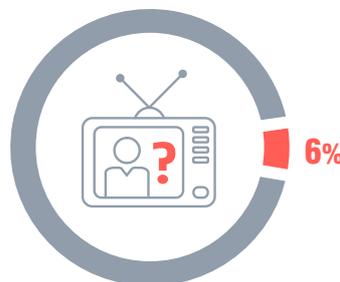
### PART A: MIRROR, MIRROR INCLUDES TWO STUDIES

#### Study I: Frequency of Appearance Analysis – Evidence from a Two-Week Slice of Australian News, Current Affairs and Breakfast Television

- The overall share of appearances on television by presenters and reporters of Anglo-Celtic background increased slightly from 76% in 2019 to 78% in 2022. The **Anglo-Celtic category remained vastly over-represented on television, across all states and territories.**
- The share of appearances on television by presenters and reporters of European cultural background declined to 10%; that of Non-European background rose to 6%. **Yet the Non-European category remained the most severely under-represented, particularly on commercial networks.**
- The share of appearances on television by presenters and reporters of **Indigenous background improved overall (to 5%) but was inconsistent across networks.**



**SLIGHT INCREASE IN  
ANGLO-CELTIC SHARE  
OF APPEARANCES (TO 78%)**



**NON-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND  
MOST SEVERELY UNDER-  
REPRESENTED IN SHARE  
OF APPEARANCES (AT 6%)**



**UNEVEN INCREASE  
IN INDIGENOUS SHARE  
OF APPEARANCES (TO 5%)**

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1. Ethical protocols were adhered to for each study used to collect data. University of Sydney Ethics Project Number: 2022/241



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

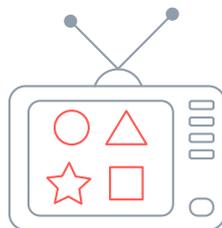
FINDINGS FROM THE FIVE STUDIES SHOW THAT: THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT WAY TO GO, WITH A SERIOUS NEED FOR MEDIA LEADERS TO SUPPORT MEANINGFUL, INFORMED ADJUSTMENTS, AND STRATEGIC INTERVENTIONS TO BUILD A MORE REPRESENTATIVE INDUSTRY.

**Study II: Audience Survey – Evidence from a Survey of Australian Media Viewers to Gauge Attitudes on Indigeneity and Cultural Diversity in Australian News and Current Affairs (Free-to-Air) Television**

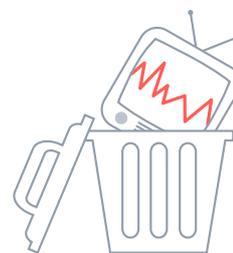
- A majority of respondents (53%) agreed that Australia’s cultural diversity is well-represented in news and current affairs, with 17% disagreeing.
- **Close to half (45%) agreed that Australia’s Indigeneity is well-represented in news and current affairs.**
- However, a clear majority of **Non-European background respondents** said they would like to see more cultural diversity represented among presenters and stories told – indicating that cultural diversity may not be as well-represented as asserted.
- There are also variances in **Non-European respondents’ trust in Australian news and current affairs media**, with a higher proportion than those with European backgrounds indicating they had stopped using a news or current affairs source because they thought it was biased.



A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS AGREED THAT AUSTRALIA’S CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS WELL-REPRESENTED



HOWEVER, A CLEAR MAJORITY OF **NON-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND RESPONDENTS** SAID THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE CULTURAL DIVERSITY



A HIGHER PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WITH **NON-EUROPEAN BACKGROUNDS** HAVE STOPPED USING A NEWS SOURCE BECAUSE THEY THOUGHT IT WAS BIASED



**INDIGENOUS AND DIVERSE PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS EXPERIENCE GREATER BARRIERS TO REPRESENTATION IN FRONT OF THE CAMERA**



**INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONG THE NETWORKS' SENIOR TELEVISION NEWS TEAMS IS LARGELY UNCHANGED SINCE 2020**



**RECOMMENDATIONS INCLUDE LISTENING TO AND UNDERSTANDING DIFFICULTIES OF GAINING EMPLOYMENT FROM THE APPLICANTS' PERSPECTIVES**

## PART B: PATHWAYS IN AND UP INCLUDES THREE STUDIES

### Study III: Staff Perceptions

Evidence from a survey to gauge staff perceptions of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in Australian television newsrooms replicated the 2020 data analysis and benchmarks the findings:

- 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.
- Consistent with the 2020 report, a high proportion of respondents (77%), believed that **Indigenous and culturally diverse presenters and reporters experience greater barriers** to representation in front of the camera.
- Concerningly, there has been an **increase in perceived barriers to career progression** for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff behind the camera.
- **Female respondents were more negative in their perceptions** of the barriers to career progression than their male counterparts.
- **Perceptions of how the inclusion of Indigenous and cultural diversity is managed at the workplace level** were similarly unchanged in 2020 and 2022, signalling more work needs to be done to ensure interventions have meaningful and material benefits.

### Study IV: Board and Leadership Diversity

Evidence replicated the 2020 data analysis and benchmarks the findings. There were some encouraging changes and some areas of concern.

- **SBS remains the only network board to have a diverse mix in terms of cultural background** with representation of Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic, European and Non-European members. The SBS board now has two Indigenous members, up from one in 2020.
- Progress on the gender mix has been inconsistent across the networks. **Evidence showed a greater gender balance on the boards of the ABC, Network 10 and Nine.** The Seven Network board continues to be male-dominated (almost 80% men), with no change since 2020.
- Overall, representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity among **television news directors, state editors, managing editors and national bureau chiefs** has largely remained unchanged since 2020.
- Concerningly, Indigenous representation and cultural diversity among the networks' **senior television news leaders is even worse than the board profiles.** Two networks (ABC and Nine) appear to have Anglo Celtic only **senior television news leadership teams.** This poor leadership outcome raises questions regarding pathways to board positions.

### Study V: Editorial Leaders' Perceptions of Indigeneity and Cultural Diversity in Regional Newsrooms

Evidence from interviews with 19 editorial leaders in regional newsrooms revealed a strong awareness of Indigeneity and cultural diversity and a desire to accurately reflect the diversity of their audiences within their newsrooms.

#### **Yet the journalist workforce in regional newsrooms remains predominantly Anglo-Celtic.**

Recommendations arising from the interviews:

- Widening recruitment strategies to make jobs more accessible to people from diverse backgrounds, for example opening internships to those without tertiary degrees.
- Ensuring media organisations are seen to be supportive of diverse employees, especially through the promotion of role models and mentoring.
- Adopting insights from other diversity campaigns and strategies on gender parity and age diversity.
- Listening to and understanding difficulties of gaining employment from the applicants' perspectives.
- Gathering data on the cultural background of audiences, as well as the journalist workforce, to help inform editorial leaders and the wider industry.



THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA SECTOR NOT ONLY HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBOURS BUT ALSO TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF AS A TRAILBLAZER FOR EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION.

## PART C: INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON – HOW DOES AUSTRALIA STACK UP?

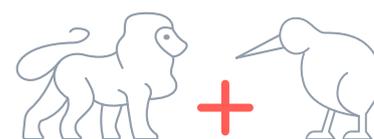
The international approach to measuring, monitoring and reporting on cultural diversity remains patchy and inconsistent. However there has been progress – particularly in NZ and the UK.

The Australian media sector not only has an opportunity to learn from our international neighbours but also to differentiate itself as a trailblazer for equality, diversity and inclusion at the workplace level; and a representative media forging greater social cohesion.

The UK and NZ provide us with important lessons for best practice approaches which we detail.

US figures that detailed the cultural diversity and gender of its media workforce were reported in *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* (2020). However, that data has not been collected for the past two years.

We know that what gets measured gets done. It is therefore critical to monitor and report on progress and gaps.



THE UK AND NZ PROVIDE US WITH **IMPORTANT LESSONS** FOR BEST PRACTICE APPROACHES

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# Mapping the context and case for more Indigenous and cultural diversity in the media

## THE VOICE OF LIVED EXPERIENCE

While the media is often referred to collectively, the power of a journalist or editor to frame the presentation of a news story should not be underestimated (Richards 2014; Rodrigues et al. 2019). Recognising that a journalist's background can affect their reporting, some three decades ago the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (1991) recommended that media organisations develop strategies to recruit and promote Indigenous and culturally diverse journalists. More recently, Stoneham et al. (2014) suggested that encouraging more Indigenous students into journalism for instance would lead to more positive outcomes for Indigenous peoples through more balanced reporting, while Johnston et al. (2018) said giving Indigenous peoples a greater voice in the media would serve the broad public interest and stimulate a more inclusive political agenda. Others, including Nishikawa et al. (2009) and Rodrigues et al. (2019), argued that diversity in the newsroom would result in more balanced coverage of all issues.



## STRUCTURAL DISRUPTION AND MEDIA DIVERSITY

Australia's media is recognised as one of the most concentrated in the world (Senate Environment and Communications References Committee 2021) with four commercial media groups – NewsCorp, Nine, Seven West Media and Network 10 – dominating and controlling the vast majority of outlets and audience. These big four media outlets are estimated to account for about 95% of print revenue, 75% of free-to-air television revenue, and 70% of radio broadcasting revenue (Stanford 2021). The shift to digital news media, a trend accelerated by COVID-19-related lockdowns, is continuing to disrupt and shape shift the landscape. Against this backdrop there are calls for greater media diversity, not just in terms of who owns and controls media outlets, but who steers media content, and the faces and voices that appear on our television screens, on audio programs and in written content: essentially the people who tell 'our' stories (Fray and The News and Media Research Centre cited in Senate Environment and Communications References Committee 2021: 13; Arvanitakis et al. 2020). A strong, independent and representative media is seen as essential to a healthy democracy.



## INCLUSIVE MEDIA

An inclusive media is important because the media reflects culture and forms opinion. Poor media reporting about minority groups has been found to reinforce negative racial stereotypes among the general population (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission 1991) and legitimise racism and racist acts (Kennedy 2020; All Together Now cited in Senate Environment and Communications References Committee 2021: 106). In an analysis of Australian media news reports about issues affecting minorities, Rodrigues et al. (2019) found the language was divisive resulting in 'othering' of minority cultures, while All Together Now (2021) criticised the Australian media for favouring 'elite' voices and neglecting the historical and cultural context of news stories about Indigenous peoples. The media can also frame how a minority group views itself, with adverse outcomes including lower self-esteem and negative implications for health and wellbeing (Stoneham et al. 2014; Vargas et al. 2020).



## THE BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

Evidence for the business drivers for diversity shows that companies can benefit financially from increasing their workplace diversity, through increased profitability, lower staff turnover and improved staff performance (Hunt et al. 2020; Triana et al. 2021) – in addition to non-financial benefits such as broader social or community appeal and engagement.

The Australian news media is an important sector in terms of employment and services provided, making a sizeable contribution to GDP estimated to be more than \$5 billion in 2019 (Deloitte 2021; Stanford 2021) and employing almost 10,000 news journalists and editors across print, TV and radio (National Skills Commission 2022). The business implications cannot be underestimated.

The consumer role in terms of business insights is also an important consideration. A recent report noted that 80% of the respondents rated free-to-air television as the key trusted source of their insights and entertainment; and they also emphasised that it was an important source of Australian content, providing a window into Australian society and culture (Deloitte 2021).

Taken together, these are certainly compelling arguments for why we need more media diversity. Yet the findings from the first evidence-based report: *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* (Arvanitakis et. al. 2020), on who frames, presents and produces stories in Australian television news and current affairs identified that the media landscape continues to be led and staffed by a largely homogenous group of individuals. A likely consequence is that the stories told and the audience represented is limited. Evidently, Indigenous and culturally diverse<sup>2</sup> voices remain largely silent, and people of colour and ethnic minorities are not visible at all levels of this sector.



**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. A LIKELY CONSEQUENCE OF THIS IS THAT THE STORIES TOLD AND THE AUDIENCE REPRESENTED IS LIMITED. EVIDENTLY, INDIGENOUS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE VOICES REMAIN SILENT, AND PEOPLE OF COLOUR AND ETHNIC MINORITIES ARE NOT VISIBLE AT ALL LEVELS OF THIS SECTOR.**

2. We drew on The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC, 2016: 75–76) four broad classifications for cultural background defined as:

1. Indigenous background: 'Indigenous' designates those who have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
2. Anglo-Celtic background: 'Anglo-Celtic' describes those cultural backgrounds that are English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish
3. European background: 'European' includes all European backgrounds other than Anglo-Celtic – including North-West European (e.g. German, French, Dutch) and Southern and Eastern European (e.g. Italian, Greek, Polish)
4. Non-European background: 'Non-European' encompasses all other cultural backgrounds, including South-East Asian (e.g. Vietnamese, Malaysian), North-East Asian (e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean), Southern and Central Asian (e.g. Indian, Sri-Lankan, Afghani), Latin American (e.g. Mexican, Colombian), Middle Eastern and North African (e.g. Turkish, Egyptian), Sub-Saharan African (e.g. Nigerian, South African) and Oceanic and Pacific Islander (e.g. Maori, Tongan).

These categories are used throughout the report.

AN INCLUSIVE MEDIA IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE THE MEDIA REFLECTS CULTURE AND FORMS OPINION. POOR MEDIA REPORTING ABOUT MINORITY GROUPS HAS BEEN FOUND TO REINFORCE NEGATIVE RACIAL STEREOTYPES AMONG THE GENERAL POPULATION AND LEGITIMISE RACISM AND RACIST ACTS. THE MEDIA CAN ALSO FRAME HOW A MINORITY GROUP VIEWS ITSELF, WITH ADVERSE OUTCOMES INCLUDING LOWER SELF-ESTEEM AND NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS FOR HEALTH AND WELL-BEING.



# PART A: Mirror, Mirror

THIS SECTION INCLUDES TWO STUDIES WITH INSIGHTS INTO WHAT WE SEE AND HOW WE EVALUATE THE REPRESENTATION OF WHAT WE SEE ON AUSTRALIAN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS.

## STUDY I. FREQUENCY OF APPEARANCE ANALYSIS: INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN AUSTRALIAN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS

### Diversity of Presenters and Reporters on News and Current Affairs Free-to-Air Australian Television

We gathered a two-week slice of news and current affairs programming that appeared on free-to-air television across six networks (Seven Network, Nine, Network 10, ABC, SBS, National Indigenous Television [NITV]<sup>3</sup>) between 1 June and 14 June 2022.<sup>4</sup> This sample included almost 25,000 items broadcast on 103 news and current affairs programs including breakfast news, early evening news, prime time news, late night news, weekend news and news updates, and various current affairs shows, such as *The Project* (Network 10), *The Drum* (ABC), *Studio 10* (Network 10), *Insight* (SBS), *Insiders* (ABC) and *60 Minutes* (Nine).

In total, we identified the cultural background of all presenters and reporters<sup>5</sup> who appeared on camera during the two-week study period. We classified individuals into one of four categories based on their cultural background: Anglo-Celtic, European, Non-European and Indigenous (Australian Human Rights Commission 2016).<sup>6</sup>

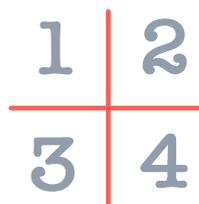
To begin with, we outline the cultural mix of presenters and reporters. Following this, we report on our analysis of the frequency of appearances on television.

More than three-quarters of presenters and reporters across all networks (in terms of numbers) have an Anglo-Celtic background (a slight increase from 75.6% in 2019 to 76.0% in 2022).<sup>7</sup> In proportionate terms, the Anglo-Celtic background is over-represented in presenters and reporters, given that an estimated 54% of Australians have an Anglo-Celtic background.<sup>8</sup>

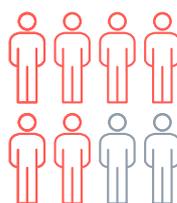
Presenters and reporters in the other three categories – European (13.1%), Non-European (8.1%) and Indigenous (2.8%) – remain under-represented in 2022, compared to their proportions in the general population of 18%, 25%, and 3% respectively. The greatest disparity is in the Non-European category.



OUR SAMPLE INCLUDED ALMOST **25,000 ITEMS** BROADCAST ON **103 NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS PROGRAMS**



WE CLASSIFIED INDIVIDUALS INTO ONE OF FOUR CATEGORIES BASED ON THEIR CULTURAL BACKGROUND: **ANGLO-CELTIC, EUROPEAN, NON-EUROPEAN AND INDIGENOUS**



MORE THAN **THREE-QUARTERS** OF PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS ACROSS ALL NETWORKS (IN TERMS OF NUMBERS) **HAVE AN ANGLO-CELTIC BACKGROUND**

3. NITV was included in the report for the first time in 2022.
4. The data was provided to us by Isentia. See *Appendix 1* for a list of the programs included in the analysis.
5. Although we now use the term 'presenters and reporters' in this report instead of 'presenters, commentators, and reporters' in *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories*, the inclusion criteria for the sample remain unchanged.
6. See *Appendix 2* for an explanation of how we determined the cultural background of the individuals.
7. *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* was published in 2020 but drew on a two-week slice of media appearances from 2019.
8. See *Appendix 2* for an explanation of how we estimated the population proportions of each cultural background.

Unsurprisingly, these patterns were reproduced in the representation of diverse cultural backgrounds measured by frequency of appearance on screen, in 2022. *Table 1* shows the proportion of appearances on television by cultural background in 2022, as well as in 2019, compared to the proportions of those categories in the Australian population. *Figure 1* visually depicts the same statistics (rounded to the nearest whole number) for both years.

In terms of the share of total on-air appearances, individuals with an Anglo-Celtic background were more greatly over-represented in 2022 (78.0%) compared to 2019 (75.8%).<sup>9</sup>

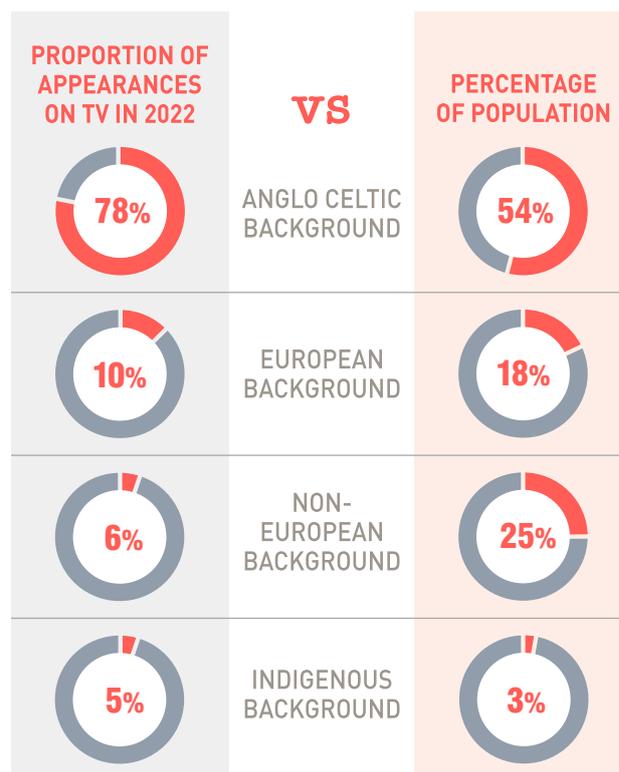
Somewhat encouragingly, on-screen representation of presenters and reporters from a Non-European background and those with an Indigenous background both improved. The share of appearances in the Non-European category increased from 4.7% in 2019 to 6.1% in 2022. Notwithstanding this improvement, this category was still under-represented in television appearances relative to the general population share of an estimated 25%.

The share of appearances by presenters and reporters with an Indigenous background also rose, from 1.2% in 2019 to 5.4% in 2022. While Indigenous representation appears to have improved greatly in terms of on-air appearances, when considering the share of Indigenous background presenters and reporters in the total number of reporters, this category remained slightly under-represented, at 2.8% in 2022 as noted on the previous page.

This suggests that Indigenous representation is concentrated in a relatively small number of presenters and reporters, rather than being spread more broadly.

Conversely, the share of appearances by presenters and reporters of European background declined by almost half, from 18.3% in 2019 to 10.4% in 2022.

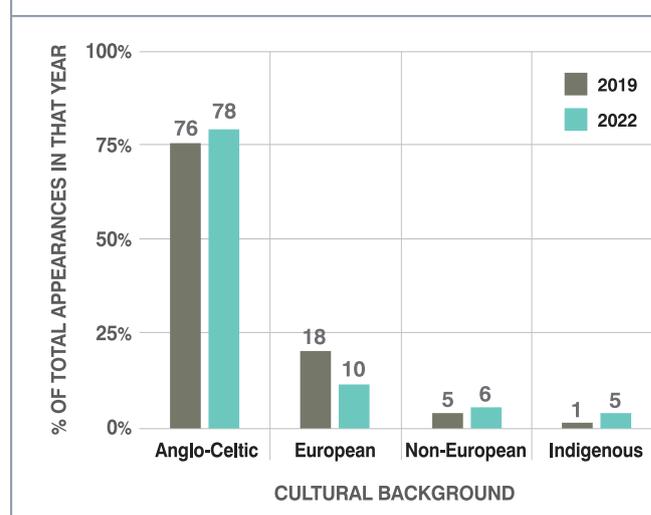
This decline means that those with a European background are now under-represented on air too, given the general population estimated share of 18%.



**Table 1: Proportion of appearances on television, by cultural background, 2019 and 2022**

Cultural background	Percentage of total appearances of presenters and reporters: two-week slice		Percentage in Australian population
	2019	2022	
Anglo-Celtic	75.8%	78.0%	54%
European	18.3%	10.4%	18%
Non-European	4.7%	6.1%	25%
Indigenous	1.2%	5.4%	3%

**Figure 1: Proportion of appearances on television, by cultural background, 2019 and 2022**



9. For a more direct comparison with the first report, *Appendix 4, Table A1* presents the equivalent analysis for *Table 1*, excluding NITV in both years. The proportions are largely the same regardless of whether NITV was included.

10. Estimates based on 2021 Census data.

IN EVERY CULTURAL BACKGROUND CATEGORY, WOMEN APPEARED MORE FREQUENTLY THAN MEN ON AUSTRALIAN TELEVISION. WOMEN IN GENERAL AND INDIGENOUS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE WOMEN AND MEN MORE SPECIFICALLY, ARE NOT A STRONG PRESENCE IN LEADERSHIP AND ON BOARDS (SEE STUDY IV).



### Diversity of Presenters and Reporters by Gender

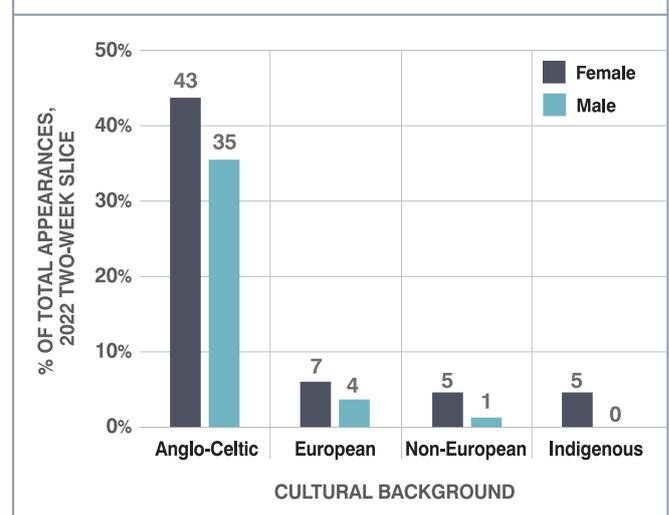
Although this report does not focus on gender, we also analysed the gender of the frequency of appearances by presenters and reporters of each cultural background.<sup>11</sup> In our sample, in every cultural background category, women appeared more frequently than men on Australian television (Table 2 and Figure 2).

While Indigenous and culturally diverse women have a greater presence on our television screens when compared to their male counterparts, women generally and Indigenous and culturally diverse women and men more specifically, are not a strong presence in leadership and on boards (see Part B, Study IV).

**Table 2: Proportion of appearances on television, cultural background and gender, 2022**

Cultural background	Percentage of total appearances, two-week slice in 2022	
	Female	Male
Anglo-Celtic	42.7%	35.3%
European	6.6%	3.9%
Non-European	5.0%	1.2%
Indigenous	4.9%	0.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>59.2%</b>	<b>40.8%</b>

**Figure 2: Proportion of appearances on television, cultural background and gender, 2022**



11. We initially classified individuals against three categories: Female, Male, Unsure/Other – based on their given name, photograph, and pronouns in publicly available information. However, as we did not identify anyone in the Unsure/Other category, we report results for the Female and Male categories only.

### Diversity of Presenters and Reporters across States and Territories

The cultural background of presenters and reporters appearing on Australian television news and current affairs programs across the states and territories during the two-week period is summarised in *Table 3* and *Figure 3*.

Compared to the previous 2019 study period, Indigenous representation improved in all states and territories. However, three out of the eight states and territories (Queensland, South Australia and Victoria) still had an extremely low representation of less than 1% of Non-European or Indigenous presenters or reporters within the two-week sample.

Gains in representation in the Non-European category were uneven across the states and territories. The share of Non-European presenters and reporters in the two smallest regions of Tasmania and the Northern Territory increased from a base of zero in 2019 to 15.3% and 12.2% respectively in 2022 but Non-European representation declined in most other states and territories, with particularly stark declines in the two most populous and multicultural states, New South Wales and Victoria.

Figure 3: Proportion of appearances on television, by state and territory, 2022

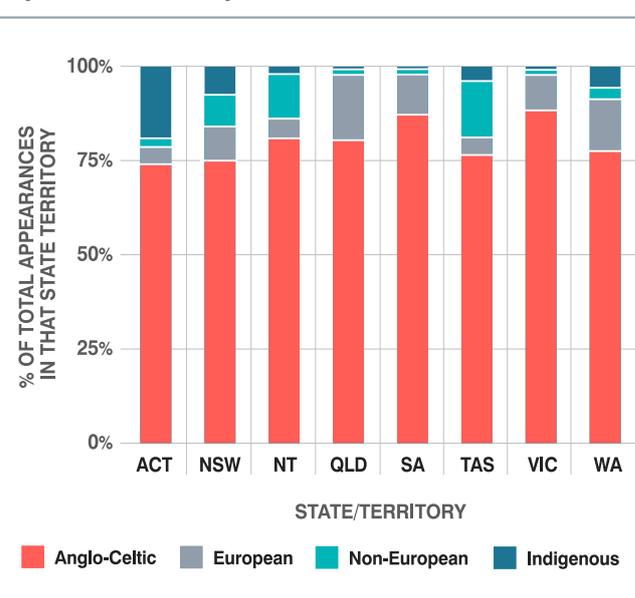


Table 3: Proportion of appearances on television, by state and territory, 2019 and 2022

State/Territory	Percentage of total appearances in state/territory							
	Anglo-Celtic		European		Non-European		Indigenous	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
ACT	76.9%	74.4%	7.7%	4.4%	7.7%	2.4%	7.7%	18.8%
NSW	72.5%	75.0%	10.0%	9.4%	14.2%	8.3%	3.3%	7.3%
NT	75.0%	81.7%	25.0%	4.7%	0.0%	12.2%	0.0%	1.4%
QLD	77.8%	81.1%	16.7%	17.7%	5.5%	0.8%	0.0%	0.4%
SA	81.2%	87.6%	18.8%	11.7%	0.0%	0.5%	0.0%	0.2%
TAS	85.7%	76.9%	14.2%	4.5%	0.0%	15.3%	0.0%	3.4%
VIC	80.3%	88.8%	12.1%	9.8%	7.6%	0.9%	0.0%	0.5%
WA	70.0%	77.8%	23.3%	14.0%	3.3%	3.0%	3.4%	5.2%



QUEENSLAND, SOUTH AUSTRALIA AND VICTORIA HAD AN **EXTREMELY LOW REPRESENTATION** (LESS THAN 1%) OF APPEARANCES BY NON-EUROPEAN OR INDIGENOUS PRESENTERS OR REPORTERS.



THE SHARE OF APPEARANCES BY NON-EUROPEAN PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS IN TASMANIA AND THE NORTHERN TERRITORY **INCREASED** FROM ZERO IN 2019 TO 15.3% AND 12.2% RESPECTIVELY IN 2022

## Diversity of Presenters and Reporters across Networks

We also examined the number of appearances of presenters and reporters by television network (*Table 4* and *Figure 4*). Anglo-Celtic background was consistently over-represented across the four major networks, ranging from 72.7% at Network 10 to 91.6% at Seven Network, but was under-represented at SBS and NITV. ABC had a sharp rise in the Anglo-Celtic category in 2022, with almost three in four (74.1%) on-screen appearances being by Anglo-Celtic presenters and reporters, compared to 57.2% in 2019. The shift at ABC was mainly from the European category.

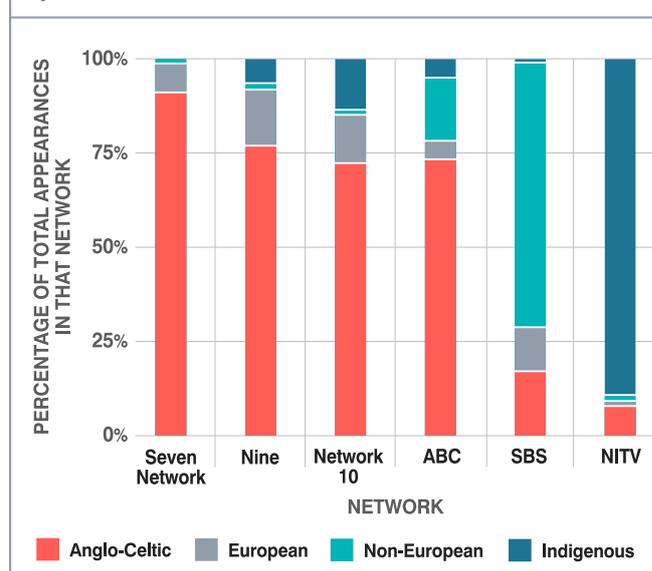
European and Non-European backgrounds were under-represented in broadcasts across all major networks, except for SBS, where there was an over-representation of appearances by Non-European background presenters and reporters.

None of the commercial networks (Seven Network, Nine and Network 10) had more than 1.3% of appearances by Non-European presenters and reporters. This is a glaring under-representation, given the share of Non-Europeans in the general population is at least 19 times greater, at 25%.

As expected, NITV led the Indigenous representation, with almost 9 out of 10 appearances being by presenters and reporters of Indigenous background. There has generally been positive progress on Indigenous<sup>12</sup> representation across the other networks, except for the Seven Network and SBS.<sup>13</sup>

By frequency of appearance, Nine and Network 10 substantially increased their representation of Indigenous presenters and reporters on air, during the 2022 study period.

**Figure 4: Proportion of appearances on television, by network, 2022**



Notably, it was identified that this was due to a single on-air talent on the respective networks.

After NITV, Network 10 had the next highest representation of appearances by Indigenous presenters and reporters, increasing from 5.4% in 2019 to 13.6% in 2022, while Nine also increased from zero in 2019 to 6.1% in 2022. The ABC also maintained strong Indigenous representation on air at 4.5% in 2022.

However, we did not identify a single appearance by an Indigenous presenter or reporter at the Seven Network in the two-week study period.

**Table 4: Proportion of appearances on television, by network, 2019 and 2022**

Network	Percentage of total appearances on that network							
	Anglo-Celtic		European		Non-European		Indigenous	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Seven Network	72.0%	91.6%	23.2%	8.1%	4.8%	0.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Nine	87.8%	77.1%	9.3%	15.4%	2.9%	1.3%	0.0%	6.1%
Network 10	67.1%	72.7%	24.3%	13.2%	3.2%	0.4%	5.4%	13.6%
ABC	57.2%	74.1%	28.7%	4.7%	9.1%	16.8%	5.0%	4.5%
SBS	0.7%	17.0%	22.5%	12.1%	76.6%	70.7%	0.2%	0.2%
NITV	N/A	8.1%	N/A	0.7%	N/A	1.5%	N/A	89.7%

12. NITV, which stands for National Indigenous Television, is part of SBS. The SBS website states that "NITV is a channel made by, for and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people".

13. SBS continued to have low Indigenous representation (0.2%). However, as noted in the previous footnote, NITV is part of SBS.

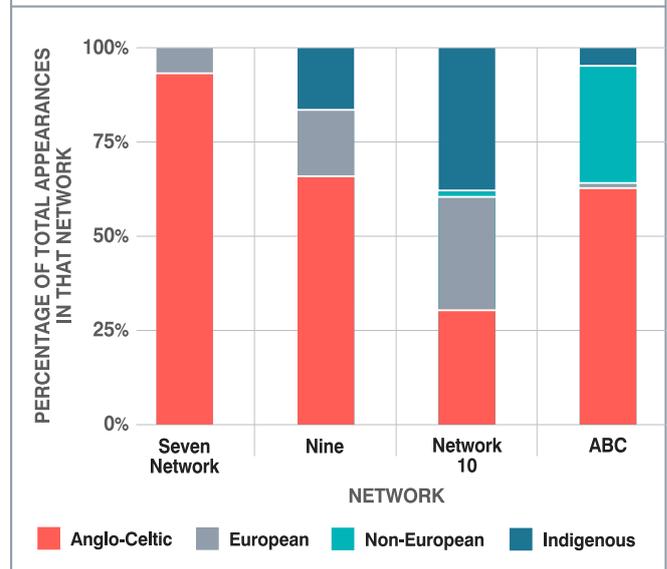
### Diversity of Presenters and Reporters on Australian Breakfast and Morning Shows

Given the role of weekday breakfast and morning shows on Australian television, we also examined the share of appearances of presenters and reporters of each cultural background on these programs on the four major networks (Table 5 and Figure 5).<sup>14</sup> SBS and NITV do not have a daily breakfast show.

In 2019, we noted the extremely low representation on many breakfast and morning television shows of people of Indigenous and Non-European backgrounds. In our sample period in 2022, Seven Network continued to have breakfast and morning teams with no representation of Indigenous or Non-European presenters and reporters. However, Nine and Network 10 recalibrated towards greater Indigenous representation in the share of appearances between 2019 and 2022. Notably, this was attributed to a single on-air talent at each of these networks. These networks had a significant decrease in Anglo-Celtic presenters and reporters on air on breakfast and morning shows between 2019 and 2022.

Non-European representation remained exceedingly low among the breakfast and morning shows on commercial networks (less than 1% of total appearances) in 2022.

Figure 5: Proportion of appearances on breakfast and morning television shows, by network, 2022



In striking contrast, the ABC breakfast and morning shows had a high proportion of appearances by presenters and reporters of Non-European background (31.6%).

Table 5: Proportion of appearances on breakfast and morning television shows by network, 2019 and 2022

Percentage of total appearances by network								
Network	Anglo-Celtic		European		Non-European		Indigenous	
	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022	2019	2022
Seven Network	62.3%	93.9%	30.7%	6.1%	7.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Nine	83.7%	66.2%	16.1%	17.9%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%	15.9%
Network 10	57.3%	31.0%	42.7%	30.3%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	38.3%
ABC <sup>15</sup>	N/A	63.8%	N/A	0.4%	N/A	31.6%	N/A	4.1%



NON-EUROPEAN REPRESENTATION REMAINED EXCEEDINGLY LOW AMONG THE BREAKFAST AND MORNING SHOWS ON COMMERCIAL NETWORKS (LESS THAN 1% OF TOTAL APPEARANCES)



THE ABC BREAKFAST AND MORNING SHOWS HAD A HIGH PROPORTION OF APPEARANCES BY PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS OF NON-EUROPEAN BACKGROUND (31.6%)

14. Included weekday breakfast shows: *Sunrise* (Seven Network), *Today* (Nine) and *News Breakfast* (ABC). Included weekday morning shows: *The Morning Show* (Seven Network), *Today Extra* (Nine), *Studio 10* (Network 10) and *Mornings* (ABC).  
 15. Analysis of ABC breakfast and morning shows is not available for 2019.

PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS WITH AN ANGLO-CELTIC BACKGROUND CONTINUED TO BE OVER-REPRESENTED IN THE SHARE OF TOTAL ON-AIR APPEARANCES.

### Analysis: The 2022 Two-Week Slice Reveals

- Presenters and reporters with an Anglo-Celtic background continued to be over-represented in the share of total on-air appearances, at 78.0% in 2022, compared to the broader Australian population where an estimated 54% of people have an Anglo-Celtic background.
- Presenters and reporters with a European background were under-represented in share of total appearances in 2022, at 10.4%, given that 18% of the general population has this background. This is a backward step from 18.3% in 2020.
- Presenters and reporters with a Non-European background were still significantly under-represented in share of appearances (6.2%) relative to the broader Australian population of 25%, echoing the 2020 report.
- Mixed progress in Indigenous representation. Although the number of appearances by Indigenous presenters and reporters on Australian television increased overall from 1.2% in 2019 to 5.4% in 2022, this growth was limited to specific networks. Indigenous representation on air increased for two networks (Nine and Network 10) – albeit concentrated among a small number of individuals – but remained the same or decreased slightly for three networks (Seven Network, ABC and SBS).



THE ABC INCREASED THE SHARE OF APPEARANCES BY **NON-EUROPEAN** PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS (16.8%).



THE SEVEN NETWORK, NINE AND NETWORK 10 ALL REGRESSED, AS PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS FROM **NON-EUROPEAN** BACKGROUNDS WERE LESS THAN 1.3% OF APPEARANCES IN 2022.



SBS CONTINUED TO HAVE A HIGHER REPRESENTATION OF APPEARANCES BY **NON-EUROPEAN** BACKGROUND PRESENTERS AND REPORTERS (70.7%) THAN THE GENERAL POPULATION.

## STUDY II. AUDIENCE SURVEY: PERCEPTIONS OF INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### Survey Background and the Cultural Background of Survey Respondents

We conducted a survey of media viewers to gauge attitudes on cultural diversity, news and current affairs. Survey questions for the purpose of this report ('the audience survey') were included, on a one-off basis, in a fortnightly omnibus survey conducted by Essential Research. Australian residents aged 18 years and over were invited with the offer of incentives to participate in the online survey which was conducted over 20–24 July 2022 and resulted in 1,082 responses.

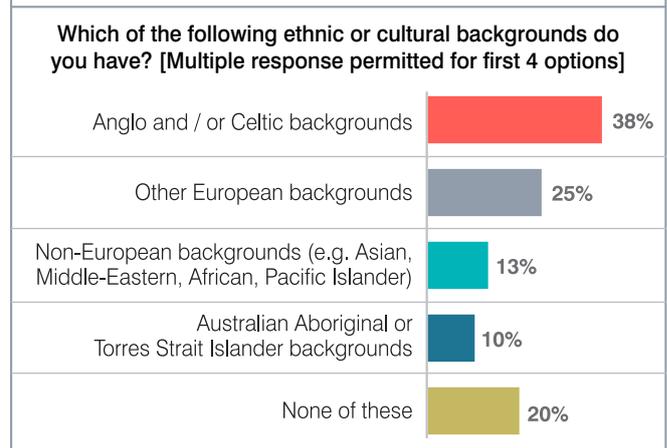
The Essential Research survey is weighted by age, gender and location to obtain a roughly representative population based on those attributes.

Respondents were asked about their cultural background, with multiple responses permitted.

Of the survey respondents (see *Figure 6*), 38% identified as having an 'Anglo and/or Celtic' background, 25% identified as having an 'Other European' background, 13% identified as having a 'Non-European' background, and 10% identifying as having an 'Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander' background.

A further 20% of respondents said their cultural background was 'None of these'.

**Figure 6: Cultural background of news and current affairs audience respondents**



#### THE SURVEY:

- 20–24 JULY 2022
- AUSTRALIAN RESIDENTS
- AGED 18 YEARS+
- 1,082 RESPONSES
- WEIGHTED BY AGE, GENDER AND LOCATION

### Representation of Indigeneity and Cultural Diversity in Australian News and Current Affairs

We asked questions to understand audience attitudes on Indigeneity and cultural diversity in news and current affairs (*Figures 7 and 8*).

About half of survey respondents (53%) agreed that Australia's cultural diversity is well-represented in news and current affairs, 17% disagreed, and close to one-third (31%) neither agreed nor disagreed.

Nearly half of respondents (48%) agreed that Australian news and current affairs does a good job of 'representing people like me' and 45% of respondents agreed that Australia's Indigenous population and culture is well-represented.

There was no significant difference between those who identified as 'Other European' background and those who identified as 'Non-European' background.

However, when presented with two other statements, 'I would like to see Australia's Indigenous population and

culture be more represented, in terms of presenters and the stories told' and 'I would like to see more cultural diversity represented, in terms of presenters and the stories told', respondents showed significant divergence across demographic groups. Respondents who identified as Non-European background were significantly more likely to agree with those two statements than respondents from other cultural backgrounds (*Figure 8*).

Thus, while there appeared to be general agreement that cultural diversity is well-represented, further prompting about attitudes seemed to highlight some tension and contradiction about representation.

That 62% of Non-European respondents would like to see more cultural diversity represented among presenters and stories told (with a similar percentage of Non-European respondents saying the same with respect to Indigenous population and culture) indicates that cultural diversity may not be as well-represented as asserted.



44% OF RESPONDENTS AGREED THAT MOST NEWS / CURRENT AFFAIRS SOURCES IN AUSTRALIA CAN BE TRUSTED TO PROVIDE RELIABLE AND TRUTHFUL INFORMATION



OVER ONE-THIRD OF RESPONDENTS (36%) AGREED THAT THEY OFTEN FIND OVERSEAS NEWS SOURCES MORE INTERESTING THAN AUSTRALIAN NEWS SOURCES

### Audience's Trust in Australian News and Current Affairs

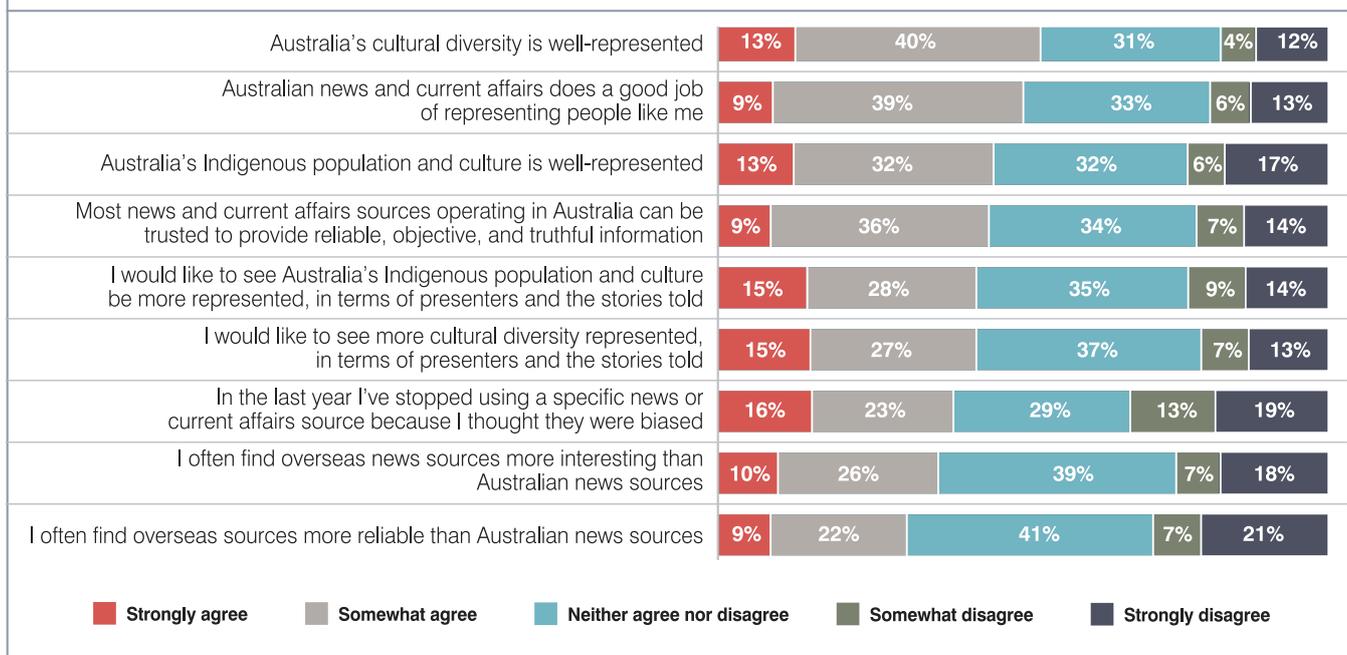
We asked four questions to understand the audience's trust in Australian sources of news and current affairs. We found there is an ambivalent attitude towards Australian sources of news (Figures 7 and 8): 44% of respondents agreed that 'most news and current affairs sources operating in Australia can be trusted to provide reliable, objective, and truthful information', and a little under one-third (31%) agreed that 'I often find overseas news sources more reliable than Australian news sources' (28% disagreed and 41% neither agreed nor disagreed). There were few differences in total agreement across most demographics (Figures 7 and 8).

In addition, close to four out of 10 respondents (39%) agreed that in the last year they had stopped using a specific news or current affairs source because they thought

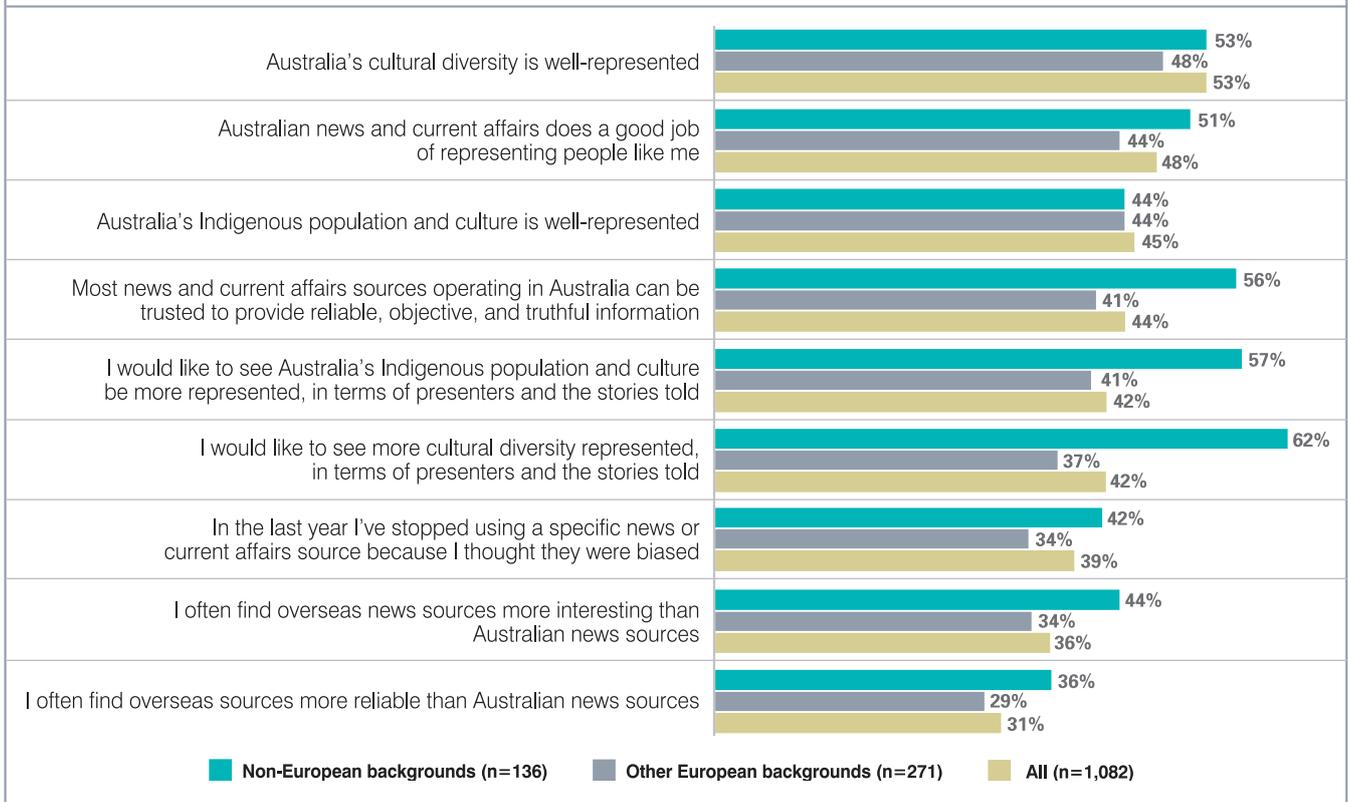
it was biased, while around one-third (32%) disagreed and 29% neither agreed nor disagreed. One-third (34%) of those who identified as Other European background agreed and 42% of those of Non-European background agreed, indicating a notable variance.

Similarly, just over one-third of respondents (36%) agreed that they often find overseas news sources more interesting than Australian news sources, one-quarter (25%) disagreed and 39% neither agreed nor disagreed. Again, there was some variance between those who identified as Other European background and those who identified as Non-European background: one-third (34%) of those who identified as Other European background agreed, while 44% of those of Non-European background agreed.

**Figure 7: Audience opinions of Indigeneity and cultural diversity representation and trust in Australian news and current affairs**



**Figure 8: Audience opinions of Australian news and current affairs, percentage 'Total Agree' by All, Other European backgrounds and Non-European backgrounds**



### Analysis: The 2022 Audience Survey Reveals

This audience survey provides a window into current attitudes regarding Indigeneity and cultural diversity in news and current affairs.

While at first glance it appears that Australian audiences believe Indigeneity and cultural diversity are well-represented, our survey indicates a more complex story.

Non-European viewers noted they were most likely to have stopped watching a news source and also most likely to switch to overseas news sources as they were seen to be more interesting.

There would be merit in further investigating why a majority of Non-European background respondents say they wish to see greater cultural diversity (if indeed it is well-represented). It is possible that the responses to these questions reflect some 'social desirability bias' playing out in public attitudes – namely, a desire to affirm Australia's success as representing diverse cultural backgrounds on screen.

WHILE THERE APPEARED TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT THAT CULTURAL DIVERSITY IS WELL-REPRESENTED, FURTHER PROMPTING ABOUT ATTITUDES HIGHLIGHTED SOME TENSION AND CONTRADICTION ABOUT REPRESENTATION. 62% OF NON-EUROPEAN RESPONDENTS WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE CULTURAL DIVERSITY REPRESENTED AMONG PRESENTERS AND STORIES TOLD (WITH A SIMILAR PERCENTAGE OF NON-EUROPEAN RESPONDENTS SAYING THE SAME WITH RESPECT TO INDIGENOUS POPULATION AND CULTURE) INDICATING THAT CULTURAL DIVERSITY MAY NOT BE AS WELL-REPRESENTED AS ASSERTED.



# PART B: Pathways In and Up

THIS SECTION INCLUDES EVIDENCE FROM THREE STUDIES WITH INSIGHTS INTO WHO TELLS AUSTRALIAN STORIES, WHO WORKS IN AUSTRALIAN NEWSROOMS AND THE COMPOSITION OF MEDIA LEADERSHIP.

## STUDY III. STAFF SURVEY REPORT: PERCEPTIONS OF INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### Survey Background, Cultural Background and Occupational Status of Staff

The staff survey replicated the survey administered in 2020 to capture and benchmark perceptions of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in Australian television news and current affairs. The survey was administered via a web-based portal (Qualtrics) and was distributed in June 2022 to 1,600 potential participants through Telum Media.<sup>16</sup> In total, 331 staff completed the anonymous survey. The 21% response rate was similar to the response rate in 2020. While self-selection bias is noted as a key limitation for surveys, this approach allows researchers to reach a broad target audience.

Similar to the 2020 study, the survey had questions on demographic information including cultural background, gender, country of birth, languages spoken, occupational status, disability and religious affiliation. It also asked staff respondents about their perceptions of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in the media and the diversity and inclusion policies and reporting mechanisms in place.

Table 6 summarises respondents’ demographics and professional background. Although 80% of respondents were born in Australia, only 55% of them spoke mainly English, which suggests a breadth of diversity in terms of cultural background among the respondents.

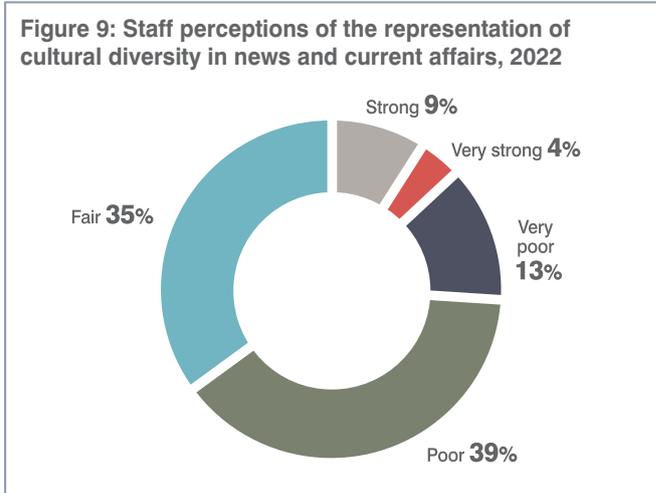
**Table 6: Staff survey respondent demographics, 2020 and 2022**

	2020	2022
Australian Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	3%	6%
Women	59%	56%
Culturally diverse	58%	50%
Editorial staff member or on-air reporter	85%	88%
Over 35 years of age	54%	56%
Born in Australia	80%	80%
Speaks mainly English	67%	55%
No religious affiliation	55%	45%
Working in the industry for over 10 years	48%	49%
Disability	na	11%

### Staff Perceived Representation of Indigeneity and Cultural Diversity in Australian Newsrooms

Since the previous report in 2020, there has been a positive change in staff perceptions of cultural diversity at the workplace level. In the 2020 survey, less than 30% of respondents rated the representation of cultural diversity in the media industry ‘fair, strong or very strong’, but this increased to 48% of respondents in the 2022 survey.

However, despite the increase in positive perceptions, more than half the respondents (52%) noted that cultural diversity is ‘poorly or very poorly’ represented in the sector (Figure 9).



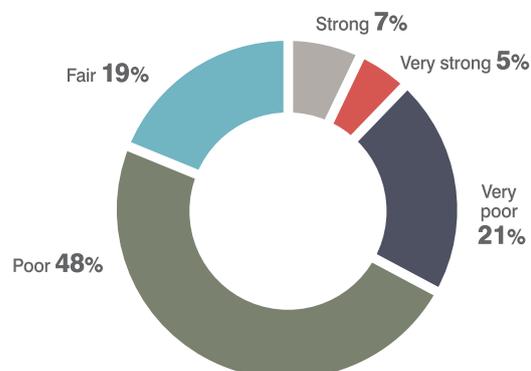
16. Telum is an Asia-Pacific based, and Asia-Pacific focused, media engagement platform. The team provides insights across the region.

In the 2022 survey, respondents' perception of Indigenous representation was collected for the first time. Almost 70% of the respondents agreed that Indigeneity is 'poorly' or 'very poorly' represented in Australian news and current affairs (Figure 10).

Notably, whether a respondent identified as having an Indigenous or culturally diverse background, this had little to no impact on how they rated the representation of Indigeneity or cultural diversity in Australian newsrooms.

Female respondents were considerably more negative in their perception than their male counterparts. These two patterns are consistent with the results of the 2020 survey.

**Figure 10: Staff perceptions of the representation of Indigeneity in news and current affairs, 2022**



### Perceived Barriers to Work and Career Progression in Australian Newsrooms

Similar to 2020 survey outcomes, the majority of respondents believed that there were greater barriers for Indigenous and culturally diverse people in securing work in front of and behind the camera, as well as in progressing up the career ladder (Table 7). In 2022, more respondents cited that one's Indigenous or cultural background was a career barrier.

The perceptions of Indigeneity and cultural diversity both in front of and behind the camera vary by gender. In both the 2022 and 2020 surveys, the majority of respondents

perceived that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experienced additional barriers to career access and progression, with women most likely to perceive amplified career obstacles for individuals from those cultural backgrounds (Tables 8 and 9).

For instance, of the female respondents, 84% in 2022 reported that they perceived additional barriers in overall career progression for Indigenous and culturally diverse professionals compared to 71% of the male respondents.

**Table 7: Perceived barriers to work and career progression in the media industry, 2020 and 2022**

Survey questions	2020 survey	2022 survey	Change from 2020 to 2022
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience greater barriers in securing work in front of the camera in news and current affairs? <b>Responses: yes</b>	77%	77%	0%
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience greater barriers in securing work behind the camera in news and current affairs? <b>Responses: yes</b>	66%	72%	+6%
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience additional obstacles in career progression in news and current affairs? <b>Responses: yes</b>	73%	77%	+4%

**Table 8: Perceptions of barriers to access and progression in the media industry (response counts by gender), 2022**

	Barriers to access (in front of camera)			Barriers to access (behind camera)			Barriers to career progression		
	Yes	No	Yes%	Yes	No	Yes%	Yes	No	Yes%
Female	101	18	85%	95	24	80%	100	19	84%
Male	65	27	71%	59	33	64%	65	27	71%
Non-binary	2	2	50%	2	2	50%	2	2	50%

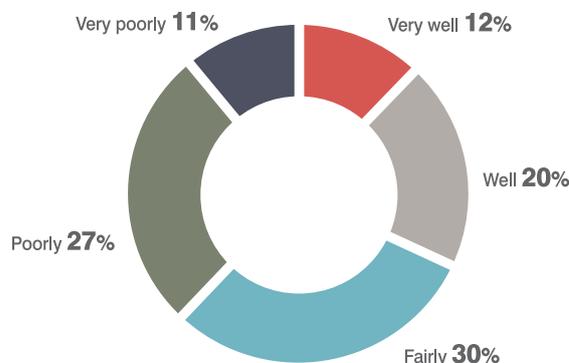
**Table 9: Perceptions of barriers to access and progression in the media industry (response counts by gender<sup>17</sup>), 2020**

	Barriers to access (in front of camera)			Barriers to access (behind camera)			Barriers to career progression		
	Yes	No	Yes%	Yes	No	Yes%	Yes	No	Yes%
Female	121	23	84%	107	37	74%	117	27	81%
Male	52	24	68%	41	35	54%	47	29	62%

### Perceptions of Managing Indigeneity and Cultural Diversity at the Workplace Level

Staff rated the management of Indigeneity and cultural diversity as 'poorly or very poorly' in both the 2020 and 2022 surveys: 40% in the 2020 survey and 38% in the 2022 survey (Figure 11).

These results highlight that while there has been a slight improvement, there are opportunities for better monitoring and reporting mechanisms for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff while building interventions to facilitate equitable access pathways and career progression.

**Figure 11: Staff perceptions of how well Indigeneity and cultural diversity is managed in Australian media, 2022**

### Analysis: The 2022 Staff Survey Reveals

The comparative outcomes and changes between 2020 and 2022 are presented in Table 10. Perceptions of the representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity have improved (from 32% in 2020 to 48% in 2022, see Table 10), both in representation in front of the camera (from 30% to 43% in 2022, see Table 10) and representation behind the camera (from 33% to 36% in 2022, see Table 10).

Despite perceived improvements, more staff identified greater barriers for Indigenous and culturally diverse

professionals securing jobs behind the camera (from 66% in 2020 to 72% in 2022); and for career progression in the sector overall (from 73% in 2020 to 77% in 2022).

Staff also perceived structural barriers and poor remedial responses in the representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity, highlighting that there is an opportunity to implement meaningful strategies to manage diversity and inclusion.

17. Non-binary was included as a category but there were no respondents in the survey data collected

<b>Table 10: Comparison of staff perceptions of key themes, 2020 and 2022</b>			
<b>Survey questions</b>	<b>2020 survey</b>	<b>2022 survey</b>	<b>Change from 2020 to 2022</b>
<b>Perceived representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in the media industry</b>			
How would you rate the overall representation of culturally diverse people in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: fairly, strong and very strong</i>	32%	48%	+16%
How would you rate the overall representation of culturally diverse people in front of the camera in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: fairly, strong and very strong</i>	30%	43%	+13%
How would you rate the overall representation of culturally diverse people behind the camera in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: fairly, strong and very strong</i>	33%	36%	+3%
<b>Perceived barriers to work and career progression in the media industry</b>			
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience greater barriers in securing work in front of the camera in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: yes</i>	77%	77%	0%
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience greater barriers in securing work behind the camera in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: yes</i>	66%	72%	+6%
Do you believe that Indigenous and culturally diverse people experience additional obstacles in career progression in news and current affairs? <i>Responses: yes</i>	73%	77%	+4%
<b>Perceptions of managing cultural diversity</b>			
What is your overall perception of how well your organisation is at managing Indigeneity and cultural diversity? <i>Responses: fairly, well and very well</i>	60%	62%	+2%

## STUDY IV. EDITORIAL AND BOARD LEADERS IN TELEVISION NEWSROOMS: CULTURAL BACKGROUNDS

An examination of the senior leadership of Australia’s major broadcast news networks indicates that diversity remains very poor with Anglo-Celtic representation at a senior level well in excess of levels in the general Australian population (*Table 11*).

The diversity profile of network boards as well as senior television newsroom teams<sup>18</sup>, was assembled using publicly available information from official websites, social media profiles and news articles. Boards are important to organisational decision making, strategic direction and financial approach. In the media sector, they typically comprise 8–9 individuals.<sup>19</sup>

The following provides a snapshot of the Indigenous, cultural diversity, and gender profile of leaders of Australian media. The investigation was undertaken in August 2022. In addition to our snapshot for 2022, we provide a comparison with the 2020 report outcomes.

The map of media network boards of management shows that they continue to be dominated by people of Anglo-Celtic background (*Figure 12*). This is a similar outcome to 2020.

Specifically, we found that:

- SBS remains the only network board to have a culturally diverse mix of Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic, European and Non-European members.
- The SBS board now has two Indigenous members, up from one in 2020. There are no identifiable Indigenous people on other TV network boards.

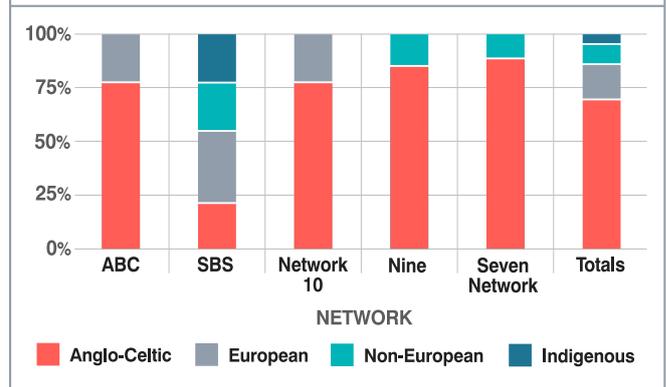
Indigenous representation and cultural diversity among the networks’ senior television news leaders are even worse than the board profiles. Two networks (ABC and Nine) appear to have Anglo-Celtic only senior news leadership teams (*Figure 13*).

**SBS REMAINS THE ONLY NETWORK TO HAVE A CULTURALLY DIVERSE MIX OF BOARD MEMBERS.**

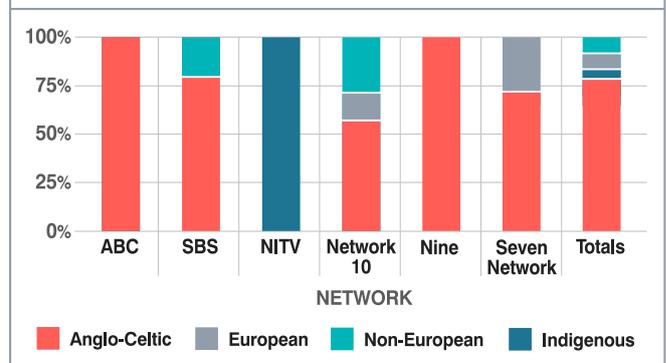
**Table 11: Cultural background of broadcast news leadership, compared to Australian population**

	Major free-to-air TV networks		Australian population (from 2021 Census)
	Board members (n=37)	Senior news leaders (n=37)	
Anglo-Celtic	70%	78%	54%
European	16%	8%	18%
Non-European	9%	8%	25%
Indigenous	5%	5%	3%

**Figure 12: Cultural background of broadcast company board members by network, 2022**



**Figure 13: Cultural background of senior news leaders by network, 2022**

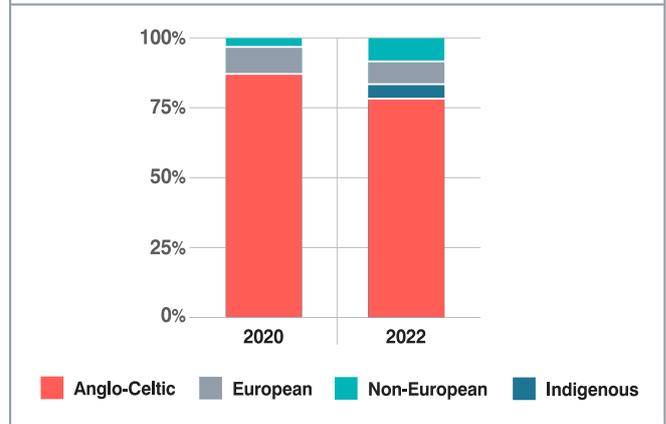


18. Senior newsroom teams were defined as those people at a senior leadership level directly responsible for TV broadcast news, such as national and state news directors, managing editors and editors, head of news and bureau chiefs, depending on the organisational structure of the network. A similar method was employed for the 2020 study. NITV (part of SBS) was considered as a separate entity, in terms of senior newsroom teams, for the first time in the 2022 study. NITV does not appear separately in the board analysis, as it is covered by the SBS board.

19. Network 10’s board is based in the US for ViacomCBS. Therefore, this is a summary of top tier leadership in Australia at the broadcaster.

- Other than NITV, which has an all-Indigenous leadership team, Network 10 has the most culturally diverse senior news leadership team.
- Overall, the Indigeneity and cultural diversity among senior television news directors, editors and national bureau chiefs has hardly changed in the past two years (Figure 14), especially when directly comparing the data by removing NITV from consideration. The biggest shift has been the addition of two people of non-European background to the senior news leadership ranks.
- Of the 37 people identified in 2022 as working in the most senior television news management roles at the broadcast networks, 78.4% have an Anglo-Celtic background, 8.1% have a European background and 8.1% have a Non-European background. The only Indigenous senior television news leaders are employed at NITV.

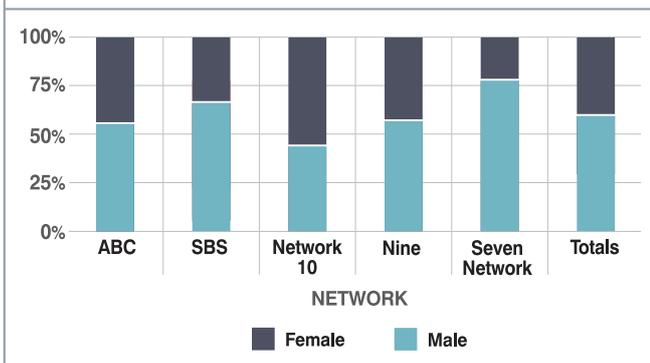
**Figure 14: Cultural background of senior news leadership: 2020 and 2022 comparison**



### Gender Diversity in Leadership

There has been more progress in terms of gender, although the changes are mixed. The boards of the ABC, Network 10 and Nine have a balance of women and men. The Seven Network board continues to be strongly male-dominated (78% men), with no change from 2020 (Figure 15).

**Figure 15: Gender diversity of broadcast company board members by network, 2022**

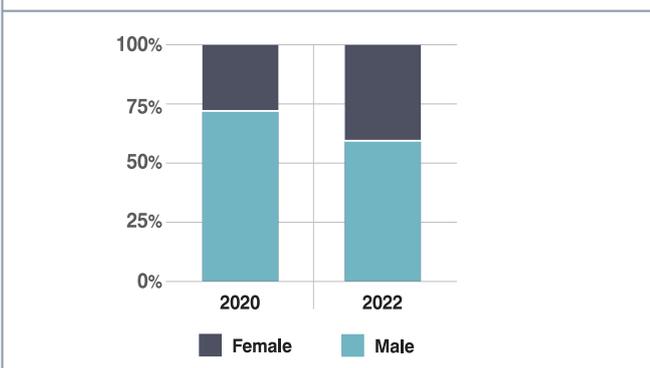


In 2020, no women were identified at a national news director or head of news level. In 2022, three women were in that role.

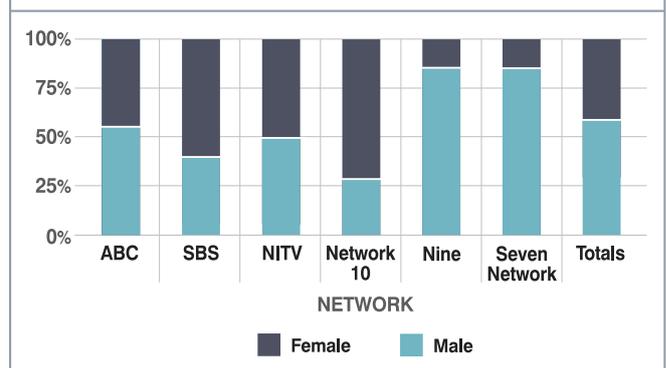
The percentage of women in senior television news management roles has increased overall, from a mix of 23 men and 9 women in 2020 to 22 men and 15 women in 2022 (Figure 16).

- The ABC, SBS, NITV and Network 10 have all achieved either balanced or female-dominated senior television news teams (Figure 17). In terms of the intersection of cultural background and gender, one of these women was identified as being from a European background and one from a Non-European background (both work at Network 10); an Indigenous woman was employed in a senior role at NITV.
- The senior news teams at Seven and Nine continue to be overwhelmingly male (86%) with female representation barely changed from two years ago.

**Figure 16: Gender diversity of senior news leadership, 2020 and 2022**



**Figure 17: Gender diversity of senior news leaders by network, 2022**





REPRESENTATION OF INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY AMONG TELEVISION NEWS LEADERSHIP TEAMS HAS LARGELY REMAINED STATIC SINCE 2020.

### Analysis: The Map of Leadership and Board Membership Reveals

- SBS remains the only network board to have a diverse mix in terms of cultural background with representation of Indigenous, Anglo-Celtic, European and Non-European members. The SBS board now has two Indigenous members, up from one in 2020.
- There are positive trends in terms of progress on gender parity but this has been inconsistent across the networks with greater gender balance on the boards of the ABC, Network 10 and Nine. The Seven Network board continues to be male-dominated (almost 80% men), with no change since 2020.
- Overall, representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity among television news leadership teams has largely remained static since 2020. Concerningly, people of Anglo-Celtic background remain overly represented in senior television news management roles, when compared to the general Australian population; European and non-European backgrounds remain considerably under-represented. While the Indigenous representation of 5.4% is above general population levels, all these senior newsroom leaders are based at NITV.
- This poor leadership report card raises questions about whether there is a correlation between the lack of cultural diversity in news leadership roles and the lack of diversity on screen, given this tier of managers is responsible for employing on-air talent.
- The current leadership map also raises the opportunity for change. With access to senior news and leadership teams providing networks and pathways onto boards, it is important to consider how pathways to leadership can become more diverse and inclusive.

WE SPOKE WITH 19 EDITORIAL LEADERS IN REGIONAL NEWSROOMS ACROSS AUSTRALIA. THEY OFFERED KEY INSIGHTS INTO INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THEIR NEWSROOMS.



## STUDY V. REGIONAL EDITORIAL LEADERS: PERCEPTIONS OF INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

### Background and Overview of Regional Editorial Leader Insights

Interviews were conducted with 19 editorial leaders in regional media organisations, including editors, news directors and chiefs of staff across free-to-air commercial and public broadcasters (TV and radio), news websites and printed newspapers, in order to:

- gain an understanding of the perceptions of editorial leaders in regional media, on Indigeneity and cultural diversity, especially in terms of audience reach and consumption, and whether that affects staff selection
- discover whether editorial leaders in regional media consider Indigeneity and cultural diversity when recruiting for journalist vacancies and, if so, how it might influence their decisions
- reveal practices that risk creating barriers in the recruitment process or otherwise inhibit the appointment of journalists from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds
- diagnose mechanisms to support the recruitment of a more diverse journalist workforce for regional media.



ARE THERE MECHANISMS TO **SUPPORT THE RECRUITMENT OF A MORE DIVERSE** JOURNALIST WORKFORCE FOR REGIONAL MEDIA?



DO EDITORIAL LEADERS IN REGIONAL MEDIA **CONSIDER INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY** WHEN RECRUITING FOR JOURNALIST VACANCIES?

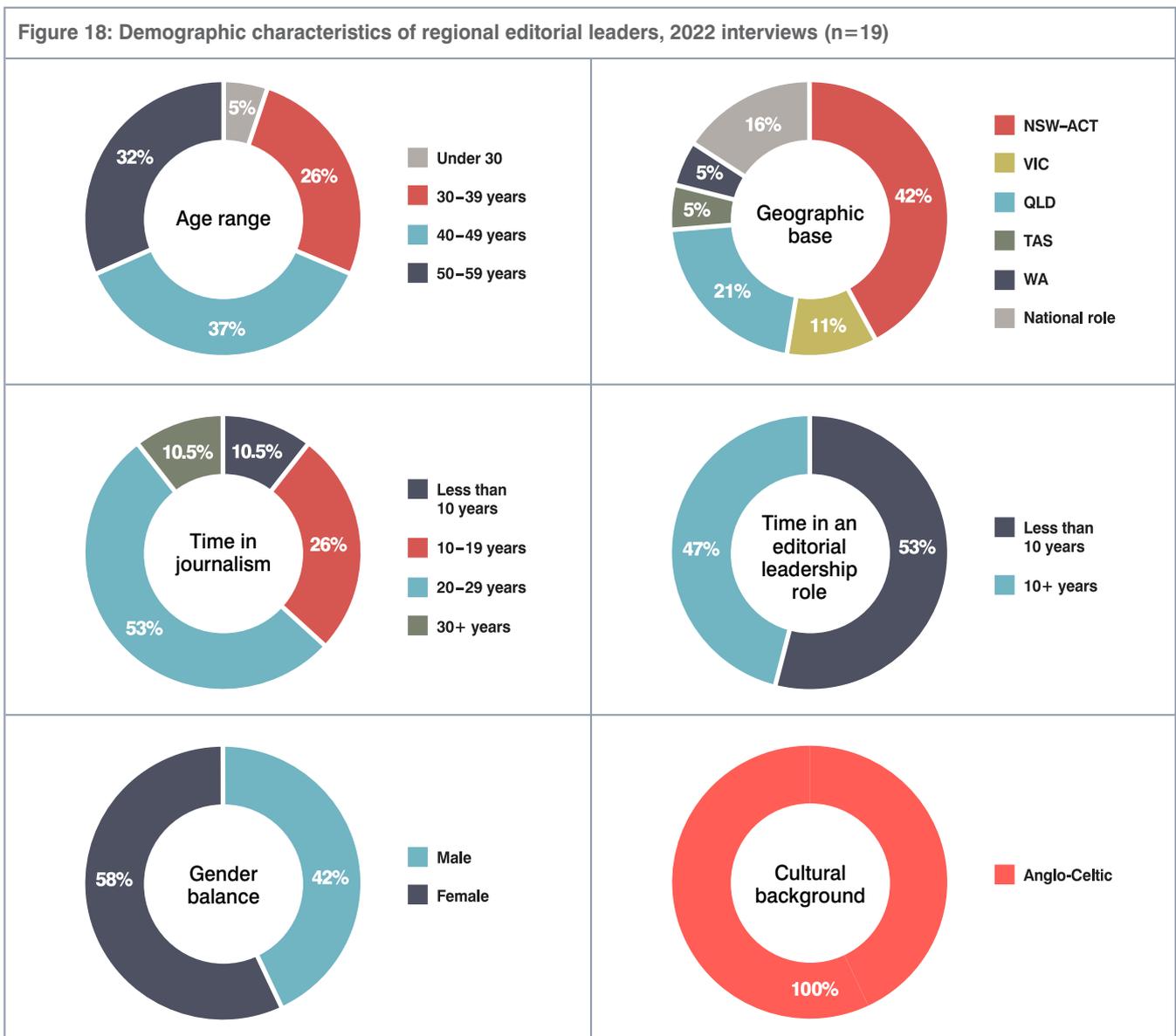
**Methodology<sup>20</sup>**

Two rounds of interviews were completed in the first six months of 2022. The first round involved a sample from one company, which had agreed to be part of the investigation. Ten editorial leaders consented to participate.

In the second round the sample group included seven regionally based free-to-air broadcasters and publishers; 30 invitations were sent, yielding nine participants from four different media organisations.

**In total, across both rounds, 19 editorial leaders from five regional media organisations were interviewed<sup>21</sup>.**

Respondents had diverse demographic characteristics including age, geographic location, industry experience and gender (see *Figure 18*). The exception was cultural background. All participants identified as Anglo-Celtic, an extraordinary imbalance when compared to the general population.



20. Ethical protocols were adhered to for each study used to collect data. University of Sydney Ethics Project Number: 2022/241

21. All the interviews were conducted by video call and lasted 30-40 minutes. Interviews were recorded (with permission from participants) and transcribed for analysis.

## Findings

Four key findings emerged from interviews with editorial leaders in regional newsrooms, (see Table 12).

<b>Table 12: Summary of findings from interviews with 19 editorial leaders in regional media</b>	
<b>Themes</b>	<b>Sample quotes from interview respondents</b>
<b>1. Awareness of Indigeneity and cultural diversity</b>	
My community is diverse	<i>'Anyone who has spent any time in regional Australia knows how culturally diverse it is. In [my regional centre] alone, we have a huge Lebanese population, we also have a large Sudanese and Middle Eastern population.'</i>
Diversity influences news decisions	<i>'I feel like it's really our responsibility to go out and seek out those people, because the stories don't just jump out at us, we've actually got to go and find them [and] also build relationships in those communities.'</i>
Diversity in news is important	<i>'Moral feels like a pretty loaded word for it but I think it's only fair and reasonable that the media – the mass media – reflects its communities better.'</i>
<b>2. Openness to diversity of the journalist workforce</b>	
The newsroom is predominantly of Anglo-Celtic background	<i>'It's very easy to just start thinking from a mainstream white point of view, because that's what our entire newsroom is made up of.'</i>
A diverse newsroom is better	<i>'The best stories are forged by people working together to create a shared narrative. So it's really critical that we are making sure that not everyone is like me in the room.'</i>
Personal qualities	<i>'So long as they've got the basic skillset to be a journalist ... you know, you look for someone that's competent in the work, but then also, I think, equally, or even more importantly, what kind of person are they?'</i>
<b>3. Inhibitors to the selection of journalists from diverse cultural backgrounds</b>	
A lack of diverse applicants	<i>'We primarily get graduates who are from, you know, Anglo-Celtic backgrounds. They are not particularly disadvantaged, having made it all the way through uni.'</i>
Time pressures	<i>'We're so thin and busy that having to teach someone how to do something when I could have employed someone who was trained how to do that ... has a lot to do with what I see as being the easiest transition.'</i>
English language problems	<i>'I really was keen to overcome my own biases around language barriers ... I've interviewed people for roles from [another cultural background] and really found it hard to get over the communication barrier. And so you kind of have that unconscious bias from the start when you look at someone's name.'</i>
Personal bias; default to best 'fit'	<i>'We all bring bias, all of us [but] you can only challenge your own bias if you're aware of it ... if you're not aware of it, you can't.'</i>
<b>4. Action for change: Recommendations from editorial leaders</b>	
A welcoming work environment	<i>'Perhaps there might be some people who are from those other backgrounds that might get put off from applying for certain media companies, because there might be some misconception about what we would consider and what we wouldn't.'</i>
Improved recruitment process	<i>'We're fishing in the same places a lot. And maybe that's the nature of media, as well. But we need to diversify how we recruit and where we recruit.'</i>
Sourcing applicants	<i>'I think if we want people from diverse backgrounds to be applying for our jobs, we have to find them... we can't just expect that they'll all discover the jobs on the Seek ad, and then apply.'</i>

## THEME 1: AWARENESS OF INDIGENEITY AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Most of the editorial leaders described their communities as diverse. When it came to representing Indigeneity and cultural diversity in their news reporting, there was a range of views, including from editorial leaders who felt their audience was still mainly ‘white’ and two leaders who felt their audiences were simply interested in what was happening locally. In that context, Indigeneity and cultural diversity were seen to be irrelevant.



*‘There’s no white filter. We’ll run a good story no matter what it is.’*

One editorial leader argued against making too much of the differences within the community:

*‘They’re Australians at the end of the day ... and I think that’s important to make them feel a part of the community. So that [means] saying that they’re not different. I certainly don’t change my editorial decision-making ... based on someone’s race.’*

At the other end of the spectrum were editorial leaders who believed strongly in reflecting diversity in their reporting and actively sought to include people from different cultural backgrounds in stories. One outlet has established a tracking system to ensure that this is a key focus.

These editorial leaders were in the majority in the sample group. Their reasons for chasing diversity in content included:

- it was the media’s responsibility to fairly represent the whole community
- it promoted equity and inclusivity, which benefited all of society – that is, there was a social imperative
- there was potential to grow the audience by covering a broader range of stories – that is, there was a business and community imperative
- culturally diverse groups had interesting stories to tell that would engage existing audiences.

*‘If we’re ignoring those voices ... which are growing in our community ... then we’re ignoring a whole cross-section; not just ignoring but excluding. And we’re excluding them to the detriment of those cultures, but also our own detriment, because that’s where division comes from.’*

Working against this trend of awareness was the ignorance of some editorial leaders about the cultural profile of their audience.

As one interviewee noted: ‘I don’t think this is the most diverse part of Australia, where I am.’ They went on to confess: ‘I don’t know [the] ethnic breakdown of our subscribers [or] even of the [community]’.

“ IF WE’RE IGNORING THOSE VOICES ... WHICH ARE GROWING IN OUR COMMUNITY ... THEN WE’RE IGNORING A WHOLE CROSS-SECTION; NOT JUST IGNORING BUT EXCLUDING. AND WE’RE EXCLUDING THEM TO THE DETRIMENT OF THOSE CULTURES, BUT ALSO OUR OWN DETRIMENT, BECAUSE THAT’S WHERE DIVISION COMES FROM. ”

– REGIONAL EDITORIAL LEADER

## THEME 2: OPENNESS TO DIVERSITY OF THE JOURNALIST WORKFORCE

All 19 editorial leaders identified as Anglo-Celtic. The newsroom with the greatest diversity had 20% of its editorial staff from ‘first-generation, migrant, non-English speaking’ backgrounds. This was a standout example. Otherwise, the editorial leaders described their newsrooms as predominantly white and ‘middle class’.



*‘I feel like we have a lot of people from the same sort of background, that live in the same sort of suburbs and ... went to the same sort of schools.’*

One editorial leader said it could be misleading to consider only racial background as a measure of diversity when there was so much more to an individual’s diversity including gender identity and expression, socio-economic background, health and ability. Of this, one interviewee noted:

*‘We’re all white [in my newsroom]. We all look the same. But we’re so very different ... you haven’t got to have a black face or you haven’t got to be Asian to be diverse. You know ... we need to be respectful of everyone’s story.’*

Most of the leaders said they had worked with journalists from Indigenous or other culturally diverse backgrounds at different times and described those experiences as valuable.

There was general consensus that journalists could not escape biases arising from their upbringing and so a variety of experiences in the newsroom would help reflect, and report on, the variety of experiences of the broader population.

*‘When we are pitching a story or pitching an angle, we’re really only able to pull from our own lived experiences and backgrounds. And so we don’t consider the experiences or thoughts or anything of those other cultures.’*

One editorial leader, however, suggested it was part of a journalist’s job to be able to tell any story regardless of their own cultural background and it was more important to ‘speak’ to a diverse range of people than employ diversity in the newsroom.

Three of the leaders, who worked with newsrooms staffed by just one journalist, asked how diversity could be measured in those circumstances, although some suggested that it could be addressed at an organisational level more broadly, for example by having a regional Indigenous reporter based in one town but covering many sites.

The editorial leader in charge of the most culturally diverse newsroom said they had developed a ‘very conscious multicultural outreach policy’ in recognition of the diversity of their audience. Indeed, it could be speculated that this leader’s view of their audience may be influencing their employment of diverse journalists in a positive way.

“ WHEN WE ARE PITCHING A STORY OR PITCHING AN ANGLE, WE’RE REALLY ONLY ABLE TO PULL FROM OUR OWN LIVED EXPERIENCES AND BACKGROUNDS. AND SO WE DON’T CONSIDER THE EXPERIENCES OR THOUGHTS OR ANYTHING OF THOSE OTHER CULTURES. ”

– REGIONAL EDITORIAL LEADER

### THEME 3: INHIBITORS TO RECRUITING FOR DIVERSITY

The interviews with regional editorial leaders revealed four key inhibitors to the employment of a more diverse workforce. While some of these blockers were obvious to the interviewees, others indicated the possibility of biases or systemic racism in the recruitment process.

#### 3.1 A lack of applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds

All but one of the editorial leaders referred to the lack of suitable applications from people of diverse cultural backgrounds. Many referred to a lack of applications for regional journalist jobs in general, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic.

*'You can't really say, oh, today I'm going to make my workplace a more culturally diverse workplace [when] you've got, you know, five people who are from a bog standard white Australian background [to choose from].'*

Interviewees offered various reasons for the lack of diversity in applications. These included:

- the requirement for tertiary qualifications
- the lack of diversity in students graduating from universities
- a general disaffection with the media and journalism
- limited advertising options for job vacancies
- a lack of industry role models.

Some of the leaders described their company's application and interview process as intimidating to those without a university education and said they offered personal support through the process to applicants they knew, who they felt would grow to be good journalists but who might stumble during the recruitment phase.

A number of the other editorial leaders suggested their organisations needed to make it obvious that journalists from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds were welcome.

*'If people don't know ... that this is an inclusive workplace [they] might be less inclined to apply for those positions ... there might be a perception or a misunderstanding [so] they don't bother applying for those jobs.'*

A few of the editorial leaders believed the lack of an Indigenous presence and cultural diversity needed addressing far earlier than the recruitment phase, and required engagement with high schools to foster an interest in journalism among younger students.

*'In an ideal world, I'd have my journalists going out to schools ... to talk to people about a career path in journalism, because that's how we get future journalists in the door. And that's how we raise our profile as a good place to work.'*

Several of the editorial leaders said they had started specifically targeting diversity through traineeships and talent identification programs, a strategy proving fruitful.



SOME LEADERS DESCRIBED THEIR COMPANY'S APPLICATION AND INTERVIEW PROCESS AS INTIMIDATING TO THOSE WITHOUT A UNIVERSITY EDUCATION



ORGANISATIONS NEEDED TO MAKE IT OBVIOUS THAT JOURNALISTS FROM INDIGENOUS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS ARE WELCOME

### 3.2 Time pressures

The majority of the editorial leaders said time pressures affected their recruitment decisions. Leaders noted they invariably opted for the 'easiest' candidate, someone who would quickly get up to working speed in the newsroom and would require less effort from the leader.

*'If you're looking at somebody who might take a little bit more time to get up to speed in the business, you probably rule them out over somebody who can slot in straight away.'*

Whether or not the editorial leaders in this sample were aware of the impact of the time crunch, the result was often the appointment of someone like themselves: white and middle class.

### 3.3 English language concerns

The requirement for applicants to have English skills of a certain level was a contentious topic. For those working mainly across print and online platforms, the requirement was for written English; for those in TV and radio it was more about the spoken word and accents.

One editorial leader said they were wary of appointing journalists whose first language was not English as it could be difficult to 'iron that out of' their writing. Another said poor English could rule out applicants at the cover letter stage.

*'So they don't make it past that first stage most of the time. Obviously, there are people of ethnic backgrounds who have a fantastic command of the English language. I'm not saying those don't exist. But, in my case, of the jobs I've hired for, in this setting, I haven't had a person of a diverse culture who also had the required command of the written English language.'*

Most editorial leaders, even those in broadcast media, believed that a 'foreign' accent was no longer a hindrance to employment, although sometimes the audience might hold biases that resulted in complaints. For the editorial leaders, the key question was whether the journalist could be understood.

Some said senior business leaders found audience complaints difficult to withstand or the negative feedback reinforced their own biases against accents.

Several of the editorial leaders believed media organisations needed to take a stronger stand:

*'If you want to see change, you've got to be the change. So if you want to hear diverse voices, you've got to use diverse voices, and people have to get used to listening [to them].'*

### 3.4 Personal bias

In the interviews, editorial leaders expressed an awareness of their own cultural biases during the recruitment processes, and the need to mitigate against these biases. The majority either wrestled with their bias internally or had taken active steps, such as introducing diverse interview panels and criteria-related scoring of interview candidates, to mitigate the risk as much as possible. Mentions of finding the right 'fit' in some of the interview responses, however, indicate the tendency to recruit 'safe' and 'similar' candidates (see for instance, Schneider 1987; Ashforth and Mael 1989; Byrne cited in Van Hove and Turban 2015).

Taken together these barriers reinforced and reproduced a lack of role models for future candidates from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds.

“ IF YOU WANT TO SEE CHANGE, YOU'VE GOT TO BE THE CHANGE. SO IF YOU WANT TO HEAR DIVERSE VOICES, YOU'VE GOT TO USE DIVERSE VOICES, AND PEOPLE HAVE TO GET USED TO LISTENING [TO THEM]. ”

– REGIONAL EDITORIAL LEADER

## THEME 4: EDITORIAL LEADERS – ACTION FOR CHANGE

Most of the editorial leaders believed the industry could do better in its efforts to recruit more journalists from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds. Some of them saw change happening but acknowledged the pace was slow. Several argued that this slow pace of change was not the result of a lack of desire or effort but of conditions and supply. All had suggestions for improvements.



### 4.1 Targeting diversity

Most of the editorial leaders thought it was necessary to go beyond traditional avenues of sourcing applicants in order to increase diversity in the journalist workforce.

Several strategies emerged from the evidence presented by the editorial leaders:

- connecting with schools and universities to encourage students from culturally diverse backgrounds to pursue journalism, and offering them scholarships
- re-introducing cadetships that do not require a university degree to get a start as a journalist
- offering targeted internships and traineeships for Indigenous and culturally diverse journalists
- advertising specifically to fill diversity roles, such as an Indigenous reporter
- talent scouting and talent banking: identifying people in the community who might be interested in transitioning to a journalist role and developing them in readiness for upcoming vacancies.

There were some differences of opinion on the role of setting business KPIs and quotas around diversity. Some argued that jobs had to be won on merit alone, while others said they believed quotas reinforced the message that diversity was important and opened the door to skilled applicants who also happened to come from culturally diverse backgrounds.

*'We know that we'll find those people, they are there ... they still have the same skills, they've got the same level of education ... it's just that they don't have to compete against 200 others.'*

### 4.2 Ensuring an equitable recruitment process

The editorial leaders suggested changing a number of recruitment practices, to put applicants from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds on an equitable footing with their Anglo-Celtic counterparts.

Suggestions to facilitate change included:

- writing more inclusive job advertisements that stated diversity was welcome
- placing ads in publications like the *Koori Mail*, to broaden the reach and diversity of the readership
- introducing a 'blind' screening process, to avoid the risk of shortlisting based on cultural signals from the applicant's name
- testing for job-specific skills, rather than selecting based on perceptions of best fit
- having at least two panelists (three where possible) on the interview committee, and aiming for diversity on the panel
- ensuring recruiters were trained in interview techniques and given adequate HR support.



HELP TO ENSURE AN EQUITABLE RECRUITMENT PROCESS WITH **'BLIND' SCREENING PROCESSES**, TO AVOID SHORTLISTING BASED ON CULTURAL SIGNALS FROM THE APPLICANT'S NAME



**SYSTEMATICALLY COLLECT DATA ON THE CULTURAL MIX OF AUDIENCES**, AS WELL AS THE JOURNALIST WORKFORCE, TO HELP INFORM EDITORIAL LEADERS

### 4.3 Providing a welcoming work environment

More than half of the editorial leaders discussed the need to make the mainstream media a place that appeared welcoming to people from Indigenous and culturally diverse backgrounds. This could be achieved by spotlighting role models. Participants referred to Indigenous presenters Tony Armstrong and Brooke Boney as good examples. Also noted was the importance of developing networks to support Indigenous and culturally diverse journalists once they were employed. This support was especially important for young journalists posted to remote locations.

*'What about the [diverse] person that we're bringing in ... Are they seeing people around them that make them feel comfortable in our newsroom ... I think it goes way beyond recruitment. You can get them in the door, but are they going to stay with us.'*

Some of the editorial leaders said their organisation provided diversity training for staff to help reduce bias and encourage inclusion. Others noted the need for such awareness-raising programs highlighting an opportunity for an industry-wide approach.

Notably, we found that the challenges and areas for improvement identified by the regional editorial leaders somewhat echoed those identified

by senior TV editorial leaders interviewed for *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* (2020). This indicates that there is still much room for progress, and encouragingly, agreement over the need for action.

Drawing on other diversity campaigns (e.g. gender) signals the possibility to target staff from a diversity of cultural backgrounds. But media organisations need to take more active steps to achieve this.

#### Future research

Future research could investigate the reported shortage of applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds to understand the deterrents and difficulties in gaining employment from applicants' perspectives. Considering attitudes to written and spoken English skills would also be useful and would provide insights into the perceived or real impediments to work as a journalist in mainstream regional media.

Systematically collecting data on the cultural mix of audiences, as well as the journalist workforce, would help inform editorial leaders and the wider industry, and possibly create greater incentive to diversify culturally. We highly recommend creating transparency through reporting mechanisms, including through company annual reports for instance.

### Analysis: The Interviews with Editorial Leaders from Regional Newsrooms Reveal

The interviews provided invaluable insights into the perceptions, attitudes and issues around Indigeneity and cultural diversity in regional media. The research revealed some practices that could be said to embed and reproduce structural racism in the recruitment process and pointed to ways regional media organisations could encourage greater diversity among journalists.

Encouragingly, there is a strong awareness of Indigeneity and cultural diversity and a desire to accurately reflect the diversity of their audiences within their newsrooms.<sup>22</sup> Concerningly, the journalist workforce remains predominantly Anglo-Celtic.

Moreover, many of the editorial leaders interviewed felt the required structural adjustments were outside their scope of influence, especially given the busy schedules of local newsroom management.

This may signal a need for the senior leadership of media organisations to more actively create the conditions necessary to support newsroom leaders in efforts to remove structural barriers to diversity.

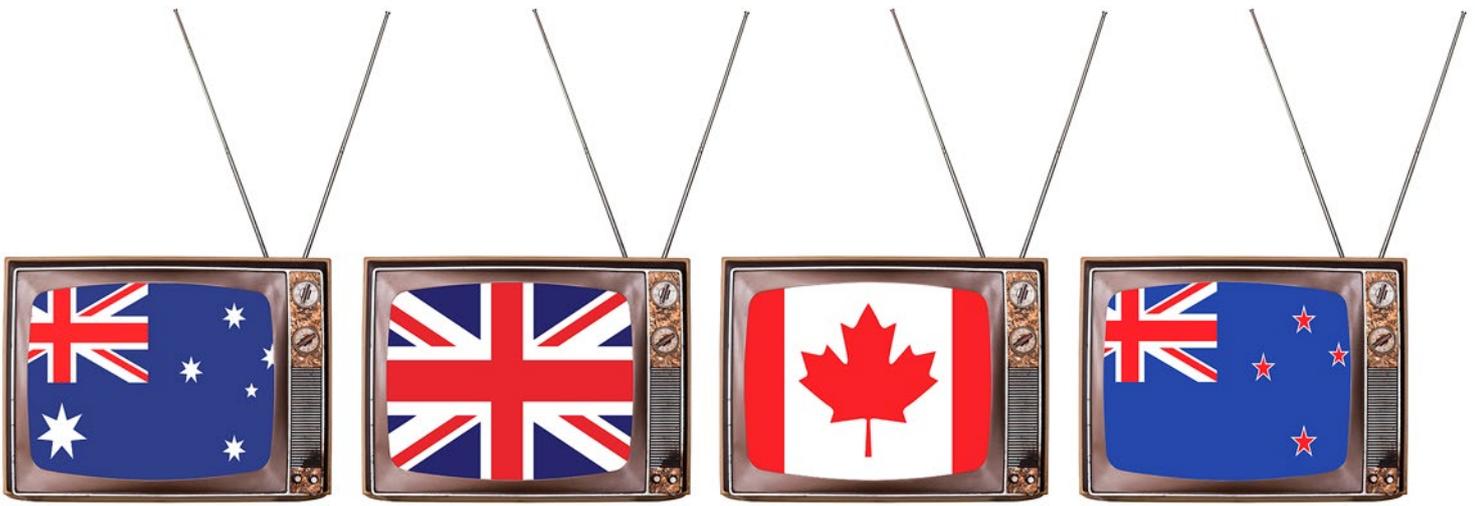
“ WHAT ABOUT THE [DIVERSE] PERSON THAT WE'RE BRINGING IN ... ARE THEY SEEING PEOPLE AROUND THEM THAT MAKE THEM FEEL COMFORTABLE IN OUR NEWSROOM ... I THINK IT GOES WAY BEYOND RECRUITMENT. YOU CAN GET THEM IN THE DOOR, BUT ARE THEY GOING TO STAY WITH US. ”

– REGIONAL EDITORIAL LEADER

22. We note that the interviewee sample in this study may not be representative of regional editorial leaders more broadly, as the 19 interviewees volunteered to participate in the interviews, possibly due to an interest in the topic matter. Therefore, the level of awareness and appreciation of diversity issues may be particularly high among this group. This is certainly a limitation of the research sample. Future research could address this limitation by conducting a broader scoping of the experiences of editorial leaders including surveys, focus groups and more extensive interviews.

MANY OF THE EDITORIAL LEADERS INTERVIEWED FELT THE REQUIRED STRUCTURAL ADJUSTMENTS WERE OUTSIDE THEIR SCOPE OF INFLUENCE, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE BUSY SCHEDULES OF LOCAL NEWSROOM MANAGEMENT. THIS SIGNALS THE NEED FOR SENIOR LEADERSHIP OF MEDIA ORGANISATIONS TO MORE ACTIVELY CREATE THE CONDITIONS TO SUPPORT NEWSROOM DIVERSITY.





## PART C: International comparison: How does Australia stack up?

THE INTERNATIONAL APPROACH TO MEASURING, MONITORING AND REPORTING ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY REMAINS PATCHY AND INCONSISTENT. HOWEVER THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS – PARTICULARLY IN NZ AND THE UK. THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA SECTOR NOT ONLY HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN FROM OUR INTERNATIONAL NEIGHBOURS BUT ALSO TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF AS A TRAILBLAZER FOR EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AT THE WORKPLACE LEVEL; AND A REPRESENTATIVE MEDIA FORGING GREATER AUDIENCE TRUST AND MORE SOCIAL COHESION.

### How Diverse is Media In Other Countries?

The media experience in other democratic countries is similar to Australia. Industry reports describe upheavals and a shift in audience consumption patterns due to the digital disruption of publishing and broadcasting traditions. Trust in the media is falling but in many countries that has only strengthened the dominance of well-known and mainstream news providers (Newman et al 2021; Westcott et al 2022).

The representation of cultural diversity: Robertson et al (2021), in a survey of 100 news outlets across five countries – Brazil, Germany, South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States, found white faces over-represented among the ranks of journalists and especially among senior editors. This was despite news industry leaders reporting in earlier survey outcomes that improving cultural diversity was a key focus for their organisations (Cherubini et al 2020).

A survey of journalists working in the UK, Sweden and Germany (Luck et al 2020) confirmed low diversity levels and concluded that change would require: personal commitment from editorial leaders; ongoing collection of data about diversity; a shift in newsroom culture to allow for different perspectives; and recognition and action to overcome structural racism.

In the USA, a longtime national survey to track diversity in American media outlets has stalled due to low participation rates (Scire 2022; see also Arvanitakis et. al. 2020 which drew on the previous survey).

**Table 13: Employment of culturally diverse groups in the UK television industry, all job categories, 2017–2021**

	Representation of diverse cultures in UK-based TV industry					UK labour market mix
	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	
White Ethnic Groups (WEG)	72%	73%	70%	71%	70%	88%
Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG)	16%	15%	13%	13%	11%	12%
MEG in senior management	10%	9%	8%	7%	8%	
Not disclosed	3%	2%	5%	4%	2%	
Not collected (data gap)	10%	10%	11%	12%	17%	

Data sourced from Ofcom (2021 a)

**Table 14: Cultural background of on-screen presenters and journalists at major UK broadcasters**

	2021		2020		2019		2018	
	Journalists	On-screen talent						
White Ethnic Groups (WEG)	83%	73%	82%	67%	83%	81%	83%	81%
Minority Ethnic Groups (MEG)	13%	9%	12%	9%	12%	10%	11%	10%
Not disclosed	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	0%
Not collected (data gap)	2%	14%	3%	22%	3%	6%	4%	9%

Data sourced from Ofcom (2021 b)

## The UK

In the UK, the communications regulator Ofcom has been collecting data on the cultural background of people employed in television for the past five years and in radio for the past four years. In addition, all TV broadcasters are signed up to the Creative Diversity Network's Diamond program which reports on diversity across all aspects of TV production, including those working in freelance production houses. The aim of both monitoring programs is the same: to ensure the UK population is seeing itself accurately reflected in the broadcast media.

In its five-year review, Ofcom (2021 a) noted that as transparency around the data had increased, so had conversations about the participation and representation of culturally diverse groups in the media. Indeed, the UK's main broadcasters had made cultural diversity a priority.

The BBC and Channel 4 – both government-owned broadcasters – have well-developed diversity and inclusion strategies with specific action plans, including targeted recruitment and promotion coupled with unconscious bias training (BBC 2021; Channel 4 n.d.).

Channel 4's Black to Front initiative ensures the inclusion of culturally diverse people in popular mainstream programs. Viacom CBS (whose parent company Paramount also owns the Network 10 in Australia) launched a 'No Diversity, No Commission' policy across its UK network in 2020, requiring production companies to meet diversity targets.

Other initiatives were also launched to identify and develop diverse talent (Ramachandran 2020). *Table 12* shows how the employment of Minority Ethnic Groups<sup>23</sup> (MEGs) in

23. Ofcom uses the terminology 'Minority Ethnic Groups' (MEG) to refer to people from other than white backgrounds living and working in the UK. It has previously used the term 'Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic' (BAME) to mean the same thing. People from Anglo-Celtic and other white backgrounds are described as 'White Ethnic Groups' (WEG).

UK television has improved over the past five years and is now above general population levels, although Ofcom warns of network and regional shortfalls and laments that MEG representation at senior management levels remains disproportionately low. It must be noted that these Ofcom figures factor all employees, including administrative, technical and sales staff.

A deeper dive into the cultural background of journalists and on-screen presenters (*Table 13*) shows diversity in these job categories lagging behind others.

The most recent Diamond report (Creative Diversity Network 2022) also contained mixed results, with some minority ethnic groups well represented and others not so.

In contrast to TV and radio, there is no industry-wide monitoring of diversity at UK newspaper publishers.

And regardless of the presence – or not – of diversity policies, a survey of non-white journalists in the UK (Douglas 2022) found widespread racism still hindering employment and advancement prospects within mainstream British media organisations.

### Canada

The Canadian Association of Journalists (2021: 2) survey of cultural diversity in newsrooms remarked that 'Canada is late in collecting data on race and gender for our newsrooms' and that it is 'well past time for these numbers to be made available'. The survey found that almost half of all Canadian newsrooms were exclusively white and that Indigenous and culturally diverse journalists were concentrated in a small number of mostly large newsrooms.

Like the ABC and SBS in Australia, Canada's national public broadcaster – CBC – has a diversity and inclusion plan that aims to increase employment of Indigenous and culturally diverse people across all departments, deliver a training program on unconscious bias, and introduce more diverse programming (CBC/Radio-Canada 2021) .

### New Zealand

While New Zealand has, similar to Australia, had a history of poor representation of its Indigenous (Maori) culture in the mainstream media – with a report by Nairn et al (2012: 38) concluding Maori stories were 'relentlessly' portrayed in a negative light – there has been significant progress in the past few years. The use of the Maori language te reo is becoming commonplace throughout the media (Corlett 2021) and New Zealand's major media group, Stuff, made an extraordinary public apology to the Maori population for a racist history of reporting, noting that it had contributed to stigma and stereotypes.

Stuff pledged to do better (Jacobs 2021), including by increasing the number of Maori employees, introducing free te reo language classes for staff and reframing its company charter to uphold the partnerships acknowledged in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi). When the New Zealand government launched a \$55million, three-year Public Interest Journalism Fund, as a rescue package for the media during the Coronavirus pandemic, the application criteria included a commitment to partnering with Maori under the principles of Te Tiriti and reflecting the Indigeneity and cultural diversity of New Zealand (Irirangi te Motu 2022).

By comparison, when the Australian Government offered grants to help media companies maintain jobs throughout the pandemic, the main criterion was that the money be spent on public interest journalism in regional and remote communities (Grant Connect n.d. a). Another new journalism fund (Grant Connect n.d. b) will help employ cadets and upskill existing staff, again in regional areas. Still there is no mention or requirements for diversity. It could be argued the government has missed an opportunity here, and the Anglo-Celtic dominance of media jobs will continue under these employment programs. These conditions certainly ring true of Australian regional newsrooms which are, as our research has shown, largely homogenous, lacking in diversity and overwhelmingly white.

### Analysis: What the International Comparison Reveals

The international comparison highlights that there are similarities between Australia and our neighbours overseas when it comes to the inconsistent and patchy markers and measures of cultural diversity. There are, however, some lessons to be learned from the UK, where the regulator has mandated staff diversity metrics and the public broadcasters have diversity and inclusion plans and targets.

Also noteworthy are efforts by sections of NZ's media which have acknowledged the impact previous reporting of Maori communities has had on racism and social cohesion. The NZ government's funding of media outlets does also take into consideration the importance of diversity, which is yet to be seen by Australia's government.

As we see it, consistent measuring, monitoring, and reporting on cultural background offers the media sector an opportunity to better represent the community it serves, fulfilling both the business and social justice imperative. The Australian media sector has an opportunity to differentiate itself by becoming a world leader on consistent measures and meaningful sector-wide responses to the outcomes.

CONSISTENT MEASURING, MONITORING, AND REPORTING ON CULTURAL BACKGROUND OFFERS THE MEDIA SECTOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER REPRESENT THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES, FULFILLING BOTH THE BUSINESS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IMPERATIVE. THE AUSTRALIAN MEDIA SECTOR HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DIFFERENTIATE ITSELF BY BECOMING A WORLD LEADER ON CONSISTENT MEASURES AND MEANINGFUL SECTOR-WIDE RESPONSES TO THE OUTCOMES.



# Conclusion and recommendations

**WHAT WE SEE ON OUR SCREENS IS VERY MUCH SHAPED BY THE PEOPLE TELLING THE STORIES, THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES, THE LENS THROUGH WHICH THEY SEE THE WORLD, THEIR WORKPLACE EXPERIENCE AND THE MANAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS WHICH CREATE ACCESS AND EQUITY TO ENTER AND PROGRESS WITHIN THIS SECTOR.**

Yet worryingly, who gets to shape the stories told, and correspondingly that all important window into Australian society and culture does not mirror nor represent a broad and diverse spectrum of Australia's population. Evidence shows there is limited representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in the workforce and leadership suite.

Moreover, audience insights reinforce that much more needs to be done to engage individuals from culturally diverse backgrounds and to ensure that the broader population is represented in the newsrooms and the stories told.

Evidence shows that Australia's news and current affairs outlets are operating at far from ideal levels, with particular gaps:

- (i) in who we see on our screens and who works behind the camera in news and current affairs;
- (ii) senior leadership teams and boards – who make the decisions and shape the agenda; and
- (iii) in regional outlets which are a notable training ground for and pathway into metropolitan newsrooms.

*Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories? 2.0* identifies underrepresentation of non-Anglo Celtic cultural groups in the media industry. This suggests both structural and perceptual barriers which restrict access to and progress for Indigeneity and cultural diversity in our newsrooms and in terms of the news we consume. While there have been some very small positive steps since our investigation in 2020, the overall landscape remains homogenous with patchy and inconsistent progress.

When we add intersectional insights with an examination of gender and cultural background, our evidence shows that while women from diverse cultural backgrounds have a greater presence on our television screens when compared to their male counterparts, women generally and Indigenous and culturally diverse women and men more specifically, are not a presence in leadership and on boards of media organisations.

We recommend these barriers can be addressed with structural and perceptual adjustments going beyond free-to-air television newsrooms to also include cable, digital platforms, print and radio. These adjustments include both small nudges and deeper and broader sector wide initiatives and reforms.



ENTRY PATHWAYS FOR INDIGENOUS AND CULTURALLY DIVERSE STAFF IN THE EXECUTIVE TEAMS **ARE BLOCKED**



WHO WE SEE ON CAMERA IN NEWS AND CURRENT AFFAIRS **DOES NOT REPRESENT THE BROADER POPULATION IT SERVES**

## Barriers

### Structural Barriers:

- Entry pathways for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff in the executive teams are blocked (*Study IV*)
- Entry pathways for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff on boards are blocked (*Study IV*)
- Entry pathways for Indigenous and culturally diverse staff in regional networks are blocked (*Study V*)

### Perceptual Barriers:

- Who we see on camera in news and current affairs remains overwhelmingly limited and does not represent the broader population it serves (*Study I*)
- While on the surface Australian audiences perceive a solid representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity on their screens, our survey indicates a more complex story is at play where Non-European background respondents say they wish to see greater cultural diversity (*Study II*)
- Staff perceive a lack of representation of Indigeneity and cultural diversity in front of and behind the camera (*Study III*)
- Staff perceived the need for improvements around the management of Indigeneity and cultural diversity at the workplace level (*Study III*)



ACTIVELY ENGAGE AND  
SUPPORT REGIONAL  
NEWSROOMS TO ACHIEVE  
GREATER DIVERSITY



MEDIA OUTLETS SHOULD PLAN  
TO PUBLISH THEIR DIVERSITY  
OUTCOMES TO **CELEBRATE  
PROGRESS AND INFORM INTERNAL  
AND EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS**

## Adjustments

### Structural Adjustments

- Facilitating purposeful entry and career progression by reviewing, measuring and monitoring the career life cycle through an Indigenous and cultural diversity lens – particularly entry points (graduate, staff recruitment and selection) and performance management (reward structures, career progression into the executive team).
- Evaluating diversity and inclusion strategies which are intended to benefit diversity by spotlighting how these strategies enable diversity at crucial points in the career life cycle.
- Ensuring head-hunters and executive search firms are briefed to fill board and leadership positions by extending the reach to Indigenous and culturally diverse candidates as a way of facilitating diversity on boards.
- Actively engaging and supporting regional newsrooms in achieving greater diversity given they are an important feeder pathway to metropolitan newsrooms.
- Consistently and comprehensively measure, monitor and report on the diversity landscape in newsrooms to measure outcomes. As we see it, consistent progress is a marker of success. The inconsistent and patchy progress suggests that the small gains are fragile.
- Tying diversity gains to leadership KPIs.
- Set targets for Indigenous and cultural diversity to jump start entry and leadership presence.
- Drawing on the international practice which sees media regulators, such as in the UK, requiring media outlets to collect and publish their diversity metrics. This is a step toward transparency and accountability (*Part C*).

### Perceptual Adjustments

- Drawing on the lived experience of Indigenous and culturally diverse graduates, candidates, staff, leaders and those preparing to exit to assess their perceptions of the sector.
- Profiling role models from diverse cultural backgrounds located at various points in the career life cycle to break down stereotypes, while enhancing the desire for incoming candidates.

- Profiling mentors and the benefits of mentorship to encourage junior staff to connect with and gain organisational knowledge, networks and maximise career outcomes.
- Set the Australian media landscape apart by driving a sector-wide campaign to raise awareness about the lack of Indigeneity and cultural diversity. Key players can include the Australian Communications and Media Authority and Free TV Australia.
- Media outlets to publish their diversity outcomes to celebrate progress and inform internal and external stakeholders.

### Future Research

We recommend future research investigates:

- Approaches to and the implications of measuring, monitoring and reporting on Indigeneity and cultural diversity of staff, the leadership pipeline and the leadership suite.
- Approaches to and outcomes from target setting and the dialogue and process required to establish targets, accountability and transparency sector-wide through the lens of cultural background.
- Interventions and strategies in response to the gaps that need to be addressed.
- A broader evaluation of leadership by employing a qualitative approach, drawing on interviews with the leadership suite and the pipeline to explain and understand the pathways to leadership through one's lived experience.
- The role, responses and experiences of Diversity and Inclusion and HRM practitioners to establish the processes and policies currently in place, best practice insights and what can be improved upon.
- The sector more broadly to establish a report card on Indigeneity and cultural diversity of the sector beyond free-to-air television newsrooms.

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# Appendix 1:

## News and current affairs programs broadcast across Australia between 1 and 14 June 2022

1. 06:00 WA Sunrise News
2. 06:30 WA Sunrise News
3. 07:00 WA Sunrise News
4. 07:30 WA Sunrise News
5. 7.30
6. 08:00 WA Sunrise News
7. 08:30 WA Sunrise News
8. 10 News First
9. 10 News First (Weekend)
10. 60 Minutes
11. 7 News Morning Edition
12. A Current Affair
13. A Current Affair (Weekend)
14. A Current Affair Promo
15. ABC Evening News
16. ABC National News
17. ABC News
18. ABC News – 11:00 (Weekend)
19. ABC News – 12:00 (Weekend)
20. ABC News – 15:00 (Weekend)
21. ABC News – 16:00 (Weekend)
22. ABC News – 17:00 (Weekend)
23. ABC News – 18:00 (Weekend)
24. ABC News (Weekend)
25. ABC News 19:00
26. ABC News Afternoons
27. ABC News at Noon
28. ABC News Hour
29. ABC News Special
30. ABC News Tonight
31. ABC Nightly News
32. Afternoon Briefing
33. An Australian Audience with the Queen
34. Australian Story
35. Close of Business
36. Creek to Coast
37. Early News
38. Flashpoint
39. Footy Classified
40. Four Corners
41. Friday Briefing
42. Insiders
43. Insight
44. Landline
45. Late Night ABC News
46. Media Watch
47. Mornings
48. National Nine Early News
49. National Nine Morning News
50. National Nine News
51. National Nine News (Saturday)
52. National Nine News (Sunday)
53. National Nine News (Weekend)
54. National Press Club Address
55. News Breakfast
56. Nine Afternoon News
57. Nine News at 5pm
58. Nine News Late
59. Nine News: First at Five
60. NITV News
61. NITV News: Nula
62. Offsiders
63. Q and A
64. Queensland Weekender
65. Seven Local News
66. Seven Morning News
67. Seven News
68. Seven News (Saturday)
69. Seven News (Sunday)
70. Seven News (Weekend)
71. Seven News at 4
72. Seven News at 5pm (Weekend)
73. Seven News First at 4pm
74. Seven News Qld at 4pm
75. Seven News Vic First at 4pm
76. Seven News WA at 4pm
77. Sports Sunday
78. Studio 10
79. Sunrise
80. Taste of Australia with Hayden Quinn
81. The Brief
82. The Business
83. The Context with John Barron
84. The Drum
85. The Feed
86. The Latest: Seven News
87. The Morning Show
88. The Point
89. The Project
90. The Sunday Project
91. The Virus
92. The Weekly
93. The World
94. Today
95. Today Extra
96. Today on Saturday
97. Today On Sunday
98. Weekend Breakfast
99. Weekend Sunrise
100. World News Australia
101. World News Australia (Late)
102. World News Australia (Saturday)
103. World News Australia (Sunday)

# Appendix 2:

## Cultural background classifications

In this report, the term culturally diverse refers to people from backgrounds other than Anglo-Celtic. This includes people from and with ancestry from European and Non-European countries, and Indigenous Australians.

The term Indigenous refers to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, who may also be described as First Nations or First Peoples.

The four categories of cultural background are drawn from the 2016 and 2018 Leading for Change reports<sup>24</sup>. We have determined their representation in the Australian population from the ancestry responses in the 2021 Census. Following the methodology in the Leading for Change reports, we used statistical modelling based on the 2016 Census data<sup>25</sup> (the latest available Census microdata from the Australian Bureau of Statistics at the time of writing this report) to adjust the 2021 Census data<sup>26</sup>. This modelling produced the Australian population proportions of these four cultural background categories in 2021:

- Anglo-Celtic background (54%);
- European background (18%);
- Non-European background (25%); and
- Indigenous background (3%).

For Study I (Frequency of Appearance Analysis), to determine the presenters' and reporters' perceived cultural background, we followed a methodology similar to that in prior research,<sup>27</sup> such as research conducted by the Australian Human Rights Commission. The perception, by others, of a person's cultural background is not always the same as that person's own cultural identity.

Although cultural identity is an important concept, perceived cultural background is more relevant to this study as we are concerned with audiences' *perception* of cultural diversity on Australian television.

Specifically, we considered:

- a. publicly available biographical information about the individual and their family history tracing back to their grandparents where possible (e.g., the individual's profile page on the organisation's website, news releases, other media reports)
- b. their full name and its origins and geographical prevalence, using the website forebears.
- c. photographs of the individual

The presenters' and reporters' cultural backgrounds were initially categorised by a member of the research team into one of the four categories (Anglo-Celtic, European, Non-European, and Indigenous) according to the definitions used in this report, in consultation with another member of the research team as necessary. Two other members of the research team then independently checked the categorisations for the full list of presenters and reporters as a quality control. Any discrepancies were resolved through discussion.

In the case of any ambiguity, we erred towards over-categorising individuals into the non-Anglo-Celtic categories. For instance, where we identified that someone had European heritage but it was not clear for how many generations a person's family had been in Australia, we would count them as European. Moreover, if a person had a name of European origin but neither publicly available biographical information nor photographs could verify this, we would still count them as European rather than Anglo-Celtic.

In cases of individuals with mixed or multiple backgrounds, for the purpose of this exercise, we have counted only one background (the non-Anglo Celtic background where applicable). However, we acknowledge that individuals can have more than one cultural background.

Despite our best efforts to ensure the highest degree of accuracy in the analysis, we recognise that human errors may occur in the categorisation of individuals. Readers are advised to take this into account when interpreting the statistics in this report.

24. These same categories have also been used in other diversity research including Screen Australia's Seeing Ourselves: Reflections on Diversity in Australian TV Drama study.

25. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019) <http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/2037.0.30.001Main+Features12016> Census of Population and Housing, 2016 [Microdata Download], accessed 21 October 2022.

26. [2] Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021) Cultural Diversity, ANCP Ancestry Multi Response [Census TableBuilder], accessed 21 October 2022.

27. Australian Human Rights Commission (2018). Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited. Accessed on 31 October 2022 from <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/leading-change-blueprint-cultural-diversity-and-0>

# Appendix 3:

## Australia's cultural background

The following passages are updated and adapted from *Who Gets to Tell Australian Stories?* (2020), pp. 7-9.

### Defining and measuring cultural diversity in Australia

There is currently no legislated requirement for Australian organisations or employers to collect and report on the cultural diversity of their workforce. Despite Australia often being deemed a multicultural success story, data about a person's ethnicity, ancestry, their place of birth and the language/s they speak is only sporadically collected within Australian businesses and institutions. The Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) has developed a robust blueprint for how Australia could make progress in this important area.<sup>28</sup> Yet getting a precise picture of the representation of cultural diversity within the major institutions in Australian society remains elusive.

This project sought to measure cultural diversity within Australian news and current affairs media. Data collection is necessary to accurately depict what our existing levels of cultural diversity are in Australian news media and how this compares with the makeup of our nation's population.

A baseline measure also presents an opportunity to address the current under-representation of cultural diversity in news media, to benchmark Australia's performance against media organisations in other countries, and to develop targets and strategies to improve the levels of cultural diversity within Australian news and current affairs media. Robust data collection will need to be ongoing to ensure we measure these initiatives are actually making a tangible difference.

The problems associated with not having mandatory collection of cultural diversity data were exposed during this research period. As cases of COVID-19 spiked in Australia in mid-2020, it was revealed that even Australia's National Notifiable Diseases database lacked data on the ethnicity, language spoken, and country of birth of Australian residents. Access to such data might have enabled quicker and more appropriate communications between government officials and culturally diverse communities during this health crisis. While not directly related to the media, this situation highlights the need for effective communication and hence the importance of collecting data about cultural diversity.

Defining and measuring cultural diversity can be complex. For example, the Diversity Council of Australia includes the categories of Gender, Culture & Faith, Disability & Accessibility, Age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and LGBTIQ+ when describing diversity. While most interview participants in this study described these categories in their understanding of cultural diversity, some also believed geographic and socio-economic diversity came under the umbrella of cultural diversity.

For the purposes of this study, *cultural diversity was understood as based on a person's ethnicity and ancestral background.*

In its *Leading for Change* report, the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) considers "cultural background to refer primarily to a person's ethnicity and ancestry. The concept of ethnicity can be understood to relate to a human group or population that has a common origin, and which may exhibit shared defining features such as homeland, language, customs, historical tradition, religion and physical appearance. [AHRC] regard ancestry – a person's descent and family background – as inextricably tied to ethnicity".<sup>29</sup>

A brief overview of Australia's cultural diversity and the categories we used to measure cultural diversity in Australian news and current affairs media is below. This explains why this study has used cultural diversity to refer to ethnic or ancestral backgrounds other than Anglo-Celtic.

### Australia's cultural diversity

Australia had a history of cultural diversity long before the arrival of colonisation. Indigenous Australians are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whose ancestors lived in Australia for thousands of years before colonisation began with European settlement in 1788.

Since colonisation, people have continued to migrate to Australia, with the 2021 Census of Population and Housing data reflecting a very multicultural Australia. More than a quarter (27%) of Australia's population (7,029,262 people) were born overseas with over 300 ancestries separately identified.<sup>30</sup> Nearly half (48.2%) of all Australians were born overseas or had a parent born overseas.

The Census also found great linguistic diversity, with more than 350 languages being separately identified in Australia and more than one-fifth (22.8%) of Australians speaking a language other than English at home.<sup>31</sup> A total of 167 Australian Indigenous languages were spoken, with around one in ten Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people speaking an Australian Indigenous language at home during 2021.<sup>32</sup> Indigenous Australians currently comprise 3.2% of Australia's population.

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28. Australian Human Rights Commission (2018). *Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited*. Accessed on 31 October 2022 from <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/leading-change-blueprint-cultural-diversity-and-0>
  29. Australian Human Rights Commission (2018). *Leading for Change: A blueprint for cultural diversity and inclusive leadership revisited*, page 4. Accessed on 31 October 2022 from <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/race-discrimination/publications/leading-change-blueprint-cultural-diversity-and-0>
  30. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021a) *Cultural diversity: Census*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/cultural-diversity-census/2021>.
  31. [4] Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2022) *Cultural diversity of Australia*, ABS, viewed 31 October 2022, <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/cultural-diversity-australia>.
  32. Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021b) *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: Census*. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people-census/2021>.

# Appendix 4:

## Supplementary analysis

**Table A1: Proportion of appearances on television (excluding NITV), by cultural background, 2019 and 2022**

Cultural background	Percentage of total appearances of presenters and reporters: two-week slice		Percentage in Australian population
	2019	2022	2021 <sup>33</sup>
Anglo-Celtic	75.8%	78.3%	54%
European	18.3%	10.5%	18%
Non-European	4.7%	6.2%	25%
Indigenous	1.2%	5.1%	3%

33. Estimates based on 2021 Census data.

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