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Women and minority genders in music:

Understanding the matrix of barriers for female and gender diverse music creators

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Glossary and abbreviations

Artist* The term 'artist' is used to refer to a songwriter, singer, musician, band member, instrumentalist, rapper or DJ. It includes those who perform live music, those who participate in recording or writing music, and those who take part in both.

Cisgender** A term used for a person whose physical sex, gender identity and gender expression all align. For example, someone who has been gendered as female from birth, goes by the pronouns 'she' and 'her' and feels comfortable and aligned with that identity.

First Nations* First Nations refers to people with spiritual and ancestral connections to the ancient, ongoing Indigenous cultures and communities. In this report First Nations is used uniquely to refer to the Australian context.

Gender diverse** An umbrella term that includes all the different ways gender can be lived and perceived. It can include people questioning their gender, those who identify as trans or transgender, genderqueer, non-binary and many more labels. In this report it is used acknowledging that participants may identify with multiple gender descriptors.

Intersectionality Intersectionality is a framework of analysis that explains the ways in which structural inequalities are compounded by individual characteristics. It emphasises how phenomena such as sexism, racism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, intersex discrimination, disability discrimination, or ageism can combine to produce unique outcomes for people who find themselves at the 'intersections' of various forms of marginalisation.

LGBTIQA* LGBTIQA+ is an acronym that stands for: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, and Asexual, while the '+' symbol stands in for the other identity labels and experiences not specifically represented in the acronym. The LGBTIQA+ community is a 'community of communities' with some shared experiences of marginalisation on account of heteronormativity, cisnormativity, and other largely Western norms around sex and gender.

Māori Māori refers to all Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa, who have spiritual and ancestral connections to the ancient, ongoing Indigenous cultures and communities of Aotearoa/New Zealand and its surrounding islands.

Moriori Moriori are the Indigenous peoples of Rēkohu (Chatham Island) and Rangihaute (Pitt Island), in what is now known as Aotearoa/New Zealand. Moriori are culturally and linguistically distinct from Māori.

Music creator Music creators are those who write, compose, or produce their own music, individually and/or in collaboration with others. The term applies to any genre of music. They are distinct from other types of musicians and music workers in that they are responsible for the creation of original musical/sound content.

Non-binary	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity exists between or beyond the feminine/masculine gender binary. Some non-binary people identify as trans, others do not. This term is used in the report where specific participants have self-identified as non-binary.
Pākehā	A white, or non- Māori person from Aotearoa/New Zealand.
People of Colour (POC)*	'People of Colour', 'Women of Colour', 'Men of Colour' refers to those who identify as part of any culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) group of people. It should be acknowledged that not all people in these groups identify with these terms. These groups are in themselves heterogenous and made up of people of diverse experiences, identities, and perspectives. These are necessarily imperfect terms, designed to convey the experiences of people who live under and are excluded by social, political, economic and cultural structures that disproportionately serve the interests of White people in settler-colonial societies.
Queer**	A reclaimed umbrella term and a reclaimed that can LGBTIQA+ people often use to self-identify. the term is used to resist binary thinking, seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as fluid and interconnected experiences. Can also be a simple label to explain a complex set of minority sexual behaviours and desires that are not heterosexual.
Sexual harassment*	Sexual harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual behaviour where a reasonable person would have anticipated the possibility that the person harassed would feel offended, humiliated, or intimidated.
Sexual harm*	Sexual harm includes behaviour which constitutes sexual harassment, sexual assault, indecent assault and rape. It also includes attempted sexual assault, attempted indecent assault and attempted rape. Sexual harm can occur through the use of technology or in a physical space.
Systemic discrimination*	Systemic discrimination involves the structures, processes, and culture of any institution, including a workplace that contributes to less favourable outcomes for marginalised groups than for most of the population.
Takatāpui***	A Te Reo Māori umbrella term that is used in a similar way to LGBTIQA+ to refer to diversity in both Māori and non-Māori genders and attractions.
Transgender, trans	A term covering a range of self-defined identities that transgress socially defined and expected gender norms, based on assigned sex at birth. This term is used in this report to capture people of all gendered embodiment that deviates from normative gender identities, including trans men, trans women, gender diverse and non-binary people, acknowledging that participants may identify with multiple gender descriptors.
Transphobia**	A term used to describe a range of negative and violent attitudes that one may have towards members of the trans, non-binary, and gender diverse community.
Wāhine	A Māori noun meaning women, females, ladies, wives; or modifier meaning feminine, womanly, female.

Woman | In this report, 'woman' is used to refer to people who have a lived experience of femininity and/or womanhood, inclusive of cis and trans women. Where necessary or appropriate, we use 'cis woman' or 'trans woman' to delineate discussion of experiences or perspectives that are unique to either of those groups.

Yarn/Yarning**** | Yarning is an important process within Aboriginal culture and Torres Strait Islander culture that is about building respectful relationships. The yarning circle has been used by First Nations people for centuries to learn from a collective group, build respectful relationships, and to preserve and pass on cultural knowledge.

* Definitions sourced/adapted from Raising their Voices (Support Act 2022).

** Definitions sourced/adapted from Clear Expectations, Guidelines for Institutions, Galleries and Curators working with Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Artists (Music Victoria 2019)

*** Definition sourced/adapted from Gender Minorities Aotearoa

**** Definition sourced/adapted from Yarning.com.au

Executive summary

Introduction

Author positionality

Dr Felicity Wilcox (she/her) is a white, Australian, cisgender woman living on Darug Country in the Blue Mountains, New South Wales. She is a Senior Lecturer in Music and Sound Design at University of Technology Sydney. She publishes traditional research on music for multimedia and gender in music. Her main expertise is in creative-practice research; her decades of lived experience as a composer, performer, and music director facilitate her understanding of the challenges women face in building sustainable music careers. Since 2015 she has contributed her research on gender equity and diversity in music to various roles within the music industry, including for: the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC); International Council of Music Creators (CIAM); the Women in Music Mentorship Advisory Committee, Australia (AIR); and as Chair and co-founder of the Gender Equity Committee for the Australian Guild of Screen Composers, which she also served as a Director. Her broad outreach and advocacy have resulted in strong peer-to-peer networks that facilitate and inform the research in this report. Dr Wilcox is the Chief Investigator (CI) of this study, which was funded via research grants from School of Communication, University of Technology Sydney.

Dr Barrie Shannon (he/they) is a white, Australian, non-binary sociologist living on Kaurna Country (Adelaide, South Australia). They are a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of South Australia. Their research expertise is on trans and gender diverse Australians, and their experiences of sexuality education in formal and informal contexts. Their relationship to music and music practice is strictly via their consumption of music; they have never played or performed music and have had no formal training. They provide this research project with expertise on the experiences of trans and gender diverse people, in addition to a broad skillset of feminist analysis and sociological critique of casual and insecure labour.

We acknowledge the absence on our research team of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori researchers and more broadly of researchers who bring perspectives as People of Colour. It is vital that further Indigenous-led research is supported to ensure that their experiences in the music industries of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand are well understood.

Background

Widespread gender inequity in the music industry remains unresolved today. Women and gender diverse people have traditionally encountered and continue to face significant barriers to their participation, inclusion, recognition, career progression and longevity as music creators. Many recent studies reveal the disproportionately low representation of female composers, songwriters, and producers: the result of centuries of discrimination, oversight, and exclusion by music education systems, cultures, and industries. Despite being over half the world's population, across musical genres, women are consistently represented as tokens: around or less than 15% of those whose music is performed or played. These percentages diminish with mainstream genres like orchestral music and opera: high-stakes areas that see

some of the lowest levels of representation for female music creators. Data on gender diverse people's representation in music are at best inconsistent, at worst non-existent, limiting current discourse on this topic.

This report was instigated by Chief Investigator, Dr Felicity Wilcox, who is a professional and awarded Australian composer of more than 35 years standing, a published researcher of gender in music, and an advocate for diversity and inclusion in music, who has worked with music industry leaders at the international level. As a result of her lived and accumulated personal and professional experience in these roles, in 2021, Dr Wilcox resolved to conduct a survey of music creators who identified as female and/or gender diverse to assist the Australasian music industry and the broader academy to better understand why such marked gaps in gender representation exist and to work out how to ameliorate representation and career success for underrepresented genders in music.

The research team behind this report comprised Dr Felicity Wilcox, research assistant and report co-author, sociologist Dr Barrie Shannon, and international specialist in workplace behaviour, Professor Sophie Hennekam (she/her), who contributed to initial research and planning for the study in 2021. Data collection for this report was achieved with support from music industry organisations, the Australasian Performing Right Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (APRA AMCOS) and funded by two School of Communication Research grants from University of Technology Sydney, where Dr Wilcox is currently employed as a Senior Lecturer in Music and Sound Design. The two-phase study and data analysis was conducted from November 2021 to February 2023, resulting in the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report, published in September 2023.

Aims

The overarching goals of the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* study and report are to: understand the underlying issues that lead to the widespread lack of gender diversity among music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand; and offer actionable solutions. Another key goal is to build on existing music industry surveys that have examined gendered disadvantage along binary lines by intentionally giving voice to those who identify as gender diverse in order to understand the barriers to representation and success that minority genders face. Further, expanding existing discussion to include minority genders contributes to an understanding of intersectionality, a framework which guides this report.

Overall, this report aims to:

- Centre the voices of women, gender diverse, and other marginalised communities in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

- Provide in-depth, up-to-date insights and analysis of music industry culture in these regions across musical genres.

- Make recommendations for best practice approaches to eliminate gendered career barriers, discrimination, and structural disadvantage.

Specifically, the study and report set out to identify and examine:

- The barriers impeding women and gender diverse music creators' career progression, success, and career longevity.

- The impact of marginalisation on individuals.

- Ways to increase visibility for gender diverse artists.

- Reasons for the very low representation of female and gender diverse people working in music producer roles.

- The ways in which compounded, intersecting disadvantage hinders careers in music.

- Factors that lead to high rates of sexual harm in the music industry and how to create more inclusive, safe, and welcoming music workplaces.

- Effective ways to move towards representation that more closely reflects the make-up of genders in the general population.

These aims reflect the ambition of the report's co-authors to ensure all music creators in our region are supported by their industries and education sectors to thrive equally regardless of their gender.

Method

The *Women and Minority Genders in Music* study and report are underpinned by the principles of inclusion, confidentiality, voluntary participation, evidence-based research, and supportive engagement with participants. In addition to their background in related research, the research team conducted a review of relevant academic literature, and of similar studies conducted into creative industries internationally. Analysis of policies and processes in music organisations and comparable industries also informed this report.

The aims of the research were met using both qualitative and quantitative research that utilised two different data sources: an online survey and semi-structured interviews. Recruitment for the initial phase of the research, the online survey, was conducted with the assistance of APRA AMCOS, who circulated information about the research and a link to the survey, on the researchers' behalf, to its royalty-earning members whose information indicated they are female and/or gender diverse. APRA AMCOS's membership is focused to Australasia, resulting in the vast majority of survey participants being writer-members living and working in Australia or Aotearoa/New Zealand. Recruitment for the second phase of the research, the semi-structured interviews, was facilitated by the online survey, which concluded with a question asking participants to indicate interest in an interview. Those who indicated interest were contacted by the researchers. A small number of additional invitations to participate in the study were circulated within CI Wilcox's professional networks to increase diversity in the participant cohort.

The research project and its methodology were approved in line with the University of Technology Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines (reference number ETH21-6180). First Nations experts were consulted as to correct protocols for the inclusion of First Nations participants and their data prior to the

survey roll out. A review of the final draft of the report was also provided by First Nations and Māori researchers at University of Technology Sydney who have requested anonymity, and their feedback is reflected in the published report.

Results

Unique contribution

The *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report presents new, primary data about the lived experience of over 200 music creators of diverse genders in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, who identify as: women (cisgender and transgender), trans men, non-binary, and/or gender diverse. It provides a unique insight into music creation that is more focused than comparable studies encompassing music workers outside the specific role of music creator. It also provides new data that offer insights beyond those studies siloed by genre, as participants were active across a wide spectrum of musical genres. A major contribution this report makes to the comparative literature on gender in music is through its consistent reporting on the professional experiences of music creators who identify as trans and/or gender diverse, who constituted 6.5% of online survey participants and 15.7% of interviewees.

Online survey participants

In total, there were 189 valid responses to the online survey, comprising the following participant identities:

- Participants ranged between 16-74 years of age. The most significant portion were aged 30 to 39 (32%), followed by those aged 40 to 49 (23%), 20-29 (22%), and 50-59 (15%).

1%	■ 10-19
22%	■ 20-29
32%	■ 30-39
23%	■ 40-49
15%	■ 50-59
5%	■ 60-69
2%	■ 70-79
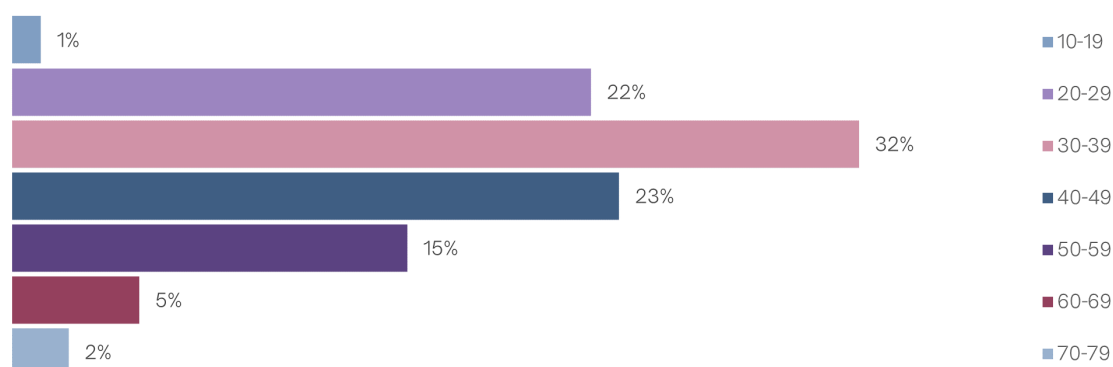
- 83% of participants were from Australia and 16% were from Aotearoa/New Zealand with 1% of responses unclear.

- 7% identified as Indigenous, comprising 5.5% Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa (Māori), 1% First Nations Australian (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) and 0.5% Morori people of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

- Survey participants were given a free-text, short-answer field to describe their gender (see graph below). These are summarised as:

- o 94% women (this includes 93% who identified as 'female,' 'AFAB,' and 'women' – a descriptor that may also include women who did not choose to distinguish their trans status – and 1% who identified specifically as 'trans women').

- o 5% gender diverse and/or non-binary.

- o 0.5% trans men.

- o 0.5% gender not stated.
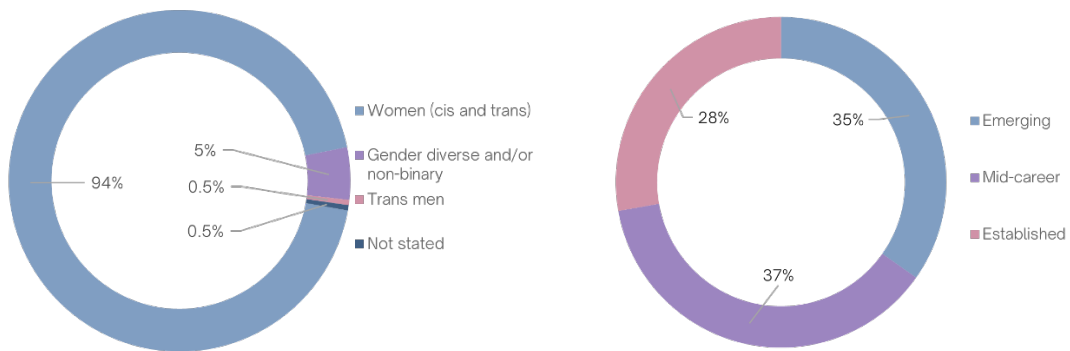
- A slight majority indicated they were 'mid-career' (37%), followed by 35% who indicated they were 'emerging' and 28% who considered themselves to be 'established' in their career (see graph above).

- Participants were active in a wide range of genres, as demonstrated in the graph below, which counts mentions of genres cited across the responses.
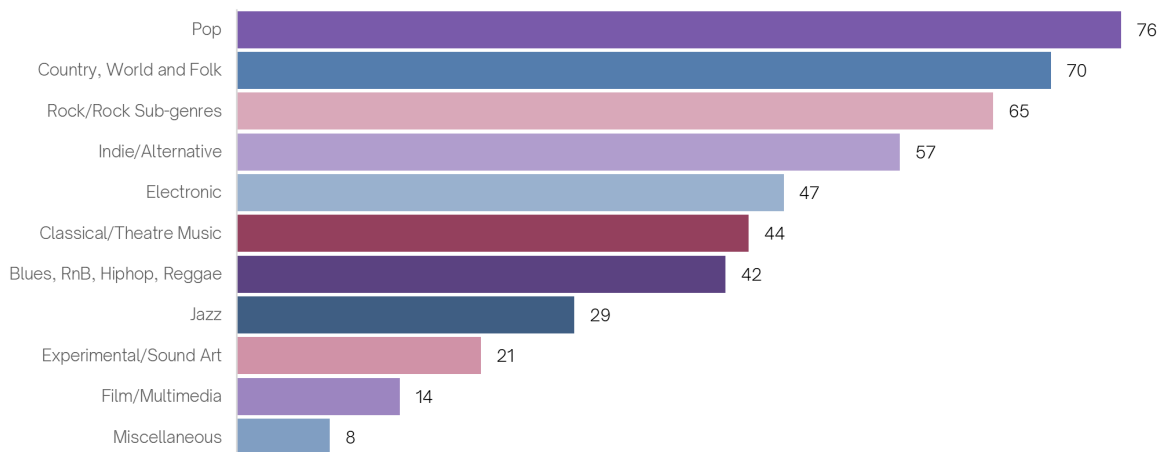
Interview participants

In-depth, one-on-one interviews were conducted with 20 people, with 19 interviews validated for our reporting. Interviewees comprised the following identities:

- Participants ranged between 21-75 years of age.

- Sixteen participants identified as cis women: two as trans women and one as non-binary.

- Fifteen participants disclosed their nationality as 'Australian,' which included three First Nations Australians; one Asian-Australian; 11 European-Australians. Four participants identified as Pākehā (European or non-Māori New Zealanders).

Key findings

Fifteen key findings emerged from our data analysis. These are summarised here and elaborated in more detail in the report body.

1. Women and gender diverse music creators face a complex 'matrix of barriers'

Data from this study confirms that there is, what we have termed, a 'matrix of barriers' to career success and wellbeing for women and gender diverse music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. This matrix is highly resistant to rupture and is persistent across career trajectories, with its points interconnected and differently angled for each individual. The key barriers to success can be summarised as (in order of reported prevalence):

- **Sexism/misogyny:** By far, the most common barrier identified by women and gender diverse music creators is sexism and misogyny. Those who identified sexism as a barrier often remarked that it made them feel unvalued, unsafe, and it made them question their aptitude for, and their choice of, career.

- **Lack of confidence:** The second most reported barrier was lack of confidence in one's own personal fortitude or required skills and knowledge.

- **Gendered carer work:** The third most reported barrier was the challenge of balancing work commitments with carer responsibilities and unpaid domestic labour.

- **Finances:** Financial constraints or a lack of availability of funding for music work were reported as significant barriers to career success.

- **Music industry issues**: such as, impregnable bureaucracy or management, not being understood or taken seriously by corporate, non-musicians; lack of access to music media; poor representation of diversity; and a broadly perceived lack of meaningful career pathways for women and gender diverse people in music.

- **Age:** or more accurately, age*ism*, was identified as a significant barrier for women and gender diverse people in music. Participants perceived a sharp decline in career opportunities for all feminine-presenting people as they age, and many identify strict beauty standards and sexist attitudes toward older women as the root cause.

- **Lack of opportunity:** such as: to collaborate and find work (often attributed to Boys' Clubs); and to hone music practice or participate in music study (often attributed to financial constraints or family commitments).

- **Genre or niche area of practice:** low representation of women and gender diverse people in specific genres contributed to their marginalisation or alienation in these male-dominated environments. Participants also reflected on being involved in so-called 'niche' genres with little industry support or mainstream appeal.

- **Geography/location:** Living in a rural or regional area was identified as a significant barrier to career success for some participants who live outside of capital cities in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

- **Racism:** In the words of one participant, a 'silent' racism permeates the music industry, where racist attitudes and expectations can be significant barriers to career success.

- **Homo/transphobia:** some older participants reported early-career experiences such as being marginalised for being gay or trans, or censored for exploring themes of sexuality in their music. Those openly LGBTIQA+ participants overall rarely reported homophobia or transphobia in their contemporary career experiences.

2. Three-quarters of women and gender diverse music creators have had some kind of 'formal' music education, yet this does not translate directly to career success

Women and gender diverse music creators are highly educated; 77% of survey respondents had undertaken some kind of 'formal' or professional/institutionalised music education in any musical discipline (western and/or non-western), with a full 40% holding a tertiary degree or higher qualification in music. This begs the question of how such high engagement with formalised and professional musical training is not translating to their similarly high representation as professional music creators. Interestingly, those who reported no formal music education (23%) indicated a perception of career-stage in line with the overall survey results. This suggests that there are other pathways for music creators that provide a high level of expertise appropriate to specific areas of practice.

- Just over 60% of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori respondents reported they had accessed family and community-led learning across a range of music practice/genres in lieu of 'formal' (professional/institutionalised) music education.

- The older women and gender diverse people were, the more likely they were to be self-taught, with less than half of those over 60 having received formal musical training (44%), compared to 82% of those between the ages of 30 and 39 who had.

Legend:
- High School Certificate
- Diploma or Certificate
- Undergraduate (current/incomplete)
- Bachelor Degree
- Masters or Doctorate
- Private formal lessons
- No formal education

Bar values (top to bottom): 3%, 13%, 5%, 15%, 12%, 29%, 23%
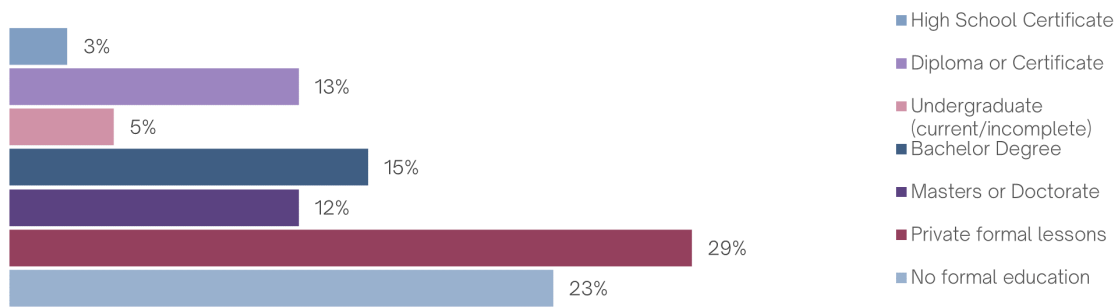
3. Many women and gender diverse music creators feel alienated and marginalised

Some women and gender diverse people acknowledge recent improvements in music industry culture and some have had positive experiences in predominantly male workplaces or with male mentors that have supported their careers. However, the figure of 'the music industry,' continues to create an environment that makes it difficult for many to succeed, often promoting the interests of cisgender men at the expense of other people, even those men whose behaviour or history has been problematic or abusive. Examples of this structural disadvantage include reports that:

- Women and gender diverse people's sense of belonging and comfort within music is negatively impacted by the disproportionate representation of men in the upper echelons of influence, power, gatekeeping, and decision-making. This was referred to regularly as 'The Boys' Club'.

- Women's experience of working within a Boys' Club culture is usually negative, characterised by exclusion, condescension, and a broad, casual sexism. Many are patronised in their workplaces, not taken seriously, feel unsafe, or are relegated to roles that are stereotypically 'feminine.'

- Intersectionality plays a role in access to the Boys' Club. Certain factors impact some women more than others, including gendered carer work, sexual objectification, misogyny, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia, a lack of social networks, geography, and more.

- Assertiveness and self-assuredness can carry punishment for women and gender diverse people, who can be labelled as 'angry' or side-lined by the industry for being outspoken, for questioning others, or for seeking to take control of their creative direction.

Overall, not seeing others working in their area of music who look like them impacts negatively on women and gender diverse music creators' feelings about their confidence and self-worth, adding further to the matrix of barriers they experience with regard to their career goals, progress, safety, and representation. Feeling alone was a recurring theme, with many expressing the desire for a more inclusive gender balance in their area of music. Data showed that:

- 30% of women and gender diverse music creators cannot see others like themselves as either role models or peers in their area of music. As a result, 65% reported experiencing negative feelings, such as:
  - isolation, alienation, invisibility (37%)

- o increased difficulty, discouragement, or feelings of low self-worth (28%)
- The remaining 35% reported either: resignation or acceptance (9.5%); increased resilience, a sense of their own uniqueness, or pride in their strength (25.5%).

4. Same-gender peers, mentors, and role models inspire, increase confidence, and reduce isolation

Where women and gender diverse people cannot see themselves represented, they are understandably reticent to step forward for opportunities in spaces that present as unwelcoming. A lack of high-level, same-gender peers and role models was revealed by younger music creators to have a dampening effect on their career aspiration, confidence, and growth.

From interviewee's in-depth responses, it is clear that the notion of a role model takes different forms for different people and is highly nuanced:

- For trans and gender diverse people, role models with aligned experiences of gender are more important than musical mentors. That said, the lack of identifiable peers and role models in music added to the difficulty of navigating their gender in mainstream society.

- First Nations music creators want to see role models in high-stakes areas of music they have not traditionally had access to, such as opera, orchestras, music production, and international pop charts. At the same time, First Nations knowledge systems regarding Country, community, and culture provide alternative concepts of what a role model' can be for First Nations peoples.

- Regional musicians' access to role models and mentors is hampered by location, increasing existing feelings of isolation and alienation due to gender.

- Older women and gender diverse people were resigned to not being able to see senior role models in music. Some had 'turned the gender factor off' because role models who looked like them were so few.

Mentorship was seen as universally positive, and many participants expressed a desire for more formal and informal mentoring arrangements for women and gender diverse musicians. However, women and gender diverse people are broadly uncomfortable with self-promotion, for which they gave the following reasons:

- Gendered conditioning.
- Cultural conditioning.
- Shyness and/or aversion to networking in music's male-dominated environments.
- Compounding marginalisation from intersecting aspects of their identity such as disability, gender, race, carer responsibilities, age, regional location, and more.

5. Nine out of ten women and gender diverse music creators use music technology in their practice

Women and gender diverse music creators are using technology regularly and in a variety of ways, and their engagement with music technology is widespread, multifaceted, and strong. We found that:

- 88% of women and gender diverse people who create music use a range of music technology to do so. Of these:

    o 46% described their skill level as either moderate or high.

    o 46% described their skill level as basic.

    o 8% described their skill level as 'mixed'.

- Age was a factor in how women and gender diverse people viewed their competency in using music technology:

    o 84% of those who rated themselves 'highly proficient' were under 50.

    o 4% of those who rated themselves 'highly proficient' were over 60.

- Those in their 40s were most likely to rate themselves as 'highly proficient' (36%), with those in their 50s displaying a variety of attitudes, uses, and competencies, suggesting this is the age group that has had to pivot the most between old and new technologies and methods.

- Overall, confidence and ability with music technology are closely related to access and experience with it. These factors are related to socio-economic status, education, career-level, and available time, which combine with gendered stereotypes to impact women and gender diverse people more than men.

- 'Gear fear,' which occurs due to a combination of lack of confidence with technology, gendered conditioning, and the traditionally male-dominated environments where technology is present - reduces engagement with music technology for women and gender diverse music creators.

- Disability, caring responsibilities, and lack of access to music technology due to financial factors contribute further to lack of confidence in this area.

- When women and gender diverse composers attain mastery of technology it feeds into their daily practice in significant ways.

6. More access, understanding, and transparency is urgently needed as to the role of the producer

Access to and understanding of the role of producer was generally seen to be problematic, whether due to gendered cliques, lack of transparency, financial constraints, time pressure, disability, caring responsibilities, or lack of access to technology and professional studio equipment. Overall, there is a poor understanding among female and gender diverse music creators about what being a producer entails, and an air of mystery surrounding the role. As work in this area is dominated by men who, in relation to women, are hired as producers at the rate of 35:1 in the US (Hernandez et al. 2022), many women and gender diverse people feel that being a producer is out of reach. We found:

- Half of women and gender diverse music creators do not call themselves producers (49%); over one third (36%) do; 15% are unsure.

- Many women and gender diverse people are reluctant to call themselves producers because of a lack of understanding of the role, lack of confidence in their skills and abilities, or lack of specific experience in this area.

- For many, blocks to producing their own and others' music are directly linked to their gender. Many feel that music production is a tightly held domain that is difficult to break into for those who are not cisgender men.

- As minorities in music who are subject to tighter scrutiny, many women and gender diverse people set standards and expectations for themselves that are unrealistic. This pressure to be 'perfect' stops them identifying as, or even trying to become producers.

- Financial resources and available time were key factors in determining access to, and time with, professional music technology, which is needed to gain the specific skills required for producing. Some women directly linked such constraints to their carer responsibilities.

- Disability is a factor that further inhibits progression and access to producing roles.

- Women and gender diverse people who are leading projects as producers are notably few. However, those who do, have a clear sense of their self-worth, technical skill, and confidence in their capacity. Those who were active as producers were mostly working as co-producers or learning the role with the support of more experienced, male colleagues.

Encouragingly, responses also indicated that many women and gender diverse music creators are:

- Keen to build on their technical capacity to become producers.

- Currently seeking mentoring to demystify the producer role.

- Finding significant inspiration in same-gender producer role models where they find them.

- Learning production skills and getting the results they want for their music by working in tandem with other producers.

7. Sexist tropes continue to disadvantage women and gender diverse people in the music industry

Our analysis reveals four key tropes, or sexist ideas that continue to shape the experiences of women and gender diverse music creators to have significant impact on their careers:

- **Diversity box-ticking**: In efforts to address lack of representation, music event organisers and funding bodies now sometimes make concerted efforts to ensure that women and gender diverse people are included. While many feel grateful for these efforts because they give them opportunities previously denied, at times music industry organisations can also exhibit tokenistic, patronising, and insincere methods around diversity, with decisions about who is included made in opaque and questionable ways, carrying unintended consequences that are limiting for gender diverse and all-female acts, such as festivals having an informal, unspoken upper limit on the number of gender diverse and female acts. These factors were felt to apply additionally to those from Māori, Moriori, First Nations and POC backgrounds.

- **'Women's music':** Or 'gender as a genre.' Unconscious bias that confuses female gender with musical content homogenises all music created by women. This can manifest in an expectation of the kind of genre and style that women and all-female acts should practice and is felt by many women to be reductive of their music and dismissive of their individual sound.

- **Lack of skill:** Social norms attached to music and music technology denigrate femininity and gender diversity and attempt to relegate them to specific roles, genres, and formats of practice. As a result, these cohorts are used to being condescended to, overlooked, or dismissed altogether in music work contexts because of their gender. This is seen most commonly in regard to their technical skills, whether related to playing a stereotypically 'masculine' instrument, or operating musical equipment such as audio mixers and amplifiers but can also extend to women and gender diverse people in positions of leadership and authority being talked down to. Some even reported a lingering perception that women and gender diverse people were simply not as good musicians as men in certain genres and situations.

- **Surprise at aptitude:** the corollary of the 'lack of skill' trope. Women and gender diverse people are used to being patronised by male colleagues apparently surprised that they are capable, successful, or brilliant at their craft.

8. Women and gender diverse music creators often make deliberate efforts to establish a defeminised professional persona to compensate for sexism in the music industry

There are certain feminine archetypes that are a liability in the music workplace, particularly where that workplace is shared with, or dominated by men. Women and gender diverse people often have to augment or curtail their femininity in specific ways, whether it is to remain favourable to men in the workplace, to avoid being seen as 'difficult,' sexually provocative, or to avoid being dismissed or overlooked. This gendered burden of complexity involves:

- Feminine beauty standards: many women feel pressure to cultivate a certain image or presentation for the sake of their career progression. Certain genres of music seem to be associated with specific archetypes of femininity that participants feel pressure to emulate. Those who feel unable to achieve idealised expectations about their appearance have a resigned acceptance that their careers are not destined for great success. This feeling is most pronounced for women who are mothers or who are over 30 years old.

- Widespread perception that a sexually provocative image that caters to the interests of a heterosexual male audience ('the male gaze') will attract attention and success.

- The 'double bind' of feeling pressure to be desirable to the male gaze in order to be allowed entry into male spaces, but also not being taken seriously professionally by those men as a result of being perceived as a sexual object.

9. Women and gender diverse music creators feel they are perceived as 'high-risk' by music industry employers

Low representation plays further into women and gender diverse music creators' exclusion, particularly from high-stakes areas of practice. They believe the low gender diversity in sought-after roles in turn makes employers reticent to hire them because employers are unwilling to offer opportunities to people who have not had the chance to prove themselves. This is a catch-22 that obstructs gender reform in music. Our interview data revealed that:

- Two out of three women and gender diverse music creators feel they are perceived as a risk when being considered for music commissions and other types of work.

- The Boys' Club factors into how music industry leaders manage risk, with those in positions to hire and fire more inclined to take a risk on other men.

- Some women feel being a mother is linked to being perceived as a high-risk proposition for employment.

- Some women still experience the stereotype of being labelled 'too emotional' or 'a diva' and therefore perceived as high-risk for employment.

- Middle-aged and older women and gender diverse people have often experienced being perceived as a risk for employment due to prevalent and normalised music industry gender bias in previous decades. This perception continues to impact them as they age due to the prevalence and normalisation of ageism in the music industry.

- It is not only male creative industry leaders who ignore female and gender diverse composers' potential. Internalised bias can also mean women and gender diverse people in positions to hire are complicit in perpetuating gendered exclusion from high-stakes areas of music practice, where they still see men holding the most experience and professional cache, and do not question this status quo.

- Many factors increase a person's feeling they are viewed as a 'risk': for example, queerness, gender, race, body, age, disability, and rurality were felt differently as burdens on employability.

- First Nations music creators' work is at times perceived as high-risk due to a lack of cultural education or understanding to support its reception by the mainstream music industry/audiences. However, where support for cultural exchange and dialogue from First Nations music creators is offered, mainstream audience engagement with their music has proven to be strong.

10. Music creators who are primary carers often struggle to navigate a hostile industry culture

It is clear that music industry culture is yet to value primary carers or acknowledge the importance of retaining them. This is evident in the lack of structural industry support, such as paid maternity leave, family-friendly schedules, provision of childcare to suit after-hours working schedules, child-friendly facilities in venues, among other factors. The double financial burdens of raising children and precarity of freelance work heavily impacts those who are primary carers, and statistically these people are most

likely to be women (Verhoeven et al. 2018). Their responses reveal that the burden of gendered domestic labour has very real implications for their capacity to maintain the same connection, momentum, and workload compared to those who are not primary carers or those who do not have caring responsibilities at all, adding to the isolation and alienation many already feel as music creators in a male-dominated industry. We found that:

- 37% of respondents to the online survey indicated that they are/have been primary carers (those with all or the majority of care). Almost three quarters (72%) felt that this role had a negative impact on their career in music.
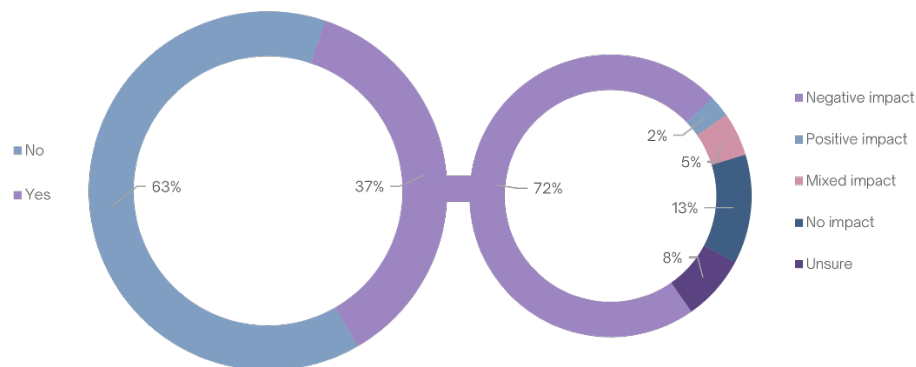
- Many primary carers experience discrimination and conflict in relation to juggling their carer and music roles.

- Being a primary carer adds significant mental load to music creators' already complex careers.

- Lack of time was the most-cited impact of caring roles.

- Inaction from the music industry with regard to carers' needs is impacting disproportionately on those who are single and sole parents.

- Many primary carers struggle to navigate the expectations of the music industry, so take time off or 'step back' from their music careers when they became primary carers.

- Using currency of practice/achievement as a criterion to assess merit or competency when considering music creators for employment creates an uneven playing field for those who are primary carers.

- Caring duties compound with endemic industry ageism when those who have taken time out to care for family return to the industry only to be judged as 'too old' to be competitive or suitable for music roles.

- The added burden of primary care has important consequences for women music creators' career longevity, the presence of senior female role models in the music industry, and the gender pay gap in music.

- Periods of juggling paid work and unpaid caring roles represent some of the most vulnerable stages of music creators' careers.

- Some primary carers reinvent their careers in positive ways to reflect their lived experience as mothers/parents/carers and to accommodate their work as musicians.

11. Ageing represents a significant disadvantage for women and gender diverse music creators

Ageing does not play well for women and female-presenting gender diverse individuals in an industry where expectations as to their looks, physical attractiveness, and assumptions about the ways they should behave are heightened, encultured, and real. This was keenly felt even by young women and gender diverse people, who felt that age-related career limitations applied to them. Adding to the impact of gendered ageism, is the reality that women and gender diverse people often experience different professional trajectories to men, due to having to navigate more complex identities and life roles. This means they may experience longer phases of career development, and be emerging in their careers for longer durations, or change career focus more frequently. For many women and gender diverse people in music, ageism is damaging to their self-esteem and professional aspiration, and fundamentally gets in the way of them being able to carry out their work. When older female and gender diverse music creators are overlooked, relegated to the margins, or drop out of music altogether, this compounds the waste already seen at the mid-career point when composers who are primary carers pause or abandon their music careers, and further exacerbates the deficits in representation of senior women and gender diverse music creators We found that:

- Growing older is felt to be at odds with being free to grow as an 'emerging composer.'

- Age caps for opportunities such as mentoring, competitions, training, festivals, and grants are felt to be unnecessary barriers for women and gender diverse composers.

- Many women and gender diverse music creators feel they are producing their best work at an older age, yet such work is at times being overlooked due to the ageism that is almost universally experienced by those who present as female.

- Certain genres more than others are openly prejudiced against older female artists; for example, pop music and electronic music were less accommodating compared to goth and punk music, where age was described as less important.

- Some music creators feel a sense of helplessness about the disadvantages to their careers of ageing, which they do not feel applies equally to their male colleagues.

- Even women in their twenties can experience ageism from their male music colleagues and fear ageing as a major career hazard.

- Many women feel they cannot see careers for themselves in music as they age. This is both affected by and helps to explain women's shorter careers and low representation in senior music industry roles.

- Ageism that preferences young women and gender diverse music creators also places them at greater risk of sexual harm and exploitation.

- Some older female and gender diverse music creators feel valued professionally and feel able to use their age to impress and elicit respect.

12. Sexual harassment, sexual violence, and domestic violence occur at high rates

Sexual harm and domestic violence occur in high rates among music creators and negatively impact careers. Women and gender diverse people often feel it is up to them to anticipate and avert predatory behaviour from their male colleagues. Some even say they feel 'lucky' to have escaped sexual harm at work, reflecting its prevalence and that the majority still feel a safe music workplace remains the exception rather than the rule.

Many have developed coping strategies that add to mental load, such as: generalised wariness, defensiveness, planning and strategizing around their physical, psychological and sexual safety. Some struggle so regularly with the strategizing required to avoid sexual harassment that it leads to a re-evaluation of their career choice.

Overall, women and gender diverse music creators reveal a poor awareness of reporting mechanisms or feel that there is no support to tackle complaints, or that their complaints will not be taken seriously or acted upon if they find the courage to come forward. In some cases, no action has ensued from their reporting of sexual harassment, adding to the injury they have experienced from the abuse itself. Our data shows:

- One in two (47%) participants report that workplace sexual harassment and/or sexual violence have impacted their careers.

- Even just witnessing a culture that allows sexual harassment and violence to go unchecked can be upsetting and frightening, can deter women and gender diverse people from starting out in music, and can hold back careers.

- After-parties, gigs, and industry networking events are part of a toxic culture where predators are enabled, where alcohol exacerbates poor behaviour, and where women and gender diverse people are particularly unsafe.

- 42% of interviewees had experienced domestic violence (emotional, sexual, or physical violence from a former or current intimate partner). Forms of violence reported ranged from coercive control to physical abuse, and financial abuse.

- Intersectional factors such as disability, gender diversity, and race can increase the likelihood of sexual harm and domestic violence occurring.

- The impacts of domestic violence and sexual harm on music careers can be extremely debilitating and significantly curtail career progression or lead to withdrawal from music careers.

13. For women and gender diverse music creators 'safe spaces' are more diverse spaces

For most women and gender diverse people a safe space boils down to feeling included, valued, seen, heard, and respected for their talents and opinions. To increase feelings of safety in their workplaces,

women and gender diverse music creators also highlighted the need for spaces that were more genuinely inclusive of diversity in all its forms. For them safe spaces are:

- Where representation of diverse race, gender, age, sexuality, and ability is commonplace.

- Where high-level soft skills are practiced and expected. These include careful communication, kindness, sensitivity, acceptance, and welcoming, flexible, inclusive, and respectful attitudes and practices.

- Feature more diverse teams, fair payment for work, clear codes of conduct, and female and gender diverse leadership.

- Emotional and psychological safety means being taken seriously for their music and ideas, rather than being valued or judged according to their gender, age, dress, sexual desirability, or physical attributes.

- Eliminating ignorance, power games, and structural hierarchies is felt to be a pathway towards safer industry practices.

Allyship from cisgender male music industry workers and leaders is a key step towards including more women and diverse genders in greater numbers in the music industry and ensuring their well-being and safety within music workplaces. Venues are felt in general to be unsafe or 'toxic' spaces. Female and gender diverse music creators want reform to venue safety, including:

- regulation of the consumption of drugs and alcohol.

- respect for music workers' personal space including dedicated safety zones/retreat spaces.

- signage that communicates a no-tolerance policy to sexism, racism, transphobia, and sexual harm.

- signage displaying clear reporting protocols for workers in the event of sexual harassment and other forms of abuse.

- clean, private retreat spaces for music workers with babies and children, including for those who are breast-feeding.

- gender-neutral bathrooms and sanitary bins and tampon dispensers in all toilet facilities.

14. Disadvantage is intersectional; not all women and gender diverse music creators experience it in the same ways and at the same rates

Women and gender diverse people who are working-class, regional/rural, First Nations, Moriori, Māori, POC, trans, primary carers, older, or disabled experience sexism and marginalisation in unique ways that demand specific analysis and tailored interventions. Intersectionality of gender with these factors can be particularly debilitating for music careers. The main areas of intersectional disadvantage identified were:

- **Ableism:** There is deeply embedded institutional ableism in the music industry. Its institutions, workplaces, education/training settings, and social gatherings are often inaccessible for people

with disability and cause them additional labour. Disability can feel like a significant and often insurmountable barrier to success. Women and gender diverse people with disability feel additional layers of pressure when the intersections of beauty standards, gender norms, sexuality, and disability come to bear.

- **Racism:** women and gender diverse people of colour experience negative perceptions, discrimination, and direct, interpersonal racism in and outside their music work fuelled by others' stereotypes and prejudices. This can extend to online abuse received directly and indirectly on social media due to their public profiles. Some First Nations women even say they are used to the structural racism and racist abuse which they see as part of being active in their chosen career in Australia.

- **Homophobia:** Explicit examples of contemporary homophobia are rare among women and gender diverse people in the music industry. Those with longer careers had experienced heightened homophobia in previous decades and feel there has been social progress concerning the respect afforded to LGBTIQA+ people in the music industry. While there are still a multitude of ways that queer people are not affirmed within the workplace some lesbian women feel that being gay allows them to draw firm boundaries with male co-workers and deflect sexualisation in music workplaces.

- **Transphobia:** While there are certain genres, scenes, and locations where being trans is not an insurmountable barrier to social acceptance and career success, transphobia and prejudice are characteristic of career development and contemporary experiences in music. At the same time their communities are a valuable source of strength and affirmation, as well as practical career support. Non-binary music creators can experience increased isolation, marginalisation, and difficulty in navigating music work environments.

- **Remote/regional communities:** Women and gender diverse people in rural and regional areas of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand experience unique challenges. In most cases, career trajectory appears to be negatively impacted by living outside of urban centres. Some feel networking and mentoring opportunities for women and gender diverse people are not meaningfully developed to include those outside major urban centres and that the internet is not always a satisfactory way to deliver such initiatives. 'Talent flight 'and lack of opportunity have a negative impact on local music scenes, and create a vacuum of talent, demand, and networking opportunities. At the same time there are those in rural and regional areas who display adaptive attitudes to career development to suit their situations, who dedicate their careers to championing local music, and who feel a strong pride in place for their local area and communities.

15. Women and gender diverse music creators develop resilience and solidarity to sustain their careers

To navigate the music industry, women and gender diverse music creators actively cultivate informal networks of care consisting of others with shared experience, and develop solidarity and resilience through practices that cultivate belonging that include:

- Formal and informal mentorship to other women or queer people

- Targets or quotas that ensure meaningful (rather than tokenistic) representation of women and minority genders, especially within the upper echelons of project management and music industry representation.

- Developing positive workplace environments actively co-constituted with other women, other queer people, and men.

- Social media as a form of activism, focused inclusion, and organised resistance.

- Reaffirming and celebrating their passion for music and music practice

- The 'Sisterhood': a form of gendered solidarity whereby women offer professional, practical and emotional support and protection to other women.

- For First Nations, Moriori, and Māori women, Women of Colour, trans women, and queer women, solidarity is often expressed through their specific intersectional lens.

- LGBTIQA+ music creators feeling supported by queer communities both in their personal social circles and in their professional lives. Openly queer musicians experience connection with other queer people in the industry, where opportunities, favours, mentorship, and other forms of practical career support are circulated between each other.

Recommendations

The research team has formulated recommendations under five broad areas for music industry and education sector reform. We strongly encourage their implementation with appropriate stakeholder consultation over the course of the next six years to position the music industry in 2030 as a safer, more welcoming, and more profitable space for all music creators.[1]

The education sector

1. Mandate music technology education as part of standard secondary and tertiary music syllabuses.

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[1] *The research team acknowledges that the report and these recommendations were co-designed and co-authored by researchers living in Australia. We put these suggestions to the music industry and others living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, yet acknowledge the many people there who are already working on these issues, and recommend that that they are consulted with regard to any of our recommendations. We extend that acknowledgement to all those already working to address these issues in Australia.*

2. Develop and offer training modules for university lecturers and secondary school music teachers to promote awareness of the gendered biases. pertaining to music technology and develop pedagogies that engage women and gender diverse students more effectively.

3. Encourage greater participation of female and gender diverse students in technical roles in tertiary and VET music programs.

4. Improve access to and availability of First Nations musical and cultural educational pathways in Australia, and Māori and Moriori musical and cultural educational pathways in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

5. Support further research to identify the reasons why female and gender diverse graduates are not gaining purchase within the industry in proportion to their engagement in tertiary music education.

Mentoring and role modelling

6. Establish ongoing, affordable, and accessible workshops for women and gender diverse music creators to develop and update their technical skills, self-promotion capacity, and marketing skills.

7. Fund mentoring programs for women and gender diverse music producers to co-produce high-level, commercial projects and receive credit as co-producers.

8. Pay and promote senior women and gender diverse role models to provide access and advice to others through talks, meet-and-greets, and networking events.

9. Ensure that all career development initiatives allow for full, meaningful participation of people in rural and regional areas in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

10. Develop and sustain investment in culturally appropriate career development opportunities tailored to Māori music creators, Moriori music creators, and First Nations music creators in their separate and specific contexts.

Safety and support

11. Establish a *Music Industry Code of Conduct* and a formal reporting mechanism for breaches of the Code.

12. Establish an independent Music Industry Human Resources body responsible for enforcing the Code of Conduct and ensuring reporting mechanisms are broadly disseminated, transparent and effective.

13. Provide incentives to music businesses and organisations to attract diverse teams, ensure fair payment for work, establish clear internal expectations for conduct and pathways for reporting within their own houses, and promote female and gender diverse leadership.

14. Implement an industry-wide campaign for safer venues that promotes more effective alcohol regulation, best practice inclusion principles for the dignity and wellbeing of gender diverse patrons and workers, and safe and clean retreat spaces for parents and their children.

15. Establish a system of paid maternity leave for freelance music workers in line with other industries.

16. Advocate for state-subsidised childcare for touring musicians and after-hours music industry workers who are parents.

17. Co-develop and establish industry-specific support services for those impacted by domestic or family violence. These might include referrals to housing services; emergency financial hardship relief; provision of temporary studio facilities, rehearsal, and office spaces; free counselling and medical services; and childcare.

18. Consider the impact of violence from policing, police harassment, and racism within any measures to reduce violence against cis-gender women, trans-gender women and gender diverse people.

19. Consider the significant and specific types of violence wielded against transgender women and people.

Unconscious bias and ally training

20. Develop and implement online training modules within all leading music organisations (private, government, and not-for-profit) for music creators and music industry workers. In view of the findings of this research, online training modules should:

    o Foster a critical understanding of gender (dis)advantage within the various facets of the music industry, and the negative impact of Boys' Club dynamics.

    o Identify and promote positive and supportive attitudes by male music workers towards people of other genders, while seeking to eliminate sexist attitudes.

    o Develop Allyship within all areas of music industry towards women and LGBTIQA+ people to accelerate the cultural reform that leads to safer workplaces. These materials should include anti-violence materials pertaining to homophobia, transphobia, and sexism, and awareness of individuals' legal rights.

    o Educate music industry leaders on ways to modernise hiring, funding, signing, and marketing practices to better include, protect, and support female and gender diverse artists as they age.

    o Develop 'soft skills' capacity for respectful communication.

    o Promote cultural awareness to increase opportunities for the advancement of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori music creators.

- o Offer resources pertaining to anti-racism which include awareness of individuals' legal rights.

Co-designing for systemic inclusion

21. Engage women and gender diverse music creators, and other minorities, to lead in devising new, specific models for inclusion that reflect their wishes and enhance their opportunities.

22. Advocate for all organisations, festivals, and curating bodies in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand to normalise the programming of music by female and gender diverse music creators in every line-up.

23. Co-design guidelines that would assist in including more diverse music practice and practitioners in mainstream concert programming, particularly regarding First Nations, Moriori, and Māori musical cultures, and improving access for music creators with disability.

24. Spotlight and champion established and emerging female and gender diverse Producers, to enhance their visibility, grow their potential, and attract more gender diversity into producing roles.

25. Celebrate taking a risk! Include more women and gender diverse people in top-level opportunities and accompany such 'high-risk' programming with yarns and/or artist talks, to involve audiences and increase understanding and engagement for such models of practice.

26. Co-design supportive, family-friendly music industry models with primary carers that increase accessibility and promote their sustained engagement, inclusion, and wellbeing.

27. Co-design and fund strategies with women and gender diverse music creators over 50 to provide targeted opportunities that nurture and promote their careers.

28. Eliminate eligibility criteria linked to age for 'emerging composer' opportunities and instead link these to career stage and experience.

29. Foster strong, lasting, and widespread peer networks among women and gender diverse music creators by supporting, connecting, and paying people to lead in their formation.

Introduction

1.1 Background and aims: Chief Investigator Wilcox statement

The *Women and Minority Genders in Music* Report was motivated first and foremost by my own experience as a professional composer – a career that began in the 1980s and that continues today with regular commissions and collaborations. Throughout my career, I, and many other cisgender women I know, have been obliged to navigate complex situations in music workplaces because of our gender and until recently, transgender and/or gender diverse composers were largely invisible to me and others outside their immediate scenes. My lived experience of gendered disadvantage as a music creator was objectively confirmed once I began investigating the topic as an academic and equity advocate in 2015. My various roles as a music educator only shored up my drive to better understand these issues for the benefit of my own and the next generations.

My research over the last eight years has revealed an alarming picture of gendered inequity in the music industry that remains unresolved today. It shows that women and gender diverse people have traditionally encountered and continue to face significant barriers to their participation, inclusion, recognition, career progression and longevity as music creators (see literature review below). I believe this is an indictment on the status quo that requires urgent attention in order to understand the underlying issues and offer actionable solutions. In 2021, I resolved to conduct a survey of music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand who identify as female and/or gender diverse to better understand why these deficits in representation exist and to work out how to ameliorate representation and career success for these underrepresented genders in music.

To that end, I assembled a team of co-researchers: sociologist Dr Barrie Shannon, whose perspective has contributed in many invaluable ways throughout this research, and Professor Sophie Hennekam – an international specialist in workplace behaviour based in France, who contributed to initial research and planning for this study in 2021. I contacted colleagues at the Australasian Performing Right Association and Australasian Mechanical Copyright Owners Society (APRA AMCOS) to seek their support. Their involvement took the form of dissemination of the online survey to their female and gender diverse members, consultation with their Executive, and sharing this report.

All outward-facing sectors of the music industry know by now that there are problems with representation and discrimination for female music creators. With that broad understanding provided by existing studies, the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report's key goal is now to closely examine the reasons behind it through direct engagement with music creators in order to understand its impact more fully so that we might contribute to meaningful change in the sector. That said, the goal of this report is not to provide a statistical overview of binary gender representation. The work already carried out by those cited throughout this report provides ample evidence of the gaps in binary gender representation. Neither is our

study focused specifically on sexual assault and safety in music, although it captures new data on these questions. Recent studies have already done the very important work of closely examining this topic in the UK (Williams & Bain 2022) and Australia (Support Act 2022); we let their excellent work stand on its own strengths and build on that conversation with new insights.

As a female and non-binary research team, it is important to us to pay more than lip service to the idea of gender diversity. Thus, a key goal of the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* study is to build on existing music industry surveys that have examined female disadvantage by also giving voice to those who identify as gender diverse. To understand the specific concerns and barriers to representation and success that minority genders face, we believe their inclusion in a report on underrepresented genders in music is timely and overdue. We acknowledge that the intention of this report is not to focus exclusively on the experience of minority genders, and it is our hope that it might pave the way for such a survey. We wish it to be clear that by including them in this survey we do not seek to conflate their experience with those of cisgender or transgender women, nor of those cohorts with each other, rather our hope is that their voices will provide balance and nuance to the conversation around so-called gender 'equity and diversity' in music that must continue to evolve apace with an inclusive music industry's landscape of identities.

Further, we believe expanding existing discussion of women in music to include minority genders contributes to an understanding of intersectionality – or how multiple aspects of an individual's identity can compound to limit access to power and increase disadvantage. While we are grateful that several of the studies cited in this report have raised this point with regard to race, with few exceptions, intersectional disadvantage for music creators is to-date rarely considered with regard to minority-gender identity. Age and career stage are other factors rarely considered in existing surveys, and our study's goals extend to examining how ageism, carer roles, and other gendered issues that evolve over a career span can work to disadvantage women and minority genders in specific ways.

The *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report presents new, primary data about female and gender diverse music creators across all musical genres. This data was gathered via an online survey and interviews to facilitate understanding of the ways in which gender impacts representation, professional relationships, achievement, safety, health, and access to opportunity in the music industry today.

The scope of the study was to listen to and consider the perspectives and lived experience of female and gender diverse music creators from Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand who are actively creating and/or performing their original music and sound works in these countries and elsewhere to earn an income. These included songwriters, composers, performing artists (commonly referred to as 'artists'), band members, screen composers, music producers, sound designers, lyricists, arrangers, improvisers, and DJs.

While those earning royalties from their creator roles were specifically targeted to participate, we found many also engaged in other types of roles in carrying out their work in music, for example, as administrators, audio engineers, teachers, and conductors. The data collected about non-creator roles

enriched the study and are included where relevant, however the focus throughout the report remains on the barriers to fair representation that music creators face, in order to address deficits that have been identified through an emerging field of peer-reviewed, international research.

This report is designed to: centre the voices of women, gender diverse, and other marginalised communities in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand; provide in-depth, up-to-date, and nuanced insights and analysis of music industry culture in these regions across musical genres; and make recommendations for best-practice approaches that aim to eliminate gendered career barriers, discrimination, and disadvantage. Specifically, the study set out to identify and examine:

- The barriers impeding women and gender diverse music creators' career progression, success, and career longevity.

- The impact of marginalisation on individuals.

- Ways to increase visibility for gender diverse artists.

- The very low representation of female and gender diverse people working in producer roles

- How compounded, intersecting disadvantage hinders careers in music.

- Factors that lead to high rates of sexual harm in the music industry and how to create more inclusive, safe, and welcoming music workplaces.

- Effective ways to move towards representation that more closely reflects the make-up of genders in the general population.

These aims reflect the ambition of the authors to ensure all music creators in our region are supported to thrive equally regardless of their gender.

1.2 Deficits in representation: 'You can't be it if you can't see it'

Many recent studies (e.g., Strong & Cannizzo 2017; Gauthier & Freeman 2018; Bain 2019; Frame 2020; 2021), reveal disproportionately low representation of female composers, songwriters, and producers (to whom we collectively refer to as 'music creators'). This is the result of centuries of discrimination, oversight, and exclusion by music education systems, cultures, and industries. Despite being over half the world's population, across musical genres, women are consistently represented as tokens: around or less than 15% (Hopkins & Berkers 2019) of those whose music is performed or played, with little improvement across large longitudinal studies (e.g., Smith et al. 2018; 2019; 2020; Hernandez, Smith, & Pieper 2022; Donne Women in Music 2019; 2020a; 2021; 2022).

In classical music, women's music is still programmed as a single-digit percentage of all repertoire; for example, of mainstage orchestral works scheduled for the 2021–2022 season by 111 orchestras across 31 countries in Europe, North America, the UK, Asia, Australia, and South America just 7.7% were written by women and 0.1% were written by 'non-binary composers' (Donne 2022). In Australia, of all works performed in 2020 by the government-funded National Performing Arts Organisations, just 4% were composed by women and no gender diverse composers were programmed. This is an improvement for

women from 2019, who were represented at just 3%, but no works by gender diverse composers were performed that year either (Frame 2019; 2020). One of 48 operas (2.08%) programmed by Opera Australia from 2019-2022 was composed by a woman (*Whiteley*, Elena Kats-Chernin), with 47 composed by men.

In contemporary popular music genres, a 2020 analysis revealed that 18.18% of all songwriters listed in the end-of-year top 10 singles charts in the UK were women, and that just 1.67% of these songs were produced by women, with no data on gender diverse creators (Donne 2021). Annenberg USC's 2021 analysis of the US Billboard Hot 100 year-end chart found just 14.4% of those songs were written by women; and women were represented at just 12.7% on average across the 10 years from 2012-21 (Hernandez, Smith, and Pieper 2022). The same survey found that in 2021 just 3.9% of music producers for this collection of songs identified as female, a figure which went down to 2.8% when averaged across their seven-year longitudinal analysis. In Brazil, a 2020 analysis found that 10% of 12 million registered works were authored by women, who received just 7.1% of royalties distributed that year (Donne Women in Music 2020b). In Australia, our own audit of the 2022 ARIA awards found that women comprised just 7 of the 49 individuals (14.28%) recognised through winning awards.

In Australia, 13% of all screen composers registered with APRA AMCOS are female (Strong & Cannizzo 2017), and an internal audit within APRA AMCOS of screen composers earning over $2,000 in annual royalties found that just 7.83% were women (Wilcox 2022a, p. 3) across the five-year average from 2015-19. In the USA, women comprised 6% of composers hired to score the top 250 grossing films (Lauzen 2019) and in Canada, 15% of screen composers identified as female (Gauthier & Freeman 2018). In the 87-year history of the Academy Awards, only three women and no gender diverse composers have ever won an individual Oscar for Best Score (Wilcox 2022a. p.1).

As is clear from the above summary, consistent data on gender diverse representation in music are lacking, limiting current discourse and analysis on this topic. If one takes the adage, 'you can't be it if you can't see it' at face value, it becomes clear there is significant work to do within the music industry as a whole before women and gender diverse music creators emerge from relative obscurity as underrepresented – and in the case of gender diverse people, under-reported – cohorts, to see themselves more proportionally represented across these areas of industry and others. As is evident from closer examination of this data, such invisibility is only compounded by intersecting disadvantage.

1.3 Literature review

Key research in recent years that has examined gender in music and related industries informs the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report. These include: Benoît Gauthier and Lisa Freeman's 2018 survey commissioned by the Screen Composer's Guild of Canada, and Catherine Strong and Fabian Cannizzo's 2017 survey commissioned by APRA AMCOS, whose findings are mentioned above. These studies of the screen music industry complement Martha Lauzen's research on women working in film and television in the US, titled *The Celluloid Ceiling* and published across two reports in 2019 and 2022. Lauzen's *Boxed In* (2021) report surveys women's work in broadcast and streaming television; while it does not extend to composers, its findings on women working in other behind-the-scenes roles provides interesting context. None of these studies report specifically on gender diverse practitioners.

Founder of the USC Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, US researcher Stacy L. Smith has led several longitudinal studies of gender in the entertainment industries. The key longitudinal study that focuses on music, *Inclusion in the Recording Studio?* has been published yearly from 2018 collating statistics since 2012. Those editions that most inform this research are: *Inclusion in the Recording Studio?* (Smith, Choueiti, Pieper, Clark, Case, & Villanueva 2019), which analysed the gender and race/ethnicity of US artists, songwriters, and producers across 700 popular songs from 2012-2018, including both quantitative and qualitative data from interviews with artists; and *Inclusion in the Recording Studio?* (Hernandez, Smith, & Pieper 2022), which analysed gender and race/ethnicity of US artists, songwriters, and producers across 1,000 popular songs from 2012-2021. The latter presents a 10-year comparative survey that reveals representation of female contemporary music artists and songwriters has remained relatively static and that representation of female music producers has only increased from 2.4% to 3.9% in 10 years. Intersectionality of race and gender is considered in all of Smith's reports, and is the key focus of, *Gender and Race/Ethnicity of Artists, Songwriters & Producers across 900 Popular Songs from 2012-2018* (Smith, Pieper, Choueiti, Clark, Case, & Villanueva 2019).

Ciaran Frame's *Living Music Report* was released in two iterations (2019; 2020) and is an independent quantitative analysis of National Performing Arts organisations' musical programming in Australia. Its focus is on composer diversity – both ethno-cultural and gendered, including minority genders. In 2020, it revealed that: no gender diverse composers were programmed by Australia's major performing arts organisations; and just 4% of works were written by female composers (+1% from 2019). The UK-based Donne Foundation has surveyed the programs presented by major orchestras worldwide since 2018, releasing three reports to date. Data reported in their audits titled, *Women Composers in Concert Performances – Orchestral Seasons* (Donne 2019; 2020) reveal that repertoire composed by women and performed by the world's leading orchestras ranged from 5.3% in 2018-19 seasons to 8.2% in 2019-2020, and their most recent global survey, *Equality & Diversity in Concert Halls* (2022) of 100 leading orchestras' programs, shows that this figure dropped to just 5% in 2020-2021, representing an overall decline in women's participation over 3 years. The 2022 report also collected statistics on 'non-binary composer' representation which it reported at 'less than 0.1%' (Donne 2022). Further research shared by The Donne Foundation considers female and intersectional representation in other contexts, e.g., *Equality & Diversity in the Studio* (2020) in the UK and USA.

A 2017 report commissioned by Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA), *Skipping a Beat* (Cooper, Coles, & Hanna-Osborne) examined publicly available data on the make-up of radio playlists, festival line-ups, industry awards, peak bodies and major industry boards and found that contemporary music in Australia was dominated by male contributions and voices. Its five recommendations remain largely unimplemented, although some aspects of these are reflected in music industry activity since 2017. For example, the report's fifth recommendation: 'Address gender bias in the Australian music industry by prioritising inclusivity and representation as core industry values (for example through funding and implementing training programs)' (Cooper, Coles, & Hanna-Osborne 2017, p. 2), is reflected in a number of initiatives, including the Australian Women in Music Awards (AWMA 2023), APRA AMCOS's annual Women in Music Mentorships (APRA AMCOS 2018) and 40:40:20 gender target ratios for awards presentations (APRA 2023). However, other recommendations are still, years later, in urgent need of action, in particular

those that call for an independent gender equality industry advocacy body, using gender equality criteria in relation to public funding outcomes, and increasing women's numbers in decision-making roles (Cooper, Coles, & Hanna-Osborne 2017, p. 2).

Raising Films Australia's *Honey I Hid the Kids!* (Verhoeven, Riakos. Gregory, Joly & McHugh 2018) found that a disproportionate share of childcare falls to women in the Australian screen industries, who make up around 85% of primary carers. This disadvantage is due to a lack of structural and formal family support in workplaces populated chiefly by freelancers. These findings provide helpful context for the music industry.

Vic Bain's report *Counting the Music Industry: The Gender Gap* (2019) is a study of gender in the UK music industry that reveals large discrepancies between women's engagement and achievement in tertiary music education programs vis-à-vis their representation in music workplaces. These deficits are also reflected in Strong and Cannizzo's 2017 study of screen composers and warrants further investigation by industry to ensure women's training and expertise is not being wasted.

Discrimination in the Music Sector (Williams & Bain 2022) investigates the prevalence of discrimination in the music sector. Australian music organisation Support Act commissioned a report to address the prevalence of sexual harm, sexual harassment, bullying, and systemic discrimination in the Australian music industry, resulting in the publication of the *Raising Their Voices* report (Support Act 2022). It engaged with all types of music workers across the broad industry including but not limited to music creators, and includes men, as well as women and gender diverse people. While there are confluences with the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report in terms of the time of the study and some of the questions it examines, *Raising Their Voices* is focused solely on the problem of sexual and psychological harm. Thus, its remit, focus, and goals are different from this report's.

In terms of broader national studies, The *Respect@Work* report (Australian Human Rights Commission 2020) led by Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner, Kate Jenkins focused on workplace sexual harassment in Australia across a spectrum of industries and contexts. The *Women's Economic Security Statement* (2020) published by the Australian Government builds on its 2018 iteration, focusing on women's economic security and safety. It identified five key priority areas, including: closing the gender pay gap, increasing women's workforce participation, supporting women to navigate family care and work, promoting female leadership, and increasing women's safety and work and at home. It found that unacceptable levels of harm are impacting Australian women: more than 80% of women over the age of 15 have been sexually harassed in their lives; and 25% of women have experienced physical and/or sexual harm from an intimate partner (Australian Government 2020, p. 62).

Added to these industry studies is recent research published in scholarly volumes on gender in the global music industries, presented by: Catherine Strong and Sarah Raine in their edited book *Towards Gender and Equality in the Music Industry* (2019), which analyses gender in music across education, practice and activism; Felicity Wilcox in her edited book *Women's Music for the Screen* (2022), which reviews women's historical and current output and experiences as minorities in the global screen music industries; and Linda Kouvaras, Maria Grenfell and Natalie Williams in their edited collection, *A Century of Composition by Women* (2022), which captures a diversity of music practice by women in the western world through the

last 100 years. While predominantly focused on music by cisgender women, these anthologies also include research on transwomen and/or gender diverse music practitioners.

Emerging literature specifically focused on trans and/or gender diverse music creator representation and experience includes: 'Becoming a "Trans Synth Queen": YouTube, electronic music composition, and coming out' (Cayari 2023), which presents a case study exploring how YouTube musician, Amie Waters, used social media platforms and her music to come out as trans, non-binary. '"It's Like Mixing Paint": Songwriting Alternative Gender Cultures with Young People as an 'After-Queer' Methodology' (Scrine 2019) conceptualises songwriting in the context of music therapy, as an 'after-queer' approach for exploring notions of gender and sexuality with young people and highlights the value of creative and arts-based methodologies in queer research. In *De/constructing DIY identities in a trans music scene*, Pearce and Lohman (2019) discuss the vital role of alternative music scenes in both generating and giving expression to trans identities. Xavia A. Publius' *Suggestions for transgender inclusion in classical music: a mini-cycle cycle.* (Masters Dissertation, University of Northern Iowa 2015) examines the lack of trans inclusion in Western classical music, especially through the lens of opera, and includes three original arias for trans voices.

There is much more published online that addresses the spectrum of gender diversity in music. As a sample: Music Victoria's *Clear Expectations* (2019) makes key recommendations for inclusive, gender diverse practices for arts operators. Declan Byrne's article for ABC's Triple J website, *Being non-binary in the Australian music scene* (2019) discusses the rising number of emerging pop artists identifying as non-binary in Australia. Alex Temple's insights into being a trans composer are communicated in a nuanced way in 'I'm a Trans Composer. What the Hell Does That Mean?' (Temple 2013). Ben Madden provides a brief survey of leading gender diverse Australian artists in an article for the website *Cool Accidents*, '8 Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Non-Conforming Artists You Absolutely Need to Hear' (2021). These articles are just a few of many published in non-academic magazines and websites.

In 'Becoming Non-binary: An Exploration of Gender Work in Tumblr', (2020) Megan Sharp and Barrie Shannon investigate how non-binary people generate affective, communicative, and creative places of intimacy, focusing on the online platform Tumblr as a site of solidarity and resilience. The edited volume in which this chapter is published, *Gender, Sexuality, and Race in the Digital Age* (Farris, Compton & Herrera 2020) provides an intersectional analysis of gender, sexuality, race, and social media that offers helpful context for gender diverse music creators for whom the internet offers an important and liberating opportunity for public engagement with both their music and personae.

A wider consideration of trans and/or gender diverse identities yields more literature. In *Navigating identity* (2019) Chassity Fiani and Heather Han examine the traditional ways in which the gender diverse community's narratives – as a subset of LGBTIQA+ – have been rendered doubly silent. An OECD study, *Society at a Glance* (2019) found that an increasing number of individuals worldwide identify as non-binary. While non-binary or genderqueer individuals are often included under the umbrella of 'transgender' those who are non-binary may face differential challenges compared to those who identify as male or female within the trans community (National Centre for Transgender Equality 2021). Broadly, trans individuals experience difficulties in maintaining employment and encounter significant levels of discrimination and

other forms of negative treatment at work (Beauregard, Booth & Whiley 2021). These negative workplace experiences relate to lower levels of well-being and higher rates of depression and suicide (Budge, Tebbe & Howard 2010). In addition, trans individuals face unique organisational challenges such as policies that prevent them from accessing gendered spaces like changing rooms and bathrooms that align with their gender identity, or restrictive gendered dress codes that deny them the opportunity for authentic gender expression. Moreover, non-binary individuals experience even more discrimination than the general trans population (Grant et al. 2011; Miller & Grollman 2015) and face greater difficulties at work (Budge et al. 2010). Individuals who identify as non-binary traditionally tend to elicit feelings of anxiety and confusion in organisations, increasing the stigma related to their gender identity (Ozturk & Tatli 2016). In *Creating gender: A thematic analysis of genderqueer narratives,* Nova Bradford et al. (2018) investigate how gender diverse identities are understood and managed in both personal and social domains and highlight non-binary gender as a source of strength and positivity in identity development.

On the music and cultures of First Nations Australians, some key texts inform this research. *Songlines* by Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly (2020) reveals how songlines are extraordinary knowledge systems intrinsic to First Nations cultures and communities that sustain story, song, dance, art, ceremony, and Country; *Singing Saltwater Country* by John Bradley and Yanyuwa families (2010) is an in-depth study of Yanyuwa songlines and their relationship to ancestors, kin, places, plants, animals, seasons, ceremonies, stories and spirit; *Ngarra-burria* by Chris Sainsbury (2019) details the ethos and practical work behind Sainsbury's initiative as a First Nations composer in response to 'the need for a mechanism to support developing and emerging Australian Indigenous composers and to connect them to industry' (Sainsbury Music 2023); *The First Nations Arts and Culture Strategy 2023-27* (2023) is the new policy document from the Australia Council aiming to enrich 'understanding of connection with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture and provide a channel for sector issues and challenges to be raised, provide expertise and advice to the management and administration of Council…[and] champion conversations between local jurisdictions and Council about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts and culture;' and *Narragunnawali Reconciliation in Schools and Early Learning Resource Guide, The Arts- Music* (Reconciliation Australia n.d.) is a guide paper providing resources for educators to embed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures, and contributions within the area of music and the arts in school curricula. In considering First Nations women's safety we referred to *Australia's welfare 2019 in brief* (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019).

On Māori music and cultures, Rachael Te Āwhina Ka'ai-Mahuta's doctoral thesis, *He kupu tuku iho mō tēnei reanga: a critical analysis of Waiata and Haka as commentaries and archives of Māori political history* (2010) discusses waiata (song, chant) and haka as examples of Māori poetry and literature that are important for the survival of Māori identity, language and culture; in *Mana Wahine: Māori Women in Music* (2016) Maree Sheehan centres Māori women's perspectives and knowledges as expressed through their waiata, and considers how these might assist with efforts to produce a new wave of creativity for new generations of Māori composers and performers; and Creative New Zealands' *Te Hā o ongā Toi: Māori Arts Strategy 2019-2024* (2019) provides a snapshot of the Māori music industry's current strategy to advance the aspirations of ngā toi Māori artists and practitioners. In considering Māori women's safety, we referred to Denise Wilson, Alayne Mikahere-Hall and Juanita Sherwood's paper, *Using indigenous kaupapa Māori*

research methodology with constructivist grounded theory: generating a theoretical explanation of indigenous women's realities (2022).

1.4 Method

The Women and Minority Genders in Music study and report are underpinned by the principles of inclusion, confidentiality, voluntary participation, evidence-based research, and supportive engagement with participants. The aims of the research were met using a mixed-method approach using both qualitative and quantitative research that utilised two different data sources: an online survey and semi-structured interviews. Further information about the participant sample, recruitment methods and data collection tools are outlined below.

1.4.1 Participants and recruitment

The participant sample consisted of women (either cisgender or transgender), trans men, non-binary, and/or gender diverse people involved in music creation in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. A broad definition of music creation was used in this project, allowing recruitment of participants with a variety of vocational backgrounds. Participation was open to any music creator from these gender identities producing original music/sound works regardless of genre. A broad conceptualisation of music creation was used in order to capture the gamut of those in, or adjacent to, the music industry in Australia or Aotearoa. It provides a unique insight to music composition and creation. In this regard it is more focused than comparable studies that encompass music workers outside the specific role of creator. It also provides new data that offer insights beyond those limited to specific genres, such as several cited above.

Recruitment for the initial phase of the research, the online survey, was conducted with the assistance of APRA AMCOS who, on behalf of the researchers, circulated information about the research and a link to the survey by email to royalty earning members of APRA AMCOS whose information indicated they are women and/or gender diverse. Recruitment of income-earning members was focused to ensure the sample predominantly consisted of those who are active in their practice and who identify their practice as primarily centred in the creation, production, and dissemination/performance of their *own* music rather than those working in administration, teaching, crew, technical support, the performance of non-original music, or other roles.

Recruitment for the second phase of the research, the semi-structured interviews, was facilitated by the online survey, which concluded with a question asking participants to indicate interest in an interview. Those who indicated interest were contacted by the researchers. Additional invitations to participate in the study were circulated within CI Wilcox's professional networks.

1.4.2 Online survey

An online survey was used to collect data about women and gender diverse people's experiences of their involvement in music practice, and their experiences of gender-based marginalisation, barriers to progression, harassment, or abuse in their work. The survey was open for a period of two months

between November 2021 and January 2022. 191 participants ranging from the ages of 16 to 74, from across a broad range of locations and areas of music practice recorded their responses. Participants were of diverse genders, ethnicities, and cultural backgrounds, including First Nations people living in Australia and Māori people living in Aotearoa. The online survey was hosted by Qualtrics, and included:

- Demographic questions to enable analysis of data based on a participant's self-identified age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, Indigeneity, caring responsibilities, vocation, education, career stage, and music genre.

- A suite of closed-ended questions to collect data on participant self-perception and experiences in the workplace. These questions gathered data on production and technology skills, social groups, and role modelling.

- A suite of open-ended questions to collect narrative data on participant experiences of gendered embodiment, career barriers, and experiences of gender-based marginalisation, harassment or abuse in their work contexts.

The online survey concluded with an invitation to participants to indicate their interest to participate in a semi-structured interview on the topics covered in the survey, in more depth. We wish to acknowledge the nearly 200 individuals who took the time to complete the online survey, which provided a rich and important source of data underpinning the findings in this report.

1.4.3 Semi-structured interviews

Confidential, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather further in-depth narrative data on women and gender diverse peoples' experiences of their involvement in music practice and music industry. The interview schedule was developed with insights gained from preliminary thematic analysis of the survey data, to ensure that the interview data would complement the themes identified in the first phase of the research. 20 interviews were recorded between January 2022 and February 2023. These were conducted both online and in-person at a mutually agreed location. Participants' contributions and testimonials provided insights into the ways gender marginalisation can occur and its impact on individual music creators. In-depth interviews gave individuals the opportunity to share their experiences and perspectives in a safe and private space and informed the report in invaluable ways. We acknowledge the generosity and bravery of those who shared their stories with us.

While women self-identified in this study in a variety of ways, including as 'female', 'trans', 'cis', or 'assigned female at birth' (AFAB), we identify women as transgender women and cisgender women in this report when we are speaking as researchers, otherwise when directly citing participants' voices we utilise their own chosen term(s) of reference. We acknowledge in academia and elsewhere the historic usage of the term 'female' and how this has been wielded against many transgender women in a model of violence based on biological assumption and colonialism, hence we make every attempt to respect participants' voices and the voices of other transgender women and people.

Intersectionality was a key priority in engaging the limited number of individuals for interviews. They included participants from a range of genders including cis women, trans women, and one individual who

identified as non-binary. Also represented in the interviews were First Nations and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals. A small number of Wahine Māori (Māori women) living in Aotearoa presented for the online survey, however no Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa (Māori) self-nominated or were engaged directly through our networks for interview. We acknowledge this limitation in the research and their absence from the more in-depth discourse contained in this report. The ages of interviewees ranged from 21 to 75 and the areas of music practice they were engaged in span diverse genres. Participants also represented a range of experience and career stage, from emerging to established. They were based at the time of interview in regional and metropolitan areas situated in NSW, Tasmania, Victoria, Queensland, New York (USA), and Aotearoa/New Zealand's North and South Islands.

Participants were asked demographic questions about their identity and work practices, in addition to questions about:

- their social circles, and views on representation and role modelling.

- their experiences and views as they relate to music industry culture.

- their experiences and views as they relate to workplace safety, harassment, or sexual assault.

- a suite of questions specifically for trans and gender diverse participants, to capture their experiences and views as they relate to gender identity, harassment, sexual assault, and homo/transphobia.

The interviews were felt by some participants to be an intervention in their own right. Several participants articulated that being interviewed had helped them towards improved understanding of the structural and/or internal barriers to their own career progression and was a process that offered a peer-to-peer connection within an industry from which they often felt marginalised or excluded.

1.4.4 Data analysis

The survey data was only accessed by the research team. Quantitative data generated from the online survey was exported from Qualtrics and analysed using SPSS (speech to text transcription). De-identified findings and quotations from the online survey are found throughout this report. Descriptive statistics and crosstabs were generated to facilitate the identification of themes within the data, and to compare data between age groups, gender identity, and ethnicity. Qualitative data from the online survey, such as open-ended questions, were exported from Qualtrics and analysed using NVIVO.

The semi-structured interviews were recorded (using a smartphone or Zoom if online) and transcribed by a professional, confidential service. Interview transcripts were imported to NVIVO and subjected to thematic analysis. The anonymised interview transcripts were only accessed by the research team. Excerpts from the de-identified transcripts are quoted and included in summaries throughout this report. All quotes cited in this report are attributed to false names generated arbitrarily by the research team.

Data analysis was conducted within a theoretical framework that centred intersectional feminist principles. The researchers chose an intersectional framework of analysis which ensures that the compounding impact of gender roles, caring responsibilities, (dis)ability, class, racism, and homo/transphobia on the

experiences of individual women and gender diverse people are accounted for. In adherence to this framework, where demographic data was collected and delineated a social group with shared characteristics or social marginalisation, analysis was conducted to ensure that the data from each group were analysed specifically to identify any unique themes or trends.

1.4.5 Ethical considerations

The research project and its methodology were approved in line with the University of Technology Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee guidelines (reference number ETH21-6180).

Considered high-risk due to its engagement with vulnerable cohorts and the sensitive nature of the information solicited, the ethics review took place over a five-month period by an anonymous university-level committee. All participants were provided in advance of their participation with an approved Participant Information Sheet to enable them to give informed consent for use of their anonymised data. Distress protocols were put in place to ensure participants could access professional, free support services should their participation in either the online survey or interviews prove triggering. CI Wilcox followed advice from First Nations experts as to correct protocols for the inclusion of First Nations participants and their data. Further consultation was conducted with APRA AMCOS to determine any areas of special interest to this organisation and to formulate specific questions to elicit this data. Feedback on survey questions was provided by APRA AMCOS before the survey was disseminated.

CI Wilcox received two research grants from School of Communication, University of Technology Sydney in 2021 and 2022 to lead this study, with the funding used to employ Dr Shannon as her research assistant, to engage transcription services for the 20 interviews, and to pay First Nations interviewees for their cultural contributions. No other participants were paid, and the CI received no direct payment for conducting this survey and writing this report, outside of her tenured employment at UTS.

CI Wilcox elected to undertake LGBTIGA+ Ally Training at the UTS Centre for Social Justice and Inclusion, engaging with the UTS LGBTIGA+ Ally network, of which she remains a member. In addition to employing Dr Shannon as her research assistant and inviting them to be the report's co-author due to their specific research expertise and lived experience, these measures were taken to ensure that: informed perspectives would guide this research at all stages; questions posed to participants would be co-designed by a team of diverse genders; and that gender diverse voices were meaningfully included in this report. This report was reviewed, and feedback provided, by First Nations researchers within UTS and other industry participants, with reviewer feedback implemented by the authors prior to publication. Reviewers have requested anonymity.

1.5 Limitations

Though this report breaks new ground on a range of issues for women and minority genders in music, there are important limitations that must be considered. While constituting 6% of those who responded to our online survey data, the absence of Māori and Moriori participants from our interviews means that this report only partially addresses the experiences of these groups in the music industry in Aotearoa/New Zealand and does not do so with the same detail afforded to First Nations peoples from Australia, who

were represented in both our online survey data and via in-depth interviewees. Our capacity to target specific groups for recruitment was limited; invitations to participate in the research were sent by APRA AMCOS on behalf of the researchers to members whose information indicated they are women and/or gender diverse; so we were unable to target a narrower sample with this method of recruitment.

We acknowledge that this means the report cannot provide an account of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori experiences in full spirit of an intersectional research design. However, patterns of racist marginalisation and colonisation are being considered in how we interpret and report their experiences, based on the broader theoretical framework, our broader research expertise, and our engagement with the relevant literature on these topics. We acknowledge the absence on our research team of those identifying within these groups as a limitation of the research and its competency in approaching the topic with an intersectional lens, despite our broader subject expertise. This is particularly relevant when considering the extent to which the research engaged and reported on the experiences of Moriori and Māori, as the research team are European-Australians who are living in Australia. It is vital that further research led by First Nations, Moriori, and Māori researchers is supported to ensure that their experiences in the music industries of Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand are well-understood.

1.6 Conclusion

The music industry is still working towards genuine inclusion. In every area of music, women and people of diverse genders experience significant disadvantage that plays out in their disproportionately low or negligible representation as music producers, composers, and songwriters. Gender intersects with other factors such as ethnicity, race, (dis)ability, class, geography, education, and age, to compound the barriers that marginalise women and minority genders in music. These are the realities industry organisations and individual workers must face and work together to reform systematically and long-term.

The research team commends APRA AMCOS for their ongoing work in this space including their in-kind support for the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* study and report, without which this research would not have been possible. We also commend University of Technology Sydney's School of Communication for funding such outward-facing enquiry as part of their deep commitment to social justice, and the training and support that UTS provides to its staff and students through the UTS Centre of Social Justice and Inclusion and Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research.

The findings of this report provide an opportunity for the music industry and all who work in it to look deeply at the barriers so many music creators struggle with day to day, to understand the reasons why they are there, and to make a choice to be part of the change needed now. The effort to ensure a music industry that is inclusive, safe, respectful, sustainable, and equitable for all - regardless of their gender - will require the entire industry. It will be ongoing and will only stop when all aspiring music creators can confidently say 'I can see it, and I can be it.'

Participant demographics

2.1 Online survey participants

In total, there were 191 responses to the online survey. 189 responses were deemed valid; two were excluded for not meeting eligibility criteria. No responses needed to be screened for abandonment (>50% questions unanswered), errors, or abuse of the survey.

The age of survey participants is displayed in Figure 1. Participants ranged between 16-74 years old, with an average age of 39.6. Three participants gave their age as a decade range only, and one participant did not provide an answer. The majority of survey respondents indicated their nationality was Australian (83%), followed by those from Aotearoa/New Zealand (16%). One participant works and lives in Australia but is not a citizen or permanent resident, and three chose not to respond. 7% identified as Indigenous, comprising 5.5% Tangata Whenua of Aotearoa (Māori), 1% First Nations Australian and 0.5% Moriori. Most of the participant sample was non-Indigenous (93%), comprising people from a range of European ethnicities, Asian ethnicities, and African ethnicities.
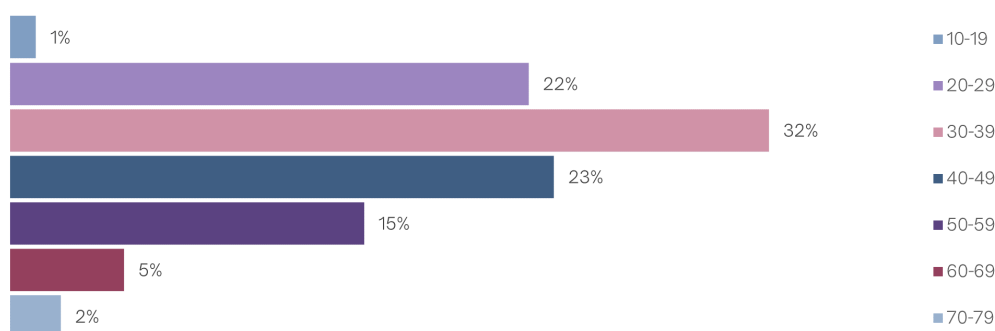
Figure 1: Reported age of online survey participants.

Survey participants were provided with a free-text field to provide their gender, and the responses to this question are displayed in Figure 2. Those who self-classified as 'female,' 'woman,' 'cisgender woman,' 'AFAB (assigned female at birth) woman' totalled 93% of responses. This category may also include women who did not choose to distinguish their trans status in their self-reporting. A further 1% of respondents identified specifically as trans women, totalling the number of all women at 94%. Trans men made up 0.5% of respondents. Gender diverse and/or non-binary people made up 5% of respondents; they used self-descriptors such as 'gender diverse,' 'queer,' 'genderqueer,' 'gender nonconforming,' and 'non-binary.' Just 0.5% of respondents refused to answer the question or provided an unclear answer in the free-text field. In total, those who classified themselves broadly as trans and/or minority genders made up 6.5% of total participants in the online survey.

We acknowledge the limitations of collecting accurate information on either sex or gender using an online survey. The online form could not be too long or intrusive, considerations that limited this question to one

short-text response only, when multiple or more detailed responses would be clearer and provide more scope for individuals to accurately define themselves. The personal choice respondents were offered as to how they described their gender and the variety of terms they used also created ambiguity in the classification process during data analysis, which we, the researchers accept and uphold as a legitimate form of disruption for those whose genders frequently come under intense scrutiny. Notwithstanding these limitations, we have attempted to reflect the genders of those who participated in the study as respectfully and accurately as possible.
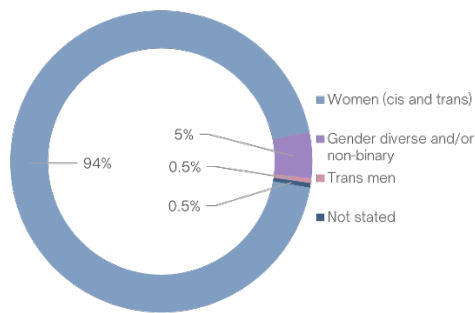
Figure 2: Reported gender of survey participants.
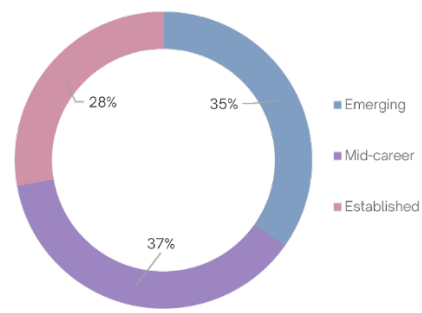
Figure 3: Reported career stage of online survey participants.

The self-reported career stage of survey respondents is displayed in Figure 3. The responses to this question were relatively uniform; 35% of respondents indicated they were 'emerging' in their career, 37% indicated they were 'mid-career' and 28% considered themselves to be 'established' in their career.

Survey respondents were asked to describe the genre of music they are active in. Many mentioned more than one in describing their engagement across musical genres. Answers to this question were collapsed into broad categories by the researchers, as demonstrated in Figure 4. Most respondents indicated that their music can be categorised as 'pop' (76 mentions), 'country, world and folk' (70 mentions), or 'rock and rock sub-genres' (65 mentions).
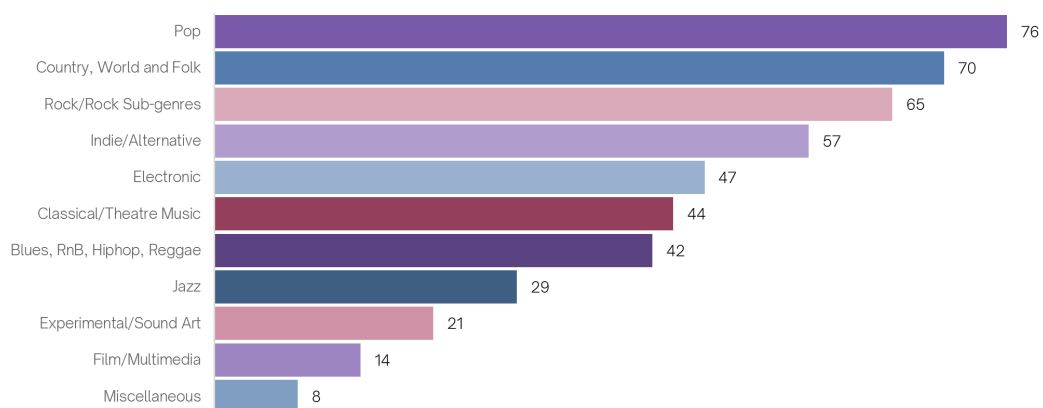
Figure 4: Broad genre assigned to online survey participants based on raw responses (number of mentions).

Underneath, in Figure 5, each broad genre category is presented in charts, demonstrating the breadth of style and genre that characterises the participant sample.

Figure 5: Breakdown of genre categories assigned to online survey participants, in the order presented in Figure 4 (number of mentions).

The majority of respondents had undertaken what we termed 'formal' instrumental or vocal music lessons (29%) at some point, compared to those with no 'formal' education (23%), a figure that includes respondents who indicated they were self-taught or learned socially. Respondents were also asked to indicate their highest level of formal music education, as demonstrated in Figure 6. In ascending order of highest formal education level attained, 3% of respondents had high-school-level musical training; 12.5% had a Diploma or vocational (VET) qualification; 5% were currently studying at university level or had not yet completed an undergraduate degree; 15% held a Bachelor-level music degree; and 12.5% had a Masters or Doctorate in music.

The largest number of affirmative responses (n=59) to the first part of question ('Did you receive any formal music education') indicated this education had taken the form of formal lessons in music theory, an instrument, and/or voice. This constituted 29.35% of respondents and in some cases represented the

only music training they received. Overall, it was interesting to note that the vast majority of female and gender diverse people (77%) have undertaken formal music education.
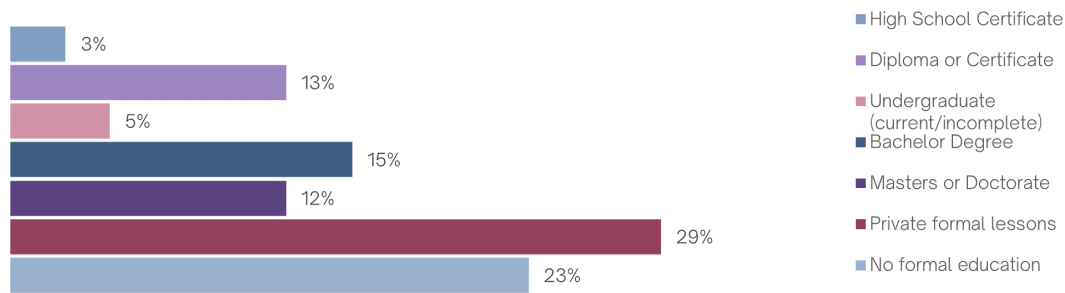
Figure 6: Reported highest level of formal music education of online survey participants.

Figure 7 visualises the proportion of respondents, by age group, who had not had any formal musical training. Respondents aged 60-69 had the lowest rates of formal musical training (56%), while those 30-39 had the highest (82%).
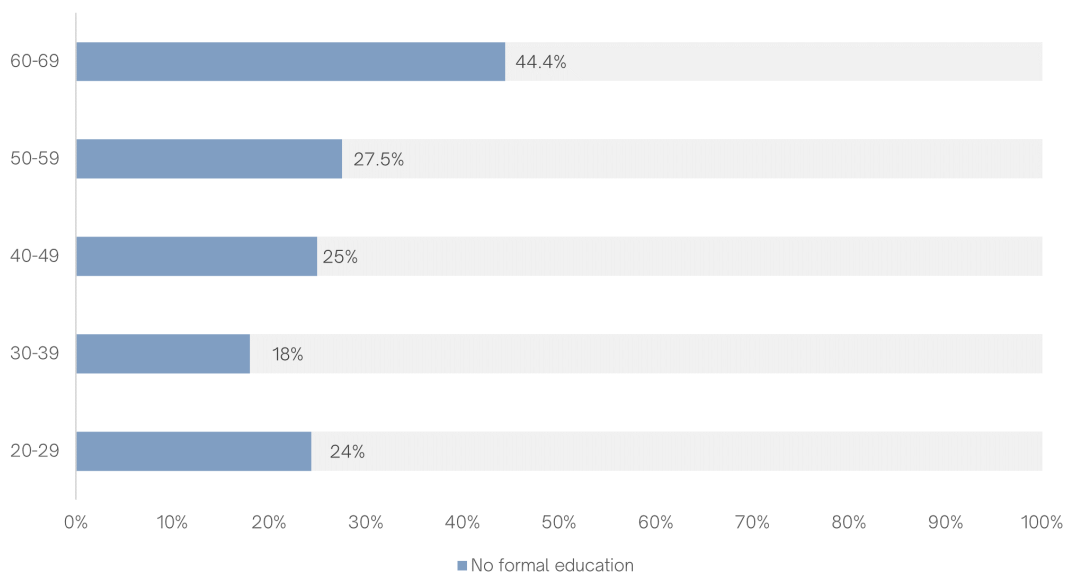
Figure 7: Proportion of online survey participants with no formal music education, by age.

Figure 8 displays the proportion of respondents who indicated they use music technology in their practice, alongside their self-reported skill level. The kinds of music technology listed by the respondents included recording equipment and software, mixing, editing and composition software, and digital instruments and synthesisers. Almost 9 in 10 respondents (88%) indicated that they do use these technologies in their music practice, and of these, almost half (46%) described their skill level as either moderate or high. Another 46% of respondents described their skill level as basic, while 8% considered themselves to have a mixed proficiency.
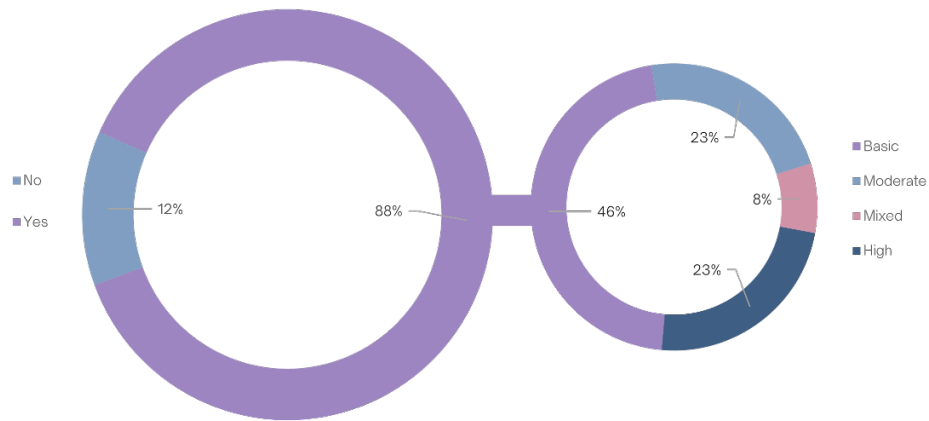
Figure 8: Proportion of online survey participants using music technology (left), with self-reported proficiency (right).

Despite high levels of technology usage and a significant proportion of respondents reporting having above-basic proficiency in use, only a minority considered themselves producers (see substantive discussion in Section 13).

Survey respondents were asked whether or not they were or had ever been a 'primary carer. (i.e. person with the majority or entirety of care for dependents). As demonstrated in Figure 9, 37% of respondents indicated that they are or have been primary carers, either for children or other family members or loved ones. Almost three quarters of those who were carers (72%) responded that this had a negative impact on their career in music. While 13% said it had no impact, 8% were unsure and 5% said it had a mixed impact, only 2% of respondents indicated that being a carer had a positive impact on their career.
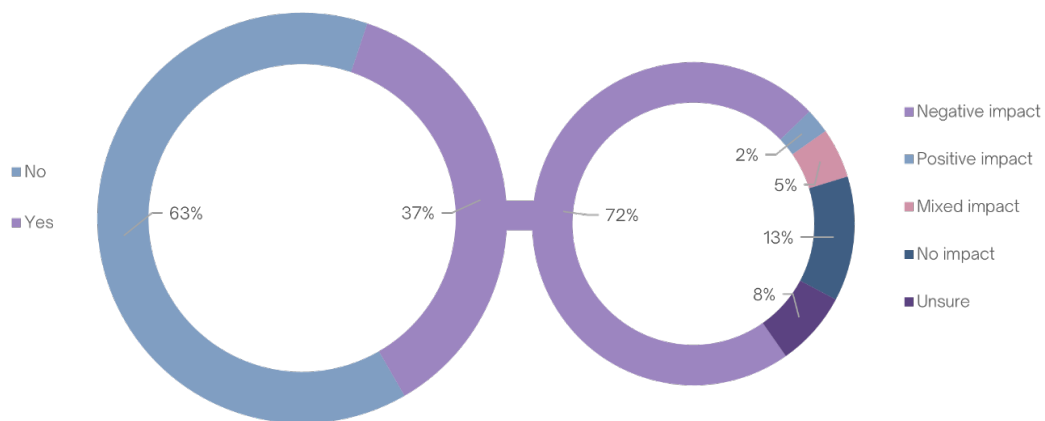
Figure 9: Proportion of online survey participants who reported caring responsibilities (left), with impact on career (right).

2.2 Interview participants

In total, 20 participants took part in interviews. One subsequently withdrew consent for their data to be included in this report. The 19 remaining participants ranged in age from 21-75, with an average age of 45.9 years. One participant declined to provide their age. Most of the participants described their gender as 'female' or 'cisgender woman' (n=16), with the remainder describing themselves as 'trans woman' (n=2) and 'non-binary' (n=1) (see Figure 10). In total, 15 participants disclosed their nationality as 'Australian,'

which included First Nations (*n*=3), Asian-Australian (*n*=1), and European-Australian (*n*=11). Four participants indicated they were Pākehā (white) citizens of Aotearoa/New Zealand (see Figure 11).
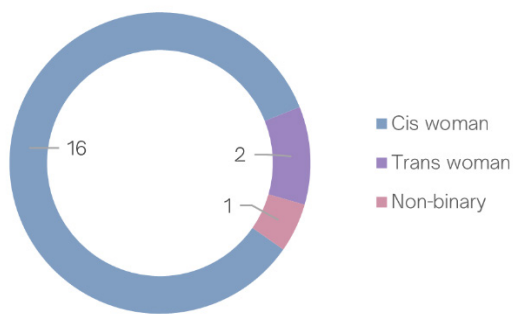
Figure 10: Reported gender of interview participants.
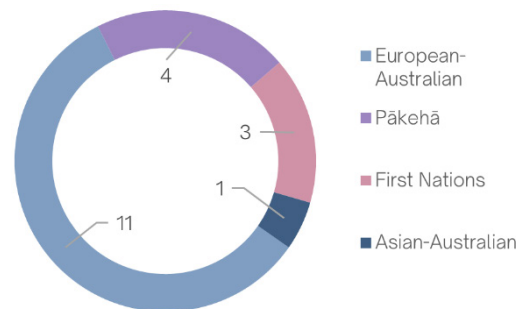
Figure 11: Reported ethnicity of interview participants.

In regard to career stage, four of the interview participants indicated they were 'emerging,' five were 'mid-career,' and two considered themselves 'established.' Seven of the interview participants were unsure about how to define their career stage (see Figure 12).

2.3 Conclusion

In summary, this data reflects a total of 208 sets of responses across the online survey and interviews. The overall participant
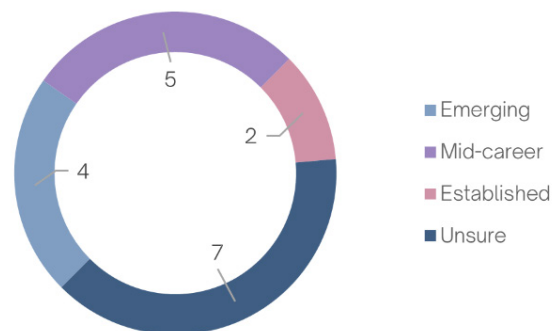
Figure 12: Reported career stage of interview participants.

sample consisted of a diverse range of women, both cis and trans, trans men, and gender diverse people of a variety of backgrounds. The participants were richly diverse in their genre of practice, education, work experience and their specific vocation. Some of this demographic information provides preliminary insight into the many barriers experienced by women and gender diverse people within the music industries in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, which are examined in depth in the sections that follow.

The matrix of barriers
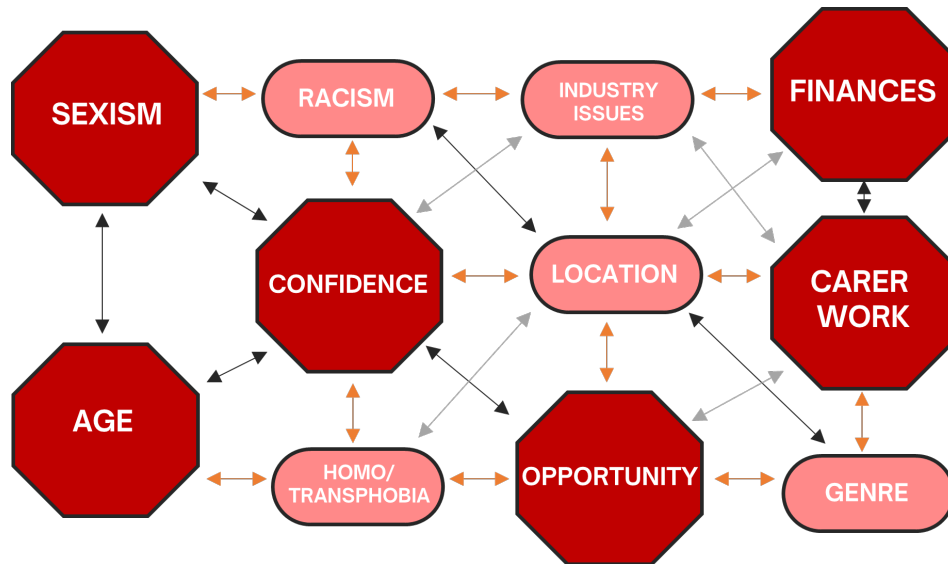
Figure 13: The 'matrix of barriers' to women and gender diverse music creators' careers.

Broadly, this research identifies the key barriers to career success, wellbeing and safety for women and gender diverse people in the Australasian music industries. In the following sections of the report, each of these barriers will be examined in depth, in the sociocultural and political contexts that erect them. In the online survey, participants were asked a question that sought to account for each of the barriers that they feel have impacted their career progression: *Can you identify any barriers that have impeded your career progression in music? If so, please tell us more about them.*

Answers to this question (*n*=123) were manually coded into 12 categories, seen below in Table 1. This section will provide a top-level analysis of these online survey answers, defining and briefly discussing each of the identified barriers presented here, while the following sections will provide detailed analysis of identified barriers that draws on all research data.

Barriers to career progression	Number of mentions
Sexism or misogyny	46
Lack of confidence in personal fortitude, skills and knowledge	19
Gendered care work	11
Finances	10
Music industry issues	10
Age	9
Lack of opportunities	8
Genre or niche area of practice	8

Geography or location	7
Other/Miscellaneous	5
Racism	4
LGBTIQA+ prejudice (homo/transphobia)	3

Table 1: Coded barriers to career progression in online survey responses (number of mentions).

3.1 Sexism or misogyny

By far, the most common barrier identified by women and gender diverse music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand is sexism and misogyny. Participants recounted experiences of direct, interpersonal sexism in their interactions with men at work, such as sexist abuse, sexual harassment, and being deliberately excluded from decision making (see Section 10). Others reflected on structural and cultural forms of sexism that create inequities, negative attitudes, and stereotypes about women and girls in music. These included negative imputations about women's technical skills and abilities and the unequal circulation of opportunities between men, enabled by phenomena such as the Boys' Club (see Section 6.2). The impact of sexism and misogyny on the participants varied. Those who identified sexism as barriers in their careers often remarked that it made them feel unvalued, unsafe, and it made them question their aptitude and their choice of career.

3.2 Confidence in personal fortitude, skills, and knowledge

Following sexism and misogyny, the second most common reported barrier was lack of confidence in one's own personal fortitude or required skills and knowledge. Several participants located fault in themselves for their career progression, usually blaming their perceived introversion or lack of knowledge about the industry. Others identified their experience of mental illness as being a barrier to their career progression. A smaller number of participants stated that they do not see themselves as good enough at what they do, remarking about their perceived lack of skill with their instrument or with the equipment they use. Broadly, a lack of confidence in their skills and abilities was a prominent theme in this data and is specifically examined in Section 4.

3.3 Gendered care work

The challenges of balancing work commitments with family responsibilities and unpaid domestic labour were central themes in this data. These responsibilities variously included parenting, caring commitments, and other forms of unpaid domestic labour. Several participants responded that 'motherhood' was the most significant barrier for their career progression. Beyond simply the practical responsibilities associated with parenthood, such as providing care and education, some participants experienced prejudice from others based on their status as a parent. The constraints on time and movement reported by participants who are parents was seen by them as antithetical to a successful career in music. These participants indicated that the level of career success they would like required a level of time and resources that they were not able to commit due to parenting and domestic labour. Gendered carer work is examined in depth in Section 8.

3.4 Finances

Financial constraints, or a lack of availability of funding for their work, was also reported as a barrier to career success. The participants who commented on finances found it extremely difficult to be self-sufficient musicians, usually having to work full-time jobs separate to their music practice to be able to get by. Others commented on living on grant opportunities where they came up and lamented a perceived lack of financial support for music and musicians, especially those who do not have established careers. Brief discussions of financial support and grant opportunities can be found in Section 5.1 and 12.

3.5 Music industry issues

Participants identified a range of barriers they have experienced navigating through or finding a place within 'The Industry.' These issues included: impregnable bureaucracy or management; a feeling of not being understood or taken seriously by corporate, non-musicians; access to music media; representation of diversity; and a broadly perceived lack of meaningful career pathways for women and gender diverse people in music. These participants often reported feeling jaded or alienated from the mechanism of the music industry, their needs or desires rarely being met. An in-depth discussion of how all research participants understand and make sense of the music industry is undertaken in Section 6.1.

3.6 Age

Age, or more accurately, age*ism*, was identified as a significant barrier for women and gender diverse people in music practice. Participants perceived a sharp decline in career opportunities for all feminine-presenting people as they age, and many identify sexist attitudes toward older women and strict beauty standards as the root cause. Broadly, they believe that women's career opportunities can often rely on their ability to cater to the male gaze and to embody a marketable image. Alarmingly, participants as young as their late twenties and early thirties reported being discriminated against because of their age, or being told that they are 'too old.' The issue of age is explored in Section 9.

3.7 Lack of opportunity

A number of the participants lamented the lack of opportunities they feel they have been afforded to advance their careers. These included a lack of opportunities to collaborate and find work, especially in rural and regional areas (see Section 11.5) and a lack of opportunities to hone music practice or study, often because of financial constraints or family commitments (see Section 8). Some participants explicitly argued that work opportunities are often monopolised by, and circulated exclusively among men, pointing to the issue of Boys' Clubs that are discussed in Section 6.2. Career opportunities and development are discussed in Section 4, while an intersectional approach that considers concepts like age, race, disability, sexuality and gender diversity can be found in Section 11.

3.8 Genre or niche area of practice

Somewhat less frequently mentioned were genre-specific barriers. These included issues such as the low representation of women in a specific genre, which often contributed to marginalisation or alienation in

male-dominated environments. Indeed, the proliferation of phenomena such as Boys' Clubs appears to vary depending on the genre of music practice (discussed in Section 6.2). Participants also reflect on being involved in so-called 'niche' genres with little industry support or mainstream appeal, which hampers their career progression.

3.9 Geography/location

Living in a rural or regional area was identified as a significant barrier to career success for some participants. Those who live outside of capital cities in Australia and in the South Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand reported small music scenes, a lack of job opportunities, a lack of industry support and a general sense of isolation. The work of women and gender diverse musicians in rural and regional areas is discussed in depth in Section 11.5.

3.10 Race and ethnicity

A small number of participants identified racist attitudes and expectations as being significant barriers to their career success. In the words of one participant, a subtle or 'silent' racism permeates the music industry. It is apparent that some CALD and First Nations musicians feel unsupported by the industry as a whole; their experiences are discussed specifically in Sections 4.2, 7.2, 10.1 and 11.1.

3.11 LGBTIQA+ prejudice

There were a small number of LGBTIQA+ participants who reported prejudice as barriers to their career success. Usually, this was reported by older participants as having occurred toward the beginning of their career, including experiences such as being marginalised for being gay or trans, or censored for exploring themes of sexuality and desire in their music. Pleasingly, LGBTIQA+ participants in the research overall rarely reported homophobia or transphobia in their contemporary career experiences. Discussion of LGBTIQA+ participants' experiences is found in Sections 4.2, 11.2 and 11.3.

3.12 Conclusion

The broad aim of this research is to account for what we have termed 'the matrix of barriers' to career success and wellbeing for women and gender diverse music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand. This matrix is complex, highly resistant to rupture, and persistent across career trajectories, with its points interconnected and differently angled for each individual.

This section compiles and analyses online survey responses to a question that asks respondents to identify any barriers that have impeded their career progression in music. The answers reveal that, by far, sexist attitudes, interpersonal sexism, and direct experiences of misogyny were the most common barriers for women and gender diverse people. Stereotypes, prejudice, and lowered expectations were common in how the participants reflected their interface with the music industry. A lack of confidence and perceived lack of personal skills and fortitude were also commonly reported by participants, especially where the technical aspects of music creation and composition were concerned. This was followed by gendered carer work and motherhood, financial constraints, and ageism.

In the sections that follow, we draw on all collected data, including the semi-structured interviews. All 12 of the themes identified in this section are mirrored in the interview data, allowing a rich, in-depth analysis of the issues at hand, as well as their structural and discursive underpinnings.

Confidence, opportunities, and development

4.1 Music education: Its extent, impact, and the alternatives

Respondents to the online survey were asked the question: *Did you receive any formal music education? If so, please describe it and state to what level. If not, how did you learn?* People described many different ways they learned music, with some individual respondents naming more than one method. All mentions of formal music lessons were logged, in addition to each respondent's highest-level academic music qualification where applicable (see Figure 6, p. 18)

While participants were free to define 'formal music education' according to their own understanding of the term, we, the authors, recognise that western society sees 'formal education' as primarily delivered through professional, private, or state-based teaching. We wish to acknowledge that the traditional modes of learning of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori peoples outside of this context are also 'formal' pathways for transmission of their musical and cultural knowledges. For clarity, in this report, 'formal music education' includes learning comprising: lessons in music theory, instrument, or voice; and/or music studies (including of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori music, and the music of other cultures) in any structured context, including, but not limited to high-school, VET, undergraduate, postgraduate, or culturally-specific models of learning practised by First Nations, Moriori, Māori, and people of other non-western cultures.

4.1.1 Correlation between education and career outcomes

As noted in Section 2.1, the vast majority of female and gender diverse people (77%) have undertaken some kind of formal music education. Nearly one-third had undertaken formal music lessons (29.35%), often in addition to academic music studies. For 15.42%, the highest music qualification attained was a Bachelor degree. A further 12.5% had gained a diploma or certificate in music studies, exactly the same number as those who had attained a post-graduate degree in music. When added to those who had attained an undergraduate degree, it was found that a full 40.28% (*n*=81) had a tertiary or higher qualification in music.

When one compares the 77% formal education rate of women and gender diverse music creators to the rates at which they are represented across all genres, it quickly becomes evident that the gaps between music education and employment rates are problematic. Our findings are mirrored by other studies: *Counting the Music Industry: The Gender Gap* (Bain 2019) revealed that, although women are now represented in almost equal numbers in music subjects at university level in the UK, they experience a high level of difficulty accessing sustainable careers upon leaving the educational setting. Such discrepancies were also reflected in the study commissioned by APRA AMCOS of Australian screen

composers (Strong & Cannizzo 2017), which found that while 42% of the women surveyed held a specialist qualification in screen music, women are still represented in the Australian industry at only 13%. In Canada, women are more than twice as likely to have studied music formally than their male peers, yet are just 15% of those employed as screen composers (Gauthier & Freeman, 2018).

We suggest this gap between education and career outcomes is due to the many factors present in the matrix of barriers women and gender diverse music creators face. At the very least, these stark discrepancies deserve examination, understanding, and informed counter-measures to be implemented in order to scaffold the pathways from education settings into workplaces for women and minority genders. This should be undertaken collaboratively by education providers and music industry organisations to ensure the training, skills, and expertise of female and gender diverse music creators are not wasted to the current extent.

Music is a highly competitive business. At best, a music education can be a direct pathway to employment, such as in the case of concert musicians who, by and large, require a performance degree for auditions and appointments with major performing arts organisations, or academics who require a Masters or Doctoral-level degree to become employed within the university system. However, in neither of these cases and in many others, is employment in the desired area of industry guaranteed, even where the qualification is required for consideration. For most, it is understood that a music education provides a complementary grounding to their practice that increases the breadth and scope of potential work, expands professional networks, skills, and understandings, without necessarily being a direct route to employment in the music industry. This was expressed by Rae, who had completed a Bachelor of Contemporary Music in Aotearoa/New Zealand: [2]

> [The] best learning though was [through] performing & touring. My Degree gave me a network and an appreciation for world music.

<div align="right">Rae (female, 36)</div>

Most respondents reported a variety of music education pathways, that mixed extra-curricular music lessons, formal music studies at school level, with some higher-level study; Poppy's mix of education settings was fairly typical of the *ad hoc* portfolio of studies most participants had undertaken:

> Music and music extension classes in high school, cert III in music industries at TAFE, singing lessons.

<div align="right">Poppy (female, 17)</div>

Almost a quarter of responses to this question, or 23.38% (*n*=47) indicated little to no 'formal music education' had been received. Closer examination of these numbers yields some interesting findings: for example, 44.44% of all respondents surveyed in the age-range of 60 to 69 years reported receiving no formal music education. We observed that the older women and gender diverse people were, the more

likely they were to be self-taught or to have received little to no musical education: almost half of those surveyed over 60, over a quarter of those over 50 (27.58%), and a quarter of those over 40 (25%). There is thus a strong confluence of increasing age with a lack of education broadly. However, nearly a quarter of those surveyed in their twenties (24.39%) also had not received formal training, indicating that study might come later for music creatives than other types of workers. Those in their thirties were the most educated, with only 18.03% receiving no formal music education.

4.1.2 Alternate pathways to music

Interestingly, those who claimed to have had no formal music education were quite evenly divided in the way they described their career stage: emerging (27.65%); mid-career (34.78%); and established (27.65%). This indicates a perception of career-stage that is more-or-less in line with the overall survey results and suggests that there are strong and effective pathways to career progression for music creators without a 'formal education. To understand this, we examined the responses to the third part of the initial question: *'If not, how did you learn?'* We found that family and community played an important role in an informal music education. For example:

> *No formal training. Self-taught by others in my music community and through self-experimentation.*

<div align="right">

Violet (female, 36)

</div>

> *I had minimal lessons on piano and guitar but didn't last long as I wasn't really interested in theory, I just wanted to play. My mother studied voice at the Conservatorium of Music so she taught me how to sing, I then taught myself to play chords on guitar and piano to accompany myself while singing.*

<div align="right">

Star (female, 32)

</div>

> *Self-taught + touring/playing with foundational traditional musicians in my genre.*

<div align="right">

Jen (female, 62)

</div>

61.5% of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori respondents reported having had no formal music education. Their responses indicated that they instead had accessed effective music education via non-institutionalised, family and community-led learning outside western notions of formal learning frameworks.

> *My godmother taught me piano, I'm self-taught [on] guitar otherwise.*

<div align="right">

Tara (female, 46)

</div>

> *No, my friends at the time asked me to sing and write with them.*

<div align="right">

Michelle (female, 32)

</div>

> *I learnt from others around me, particularly other women, and by DIY-ing my way through.*

<div align="right">

Frankie (female, 22)

</div>

Echoing the DIY approach expressed by Frankie, several respondents cited learning 'by ear' as their key method. Others stated they learned 'through experience,' 'life experience,' or simply 'by doing.' Another method, described by one respondent as 'self-directed internet learning' was cited by several younger respondents as a primary educational approach that had filled in the gap of formal lessons:

> *I taught myself from a book and then from occasional teachers and online.*

<div align="right">Alice (female, 28)</div>

> *I taught myself, watched YouTube tutorials, and sat in with other producers to watch and learn.*

<div align="right">Gemma (female, 28)</div>

Learning from community and family provided pathways that replaced institutionalised formal study for many. Others had experienced disruption to their formal training due to learning difficulties or interrupted access to educational opportunities:

> *I learnt in school but because of my dyslexia was predominantly self-taught.*

<div align="right">Val (female, 28)</div>

> *Was bad student, didn't practice and couldn't learn theory but I always loved music and could hear melodies in my head. 20 years later my husband's band had thrown him out and we'd bought an electric piano for our children, and I played it one day. He said: 'I didn't know you could play – let's get a band together!' And we did.*

<div align="right">Amy (female, 74)</div>

4.2 Role models and mentors

> " People who are either peers – or like peers who are just a few steps ahead. People who you can get ideas from and who are also accessible to you. "

A priority of our study was to examine the importance of role models in music career development for composers, songwriters, and other types of music creators to see if this might be linked to low representation among women and gender diverse people. To that end, respondents to the online survey were asked a three-part question:

A. Do you see others in your area of music who are like you?

B. If yes, are they your peers or your role models?

C. What effect does this have on you?

We found that, of the 156 responses to part A, 30.13% were negative, meaning nearly one third of respondents did not see others like them in their field. This is a significant proportion and feeds into our discussion of alienation and marginalisation in Section 6 of this report. The remainder responded 'yes,' which, although the majority of responses, cannot necessarily be construed as a positive result when it

comes to the question of role models. This is because the responses to part B of this question were mixed: only 3.19% identified others like them as role models, 31.91% saw them as peers, nearly half (47.87%) identified them as both, and the remainder (17%) were unclear. We believe the fact that nearly one third of women and gender diverse music creators cannot see others like themselves in their area of music, and of those who can, only 3% can identify role models like them helps to explain why their representation in music creator roles is so low. Clearly the numbers of role models and visible women and gender diverse practitioners in music need to be much higher to make a material difference to diversity in representation.

This idea was backed up in our qualitative analysis of responses to part C of the question, where respondents detailed the effect of not seeing others like them in their field. The 43 responses to this part of the question can be summarised as:

- 37.2% saying they experienced isolation, alienation, invisibility as a result.

- 27.9% saying they experienced increased difficulty, discouragement, or feelings of low self-worth.

- 9.3% saying they experienced resignation, or acceptance of the status quo.

- 25.58% saying they experienced either no negative impact or increased resilience and empathy.

❝ I feel like I'm paving the way forward down a new path. **❞**

For the quarter of participants who felt either neutral impact or a positive impact, this was expressed as a sense of their own uniqueness or a pride in their strength:

If someone was the same as me, I'd have a nervous breakdown, I need to feel unique.

Pearl (female, 35)

I am a musician, first and foremost. If I cannot "see" other women in front of me, this does NOT inhibit my desire to participate in the field. How could it? It's easy to see past.

Karen (female, 44)

Other respondents expressed a mixed benefit of feeling isolated but also 'special' and spoke to the resilience they had developed as a result of this combination of qualities:

I have developed a highly independent mindset, over many years, together with a determination to just be myself. This works in most situations, with most people.

Bella (female, 59)

It has its pros and cons. I like being a little different to all of the other female singer songwriters in the area, but it's hard to tick a box and appeal to a certain crowd.

Star (female, 32)

The majority of respondents (65.1%) reported experiencing negative feelings at not seeing others like themselves in their area of music. They used words such as 'lonely,' 'sad,' 'discouraged,' 'disconnected,' 'unmotivated,' 'invisible,' to describe how that made them feel, or that it was 'frustrating,' 'tiring,' and 'isolating' to not be represented in their field. Feeling alone was a recurring theme, with many expressing the desire for a more inclusive gender balance:

I feel sad there's not more women drummers.

Lindy (female, 45)

I sometimes feel isolated and sometimes have self-esteem issues.

Rosa (female, 39)

It's isolating and hard to make meaningful connections.

Leah (female, 55)

Lack of identifiable peers and role models was revealed by several younger respondents to have a dampening effect on career aspiration, confidence, and growth:

I feel I can't reach my goals. It feels impossible.

Monica (female, 32)

It's hard to know... where I fit in within the industry.

Ky (female, 28)

It makes me question my worth and integrity as a musician-composer. It has held me back. I've come close to quitting before due to such things.

Tas (female, 33)

Sascha described feeling 'invisible' due to not being represented as both a negative and positive thing, reflecting trans and gender diverse people's experience of being targeted by negative attention:

It makes me feel invisible in Australia which is maybe a good thing. I need a place where I can just go about my business. It is actually a shame that I can't find an audience in Australia because my work has so much potential.

Sascha (trans male, 44)

Such challenges were also evident in Steffi's response, confirming how, for gender diverse music creators, the difficulty of navigating their gender identity in mainstream society can negatively impact their career potential:

I spend time thinking about how to navigate situations and career rather than seeing and following an example.

Steffi (non-binary, 45)

This feeling was echoed by Kim:

> *You put your head above the parapet as a different being, and it is dangerous. It feels dangerous. It feels unsafe.*

<div align="right">Kim (non-binary, 46)</div>

It appears overall that not seeing others working in their area who look like them impacts negatively on women and gender diverse music creators' feelings about their confidence and self-worth and adds further to the matrix of barriers they experience with regard to career goals, progression, safety, and representation.

4.2.1 Raising women and minority genders up

> **"** It's frustrating not having a clear pathway to follow and feeling like
> I'm breaking a glass ceiling. **"**

We asked interviewees a series of questions to tease out in-depth responses on the topic of role models. One interviewee spoke about how her conscious decision to become a mentor for other women in her field was based on understanding the value of seeing oneself represented at higher levels of achievement:

> *We need more female mentors.... I think we all feel safe with people we can identify with...I suppose that's what I've tried to do is to sort of put myself forward as a mentor because I know what it's like on the other end. As wonderful and all as it is to get these mentoring opportunities from men, you want to see yourself reflected somehow in the industry. There is still that little voice that says, 'Why am I the only woman in the room doing this?'*

<div align="right">Tania (female, 36)</div>

When asked about her own role models, however, Tania was unable to name a woman:

> *I've always said, "I wanna be like John Williams. I wanna be like Hans Zimmer. I wanna be like Brian Tyler." ... I suppose your idols that you've had, will always remain your idols and then, when you see women who are like you that are popping up say in the bigger scale, in the Hollywood sense, that just reaffirms that it is possible and that it is happening. It's just not necessarily happening enough, or fast enough perhaps.*

It is both unsurprising and unfortunate that Tania, a highly aspirational mid-career screen composer, is unable to name any mentors of her own gender. Tania's remarks reflect the invisibility of women in the higher-stakes areas of screen music production, which reflects the glass-ceiling effect that many experience (see Section 9). Cannizzo and Strong (2017) found that Australian women screen composers were most likely to be represented in the area of documentary film at 40%, which attracts lower budgets and fees for composers. Conversely in the high-stakes, high-budget area of feature films, women screen composers are represented at just over 20%, and in the high-profile area of TV series, this falls to below 20% of those who are hired. Further, the equivalent award to an Oscar in Australia (AFI/AACTA Best Score for a Feature Film) has been won by just two women in its 43-year history (Wilcox 2022a).

Female and gender diverse invisibility has real consequences for music creators. Its flow-on effects are evident in the lower numbers of women presenting for career opportunities. Tania spoke to a reticence on the part of women to self-nominate for mentoring within her business, which she linked to the lack of female role models she had already noted. It is logical that if women cannot see themselves represented, they won't step forward to be selected for opportunities in those areas, as they present as unwelcoming environments. Tania explained how she is attempting to address this problem through creating a strong, welcoming community for women:

> They're all out there. It's just whether or not they're stepping forward and I thought "That's interesting. Why is it that they haven't stepped forward till now?" I think it's maybe …we don't see ourselves reflected enough or we think, "I don't wanna go in there because that's all—all the boys are doing that and they've got their thing happening there and—oh, this looks interesting, there's a lot of my friends and women that work there, maybe I could try this!"

When asked whether there were enough role models in the composition space to see a pathway for her own career, Rilke said:

> No. No way! [Laughter] This is such a huge question because it's so many things. A lot of them are small things that are really hard to pin down—It's just like subtle traditions and expectations…Okay. I'm writing a musical at the moment, right? My role model is Lin-Manuel Miranda. He's the same age as me, and he's famous, but he's a man. He's a man who's famous for writing a musical about men. [Laughter]

<div align="right">Rilke (female, 41)</div>

Conversely, Elise did not feel it was important to seek same-gender role models:

> There are other musicians—males that their essence and their humanity are powerful and they remind me of what's important to capture in music and stuff like that. Leonard Cohen—I would say he's a role model.

<div align="right">Elise (female, 34)</div>

> "I would love to see more First Nations artists. There are heaps that I look up to, but…it would be great to see that grow."

4.2.2 Intersectional role models

First Nations interviewee, Emily, cited a non-Indigenous woman of colour as a role model in her field, but said she would like to have 'definitely more Aboriginal women' as role models, and more First Nations people represented at high levels of the music industry:

> I'd love to see a Blackfella at first or second string in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. My thing there at this age and stage is not why, it's why not? …I was talking to some students…and one of them's saying "To be it, you have to see it," and I haven't seen it. Especially for young people, that stuff, to aspire to it. That's why I think it's so important …you plant that seed, and in 10 years' time,

you never know...I think if you're young when you see a Blackfella up there playing strings or something... I think it's really important.

<div align="right">Emily (female, 55)</div>

When asked whether she wanted to be a role model for others like her, Emily explained what that meant in her own terms, expressed through a First Nations lens:

> *It's part of what's driving me...It's access and equity ... these are platform spaces that we haven't had access to, and that all ties in with what we're talking about... White privilege. A little Blackfella from out the back of Bourke ain't gonna go to the opera and watch...whatever it is. You know what I mean? That actually comes into play because it's contested ground and all that stuff. We understand this... I'm in my 50s, and we're still protesting. It hasn't got better; it's gone backwards. My lived experiences, that stuff comes into it, ... it's lovely and everything and music can be beautiful... but music can be your vehicle for change...When Treaty came out. They were doing their boogie down at...Toorak, and shaking their boogie on a Friday night to "Treaty! Yeah! Treaty now!" ... I think it can be a vehicle for change... even if it's not conscious on some level... When I say I don't create a vacuum, that's what I mean – my lived experiences. We all do this; we all have different versions of this. We don't create any vacuums. That's all part of it.*

Another First Nations interviewee, Sunny, explained that she felt there were already female artists to look up to as role models and emphasised instead the importance to her of First Nations role models of all genders. She felt she would like to see more who were successful internationally, citing Kamilaroi artist, the Kid LAROI as an inspiration:

> *I feel like for myself there's a lot of odds I have to break past, get to a certain point and I feel him, he's gone up against all odds and has still been able to be successful in what he does. That's why I look up to him a lot, even though he is a lot younger than me...[He's] just like, "I'm doing it. I don't care."*

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

Another First Nations interviewee rejected the term 'role model' outright. Instead, she redefined the notion on her own terms:

> *There's no path ahead that looks like the way I want to go. The support that I need to do what I would like to do well comes from being connected to my communities, and I know I've got that...So, there are people perhaps that are... beautiful, wonderful music makers. Amazing women standing like that strong tree in the wind, that I love, and I notice, and I'm grateful for, but I'm not looking that way, I'm looking this way. As long as I am connected into this world of relation and whatever that is. I want to say humility and generosity and kindness...then I'll be right.*

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

Lena cited her Country as a 'teacher, connection, relationship,' that was a role model wrapped up in her community's cultural teachings of ways to relate and behave. Others who did not identify as Indigenous also redefined the idea of a role model to fit their personal values. For Rilke, the most significant mentors and role models were those who were personally close to her, such as her family and teachers:

My granny was from that totally different generation where it actually wasn't that common for women to have a career. Indeed, she didn't really have a career. One of the main things that she gave me and that I always use is her respect for people. She was big on manners, old fashioned manners, but to her manners were how you showed a person that you respect them, and that they're important. That's something I try to always remember and retain.

<div align="right">Rilke (female, 41)</div>

Blithe's role models included other trans women, who were less musical role models, than gender role models:

A couple of older trans women who I did know in the 90s were mentors of a sort at the time, just to help get through this awkward morphing that was going on, but I did have to work a lot of it out by myself.

<div align="right">Blithe (trans female, 59)</div>

Maxine also affirmed a common tendency among our interviewees to seek role models along gendered lines. She explained how her role models shifted as her true gender became clear to her:

The role models have changed quite a bit as I've discovered myself. Originally when I was more male presenting, it was mostly …how their music sounded than anything else. Then when I was in my undergraduate, there was one of the other composers, I think two years above me, and all of her music was far beyond what the male composers were doing. The main thing of that was that it said something and that it stood for something while also being beautiful music. It was just that idea of "that's what I want my music to be, but that's also the person I'd like to be." Then as I discovered myself later on, it was a bit more obvious why that was more how I wanted to be.

<div align="right">Maxine (trans female, 27)</div>

Similarly, Kim was still seeking a role model who reflected their own intersections of gender, disability, and artistic identity:

Certainly, somebody non-male, with some experience of disability—or neurodivergence, or both…somebody who models successful, disabled, non-male composer—and is successful and has trodden a career path, and is keen to help me do something similar. Yes, I would—that would be amazing if possible.

<div align="right">Kim (non-binary, 46)</div>

Distance was another factor that intersected with gender to reduce access to role models for several regional music creators, such as Bonnie, who felt her access to role models and mentors was hampered by her location:

Being far away, you don't have a lot of those networking opportunities and stuff that you might do, say if you're in Brisbane and they have all the key music events and everyone gets to meet people and you can pick their brains and see a little bit behind what they're doing. Whereas we sit in the background and see them on computers and on phones and be like, "Oh, that person's really cool. They write some really cool songs and I wonder what their process is," but it's a bit weird to just send them a message and be like, "Hey, how did you write that song? What was in

your head then?"...You get to see little bits on the outside, but it'd be really cool to be on the inside.

<div align="right">Bonnie (female, 32)</div>

Age intersected with gender in some responses as blocks to being able to identify suitable role models. Both Jen and Carol expressed their forced resignation to the status quo, and a 'workaround' mentality that had been necessary to adopt in order continue on the career path they had chosen:

I do not see 60+ professional female guitarists - I am used to it because this has generally been the case over my 30+ career.

<div align="right">Jen (female, 62)</div>

Carol, who grew up in the US of the 1960s, stated that out of necessity, she had 'turned the gender factor off' when seeking role models:

I just kind of wanted to turn the [gender] factor off completely because I thought you can't win. It's unfair, but it's, I'm just gonna do this the best I can, and as if [gender] is irrelevant. I'm gonna live it as if it's irrelevant and try to make that happen.

<div align="right">Carol (female, 66)</div>

4.2.3 Mentoring

Many of those who did not mentor others, or were not mentored by others, expressed a desire for mentorship in their careers. All participants who were asked specifically about mentorship reflected on the importance of being 'shown the ropes' by somebody who has nurtured their own career against the tide of similar barriers. These mentorship arrangements were instrumental in building skills and securing opportunities:

I feel like I'm finally starting to be considered a credible producer. The world of composing has also started to open up to me thanks to some amazing females who are trying to bring me through.

<div align="right">Chantelle (female, 45)</div>

The perception of mentorship was universally positive, and many participants expressed that there should be more formal and informal arrangements that should emerge from the grassroots:

We [need to] create our own ways of setting up networking opportunities. For most people, seeing someone like you who's done it before is really important in making that possible.

<div align="right">Carol (female, 66)</div>

4.2.4 Blocks to self-promotion

Overall, our responses from interviewees indicated that there was a generalised reticence to self-promote – a necessary activity for most freelance music creators who are not under formal management. The reasons for this appear to be myriad and intersecting. First Nations woman, Lena referred to self-promotion as not being part of her cultural conditioning:

That whole idea of putting yourself out [there], we're no good at… We say by investing in each other, you'll get where you need to go, so therefore promotion is irrelevant… What are you doing if you promote yourself? You're separating yourself from the collective, and you're elevating yourself out of a shared space… It's not that we don't have aspiration, but our success is greater than our own achievement… That's maybe what I'm tryin' to say. This idea of promotion …that's not a concept for me that is gonna give me any good business, good stuff, you know?… But maybe that's a woman thing too, I think. Maybe that's a woman thing.

Lena (female, 46)

Lena's assessment that being less inclined toward self-promotion was perhaps also due in part to her gendered conditioning, was affirmed by Emily, who also felt both her gendered and her ethno-cultural conditioning as an Aboriginal woman affected her capacity to push herself forward:

How do you think the blokes do it? They network. That's the thing, I haven't [got] a natural thing for that. It's another thing thinking about that stuff. Putting your name in for some competition.

Emily (female, 55)

Across many responses, women, or those assigned female at birth expressed reticence or a lack of comfort with aggressively self-promoting. For example, Xanthe, who identified herself as Pākehā (or New Zealander of European descent) said that as she found it hard to promote her work due to:

Shyness I think, and definitely, I've had to learn … to be more assertive with [my] skill sets. I think that's still a thing, I'm not like wanting to shout about those things, but when I do talk about my skill sets, I tend to get more work. I feel like that's something that I'm still— it's an ongoing thing.

Xanthe (female, 35)

Shyness, or a difficulty pushing themselves forward were commonly articulated blocks to self-promotion across the study:

I can probably be a little bit shy. If I was at a networking thing, there is a chance that I'd probably be sitting in the corner, until I meet a few people and then I can be quite chatty and people are like, "You're not shy," but that initial thing, I think I probably struggle with that.

Bonnie (female, 32)

I don't wanna walk down a red carpet in high heels, or anything else… I think that's hard and feels quite—it makes me feel like I'm not built for this, or I'm doing something wrong.

Elise (female, 34)

Compounding marginalisation also factored into participants' difficulty with self-promotion. When Kim was asked what their blocks to self-promotion were, they revealed these were related to a complex combination of their disability, gender, and Australian nationality:

Self-promotion makes me want to vomit… It's hard to take up space… Being assigned female at birth certainly has a big role to play there as well, and the fact that the industry looks nothing like me has a role to play as well. The overlay of being autistic on top of that, is that you get made wrong about who you are and how you are in the world a lot—as a kid particularly, and as a

teenager. It tends to have a fairly damaging impact on your ability to take up space as an adult. It's—because you spend a lot of time achieving the sleight of hand trick of passing for normal and that involves not taking up space. Actually snapping out of that, and unmasking, and being proud of who you are, and taking up space—is a big shift and it's very scary…The tall poppies thing in Australia is also a factor, and that's not related to gender. That's broadly cultural…You're not allowed to big-note yourself. It's not a thing that you're allowed to do, and yet you're meant to self-promote. It's a real paradox.

<div align="right">Kim (non-binary, 46)</div>

Rilke felt her capacity to promote herself was hampered by intersections of gender, being a mother and living in a regional setting:

Certainly, being a mother, it is so much harder to put yourself out there, so much harder to find the right opportunities…One of my pet peeves is festivals [laughter] and how it's such a non-transparent process, applying for festivals. You are always wondering, and you might be breastfeeding in the middle of the night trying to fill out this bloody application [laughter] and they put "state your fee." You're thinking, "all right, well, if I've gotta pay for the petrol to get there and …what are we gonna do about babysitting?" You can't afford to put 150 bucks if you're trying to support yourself and your family, and I've often thought, "is it because I ask for too much money that I didn't get in or is it because the younger, prettier contender got it or is it because my online presence isn't strong enough." Why is it?

<div align="right">Rilke (female, 41)</div>

> " I feel alone as a woman doing what I do. I wish I had an army of like-minded women to bounce off and network with. "

4.3 Conclusion

Our findings do not reveal a correlation between a higher level of formal, institutionalised music education and higher career success for music creators. We note that among those who reported no formal music education there appeared to be no significant evidence of this impacting on their perceived career success. Over a third of those without this type of music education self-described as mid-career (similar to the overall cohort) and they were just as likely to consider themselves established as emerging (whereas the overall cohort was more likely to self-describe as emerging than established). In addition, many individuals with no formal music education displayed intrinsic motivation through being self-taught, learning by ear, by practising or 'doing,' and through self-directed internet learning. Within the detailed responses from this section, there were some cases where a lack of confidence was perceived as a block to career progression, which may have been related to their feelings about not having had a formal music education. However, in other cases there was clear evidence of a self-motivated attitude to succeed in music on their own terms. We found evidence in these responses of: resilience; confidence in community, peer, and family-led music education; and a capacity for self-realisation. On this point, we

found strong evidence of educational support through family, friends, and community, in particular for First Nations, Moriori, and Māori respondents.

Over 40% of responses attest to having attained either an undergraduate or post-graduate qualification in music. While such high levels of institutionalised music education among female and gender diverse music creators are indicators of a highly skilled cohort and should logically translate to higher levels of employment, confidence, success, and career longevity, as will be shown throughout this report, they do not. We suggest that this discrepancy should be interrogated and addressed in a consultative way by students, music educators, and music industry going forward.

Almost one third of respondents to the online survey did not see others like themselves practising in their area of music and almost three-quarters of respondents experienced predominantly negative feelings as a result of the gender identities they observed around them in their field. We believe the links between these deficits in relatable peers or role models; negative feelings; and lower representation discourage women and minority genders from partaking in music creation because, in the words of more than one respondent: 'you can't be it if you can't see it.' To support this, we noted that a lack of role models appears to have a dampening effect on women and gender diverse music creators' confidence, morale, sense of inclusion, productivity, capacity to step up for opportunities, promote themselves, and to imagine pathways forward in their music careers.

We found that the notion of a role model was fluid and highly nuanced to intersectional factors. Some chose to (re)define the term according to their own values and cultural perspectives. For First Nations people surveyed, Country and ethno-cultural identity were more important than gender in determining who or what a role model looked like. For the person who spoke to their disability in relation to this question, it was desirable to have mentors and role models who were living with disability and succeeding in their careers. For trans and gender diverse people, finding role models of a similar gender identity appeared more important than finding role models related to their specific area of practice. For the majority of cisgender women this was also the case, with the exception of one older woman who had given up on this quest due to the paucity of female role models available to her in her youth, and a small minority of younger women who did not feel that gender was an important factor, but who felt personality and quality of practice were more important factors in determining suitable role models.

Music technology: Adoption and attitudes

We asked respondents to the online survey the question: '*Do you use music technology in your music practice*? If so, please describe your level of proficiency and how you use it.' We found that the vast majority of female and gender diverse music creators (87.86%) use music technology in their practice (see Figure 8, p, 19). Such widespread use reflects the ubiquitous nature of technology in the music industry and the expectation that most music professionals will deploy and master it.

> Yes, I am a geek, part of being a musician for me is being very computer literate and equipment savvy.

Most respondents reported use of more than one application in their practice. Technology used ranged from the accessible to the professional and was used for many different types of creative processes. These can be summarised as:

- Notation software for composing scores (e.g., Sibelius, Finale)

- Live signal processing and effects for performances (e.g., loopers, pedals)

- Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs) for music composition, recording and production (e.g., GarageBand, Logic, FL Studio, Ableton Live, Pro Tools)

- Digital instruments (e.g., synths, samplers, and keyboards)

- Interactive software for performances, installations, sound works etc. (e.g., Max/MSP)

- Recording and mixing technology used in studio settings and for live sound production (e.g., desks, speakers, computers, and effects)

- Video editing apps (e.g., Final Cut Pro, iMovie)

- Hand-held recording equipment for capturing musical ideas/demos (e.g., iPhone, iPad)

5.1 Blocks to technology: Age, ability, and affordability

Age was a factor in how women and gender diverse people viewed their competency in using music technology; 84% of all those who rated themselves 'highly proficient' were under 50, and just 4% were over 60. Those in their forties were most likely to rate themselves as highly proficient (36%), closely followed by those in their thirties (32%), with 16% of those in their twenties rating themselves this way. This

would suggest age again disadvantages some women and gender diverse music creators in this vital area of music practice, as expressed by several respondents over 50:

No. I am technically challenged. Had help getting my songs onto my computer and iPhone. Basic skills or low level.

Amy (female, 74)

I'm very bad at looping (this takes oodles of practice). It's time I don't have spare.

Harley (non-binary, 50)

Not really. I use GarageBand and my phone for demos.

Alison (female, 50)

However, other music creators over 50 reported high levels of proficiency and engagement with music technology revealing that while age may predispose some music creators to lower self-perceived competency in this area, it is not a pre-determinant of competency – whether self-perceived or real:

Yes. [I can do] audio production and MD [music direction] alongside [a] sound engineer on any system.

Kate (female, 72)

Yes. I use different software in composing electroacoustic music and in notating my music for acoustic ensembles. I am reasonably fluent, and very proficient.

Devi (female, 57)

Still, others in the over-50 group revealed adaptive attitudes to get the work done, such as using accessible, entry-level technologies, synthesising existing knowledge they had about music technology to master complex tasks, and outsourcing tasks that were beyond their competency:

Electric keyboard and amp for gigs. Sibelius music software for writing, arranging, publishing. GarageBand, iMovie for editing sound files. Proficiency is adequate. I always hire professionals for jobs I can't do or that would take me too much time.

Annette (female, 61)

A lot of my composition practice is self-taught, and I started out when music tech products came on the market for the popular music industry, so I combined the traditional music institution ideas with these new instruments that were made available to the GP [general public]. I am skilled in two DAWS and music notation software programs. I continue to try and update my technology skills throughout my career, though having a child slowed progress down for a while.

Harriet (female, 57)

In addition to age and the caring responsibilities mentioned above by Harriet, other factors contributing to the challenges women and gender diverse composers face regarding music technology were disability, affordability, or a preference for music making that is not mediated by technology:

I have ADHD so I use it but I hate it and it's a big reason for me getting overwhelmed and not wanting to "do the thing" whatever that is. Sometimes simply resetting a password is enough for me to ghost that idea for months.

<div align="right">Rae (female, 36)</div>

I love that music technology can be a 'way in' for others to be creative and play with music. However, usually the technology I use is limited to what I have, what I can afford and lo-fi options/hacks. ... I would love the opportunity to do more with tech in the future.

<div align="right">Raven (female, 27)</div>

I hate being stuck behind a computer. Which makes me prefer organic live music and hardware.

<div align="right">Holly (female, 32)</div>

I think using my iPad to find tabs is about as technical as I get. Sometimes while I'm writing I use websites like rhyme dictionary when I get really stuck, I've tried using software like MasterWriter but I prefer pen and paper to be honest.

<div align="right">Star (female, 32)</div>

5.2 Technology and gendered attitudes

'Gear fear' was defined by one respondent as being a complex combination of a lack of confidence with technology, gendered conditioning, and male-dominated music workplaces:

I use Pro Tools and Logic, and iPhone voice memos. I struggle with 'gear fear' which I believe is a result of conditioning on women not to 'fail' at things in front of their peers, plus being a male-dominated space, and the pressures on women to be extraordinary rather than just ordinary and capable.

<div align="right">Jess (female, 33)</div>

The pressure articulated above 'to be extraordinary' rather than just capable appears to affect many women and gender diverse people's evaluation of their own competence with music technology. This is evident in Nat's assessment of her own skills as 'only basic' despite, like Jess, clearly using music technology effectively to achieve sophisticated outcomes:

I sometimes use a DAW. I use it either to build sound beds for works performed live, or to put together whole sound designs for dance works, or to create sound for art installations in collaboration with visual artists. For some of these works, with live elements, I also use QLab. I have only basic music tech skills.

<div align="right">Nat (female, 39)</div>

Such self-deprecating attitudes towards their own competence with music technology were reasonably frequent across our participants' responses. Some people expressed that using music technology was 'a struggle.' Others described their ability as 'very basic' or 'limited.' Lack of confidence with technology was an inhibiting factor that was experienced even by members of supposedly tech-aware, younger generations:

Not really. I do record demos at home and sometimes mix my own sound but am not confident in music tech.

<div align="right">Frankie (female, 22)</div>

Not really. Computers and technology aren't something that comes easily to me however I am looking into buying recording equipment and intend on learning.

<div align="right">Jamie (female, 29)</div>

Attitudes such as that expressed by Jamie show a desire to advance despite a lack of confidence and access to equipment. Frankie's lack of confidence with music tech might in part be due to her lack of formal music education (see Section 4), which might provide greater access to music technology. We observed that levels of confidence and ability with music technology were closely related to access and experience with it, factors related to socio-economic status, education, career level, and available time. These combined with gendered stereotypes in limiting women and gender diverse music creators in engaging with technology.

5.3 Pathways to advancement

Sascha provides insights into the pathways towards higher levels of music tech competency many practitioners follow, showing that simple freeware (such as GarageBand) can lead to more advanced, professional technology use:

I use Ableton Live, Premier Pro and sometimes GarageBand, but I am now completely moving away from GarageBand because it does not give me the range of sampling that I require to make the music I do.

<div align="right">Sascha (trans male, 44)</div>

When women and gender diverse composers attained mastery of technology it was observed to feed into their daily practice in significant ways and define their professional routine:

[I use them] all the time. I am very proficient in Digital Performer, Pro Tools, Kontact, many virtual instruments (Native Instruments, Spitfire, Orchestral Tools etc.) also used Finale for score preparation and orchestration.

<div align="right">Romi (female, 49)</div>

DAW, composing rig. Microphones, pre-amps, virtual instruments, scoring software etc. I use it all every day.

<div align="right">Olivia (female, 39)</div>

I use technology as a process and a medium. I am also a creative technologist, and I am extremely proficient with the technical aspects of composing, engineering, mixing and mastering. I have used these tools for over a decade. This spans recording and engineering in Pro Tools, exploring sound manipulation using hardware and software plugins, stereo mapping and interactive audio using Max/MSP as well as physical computing to create immersive and interactive installations.

5.4 Conclusion

The breadth of application of music technology was shown to extend to all areas of female and gender diverse music creators' practice. While around one in 10 showed no or low engagement with music tech, the vast majority reported using more than one type of technology in their professional practice. Those aged over 50 were more prone to negative self-assessment regarding their proficiency in music technology yet, nonetheless, exhibited adaptive attitudes towards managing it and had enjoyed the longest careers. The evidence presented from our data suggests that, despite overall lagging confidence, women and gender diverse music creators are using technology regularly and in a variety of ways, and their engagement with music technology is widespread and strong.

It appears rather, that the inhibiting factors for technological competency in music for women and gender diverse people are gendered stereotypes about technology use and competency (often internalised by participants themselves), access to professional technologies, and experience or practice with these technologies. The answer to addressing the perceived low levels of competency among women and gender diverse music creators seems to be fairly straightforward and amounts to giving more people of all backgrounds easier access to music technology. Particular groups to prioritise include: people from low socio-economic backgrounds, First Nations people, older women and gender diverse people, and those have not recently accessed music education.

As a further step, on analysing the responses to the question of music technology use, the research team formulated a question back to industry that we feel speaks to the heart of the problem of low representation for female and gender diverse people in this area:

> *Instead of making them the problem, how can the music industry leverage and affirm female and gender diverse practitioners' existing competencies and engagement with music technology to increase their confidence, consolidate their skills, and take them to the next level?*

The music industry has an opportunity to harness the interest and expertise clearly evident in our research and leverage it to achieve more gender diverse representation in music, where technology plays a central role. This opportunity applies specifically to the field of music production, where those who do not identify as male fall badly behind (Smith et al. 2019; Hernandez et al. 2022) and where there is scope to introduce a world of new sounds, perspectives, and approaches by increasing diversity.

Changing attitudes requires intentional action and takes time. Younger music workers must be educated to drop biases they may hold around older people (particularly older women) and their assumed lower competence with technology. Women and gender diverse music creators over 50 in particular must be supported to (re)acquire skills and confidence in this area. The industry should also address and arrest prevailing attitudes that cast music technology as a male domain and reframe this conversation going forward to include other genders. It must also affirm and build on female and gender diverse music creators' existing technological competencies, knowledges, and mastery to develop pathways towards their increased leadership in music production and technology-focused music roles.

Alienation from 'the industry'

6.1 'The industry'

Participants in this research frequently described feelings of being alienated from 'the industry', a figural representation of their reservations about the economic, cultural, and logistical apparatus of mainstream music practice. A significant number of participants, in survey responses and in interviews, expressed resentment or criticism of the music industry for failing to provide opportunities for women, for failing to respond to social issues affecting women, or simply for not being built to accommodate women and gender diverse people. Some participants feel alienated from the music industry and by extension, success; they feel it is impossible for them to progress or break through because of their gender, their queerness, or their non-mainstream music practice. This was especially true for participants who had caring or parental responsibilities (see Section 8).

> I have received little or no interest from the "industry" in terms of management, booking agencies etc. I have conducted my career on my own terms to cater for the needs of my family. I have wanted more but was never able to achieve more no matter how hard I worked.

Chelsea (female, 54)

> I stopped writing and recording for years when "the industry" told me being a parent was not cool and being older than 25 was not viable. The damage has been devastating emotionally and taken many phases of healing to bring me to a place where I am now writing and recording on my own terms in a way that I am truly creatively satisfied. With absolutely no support from "the industry" currently.

Ash (female, 52)

> " I feel supported by the people I collaborate with, who champion me and my creativity passionately. I do not feel supported on an industry level. "

In a similar vein, for many of the participants who felt their gender was a specific barrier for participating in, or being taken seriously by the industry, there was a sense that the kind of work and the level of work required to foster a career in music and achieve success was not possible. The participants described their experiences in a way that suggests they feel that the rules of the game and the way the game is meant to be played specifically caters to a parochial, hegemonic masculinity that many of them did not feel able to emulate.

> The perception of society toward female musicians can still boil down to either a sexy or cute novelty, or a strong-willed scary bitch! When you're female and you stand up for yourself it's easy

*to be labelled the latter. If you play upon your sexuality, you have a bunch of drooling old men
and [are] not taken seriously.*

Jo (female, 38)

*I think women in the music industry can be brushed aside as 'bossy' or 'ball busters' when they try
to get group decisions over the line.*

Yoko (female, 37)

Reflecting on their experiences, the participants who had worked within the music industry observed their male counterparts behaving in certain ways and conducting their careers in certain ways that appeared to enable their success over the women around them. Some specifically described their perception of a masculine, assertive, cut-throat environment that would require them to compromise their values:

*The deeper you get into this industry, the taller the weeds are, and it just feels very competitive
and [they] throw people under the bus. And I don't want to be a part of that.*

Judith (female, 32)

*The biggest restriction for me doing that is the snobbish music industry "I'm going to tell you how
great I am in every way" attitude that is just not for me.*

Tammy (female, 33)

Participants also described their perception of the music industry and those at the helm as trading in 'grossness,' poor behaviour, poor ethics, and a general disregard for music creators:

*Everyone is gross and it's frustrating. I have to ignore so much grossness to continue to sell music
and sometimes it's overwhelming and I want to quit.*

Tammy (female, 33)

Some participants felt disheartened and alienated because they believe the machinery of the music industry works under the influence of broad gender norms to ensure the ascension of men over women in general, even where their behaviour or history with women has been problematic or abusive. Some successful Australian musicians and bands were mentioned specifically because of their perceived misogyny, accusations of sexual misconduct, or lyrics that perpetuate rape culture, for example (see continued discussion in Section 10).

*I would just love to be a full-time touring/recording musician, more than anything in the world. But
the industry as it stands just makes it so difficult. All the people at the top of all the big
companies are men. All the gatekeepers/tastemakers - triple j, Spotify etc - are mostly men. Men
who are happy to support bands with a history of misogyny and awful behaviour if it means they'll
make money.*

Talia (female, 31)

*The industry has a short memory and continues to celebrate the mainstream males - there is no
real respect for artists who have marked milestones along the way.*

Pip (female, 50+)

In these narratives 'the industry' appears to be used as a catch-all term referring to producers, labels, executives, industry bodies, radio stations, promoters, event organisers, and more. Of course, this captures a vast proportion of music practice, and these perceptions emphasise how out-of-place and hopeless many women and gender diverse people feel about their career trajectories.

> *I feel so supported by my peers. However, I have worked with male booking agents that have made me feel so small and incapable. I have only ever encountered problems (gender related) with those working in roles within the music industry that are not actually musicians/creatives.*

> Bindi (female, 26)

The narratives of the participants reveal that, ironically, attempting to embody the traits supposedly required for success in the music industry, such as assertiveness and self-assuredness, carries punishment for women and gender diverse people; a number of participants specifically mentioned being sidelined by the industry for being outspoken, questioning others, or for seeking to take control of their creative direction:

> *[We are] outspoken about misogyny. When we've called out bad behaviour from male performers we've been ghosted/blacklisted by promoters.*

> Celine (non-binary, 33)

> *People do not respond well to women who can be 'demanding' - a term used when they are in fact articulating standards of fairness, for example.*

> Sarah (female, 55)

6.2 The Boys' Club

A closely related factor that impacts women and gender diverse people's sense of belonging and comfort within music practice is the disproportionate representation of men in the upper echelons of influence, power, gatekeeping, and decision-making. The trope of the Boys' Club was invoked by many of the participants in the research, both in their survey responses and their interviews; 22 different participants specifically used the phrase to describe the barriers they have personally faced during their careers.

> *When I was younger and beginning to learn production - I wasn't in the Boys' Club. I think I really did miss out on some valuable learning from my male peers as I wasn't included in the conversations.*

> Yuna (female, 34)

> *The Old Boys' Club that I grew up in is a very long way away from my musical world these days and I hope it disappears into history as something that will never emerge again.*

> Amala (female, 40)

The Boys' Club can be generally understood to be a concentration of power and resources among men within a given social system, enabled by a set of normative gender traditions and behavioural protocols that facilitate the ascension of men and inhibit the ascension of women and other genders. These social arrangements that have come to be colloquially named 'the Boys' Club' have been theorised by

sociologists and gender studies scholars for several decades, including Michel Foucault and Pierre Bourdieu. Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell's (2005) concept of 'patriarchal dividend' encapsulates the phenomenon of the Boys' Club neatly, referring to the realisation of material and immaterial rewards that men, as a group, can access because the traits required to achieve success and power in most societies are commonly understood to be masculine ones. Social norms that provide a framework for appropriate gendered behaviour guide men and boys toward embodying these traits and benefiting from patriarchal dividend and, as discussed above, guides women, girls, and others away from same. Connell and others argue that this concentrates power within closed social networks – essentially creating what we understand as Boys' Clubs.

> "The Boys' Club! If you don't act like a man in this country, be one of the boys, inflate their egos, then you're high maintenance."

Our survey participants' narratives indicate that their experience of working within a Boys' Club – which many of them see the music industry as being – is usually negative, characterised by exclusion (subtle or deliberate), condescension, and a broad, casual sexism. Participants reported feeling patronised by some of the men in their workplaces, and not taken seriously, while others felt that they were relegated to roles that were stereotypically feminine:

> *Boys' Clubs… coming into the recording studio not taking my work seriously… rehearsals on my work where I am told not to 'worry my pretty little head'… composer panels at music festivals where the men all talk five times and then they give me a quick three minutes at the end of the session.*
>
> Jewel (female, 50)

> *When I worked for other music companies… I was given administration roles on top of music stuff. No other men were given administration roles. It was a bit of a Boys' Club—actually, not a bit—it was a Boys' Club. It is a Boys' Club still.*
>
> Tania (female, 36)

> *I also find that while touring, the food, accommodation and other 'living' needs for the band are often left to the women to arrange. I feel like women, more often than not, are charged with the marketing/publicity/design and direction of a band, until a man has a better idea, in which case, everyone disregards the original vision.*
>
> Yoko (female, 37)

Opportunities to participate more meaningfully in their workplaces, to reach leadership positions, and to exert autonomy over their music practice were often reported to be out of reach. The participants that specifically invoked the concept of the Boys' Club to explain this believe, based on their personal experiences, that the music industry consists largely of men trading favours or opportunities amongst themselves, concentrating power and influence. The following participants describe pockets of the music industry as cliquey and predominantly male:

Men are very good at feathering their own nest and keeping their own work to themselves and giving it to their mate. It's just something they do.

Blithe (trans female, 59)

If I think about the systemic issues in Australia, the reason is that the people who are most experienced monopolise the work. They sit at the top, and they're all men.

Judith (female, 32)

Most 'hiring' is friends asking their friends to do gigs; because of the gender imbalance in the jazz world, this tends to be guys hiring other guys. In my musical life, I can count on one hand the number of times I have been invited by men to play on their projects, or even to be a side person on a one-off gig. This has without any doubt impeded my career progress.

Annette (female, 61)

> " As a gender diverse musician, I have found myself left out of certain circles where lucrative work gets shared around; it's very hard to get in with male cliques that monopolise professional work opportunities. "

Though a significant number of participants noted that progress is being made in some professions and in some genres, a small number of participants have reflected on Boys' Clubs being a stubborn phenomenon that have resisted substantial change in the past few decades. Others identified a kind of post-feminist sentiment where men in their workplaces either did not believe that Boys' Clubs still operated, or actively felt threatened by contemporary gender equity initiatives:

I still feel there's networks, but I think it's not obvious, or I don't know they're actually aware of it.

Emily (female, 55)

I went to quite a few conversations that I've had with men, and they've said, "I'm really getting tired and jaded of the amount of pressure that's being put on us as an industry, to be inclusive of women... I'm so respectful of women and all of the people I work with are women. The edit assistant is a woman, and the [person] that's downstairs at the coffee machine, she's a woman and blah blah blah." I remember saying to two of them, "I get that dude. I get that they're all women that are around you but just look at the titles. Look at the work that they're doing. It's not what you're doing."

Tania (female, 36)

These narratives reveal the need for more efforts to foster a critical understanding of gender (dis)advantage within the music industry. Such initiatives may help to counter the invisibility of Boys' Club dynamics, and negative attitudes toward gender equity that may be reinforced by men's anxieties concerning career precarity and material insecurity (Kim & Kewon, 2022).

It is important again to note that an intersectional approach is required to understand the phenomenon of The Boys' Club, as there are obviously examples of women who have achieved significant success within and beyond the music industry in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, and men who are unable to advance in their chosen field. Indeed, there were a small number of participants who had positive experiences in predominantly male workplaces or have had supportive male mentors that have supported their careers. Sometimes, this was attributable to certain characteristics that allowed women access to the Boys' Club:

> I will say as well—when men find out that you're gay, it's like there's this relax. They kind of feel like, "Oh you're one of us. You're one of the boys."

<div align="right">Tania (female, 36)</div>

Tania explained this phenomenon by claiming that when this has happened in her career, she has felt like she was no longer considered an object of desire by the men around her and could instead be considered a legitimate colleague first and foremost. Tania did not think this was positive, or that this meant her sexuality was an advantage necessarily. What this demonstrates though, is that membership to the Boys' Club and the realisation of its perks and benefits are not simply dictated by men who deliberately exclude all women from opportunities (although this certainly happens); there are certain hurdles that are in the way for some women more than others, including gendered carer work, sexual objectification, misogyny, racism, classism, ableism, homophobia, and transphobia, a lack of social networks, geography and more.

6.3 Sexist tropes, attitudes and expectations

Through analysis of survey data and interviews, we identified a range of sexist tropes that are present in the participants' narratives. Broadly, these are sexist ideas that have shaped certain experiences, or have had a significant impact on the career of a participant in some way. Our analysis reveals four key tropes that we have called:

- diversity box-ticking.
- women's music.
- lack of skill.
- surprise at aptitude.

6.3.1 Diversity box-ticking

Several participants described a patronising 'diversity box-ticking' in funding schemes, festival and show line-ups, and we named this trope accordingly. The use of the term 'box-ticking' was usually derogatory, and often accompanied by terms such as 'token,' indicating they see the inclusion of women, gender diverse people, and other minority identities in this way to be insincere, more about politics and appearances than any meaningful attempt to foster their creative talent in music. This was remarked upon by one First Nations respondent in relation to both her ethnicity and gender:

> *Well, it appears new, and appears different, and can be this sort of innovative curve ball that people are willing to go with, and so opportunities exist because of our difference, not because of our music.*

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

In efforts to address the lack of representation of women in live music, event organisers and funding bodies now sometimes make a concerted effort to ensure that there are women and gender diverse people included. In some cases, participants were grateful that these efforts were made because they gave them opportunities to participate in music festivals or receive funding for their work:

> *I think in recent times… people are trying to meet certain diversity quotas. I'm getting a little bit of work and there's funding that they're consciously trying to give to more women and gender diverse people, so I'm more likely to get the funding which gives me more experience, which means I can catch up a little bit.*

<div align="right">Xanthe (female, 35)</div>

> *I was sometimes hired as a balance to all the male singers and bands and got to tour with several Australian and international performers.*

<div align="right">Lindsay (female, 68)</div>

> *Women in music are still a minority so it's a point of difference. Many of my male musicians want non-men on a line-up for diversity, for example on a recent tour.*

<div align="right">Laila (female, 53)</div>

However, others criticised the manner in which these decisions tend to be made and identified some unintended consequences that are limiting for gender-diverse and all-female acts. This is articulated neatly by Jen:

> *Being treated as some sort of novelty is both an advantage and disadvantage, but it is marginalising.*

<div align="right">Jen (female, 62)</div>

> *I've seen some people who specifically want to hire a female POC but only to make themselves look good or to pat themselves on the back or appear inclusive. It's not about respecting the person they employ or their voice in the matter.*

<div align="right">Christine (female, 30+)</div>

Lena's earlier reflection on the opportunities that have been available to her as a First Nations artist reinforces the notion that there is a certain cachet associated with acts that can be marketed as new, different, innovative, or signalling an event or organisation's political commitment to diversity. Proximity to these social ideals can translate to economic reward and provides individual artists with opportunities they may not have had access to otherwise; but as Laila, Lena, and others in this research noted, these benefits sometimes only exist because of the social categories they sit within, rather than their music practice. This phenomenon was interpreted by some participants as patronising. Erin's survey response stated that she finds it 'hard to find genuine support which is not tokenistic or "ticking boxes".' The term

'genuine support' suggests that Erin feels patronised by box-ticking and does not see it as a legitimate or sustainable form of support for her career aspirations.

Other participants commented on the phenomenon of gender quotas within festival or show line-ups. While seeing the positive impact of a self-imposed requirement to include women in their shows, participant narratives suggest that it is not uncommon for festivals to have an informal, unspoken upper limit on the number of gender-diverse and female acts they can have. Once there are 'enough' women to satisfy their responsibility to ensure representation of women, participants reported that promoters and agents can be hesitant to include additional acts. This indicates that within these arrangements, women are in competition with each other to fill the fraction of places in the line-up allocated specifically for them, rather than being considered on their merit alongside male acts. The phenomenon of the gender quota has meant that, for some participants, they have been overlooked for inclusion in an event because there was already another woman on the bill:

> I have had people say to me, "We've already booked so-and-so, other female artists, and so we don't have room for another similar act on the bill," even though I don't consider that I am similar to those artists.

<div style="text-align: right">Xanthe (female, 35)</div>

> I believe I have missed many opportunities to play to new audiences at festivals because the "women quota" was already full. I think there are several ways in which I haven't been treated like men are, and my gender being treated as a genre is always at the centre of that.

<div style="text-align: right">Oxana (female, 41)</div>

What Xanthe and Oxana have described here reveals unconscious bias that confuses female gender and musical content, giving rise to the perception of 'women's music.'

6.3.2 Women's music

When participants described a feeling of their gender being considered a genre in itself, it spoke to the practice that can occur of homogenising all music created by women, as distinct from other music. Of course, this implicitly marks music created by men as the norm, from which women's music is aberrant. This manifested in a problematic situation for Xanthe and Oxana, who experienced rejection because there were already other women in the events they missed out on, despite, in Xanthe's case, having a sound that is entirely different. Here, all the women in this event were clearly considered squarely within a quota framework, where the main focus was on ensuring there was the physical presence of women rather than on their music and talent. Again, the motivation of these tokenistic gestures is, arguably, to give the appearance of progressiveness rather than meaningfully supporting women in music. The gender of the men in the event line-up was evidently not considered in the same way, allowing their inclusion to be (in theory) based upon their merit and the substance of their music practice.

The constraints of 'women's music' were also felt by participants in the sense that there was an expectation of the kind of genre and style that women and all-female acts should practice. Some of the

women and gender diverse people in this research reported that they were assumed to practice, or were relegated to working on, sounds and genres that were stereotypically 'feminine.'

> *When I released my first song on a compilation album, it was an all-female album. They said, "What sort of music do you play," and I said, "Industrial." They said, "Well, you can't put that on this female compilation. Girls don't play industrial music. You have to do a different song."*

<div align="right">Tonya (female, 62)</div>

> *The other women that I worked with, and myself, were put on projects which were very much light, fluffy piano, strings, and flute-based.*

<div align="right">Tania (female, 36)</div>

6.3.3 Lack of skill

Within the dataset there were 29 specific mentions of experiences where participants have been underestimated or assumed not to be capable because they are women. Participants recounted various examples of being condescended to, overlooked, or dismissed altogether because of their gender. The most common situation where this occurred was regarding their technical skills, whether that was related to playing a stereotypically masculine instrument, such as an electric guitar, or operating musical equipment such as audio mixers and amplifiers:

> *I get spoken down to a lot, even by people who I'm close to. Part of it's being a woman, but also, anyway, yes, I get spoken down to a little bit about technical stuff with people I'm close to.*

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

> *Being taken less seriously, being accused of having a ghost producer, people assuming I can't DJ, people assuming I'm some bimbo who knows nothing about music, people assuming I'm an industry plug - despite the fact I've been hustling at this for over 6 years.*

<div align="right">Gemma (female, 28)</div>

The common perception of technology as being a masculine domain evidently impacts the perception of women in these fields, and in some cases, their skill and aptitude are called into question. Gemma's experience of being regarded as 'some bimbo' rather than a legitimate musician clearly reflects prejudices shaped by what Gavanas and Reitsamer (2013, p. 54) describe as the 'mutually constituting relationship between technology and masculinity.' This conflation of maleness and technological prowess begins early, as noted by Hopkins and Berkers in their discussion of gendered experiences in music technology classrooms (2019, p.45-57).

> **"** Being a woman musician in the classical guitar scene has been
> challenging; there is an unspoken attitude amongst many male
> musicians that women players aren't as good. You have to work
> hard to counter that. To my dismay it seems just as prevalent now
> as 30 years ago. **"**

There were a smaller number of participants, within certain genres, who felt that there was a lingering perception that women were simply not as good musicians as men. Another prominent theme related to the questioning of women in (also typically male) positions of leadership and authority. This occurred in various contexts, from teaching to working with producers in the studio:

> *I feel that's the main thing I feel as a female I would struggle with. I'm not taken seriously, or I'm
> not listened to… when I have an input and it's like, "oh yeah", and then just brushing it off. I feel
> like a lot of men have supported that kind of environment in the industry. They just think that they
> can treat people like that or treat women like that. It's just normal to them to do that.*

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

> *There's a certain age group of men who are just not comfortable taking lessons with a woman, no
> matter what they think of you. They think a guitar teacher's gotta be a bloke. You might be very
> nice, you might look like you know what you're doing, you might have your University gongs on
> the wall, you might look quite serious, but they don't think you can play properly. It's just the
> societal kind of thing.*

<div align="right">Blithe (trans female, 59)</div>

Blithe's reflection on teaching acknowledges the legacy of sexist assumptions about women's aptitude, and questioning of their credentials when they are in positions of leadership or authority. In her experience, there have always been men whose internalisation of gender norms mean that they are deeply uncomfortable taking directions from women. For Sunny, who is a singer-songwriter, being ignored or not taken seriously has an impact on her ability to guide her own music practice. She explained that the R&B scene in her area is quite masculine, and so at the beginning of her career she was rarely seen as a legitimate musician and was not treated with the respect or courtesy she felt she deserved.

6.3.4 Surprise at aptitude

Related to these experiences, there were nine mentions of situations where participants have felt patronised by male colleagues who were apparently surprised that they were capable, or good at their craft. While some participants felt a sense of satisfaction, vindication, or amusement from surpassing the low expectations of others, most felt annoyed or offended by the implication that women, as a group of people, are considered lesser:

> *A lot of time sound techs would give you the impression [they thought] we wouldn't be able to
> play our instruments until we set up, sound checked, and played the show. Then the attitude
> changed to surprise and excitement! I can't count how many times after a show people would*

say, "Wow! You girls were really great! I was really surprised!" Confirming their preconceived thoughts expecting the band to be crap!

<div align="right">Jo (female, 38)</div>

I definitely do feel like it takes people a while to take me seriously. That was more of an issue before, but even now, I'll say I'm a composer, and then once I tell people some things that I've worked on, they're like, "Oh, okay, it's legit."

<div align="right">Judith (female, 32)</div>

> " Ironically... being a woman seemed to be an advantage. I had skills that many other members of the ensembles did not have, and they were also somehow amazed that a woman could be so skilled. I felt truly appreciated and validated working in those groups. "

Regardless of whether the performer felt amused, validated, or offended by the apparently low expectations of others, this phenomenon reveals social norms attached to music and music technology in practice. For many of these women and gender diverse people, their careers have been forged against the current of social norms that denigrate femininity and gender diversity in general, and attempt to relegate them to specific roles, genres, and formats of practice. And, as will be discussed further, such dismissive attitudes, unconscious undermining, and small acts of disrespect, are not just harmless relics of a former time but active ingredients that remain present throughout the music industry today and that carry dangerous implications for more serious forms of sexual, emotional, physical, and psychological abuse (see Section 10).

6.4 Conclusion

Many of the women and gender diverse people who participated in this research cited misgivings or negative experiences with the music industry as barriers to their career development. Though each participant evidently understood it differently, we can piece together a perception of the music industry as monolithic, male-dominated, and stubbornly gender normative. The figure of 'the industry,' in the view of many women and gender diverse people, creates an environment that makes it difficult to succeed, often promoting the interests of cisgender, heterosexual men at the expense of all others.

Indeed, this was borne out in the experiences of participants, who frequently described male cliques – Boys' Clubs – that actively excluded them, devalued them, or made them feel unsafe. Further, it was evident that deep-seated stereotypes and expectations of women and femininity continue to manifest in marginalising practices. Participants criticised tokenistic gestures at inclusion, the concept of 'women's music' as a genre, and patronising expectations about women's technical skills and aptitude.

As a result of these experiences, it is not surprising that many women and gender diverse people find themselves alienated from the machinations of mainstream music industry practice. Though it is important

to note that many participants commented positively on how the industry has changed over the past decade, it would be a mistake to assume that the music industry has now 'done gender' as a result; there is clearly much more work to be done to encourage inclusive and affirming attitudes within music practice in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Managing gender in the workplace

7.1 Self-concept and the perceptions of others

The participants' reflections on struggling against the current in the Boys' Club reveal a deep desire to be affirmed, respected and taken seriously on their merit by colleagues. In the online survey, the women and gender diverse people in this research were asked to reflect on how they present themselves in their workplace, and how they believe they are perceived by others. A full 48 responses to both of these questions specifically use the word 'professional' to describe how they present, and how they hope they are perceived. Analysis of those who provided more detail indicates that women and gender diverse people may make deliberate, concerted efforts to establish a defeminised, professional persona to compensate for sexism in the workplace:

> [I present] as a nun! I try not to mix business with pleasure, as that leads down some questionable roads and can sometimes compromise the project. I also go above and beyond to present myself and my work in a polished, professional manner.

> Jewel (female, 50)

> I am personable and professional… not a diva as many males I have worked with like to tell me. Sometimes remaining personable is challenging in a male-dominated environment.

> Chelsea (female, 54)

> On meeting new people, I go full hair and makeup with a shirt buttoned to the neck, generally. The aim is to show strength but also not appear too strong. Know what I mean?

> Rae (female, 36)

> " Passionate but business-like. I try to keep myself quite business oriented so that (mostly males) take me and my craft/skills seriously. "

Jewel's comment about being a 'nun' at work, as well as Chelsea's negative remark about 'divas' suggests that there are certain feminine archetypes that are a liability in the workplace, particularly where that workplace is shared with, or dominated by men. From this, it is clear that women and gender diverse people in the music workplace experience situations where they have to augment or curtail their femininity in specific ways, whether it is to remain favourable to men in the workplace, to avoid being seen as 'difficult,' sexually provocative, or to avoid being dismissed or overlooked.

An important factor in the treatment of the participants in their music workplace, and indeed in the opportunities they may or may not have access to, relates to feminine beauty standards. Multiple

participants commented on the pressure they feel to cultivate a certain image or gender presentation for the sake of their career progression. Certain genres of music, or certain music practices, seemed to be associated with specific archetypes of femininity that participants felt pressure to emulate:

> *My genre, especially back then, was quite cutesy…. I just thought, to make this music, you have to wear a pretty dress and be feminine. The whole way through the first stages of my career, whenever I went on tour or played an important show, I would borrow clothes, get someone to style me. Basically, dress the opposite of how I did in real life, even though every other part of my music was like, "Here's my feelings on my sleeve. Here is my personality on the stage."*

> Elise (female, 34)

> *[Female guitar players are] incredibly rare in the pop scene, despite the fact there are some great examples overseas. We don't seem to do it very well here. There's one or two, but they've gotta play that total rock-chick-babe routine with tats up the arm and nose rings and pink hair, you gotta do the whole thing. Otherwise, you're not there.*

> Blithe (trans female, 59)

For those who felt unable to achieve these expectations about their appearance, there was a sense of resigned acceptance that their careers were not destined for great success. This was particularly evident in the narratives of women who were mothers, or who were over 30 years old (See Sections 8 and 9 for further discussion):

> *It's never sexy to be a mother in the music scene, not in my experience. It's a young person's game, a young, beautiful person's game. I feel a lot of the time that's what the expectation is.*

> Rilke (female, 41)

Other participants who were performers felt the pressure to cultivate an especially sexualised appearance in order to advance their career. In these situations, there is a heavy implication that a sexually provocative image catered to the interests of a heterosexual male audience will attract attention and success:

> *I know I've had people tell me that I should dress in more skimpy clothing and move around more, and that would get me more attention, but I say, "Well, I don't really want that attention anyway." I'm just gonna keep doing my thing.*

> Bonnie (female, 32)

> *There's been times when I've been told that I need to change the way I dress, or change up my style to be more appealing and edgy to a male audience - not my cup of tea. I'm me and it's a bit of a "like it or lump it" thing.*

> Star (female, 32)

> "I'm very stubborn about refusing to feminise myself in a mainstream way, refusing to feminise my "look" and my music, and I think that makes me harder to market, and a more complex listen."

Taken together, we can see evidence in these discussions of self-presentation of the double-bind lamented by generations of feminist theorists: that it is imperative for women to embody an image desirable to the male gaze to be allowed entry into male spaces (which the music industry largely remains), but alignment with that desirability has consequences for how they are perceived in professional contexts. On one hand, the women in this study feel pressure to present like a 'nun' so they are taken seriously in their workplaces, but on the other hand they feel pressure to cultivate a desirable, often sexualised image in order to cater to a hypothetical audience as a marketable product.

7.2 Gender as an 'investment risk'

Where women and gender minorities are involved in music creation, it is often at grass-roots level, in the small-to-medium sector, or in lower-stakes areas where organisations are prepared to take a risk on programming or commissioning their works. Where venues and audiences tend to be smaller, or in more experimental settings, works by women and gender diverse people – which are generally newer and thus lesser known – are more financially viable. For example, while an audit of 15 major orchestras around the world found that only 5.3% of works programmed were composed by women (Donne in Music 2019), a similar audit of public concerts listed by the Australian Music Centre (AMC) in Australia, which captured performances by smaller ensembles in lower-stakes settings, found that 16.58% of all composers programmed were female.[3]

It is clear from evidence presented in this report that it is hard for composers and songwriters to become visible and their works to become well known unless they are commissioned, signed, programmed, released, and their works regularly performed. This conundrum is perfectly illustrated in the context of symphony orchestras and national opera companies, which, in Australia, are dominated by canonical works by long-dead, European (white), male composers. Across all major orchestras in Australia in 2020, there were more pieces performed that were composed in the year 1723 than total works written by women (Frame 2020). Further, in its 2020 season, Sydney Symphony Orchestra (which was funded by the taxpayer to the tune of $15 million), performed no works by women, no works by First Nations composers, no works by gender diverse composers, and no works by culturally and linguistically diverse composers (Frame 2020; Wilcox 2021). In 2023, Opera Australia programmed only operas written by men, and only one opera has been staged in recent years by a female composer: Whiteley, by Elena Kats-

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[3] The AMC audit captured data from 2009-2018, which is comparatively early in the current phase of gender reform initiatives.

Chernin. Such widespread exclusion of women and gender diverse composers by major performing arts organisations can only indicate that they consider women and other minorities to be high-risk propositions.

We were interested in exploring this phenomenon to ascertain whether our respondents were aware of these hiring patterns that disadvantage them, and how they might have been impacted. To that end we asked: Do you feel like music industry leaders perceive you as a risk when considering you for employment? If so, why? Two thirds (65%) answered 'yes' to the first part of the question, 25% answered 'no' and 10% were unsure or did not answer.

In the detailed responses, it was clear that the marginalising factors already identified in this report further played into women and gender diverse people's exclusion from high-stakes areas. Respondents believed that a lack of representation of women in top roles makes employers reticent to hire women for these roles:

> BINGO! Being visible is a prerequisite. Otherwise you are perceived as being irrelevant, unavailable or as having diminishing talent...These kinds of perceptions truncate, stall, and prematurely terminate the careers of unique talents.

<div align="right">Claude (female, no age given)</div>

It was also perceived that employers were unwilling to offer opportunities to a more diverse range of people or to people who may not have already had the chance to prove themselves –a factor more prevalent in female and gender diverse populations. This tendency only perpetuates the exclusion of those already marginalised by their gender:

> It's like chicken and egg issue. If you don't have credits, you can't get credits.

<div align="right">Judith (female, 32)</div>

> It's probably more the newness that I have to the area 'cause my pieces haven't been performed as much. They probably don't see as much of a draw from audiences to a new name, as they would [a] name that people have seen; they know what it's gonna sound like, the quality they'll be getting.

<div align="right">Maxine (trans female, 27)</div>

> I don't think they would [perceive me as a risk] because of gender. I think they would because of my relative lack of profile or prestige, and lack of institutional affiliation. I don't bring any assets in that way.

<div align="right">Carol (female, 66)</div>

It did not seem to occur to Carol that perhaps her 'relative lack of profile or prestige' might have been linked to her gender or that the biases she had experienced from others who perceived her as a risk for employment were a product of the matrix of gendered barriers she had experienced throughout her career. This lack of awareness around how factors interlock to form blocks to success for women and minority genders in music was observed more than once throughout our analysis. Concerningly, through their ignorance and unconscious bias, women and gender diverse people are also at times complicit in

perpetuating exclusion. It was noted by more than one respondent that it was not only male creative industry leaders who appeared to ignore female and gender diverse composers' potential, for example:

The screen industry has so many women in leading roles of producing and directing who still aren't up for engaging women composers, who still feel more comfortable with a man in a studio, for sure. That's a clear kind of gender thing. It's not about music culture.

Gretel (female, 57)

> "Let's say we release 20 dramas a year [in Australia] and there are 30 male composers that are already very, very established, coming off the backend of other projects. They'll probably be lining up for the next project after that. Then, therefore, there's not any room for anyone new—let alone a woman—trying to bring that into the mix."

In the field of screen soundtrack production, which was named as a creative industry that excluded female and gender-diverse composers by Gretel and Tania, female composers are concentrated in low-stakes, lower-budget areas such as documentary films and reality TV, rather than in the prestigious, higher-stakes areas of feature films and television drama (Strong & Cannizzo 2017; Wilcox 2022b). The Boys' Club factored into how industry leaders managed risk, with those in positions to hire and fire more inclined to take a risk on other men. Tania offered a useful insight as to how the gendered monopoly of men in high-stakes areas might be shifted:

I've noticed that we're getting a lot more collaborations. When you might have a composer on a TV show, it's him and it's his assistant perhaps—a male assistant that he's been mentoring —then there becomes the two credits. Maybe—there [is] something that men can do to be more conscious of this—is making sure that you're mentoring a woman and therefore the credit becomes the main event. That way, that starts to give her some notoriety and a foot in the door. Perhaps being more conscious to allowing credits of teams as well, I think is—would be maybe something the industry could look at...How about sneaking in some other female credits and acknowledge that? That might actually help women.

Tania (female, 36)

Others linked being a mother to being perceived as a high-risk proposition for employment:

I'm of an age where people might think, "Oh, she might go have children," which is a risk for some people.

Xanthe (female, 35)

I certainly felt when I was pregnant— each time that I've been pregnant...I've felt like a liability. You feel like, oh, if you're not showing yet you feel, "Oh, maybe I should tell them, is it the honest thing to tell them that I'm—" and especially as a musician when—there's not always a workplace policy on that. Whereas I guess with a big company, a big office job or whatever there might just

be a hard and fast policy about what you do in that situation. Often if you're applying for grants or whatever, or a job like teaching music or anything like that, it feels like a bit of a liability.

Rilke (female, 41)

I went to a, like a forum thing, talking about the New Zealand industry. I was just talking to a woman from a record label in America. I was talking about my singer, and I mentioned the fact that she had a five-year-old, and she said, "No one's gonna be interested in you guys, 'cause with a five-year-old, she can't tour." That was it. She said, "Give up now if you ever think you're gonna tour."

Tonya (female, 62)

Tonya elaborated on yet another aspect of music industry culture that speaks to the common historical stereotype of women being 'too emotional' and therefore high-risk:

I think men are scared of women. They're scared of, they think women are emotional.

Tonya (female, 62)

7.2.1 Minorities as high risk

As with most of the themes explored through our study, the degree to which music creators felt they were perceived as a risk by employers and colleagues was often determined by intersectional factors. Certain respondents felt they were perceived as a risk in direct proportion to the number of marginalising factors contained in their identity. Kim voices clearly how being perceived as a risk has led to lost opportunity which in turn has led to a lack of experience which then augments the perception of risk around hiring them. This is an unfortunate and self-perpetuating cycle many women and gender diverse people face.

I'm all the things. Not only am I queer and gender non-conforming, and assigned female at birth— I'm also ageing and disabled and overweight. [Laughs] How dare I even exist? Oh my God. I'm such a risk. I'm a terrible proposition and I have missed out on significant work because … They want somebody with a bigger name than me, and I'm just—it makes me crazy.

Kim (non-binary, 46)

Many factors intersect to augment a person feeling they are viewed as a risk. For Kim, their queerness, gender, body, age, disability, and location were mentioned as burdens on their self-imagined employability. We discuss age an as intersectional risk factor in detail in Section 9 of this report.

Jo felt she was considered a risk because she was known to speak up for what she believed in, which as discussed earlier, is seen by some as 'unfeminine' behaviour. However, she also felt she was viewed as a risk and thus excluded from opportunities due to intersectional aspects of her identity

I'm just gonna lay it on the table. Why aren't you supporting us in rural areas? Why aren't you enabling mothers? Why is it such a …difficult battle every time I wanna do something? I see the same people on the funding charts getting it every time. Just because I'm a woman and because it's my choice to be a Mum, it's not a disability. We need to be enabling this.

Jo (female, 41)

Racist stereotypes were cited by Emily as a factor contributing to a sense of 'risk' in providing opportunities, particularly to First Nations people:

> I think it's just stereotypes...general stereotypes, I don't get them. "They'll all just get drunk, and won't show up at the thing on time," and all this. Yeah, just stereotypes, I think.

<div align="right">Emily (female, 55)</div>

Lena felt First Nations music creators' work was still perceived as high-risk because, due to a lack of cultural education to support its reception, it was sometimes perceived by mainstream audiences (or 'Joe Blows') to be of a lower standard:

> People kind of think, well, the standard's not there. This is the risk we're taking because we're gaining diversity... I have apprehension about the spaces we're asked to move in, that people are clued up enough to read value. I mean Joe Blows... Just to understand the richness and complexity is not only in the things that you're hearing. That's what I'm trying to say... I don't think groups or whatever, mobs, commissioners, whatever, and audiences are trained up enough to understand that yet, 'cause we don't have critical mass, we don't have these yarns, we don't talk about process, and the doors aren't open.

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

This observation underlines the importance of including more diverse music practice and practitioners in mainstream concert programming. In Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, which are countries privileged with rich, Indigenous musical cultures, there is remarkable opportunity for such cultural engagement. Without exposure to unfamiliar forms of music and the 'yarns' to facilitate new understandings of a greater diversity of gender and culture, audiences are not adequately supported to engage with concerts that present music they might not have heard before. Where support for cultural exchange and dialogue from First Nations music creators is offered, audience engagement with their music has proven to be strong (e.g. Wesley Enoch's artistic directorship and curation of Sydney Festival 2017-2020).

7.3 Conclusion

Women and gender diverse people make deliberate, concerted efforts to establish a defeminised, 'professional' persona to compensate for sexism in the workplace. Certain feminine archetypes, such as being perceived as very attractive, 'too emotional,' or a 'diva' are foisted on women in the workplace, particularly where that workplace is shared with, or dominated by men. Feminine beauty standards are often applied to women, who feel pressure within certain genres of music, or certain music practices, to cater to the interests of a heterosexual male audience. Many responses revealed women felt under pressure to achieve this ideal standard or fail in their careers. Intersectional factors such as age, gender identity, disability and/or weight were felt to contribute to music creators' capacity (or incapacity) to achieve this ideal.

Further, it was clear that the factors already identified in this report that marginalise female and gender diverse music creators further exclude them from high-profile, high-earnings areas of practice. Men, through the Boys' Club mechanism, as well as other women and gender diverse people, through their own

internalised, unconscious bias, are complicit in perpetuating such exclusion. Certain respondents felt they were perceived as a risk according to the number of marginalising factors contained in their identity, with music creators who were regional, First Nations, queer, disabled, older, or carers citing an increased sense of being perceived as a risk to potential colleagues and employers. Marginalisation from high-stakes areas of practice only exacerbates and perpetuates the invisibility of female and gender diverse music creators from mainstream sectors of the music industry. We suggest a priority of the music and creative industries should be to include more women and gender diverse people at this level to increase access for others. Creating greater visibility at the top end to reduce perception of risk and fast-track diversity might be done through setting up mentoring programs that acknowledge mentees as co-composers; co-producers; co-writers, collaborators, and team members via official credits; and linking gender targets or quotas meaningfully to funding. Finally, the music industry could consider cultural awareness training and 'yarns' to inform audiences, industry leaders, and music creators alike towards a more nuanced understanding of Indigenous musical practice and to increase opportunities for the advancement of Aboriginal, Moriori, and Māori music creators into mainstream practice.

Gendered care work

8.1 The burden and privilege of domestic labour

> My family will always come first and a career in music requires time away from home to connect with audience. It has pushed me to be more creative and resourceful in ways but has meant most mainstream opportunities have not been available to me.

37% of respondents indicated that they are or have been primary carers: those responsible for the majority of care, either for children or other family members or loved ones. Almost three quarters (72%) of those who were primary carers responded that this had a negative impact on their career in music.

Apart from Gabe (female, 38), who described her carer role as 'a privilege,' the 28% of survey respondents who described anything other than negative impact to their careers from being primary carers were still qualified in their responses. Many acknowledged the value of this work in terms of their broader lives even while they cited the difficulty of balancing caring for others with music work. The main benefit of their carer role to their careers was described as honing their time management skills and making them more efficient workers:

> When I had kids, I suddenly had very limited time to make music, but I became more efficient because of it. It also put my priorities straight. I care less what other people think now because I just don't have the time or energy to care.
>
> Maggie (female, 40)

Online survey respondents who were carers cited various negative impacts on their career. Among the most common were the double financial burdens linked with raising children and experiencing precarity of work as freelancers, and the mental load this adds to those in this position:

> It was bloody hard earning enough to raise two kids.
>
> Kate (female, 72)

> It is very hard to keep some of these resources aside to invest in music when that involves withholding them or taking them away from your kids.
>
> Steffi (non-binary, 45)

> Although my career began once I had children, I was primary care giver throughout (still am). This meant a huge mental load and missed opportunities.
>
> Naomi (female, 50)

Even those planning children were already experiencing increased mental load:

I feel an anxiety about being a 28-year-old woman in the industry as I know biologically if I wanted to have children, I would need to start thinking about it. I worry about my future and feel time hard. I find this affects my creativity with more stress and worry.

Pearl (female, 28)

Lack of time was the most-cited impact of caring roles on music creators. Respondents experienced increased time demands due to their unpaid labour as primary carers and described these in ways that can be summarised as overwhelmingly negative.

I was unable to book studio time at university due to family commitments. I had to work in moments of time around caring which meant working long days. My reduced work capacity meant I was unable to afford a professional studio space.

Gwen (female, 56)

8.2 The impact of industry culture on primary carers

Compounding the time pressures faced by most carers who work in paid employment, is a music industry culture that does not value primary carers or acknowledge the importance of retaining them. Our survey documented many experiences reflecting the lack of structural support from the music industry, such as paid maternity leave, family-friendly schedules, provision of childcare, and other related issues:

I just had to stop completely while I was a new mother…Certainly no maternity pay!

Kristen (female, 38)

It impacts upon touring; venues are not child friendly after a certain time.

Yoko (female, 37)

It limited my mobility, and ability to be engaged in interstate and capital city professional creative communities.

Bhuva (female, 65)

> "There have been numerous occasions where I have felt like I have been treated like I have a disability because I have small children and can't keep up with the expectations of a 'modern' music career."

Those who were successfully able to navigate their caring responsibilities often had to rely on their partners and/or colleagues for the support required to sustain their careers:

I cannot spend as much time as I used to on music. This has shown me how important it was to get my career to a certain stage before I became a mother. Because I would not be able to keep going at this without the support of the others I work with (publisher, business manager, studio,

music editor, music mixer, assistant etc.). So, if I was earlier in my career at the point that I became a carer I think it would have really derailed it.

<div align="right">Olivia (female, 39)</div>

I'm a mum. But I also have a very supportive partner and we share parenting 50/50. Sometimes I'm full-time and sometimes he is.

<div align="right">Eva (female, 40)</div>

I was lucky I had a supportive network family kind of thing. I was lucky in that. Still, there were occasions where I had to just not do the gig or not take the job because— I think it's just a balancing act, but I'm fortunate in that I had family to help.

<div align="right">Emily (female, 55)</div>

The reported reliance on partners, family, and the goodwill of colleagues by primary carers to make music careers work is concerning, and as we shall see, reflects a lack of industry-led support for carers that jeopardises the careers of those without other forms of support.

8.3 Women carry the burden

As women make up 85% of primary carers in the creative industries (Verhoeven et al. 2018), inaction from the music industry with regard to carers' needs is impacting disproportionately on female music workers. When such support is not in place, the negative impact of working in an industry that is not set up to support carers is felt keenly – in particular by single and sole parents. This effect appears to be compounded by the alienation and isolation many female and gender diverse music workers already experience (see Section 6), which is in turn compounded by a general industry culture that does not recognise the degree to which the burden of domestic labour falls predominantly on women. It appears that this burden has very real implications for primary carers' capacity to maintain the same connection, momentum, and workload compared to those who are not primary carers or those who do not have caring responsibilities at all.

It has contributed to a loss of momentum, which can be quite detrimental to an independent artist.

<div align="right">Fi (female, 41)</div>

Mum is 82 ...she's still independent, but she just needs people. She needs someone around. I'm the only one who can go around regularly and just help with things, help lift things, be there to have a meal with, that kind of thing...You find yourself having to say no to a lot of [other] things.

<div align="right">Blithe (trans female, 59)</div>

For performing musicians whose skill level is closely related to hours spent practising, lots of time spent as a carer can be problematic, as expressed by Lindy, a drummer:

Having children and then being a single mum when their dad got sick, I didn't have much time to play.

<div align="right">Lindy (female, 45)</div>

The lack of structural support for carers adds the music industry to the list of industries across Australia that contribute to a national gender pay gap of 13.3%, with 'women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work' cited as a key factor that reduces women's earning capacity over their lifetime (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2023). Many of our survey participants' comments supported this finding, stating they had to take time off or 'step back' from their music careers when they became primary carers. Others described how they struggled to navigate the expectations of the music industry and continue in their carer roles:

> *Regular evening rehearsals are very tricky as I am a sole parent, as are performances, but I do pretzel myself to get there. And my son has been to many, many rehearsals and recording sessions in his life. Also, money is tight, so I take advantage of cheap tix when I can, and baby sitters are not an option financially.*

<div align="right">Jewel (female, 50)</div>

Concerningly, many respondents described an industry culture that discriminates against mothers and primary carers, and whether through structural oversight, overt or unconscious bias, forces them to the margins. At times, encountering such bias was even cited as a reason for discontinuing a career path:

> *Being a mother has put me very much on the fringe of the industry. Festivals, grants, etc. are angled at people who have more time on their hands, can afford to work for little or nothing, and can keep their online presence and CV impressive at all times. Mothers are not in this category.*

<div align="right">Shauna (female, 41)</div>

> *I have always found employment as either a session musician, musical director/arranger/ orchestrator, or composer. However, when I got married and had a child, many of the male directors (theatre and film) I worked with, assumed I no longer wanted to work as hard and made the decision for me, not to book me for tours and/or work that would take me away from my family. I had to let them know I was still available and willing to work, which was annoying and uncomfortable.*

<div align="right">Eva (female, 40)</div>

> *I have simply been unable to say "yes" to jobs that had crazy deadlines as a sole parent … resulting in me winding down and eventually stopping my screen composing career, as I could not see a way to juggle the stringent demands and deadlines of this industry (as well as the financial ups and downs of freelance life) and be a stable primary carer for my kids.*

<div align="right">Devi (female, 57)</div>

8.4 'Currency' is not a fair criterion

The 'currency' requirement - where a person needs to be able to demonstrate recent career activity to be competitive - disproportionately impacts women. It is predominantly women's time and mental energy that are given to raising their families or caring for others, and these are finite resources. The gendered care work that society tacitly assumes women will take on, and that women choose to take on, reduces their

capacity to do the same amount of work with the same frequency as those who are not primary carers. Thus, using currency of practice as a criterion to assess competency creates an uneven playing field for those who are primary carers, and is not an accurate measure of merit.

> *The state funding agency had criteria such as, you know, you had to have made a piece in the last year, and you had to have made two pieces in the last five years. With these kinds of end dates that as a carer, and as a carer with a child with a disability, was never gonna happen. I really felt discriminated [against] in that role.*

<div align="right">Gretel (female, 57)</div>

> *I've had enough to do raising three children and keeping some musicianship alive...We're at a disadvantage because we have less spare time than others, we've often given several years to our children thus our CVs are less impressive than they might be if we hadn't. It's very hard to muscle back into the scene.*

<div align="right">Shauna (female, 41)</div>

> *I was rejected in a job application because I did not have enough recent credits as a film composer despite having two small children and completing a PhD in composition in the 2 years prior to my application.*

<div align="right">Devi (female, 57)</div>

It is clear that the requirement to be constantly producing work was viewed as discriminatory by these mothers. Further, both Devi and Gretel identified themselves as 'established'; their career achievement should surely provide evidence of their competence and the merit of their work, without the requirement to be constantly active while also caring for children.

8.5 'Mummy Guilt'

'Mummy guilt' can be understood as the feeling of being torn between caring for children and paid work (or pursuing one's creative passion). The term references the widespread guilting that is perpetrated towards mothers through cultural stereotypes of what a mother 'should be' – felt by many to be an unattainable ideal. We upheld the intentional use of the term 'mummy guilt' by some participants as an example of the ways women reclaim language and ideas that have been wielded against them. Respecting the nuance in participants' testimonials in this way we believe supports attempts at agency by those who are often the victims of assumptions and expectations as to caring roles that demand their time, attention, and emotional and financial resources disproportionately in society. We acknowledge however in using 'mummy guilt' that in this context, it relates directly and only to people who identify with being a mother or mothering and does not account for the diversity of parents who are non-binary, gender diverse or simply use other pronouns.

'Mummy Guilt' was cited as an inhibiting factor on music careers for some parents:

> *Being a single mum and having mummy guilt if I was out playing or touring.*

<div align="right">Tara (female, 46)</div>

*There doesn't appear to be much support…in the music industry that speaks to working parents. How to survive and thrive in the Aotearoa music industry when you're watching the clock for the school run and you can only do your admin whilst the toddler naps *if* they nap. Lol.*

Rae (female, 36)

Rae also wrote about the conflict she felt between expectations from industry as a worker and from society as a mother:

I guess, the parenting is often left to the mum - I fought to tour whilst my older kids were young and the guilt (my own, and the guilt from the wife of the guy I was touring with) broke our band up.

Caring duties compound with endemic industry ageism (see Section 9) when those who have taken time out to care for family return to the industry only to be judged as 'too old' to be competitive:

I didn't believe my music and art practice was as valuable as my partner's. …I spent my 20s supporting him and when I finally had the time, space, and resources to work on my own creative practice I was in my 30s and 'too old' to be able to get any career opportunities in Australia.

Violet (female, 36)

Being a parent and having children; now being older I actually had an older 65+ A&R guy tell me the writers now are all young… Alright for him to be older, experienced, wise, etc.!

Kylie (female, 56)

Disadvantage due to the intersection of gender, ageism, and caring was also felt by Chelsea:

Ageing as a woman has certainly made any progression difficult. Being the primary/sole caregiver of children. I was limited in how much I could tour. Men seem to have "wives" taking care of all domestic concerns.

Chelsea (female, 54)

> " Pregnant women, women with small children, and older women with children are considered less marketable and interesting to a record executive. "

8.6 Redefining success

Many people struggle with their new role as primary carers when it first happens, and with trying to stay afloat in an industry that does not accommodate them easily. For some, it has meant reinventing the way they participate in the industry, as reflected on by Rilke:

It's changed the goalposts for me. It changes what you want. It changes what you would work towards. When I was in my 20s, I thought success was touring and being in festivals and doing lots of gigs and maybe getting a record deal or whatever…Now, … even if I could be on the festival circuit, for example, and do all the major festivals in Australia, for example, would I wanna do that now? I don't think I would. What would I do with my kids? Would I spend four months of

the year away from them, or would I drag them around to festivals all the time? It'd probably make them just hate music. [Laughter] ...You can't afford to take minimal gig money that doesn't really cover your costs and all of that. It just changes. In the last few years, I guess what I've wanted has been much more, just a local niche, I just want to be—I wanna keep making my music, I wanna keep expanding my audience, but I'm happy to do that in my local community at local gigs...—of course, it'd be nice to reach a broader audience, but it's not really make or break for me anymore.

<div align="right">

Rilke (female, 41)

</div>

For Jo, the goalposts also changed when she became a mother:

I had been accepted into music school then found out I was pregnant and then found out that this child would need really major surgery. We packed up our life in Australia where I was really established, and I was touring, and I had a band, and moved home [to Aotearoa]. All focus was on safely delivering this child and her going through this massive surgical journey and then the recovery and it was several years. I remember going through a really massive grief process where... I was like, "Everything I've worked so hard for is gone." Then when she arrived, it's like, "Oh, everything I've worked for has just changed. This is the most important thing I'll ever do."

<div align="right">

Jo (female, 41)

</div>

As a result of her circumstances, she shifted her music practice into children's music, where she feels advantaged through her lived experience as a woman and mother:

I think being a children's musician and being a woman has been amazing for connecting to audiences. Children will come up to me after a show and throw their arms around me and tell me that they love me, and I think if you're a male it's not as acceptable and parents are wary... I feel like that's been a real advantage for connecting with people, the personality that I've created for myself as a children's performer.

Rilke also envisaged another career angle that would celebrate and leverage her lived experience as a mother, and that she puts forward as a possible opportunity for other mothers and carers:

A festival celebrating mothers in the arts. I think that would be amazing to have a festival. ...I feel like motherhood is just this hump, this speed bump sort of thing. So many people don't get over it because it stops you in your tracks. It's like...when you have children, you have this strange rebirth as a new self, and it's not like your old self dies, you're still that as well, but you become this new self. That becomes for me, that's central to who I am. That's the main thing I am—that's always the most important thing...Celebrating that and honouring that, I think, somehow would be great from industry. Something like a festival or just more opportunities for mothers in music, grants and recordings, that sort of industry help would be really big.

<div align="right">

Rilke (female, 41)

</div>

First Nations woman, Lena, moved the goalposts again by rejecting the idea of parenting as a burden and instead reframing it as a possibility for sharing cultural knowledge:

I don't want to come at it from my son being the problem... I would judge my value as a parent on how I was able to share a love of music and story with him....He experiences things he's never

heard before, and it's not so bad... I hope that I've woven music into him, rather than had a career and him tagging along... I know, because our music-making is so, you know, in culture way, most of your music is sung down. I mean, the thing's given to the young ones. You're always putting music into young ones. How do we replicate that in a mainstream way? I don't know. How do we do that?

Lena (female, 46)

> This industry is not set up for full-time, professional musicians who are also parents. There is no understanding or government awareness that we exist or have needs in this realm.

8.7 Conclusion

It is concerning that almost three-quarters (72%) of respondents to the online survey who were primary carers felt that this factor negatively impacted on their music career and that so many reported experiencing discrimination and conflict in relation to juggling their carer roles and music careers. The fact that it is women who overwhelmingly fulfill the roles of primary carers in our societies has in turn, important consequences for women music creators' career longevity, for female visibility in senior roles, for the presence of female role models in the music industry, and for the gender pay gap in music that add to the matrix of barriers already experienced by women in music. To plug the outflow of wasted expertise that occurs when primary carers are forced to step out or step back from their music practice, we suggest that the music industry must urgently implement measures to normalise and acknowledge the value of caring roles within industry culture and provide infrastructure that supports primary carers to manage their paid and unpaid work.

As evidenced by the above responses, periods of juggling paid work and unpaid caring roles represent some of the most vulnerable stages of music workers' careers, and a time when much valuable expertise is lost from the music industry. Reimaging the industry via new models that promote accessibility and inclusion for primary carers would be advantageous for all concerned, not least, their children and other family members. Of note is the resilience displayed by primary carers and examples of their capacity for positive, wholistic thinking that embraces this added dimension to their identity. Such a revision in thinking and culture by the music industry more broadly is needed now to increase inclusion for primary carers and develop new models that facilitate their ongoing industry engagement.

Age and the musical glass ceiling

9.1 When age and gender intersect

A consistent and noteworthy thread we observed throughout the survey data was the intersectional effect of age and gender on music creators' careers. This theme emerged strongly even though there were no questions in either the online survey or the interview guides asking directly about age-related issues. As discussed in previous sections, ageing does not play well for women and female-presenting individuals in an industry where expectations as to their presentation, judgments about their physical attractiveness, and assumptions about the ways they should behave are encultured and real. As noted in Section 7, frequently, a woman's appearance plays to her 'brand' with certain genres, such as pop, rock, hip-hop, and R&B openly sexualising female artists as a marketing strategy. This results in shorter careers for women, who are relegated to ever-lower rungs of a gendered hierarchy of sexual desirability as they age. We observed this was keenly felt even by young women and gender diverse people, who felt that age-related limitations applied to them:

> I do think that how you look or present yourself can have an impact on things like how much media coverage you receive and things like that. There is also a certain level of ageism particularly against women in the industry.

> Toni (female, 34)

> I'm like, "I'm over 30 now," and I don't know whether it's the stress of all of the last year and everything, but I've somehow gone from a size eight to 10 to a 10 to a 12 to 14 in the last like six months, and so now I've got that going against me as well. There's all these little, I guess, cosmetic, really shallow kinds of things that shouldn't matter... There still is a lot of that pressure, even as a female against other females to still, as much as you wanna be a little outside the box constantly being like, "Oh, but I'm not as young as that one," or "I don't wear the same kind of clothes that one."

> Bonnie (female, 32)

> I feel a lot of the time that's what the expectation is... How you look, how you present yourself... It's subtle things, it's the expectations and that you're gonna look a certain way ... you don't see so many older women, for example, on those YouTube videos doing songs. Yeah, or a larger woman or a pregnant woman.

> Rilke (female, 41)

> " I believe the ageism is linked to being a woman, yes. We get 'past it' while men become 'experts.' "

Australia was described by several participants as ageist compared to other cultures:

> *I really noticed the difference when I went overseas that there is just a lot more scope for people like me – electronic music creators who are older. Here you're just seen as old and irrelevant, except when you're giving opportunities to others.*

<div align="right">Kora (female, 52)</div>

> *Australia's …still a youthful, youth-focused artistic scene, and I think … it's challenging for mature women practitioners to have sustained employment, or to receive sustained gigs.*

<div align="right">Gretel (female, 57)</div>

Even relatively young participants expressed feeling blocked due to their age:

> *I feel that my age is an issue. My age has prevented me from many opportunities in this industry.*

<div align="right">Corinne (female, 40)</div>

> *I am getting older, pushing 40. I worry about reduced opportunities for older women who are emerging composers. There are career barriers for older women.*

<div align="right">Rosa (female, 39)</div>

As evidenced by Rosa's comment, who tellingly self-described as 'older' at just 39, growing older was observed to be at odds with being free to grow in her career as an 'emerging composer.' The same sentiment was echoed by Kate:

> *I'm finally about to release my 'adult' songs – my best work yet – knowing it's far too late for me to 'emerge' so to speak. Ageism is the problem there. Youth is an investment. Old goats like me are written off!*

<div align="right">Kate (female, 72)</div>

Women and gender diverse people often experience different professional trajectories to men, due to having to navigate more complex identities and life roles. This means they may experience longer phases of career development, and be emerging in their careers for longer durations, or change career focus more frequently. As observed with regard to the 'currency requirement' in Section 8.4, we found that age caps for opportunities such as mentoring, training, festivals, grants, and other professional opportunities are broadly felt to be unnecessary barriers for women:

> *There are some funding opportunities that have cut-off ages that I feel sad about not being eligible for. Age doesn't equal relevant career development and skills levels. It's the time you've been able to focus on the work, and for a lot of women that's not been possible in their early working/family-building lives.*

<div align="right">Violet (female, 36)</div>

As Violet explained, in addition to the more complex career paths experienced by women and minority gender music creators, for all genders, music careers often take time to develop and bear fruit due to the complex and evolving skillsets required to create music and the financial challenges and employment precarity associated with being a music worker. In light of these factors, it is perhaps not surprising that many women feel they are producing their best work at an older age – yet such work is being overlooked

due to the ageism that, from our data, appears to be almost universally experienced by those who present as female. This was perceived as an issue for women from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds and across diverse musical genres. One Māori respondent – a DJ and singer – expressed her sense of helplessness about ageing as a woman, which she did not feel applied equally to her male colleagues:

> *My thoughts are, that if you are a man in the industry, you will be supported until you are 50. When you get to my age or over 30, [as a woman] you are not good enough to be seen anymore.*

<div align="right">Nadia (female, 35)</div>

Others also spoke to the way ageing applied differently to female and male music creators:

> *As a middle aged woman I am overlooked often and the men are more often given opportunities… Playing in bands and doing gigs… it's mainly men or young women wanted.*

<div align="right">Catherine (female, 56)</div>

> *I think that age related issues are the most directly related to my gender. I am not aware of men being as impacted/concerned about their age as emerging musicians as the womxn I have spoken to/worked with.*

<div align="right">Georgia (female, 34)</div>

> " I was never thin enough, or young enough. I started singing at 20 and made my first album at 30…I was encouraged to lie about my age, weight, beauty. "

One participant reported experiencing ageism from a male colleague even in her twenties:

> *I was seeking advice from an older male producer in his 40s about my career, he listened to my questions/concerns and then asked, "how old are you?" I replied (at the time), "26"… and he said with a surprised expression – "oh you're lucky you don't look it."*

<div align="right">Jess (female, 33)</div>

It is disturbing to read of such bias perpetrated against even very young women who are being conditioned to fear ageing as a major career hazard. Moreso, given that age and ability bear no logical relationship to each other; if any relationship does exist, both should increase in tandem as music creators hone their craft with practice and accrue experience. While such attitudes from males in role model positions go unchecked, their advice is likely to be damaging to people of other genders who are attempting to forge music careers. Further, ageism is a double-edged sword; that is to say, when men favour young women, this can also be dangerous for them too. Here, ageism is working in different ways to disadvantage young women. A disturbing testimonial from one interviewee revealed how the vulnerability she possessed early in her career due to her youth was something her more senior male colleagues simultaneously desired and exploited. The male colleague Elise refers to here unfortunately went on to sexually harass her, which had a hugely detrimental effect on her career and mental health (see Section 10.1):

I was just a child. I had no self-confidence. I was trying to prove to them that I was like, "Yeah I'm here with you guys and I know what I'm doing and I'm not going to mess this up for you." Looking back I [should have]realised how young I am and own that and be like, "Well, I am 21. I can't pretend I'm 30 'cause I'm not. I don't wanna be 30 'cause I'm 21."

Elise (female, 34)

Sunny also alluded to feeling her youth made her vulnerable to the wrong kind of attention from senior male colleagues:

I definitely don't feel the best at industry events, or after parties, I feel it's a bit weird 'cause I'm a younger artist and then there's just a lot of drunk old men; old, white men that are partying and it's bit uncomfortable to be around that. It's like you don't wanna put yourself—I have to say you don't wanna put yourself in that position to ever be—you know what I mean?

Sunny (female, 21)

The dangers of being a young woman in a male-dominated industry that applies an ageist, sexist lens, was felt by many respondents and will be examined more closely in Section 10. The above testimonials from Elise and Sunny draw attention to the ways in which the Boys' Club works against the wellbeing of the music industry as a whole and why dismantling it is a fundamental first step the industry must take. Beneficiaries of the Boys' Club (the 'old, white men' to whom Sunny refers) succeed only in perpetuating a negative cycle that excludes other genders and supports toxic masculinity to the overwhelming detriment of the music industry. This is discussed further in Section 10 of this report and is examined in depth in the *Raising our Voices* report published by Support Act (2022).

9.2 Invisibility and curtailed careers

For many women in music, ageism is damaging to their self-esteem and professional aspiration, and fundamentally gets in the way of them being able to carry out their work:

I would like to do more session singing, but I think I have more barriers from ageism in this area than sexism.

Ghita (female, 43)

I'm over 50, and immediately, that's sort of a given that if you're over a certain age, you'll be seen as [if] you haven't got the cutting edge aesthetic going on —no matter how much effort and time – and I have put a lot of effort and time and money into it, you're not going to be current in your skills, you're not gonna be as cutting edge – especially with menopause now as well – as a younger person is gonna be.

Ingrid (female, 52)

I feel like I have been fighting for a place, and now I'm getting too old to be in the industry I once loved. I feel so uninspired.

Nadia (female, 35)

As evidenced by surveys of the screen music sectors in Australia (Strong & Canizzo 2017) and Canada (Gautier & Freeman 2018) women's musical careers tend to be shorter than their male colleagues' by a significant margin. We observed evidence of age-related career disengagement and abandonment similar to that observed in women struggling to balance music careers with carer roles. The defeatism women experienced due to the ageism they perceived was generally expressed as the feeling they cannot see careers for themselves as they age. This goes some way to explaining women's shorter careers and the low representation of women in senior music industry roles.

> " I feel like my songs as I get older, are getting better – yet the grants don't come now. Whereas they did when I was new and maybe going to be something exciting. "
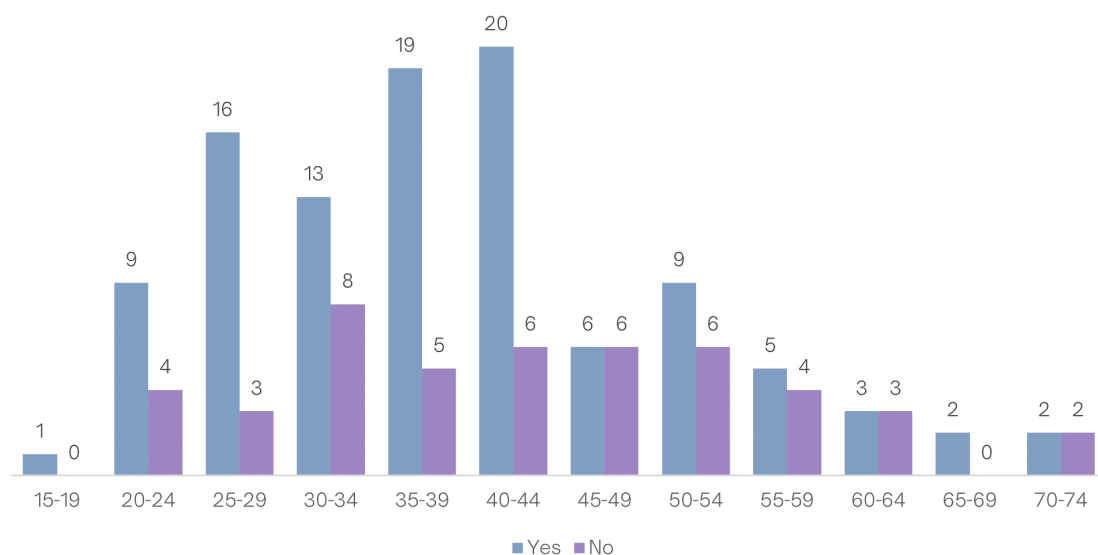
Figure 14: Responses to question 'Do you see others in your area of music who are like you?' by age

As observed in the graph above, women 45 and over were less likely to indicate they see others like them in their area of music. The problem of invisibility for older women and gender diverse people was clearly articulated by several respondents. For Maggie it was the main reason leading to her choosing to abandon her music career:

Lack of a clear pathway modelled. There is no female musician with a career that I want for myself for the rest of my working life. Men seem to be able to do it into their 50s/60s and beyond. But women are only good for their 20s and 30s. I'm getting out because I can't see any woman with a job I covet.

Maggie (female, 40)

I am invisible for a few reasons. When you are a person who is female-bodied, and you have grey hair, and you don't look like a supermodel, you are three times invisible already, without then having a gender that nobody understands… I'm just not much to look at and that's a really weird

conundrum—getting people to actually pay attention to what I have to offer, which is extremely
high end arts practice and a really interesting story.

<div align="right">Kim (non-binary, 46)</div>

I recognized the importance of having a role model, having women on stage doing electronic
music, and … I would seek out women – and older women. There's barely any bloody older
women in this space, is my view at least.

<div align="right">Ingrid (female, 52)</div>

Being older, [there are] less opportunities, even though I've had a wealth of experience.

<div align="right">Trish (female, 72)</div>

As Trish observes, when older female and gender diverse music creators are overlooked, relegated to the margins of the industry, or drop out of music altogether, this compounds the waste already seen at the mid-career point when composers who are primary carers are more at risk of pausing or abandoning their music careers (see Section 8). As we've seen, these disadvantageous situations happen more often to women than other genders. This loss of mid-career and senior expertise not only has a significant impact on the way women of all ages feel about a career in music but compounds to negatively impact the music industry as a whole. When this occurs, the training invested in women by the industry earlier in their careers is wasted, along with the potential sum of their expertise, experience, and perspective.

9.3 Shall we dance on the ceiling?

However, not all women feel the need to give up. Encouragingly, there were a few respondents over 50 who described spaces and places where they felt valued professionally as older women. Some even perceived specific age-related advantages afforded by their gender, as one producer explained:

I've also learnt that men lose their top-end [frequency hearing] when 45, and women lose it at 65,
so we do have an extra 20 years than them to work as engineers and producers…I can't ever
imagine giving up.

<div align="right">Tonya (female, 62)</div>

First Nations artist, Sunny, described how she was intentionally leveraging her youth and other aspects of her identity to take control of her career, rather than be controlled:

As a young woman, I feel how we perceive things is different at the end of the day…It's the same
as having First Nations and POC working on stuff. If I want it to be accurately represented, it
needs to be – they need to be working on the team.

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

A few respondents reflected on how they were able to use their age to impress and elicit respect. Chris, a punk-rocker, explained how she was able to evade audience expectations to do with her age and gender:

I guess there's the element of surprise when I perform [that] is a combination of my gender and my age. I'm much older and a female so people have an expectation of what I might do. When I get up on the stage they are surprised and often very positive about what I do.

<div align="right">Chris (female, 63)</div>

The music industry might look to the words of some older women in developing more age-inclusive models.

The goth scene is very non-ageist. Old goths are called elders, and so it's not like the pop scene or anything like that. It doesn't matter what you look like, or how old you are, or anything. You're always accepted.

<div align="right">Tonya (female, 62)</div>

> " I have become more respected as I get older and am more appreciated for my wisdom. I feel and act worthy and am usually treated that way in return. Not always, but mostly. "

9.4 Conclusion

While no specific question regarding age was posed, throughout our study, participants of all ages revealed they believed the combination of their age and gender identity was a disadvantage to their careers. As discussed in detail in Section 8, women, who are more impacted by gendered carer work, often take longer to establish their music careers. Yet growing older as a woman was observed to be at odds with career development and many respondents felt they were not considered for mentoring and training opportunities when these were needed, because of age limits being linked to eligibility or because younger women were more likely to be endorsed as 'emerging' than older women. Certain genres more than others were openly prejudiced against older female artists; for example, in pop music and in electronic music, respondents felt youth to be desirable, whereas in goth and punk music it was felt to be less important.

It is already known that women experience shorter music careers than men, and we would suggest that this is linked to gendered hierarchies regarding age. Frequently, it was observed that a woman's appearance and presentation played to her 'brand.' Entrenched and encultured confluences between sexual desirability and musical marketability were widely reported. These were felt to be damaging to respondents of all ages and many women and gender diverse people recounted instances of lived experience where these values had disadvantaged or endangered them. Concerningly, even very young women are conditioned early to fear ageing as a career hazard to be navigated, and ageism that preferences them while young also places them at greater risk of sexual harm and exploitation.

It is clear from the data that valuable expertise and experience are being overlooked due to a music industry evidently lacking awareness as to the ways it propagates and endorses cultures and practices of ageism against women and female-presenting people in particular. This not only has a significant impact

on the way women of all ages feel about pursuing a career in music, but also compounds to negatively impact the music industry as a whole. To become more equitable and sustainable overall, the music industry must work towards more age-inclusive practices, attitudes, and behaviours to retain women and gender diverse music creators as they age, and to promote and nurture their career development and sustainability to bring it into line with the seniority and career longevity enjoyed by male music creators. As well as the work needed from industry to support older women to continue to grow and prosper, it is equally important that men in music are educated to understand their privilege in terms of the different ways society views and treats them regarding ageing. This might begin with unconscious bias training for men in music and should extend to leadership training to alter frameworks around the hiring, funding, signing, mentoring, and marketing of female and gender diverse artists to eliminate age as a barrier.

Towards safer music workplaces

10.1 Sexual harassment and sexual assault

Sexual harassment is prevalent in Australian workplaces; 39% of women and 26% of men reported having experienced sexual harassment between 2013 and 2018 (Australian Human Rights Commission 2018). The Music Industry Review's *Raising Their Voices* report (Support Act 2022) found high rates of sexual harassment among music workers that were on par with the national average; one third of participants reported experiencing sexual harassment in the five years prior (women at 40%; men at 26%) and 55% having experienced it at some point in their careers. The issue is exacerbated by gender; 72% of women have experienced it at some point in their careers compared to 39% of men and 85% of people who did not identify as either male or female (ibid., p. 33).

As stated in *Raising Their Voices,* 'a key driver of sexual harm and sexual harassment is gender inequality' (ibid., p. 31). The music industry is thus predisposed to these risks due to the entrenched gender inequality already detailed in this report. This, added to power imbalances that play out in the form of: hierarchical workplace structures where males hold most of the management and gate-keeping roles; a workplace culture that tolerates sexual harassment and normalises small acts of disrespect; an industry populated chiefly by freelance workers; and poor understanding among leaders of the drivers for, and harm ensuing from sexual harassment make the music industry a less-than-safe environment for music creators (ibid., p. 32). Power imbalances related to race, sexual orientation, ability, age, and gender identity also put certain music workers at a higher risk of sexual harm than others (ibid., p. 31).

We recommend *Raising Their Voices* to readers who wish to pursue more detailed discussion and analysis of sexual harm as it represents an authoritative survey of this specific issue within the Australian music industry. While corroborating some of its findings*,* the *Women and Minority Genders in Music* report does not seek to duplicate them, instead, here we offer our own analysis of the issue through the lens of the broader remit of our study, which considers multiple intersecting factors beyond this issue alone.

10.1.1 Impact of sexual harassment and violence on music careers

To ascertain the extent of the impact of sexual harassment and sexual violence, we asked participants to our online survey: *'Has sexual harassment or violence against you in the workplace ever impacted your career?'* with results revealing that almost one half (47%) felt this issue had impacted their music careers at some point.
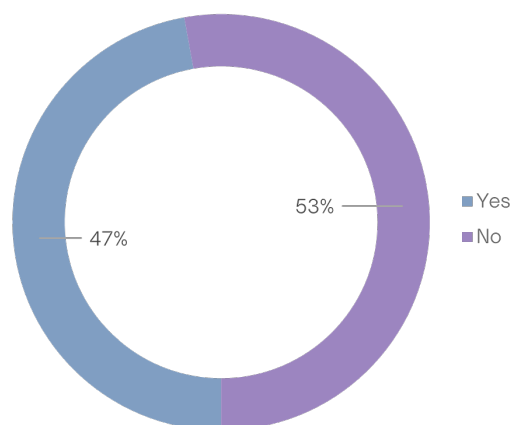
Figure 15: Proportion of online survey participants who indicated sexual harassment or violence has impacted their career.

We draw attention to the nuance in our question, which asked about *career impact* rather than simple occurrence of sexual harassment and violence. Keeping in mind our study was undertaken only by women and gender diverse music creators, and that rates of sexual harassment reported in *Raising Their Voices* were very high among these cohorts (women 72%; gender diverse people 85%), it would appear that the rate of *recognised impact* on music careers is lower than the rate of experience. This needs to be further investigated to be properly understood and addressed, but we suggest any discrepancy might lie in the difficulty for victims of gauging and articulating the impact of such experiences. Notwithstanding, the fact that approximately one half of female and gender diverse music creators in our online survey believed that their careers had been qualitatively impacted by sexual harassment or violence equates to a huge loss of potential revenue, expertise, and artistic output for these individuals and the industry.

10.1.2 Case study #1: 'Elise'

The links between gendered power structures within the music industry and high rates of sexual harassment are now clearly defined (Support Act 2022, p. 32). We know that where people's work is not taken seriously, where they are sexually objectified, or where their opinions are undermined or dismissed, sexual harassment is more likely to follow. As documented in previous sections of this report, such expressions of gendered power are common occurrences for many women and gender diverse people in music workplaces.

Factors predisposing music workers to sexual harm identified in *Raising their Voices* include: 'hierarchical structures,' 'use of alcohol in a work context,' a culture where workers are often 'isolated…with restricted access to help and support' (ibid.), all hallmarks of the experience recounted by Elise, who experienced significant harm to her music career and mental health as a result of sexual harassment:

> (I) met them at a bar. I think that was the first time I'd gone to a bar for a meeting. I didn't really drink at this time. They were like, "Do you wanna drink?" I was like, "It's the daytime. What do you mean?"
>
> Elise (female, 34)

As well as being asked to meet in a bar for work, feeling under pressure to consume alcohol, being outnumbered by and much younger than the men she was with and on whom she was relying to progress in her career – all factors that disempowered her – Elise was not aware she could bring others along for safety and support to the meeting. Curiously, she puts this lack of knowledge down to her own failing, rather than seeing it as her employer's duty of care to make it clear this option was available:

> Looking back, I [should have]realised how young I am … I guess now I know how vulnerable I was then, but I didn't realise at the time that I was vulnerable and that there were ways that I could protect myself.

Elise went on to recount how she worked with her much older, male, manager for six years, during which time he groomed her by positioning himself as a 'caring father figure.' She described actions such as: 'an arm around me if I was feeling stressed in the studio'; 'a hand on my shoulder in the car'; or hearing him say things to her that blurred the boundaries between them:

> Now, if someone confided in me that any of these things were happening to them, I'd be like, "He's a predator. Get away." When you're in there, you trust the person. They're your connection to getting the support slots that you want —it's like your brain hides that stuff or tries to make a story that makes it seem safer than it is.

Eventually she found herself in what she described as 'a really awful situation with him' and walked away, sacrificing her career. She felt she had learned the hard way how to recognise a predator:

> In my experience, no man does that without having more in mind. It's not like—all these little things are harmless in themselves but they're never the end goal for that person.

We know that the impact of sexual harm on those who experience it can be profound (Support Act, p. 38). In our case study, this is evident in the fact that Elise had effectively withdrawn from the industry due to her subsequent PTSD diagnosis and other significant impacts to her mental health from this experience:

> We named him…He was stood down from his role at the management company… I went through that process, a four-hour interview with an investigator…and thankfully a lawyer came forward and said, "I'll come with you to the interview, and I'll be your support." She encouraged me to ask for compensation for health stuff, counselling, and some other health expenses…I sent them all my bills for health stuff from that previous year, and they covered it. It wasn't heaps but, I'm not working.

10.1.3 Toxic environments

> My life as a professional musician has often been in spaces where everyone is exposed to potentially unsafe behaviours. Late nights and dark alleys…This is just an extension of the conversation about the safety of women and girls in the community.

The 'sex, drugs and rock'n'roll' culture traditionally touted by many in the music industry as part of its cool appeal and which is accepted as the status quo even today, can create environments where women and gender diverse people are particularly unsafe. This culture was cited throughout our survey responses as another endemic factor in the music industry that increased the risk of sexual misconduct and allowed for sexually loaded behaviour to go unchecked. Within this culture, disrespect and entitlement still play out in ugly ways towards women and gender diverse people of all ages:

> You know what happened last year? Doing a show to these uni students, and one of them held up his phone, and on it said to me, "Show us where your piss comes out of." This is last year. I was so shocked—and these were kids, they were 18 or something, uni students! [Laughter] I go, what year is this? Oh my god.

<div align="right">Tonya (female, 62)</div>

After-parties, gigs, and industry networking events were perceived by several respondents as part of a toxic culture where predators are enabled and where alcohol exacerbates poor behaviour:

> You do see situations at these after-parties, and there's a lot of alcohol involved. It's still happening... I think that people are probably being a little more clever about not being so overt perhaps, but I think...If you're talking about it, well you're thinking about it. If you're thinking about it, well then there's a good chance that you've already crossed the line.

<div align="right">Tania (female, 36)</div>

> I mean there's some venues that I know aren't always doing the right thing. Then on some nights... depending on what kind of act they have in there and what crowd that brings in and what energy that brings in. There's nights that I won't go near the place at all because I know that they're all gonna be doing things that I don't wanna be around, and that the people that are there on those nights can be aggressive and not very nice.

<div align="right">Bonnie (female, 32)</div>

Another factor contributing to higher risk of sexual harassment and violence is where workers are isolated; for example, through living in employer-provided accommodation with restricted access to help and support (ibid., p.32). This was a key factor that placed Judith at heightened risk of sexual harassment while on tour:

> When I was in a band, had a really weird experience with a musician from the US...I was performing at a festival, and we were staying in this apartment that had a shared kitchen and little rooms off, so that was kind of how that worked, it was all paid for by the festival. He was a bit weird when we were talking, like a bit too forward, and then I was brushing my teeth, and I saw him looking at me in the mirror behind me. It was really creepy. I went to my room and I locked the door and could feel someone jiggling the door afterwards. That happened.

<div align="right">Judith (female, 32)</div>

As noted in Elise's testimonial, although safety in the workplace is a human right, we consistently observed women and gender diverse people feeling it was up to them to anticipate and avert predatory behaviour from their male colleagues. Some even said they felt 'lucky' to have escaped sexual harm:

> *I feel lucky in that I never was assaulted in my workplace. Just lucky. I was surrounded by great people, most of my colleagues are male. And a lot of them helped me and gave me opportunities.*

<div align="right">Ro (female, 43)</div>

We reiterate that not being sexually assaulted in the workplace should not be remarkable. It is concerning the extent to which it is normalised in women's minds and experience.[4] Conversely, Ro describes above what a normal work environment should look like: where male colleagues are supportive, safe, and act ethically towards their colleagues. From our data, it is clear that the majority of women and gender diverse music workers still feel such an environment remains the exception rather than the rule. This is an inconvenient truth the music industry must face.

10.1.4 Case study #2: 'Sunny'

Sunny, a First Nations woman, who previously described the feeling of discomfort she experiences at industry events dominated by 'old, drunk, white men' (see Section 9.1), said that for her the hardest thing about being a young woman in music was having her voice overlooked:

> *My thoughts and my ideas just not really being taken as serious as other people. …I feel that's the one main struggle that I always—yeah, I'm not taken seriously or I'm not listened to.*

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

Throughout her interview, Sunny recounted other small acts of disrespect that included being placed first in a line-up due to her gender and having her input brushed off in the studio. While these may seem trivial at first glance, for those who experience a constant culture of being undermined, overlooked, and marginalised, they are damaging. Moreover, these acts of disrespect, which are more prevalent for Indigenous women, can be precursors to sexual harm (ibid., p 45) and compound with other risk factors for sexual harassment spelled out in *Raising their Voices:* alcohol in the workplace, isolation, low gender and racial diversity, unsupervised interaction while working with members of the public, and poor industry awareness and leadership (ibid. p. 32). These were all aspects of the experience of sexual harassment that Sunny recounted to us:

> *I felt really uncomfortable at a TikTok after-party where… I had a dress that was like a V-split and he pulled me by my dress to him like that… I got very upset and I just yelled at him and I was like, "Don't! You can't touch me like this!" …Maybe because he felt like, "yeah, she's by herself." …I'm by myself, I'm in a vulnerable position next to him and … It's like he thought, "Yeah, this time I could get away with this."*

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[4] *A perception of being 'lucky' to avoid sexual harm was also observed in testimonials included in Raising their Voices (Support Act 2022, p. 35).*

10.1.5 Intersectionality and heightened risk

First Nations people are now increasingly recognised with mainstream music awards and chart success.[5] For all the recognition their musical outputs deserve, First Nations music creators, however, remain underrepresented in leadership and decision-making roles within the music industry – observed by some to be 'a legacy of colonisation' (ibid., p.45). The *Women's Economic Security Statement* found that in general workplaces, one in two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander workers had been sexually harassed in the previous five years (Australian Government 2020, p. 62). Further, People of Colour (POC) experience marginalisation that can lead to their feeling unsafe in music workplaces, where they can often be one of only a small number of artists of colour. This marginalisation is even more pronounced for female and minority-gender POC and is noted in *Raising their Voices* as a key risk factor for sexual harassment (ibid. p. 32). In our study, Nadia, a Māori woman, said she felt her dreams were fading away due to the sexual harm she had experienced in her career:

> I just want to be able to do my job. I just want to be the artist sometimes. And dealing with the harassment and assault has made me hate what I do sometimes. I'm sorry for being so negative but I am so sad that I am watching my dreams fade away because people tend to choose to believe men over women.

<div align="right">Nadia (female, 35)</div>

As discussed, *Raising their Voices* noted very high rates of sexual harassment among gender diverse respondents, and the *Women's Economic Security Statement* found that one in two LGBTIQA+ workers had been sexually harassed in their workplace in the five years prior (Australian Government 2020, p. 62). Despite this, one trans woman in our study stated she had managed to avoid it through a conscious strategy of defensive behaviour, resilience, and through relying on her physical stature and attitude as deterrents:

> When you're six foot tall and you're willing to eyeball someone and be quite direct with them, you probably get a different response to if you're five foot one and feeling threatened and not feeling secure. We all give a vibe off, don't we? ...My particular size and deportment have probably been a saving grace for me.

<div align="right">Blithe (trans female, 59)</div>

Emily's chief concern around safety was in the online space:

> I don't understand enough online stuff, and that makes me wary of it.

<div align="right">Emily (female, 55)</div>

E-safety was a concern also expressed by Sunny, who feared as a First Nations artist she was at greater risk of bullying, trolling and online backlash for being forthright about her identity:

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[5] *For example, in 2022 of the total 63 Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) Awards given out, 14.28% (n=9) went to First Nations men (no First Nations women). Despite the concerning gender deficit, this percentage sits well above proportional representation for First Nations Australians who make up around 3.8% of the general population (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2022).*

A part of me is really scared for seeing the YouTube comments and things that might be a bit racist or certain things like that. ...I feel 'cause the Australian population's majority-white, as a First Nations person, it can be a bit daunting to put yourself out there, in situations where you feel it's possible to get any clap-back for anything to do with your race or—'cause it's hard to not take it personal when people are saying things to you.

Sunny (female, 21)

Sunny and Emily's fear is well-founded. Data from the e-Safety commissioner shows that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people experience online hate speech at rates of 33% – more than double the national average of 14% (Taylor 2023). Speaking up on issues that affect them can cost professional First Nations people dearly; First Nations journalists are frequent targets of online abuse and harassment, having a variety of negative impacts on their wellbeing and career progression (Valencia-Forrester et al. 2023).

10.2 Coping strategies and accountability

> I suppose male-dominated environments make me a little wary,
> and in music there are lots of those.

Many women and gender diverse music creators have developed coping strategies to protect themselves in music workplaces. These strategies take up time and mental load. We observed in their responses a generalised wariness, defensiveness, and strategizing around safety as an aspect of managing survival:

I have to be wary sometimes, which any woman will tell you is how you have to be.

Judith (female, 32)

Would I go back to playing in blues cover bands and playing in biker pubs in Hurstbridge? No, I wouldn't because I probably wouldn't feel very secure in an atmosphere like that. That's just being sensible.

Blithe (trans female, 59)

I definitely know going into some places that I've worked there's always that, "Hey, don't be alone with this person," sort of thing. There seems to always be that warning for at least one person. As that gets to higher up ones, that seems to be a bit more... There seem to be a lot more warnings of, "Don't be alone with these people."

Maxine (trans female, 27)

Maxine's assertion that she and others like her perceive 'higher up' music workers to be more dangerous is alarming. The reality that the most common demographic of senior members of the music industry is white, male, and older points to a need for leadership training among this particular cohort as to ethical behaviour and best practice. It also underlines the case for more diversity in leadership roles.

Two young women had experienced sexual harassment in their school, one as a student:

Sexual harassment at school is a real thing.

<div align="right">Harper (female, 16)</div>

And another as a music teacher, as recently as three days prior to our interview:

It was actually the first time as a woman, so that was interesting. The most concerning thing about it was that it wasn't from other staff, it was from a student.

<div align="right">Maxine (trans female, 27)</div>

Some struggle so regularly with the strategizing required in order to avoid sexual harassment, it leads to a re-evaluation of their career choice:

Re: sexual harassment. Every single woman has to put up with it…you learn pretty quickly that there is a difference between a man on stage versus a woman. Men can respond back to audience members who give them attention whereas I feel that if I prolong eye contact with certain audience members they latch on to me and I need to rely on the men on stage to vibe them out or [try to] do it myself without having to break the performance. This type of battle makes me wonder if I really want to continue playing music live as a new mother or just leave it behind.

<div align="right">Michelle (female, 32)</div>

Defensive strategies were widely reported throughout the study and ranged from respondents: being wary of or avoiding travelling late at night to and from gigs on public transport; paying careful attention to where they load and unload gear at night; 'playing down' what they wear; making sure they have a group of people they know around them at events and when going into unfamiliar situations, and so on. As reflected in Michelle's remark above, it was clear from the myriad examples shared that strategizing for safety in the course of carrying out their work adds significant and regular mental stress for women and gender diverse music creators.

For Xanthe, like Michelle, coping mechanisms came in the form of extra boundaries she puts up between her fans and herself. She said did not believe her male bandmates needed to exercise the same degree of caution, explaining that she is predominantly targeted by 'middle-aged to older men:'

I've got my Facebook quite private — and I don't accept requests from fans even if I've met them. It's just my rule… I do know people have been stalked and we've had a couple of slightly weird fans. I am definitely aware of fans as potential dangers I suppose at times.

<div align="right">Xanthe (female, 35)</div>

Lena had avoided sexual harassment through always 'hunting in a pack,' explaining she surrounded herself with other Aboriginal people in most professional situations. While this was an effective strategy, she admitted to feeling a sense of lost opportunity at having to plan so carefully to protect herself:

Being cautious and guarded sometimes is a sad memory to have of your performing life where you know if you didn't have to do that, you'd have a lot of wonderful things that happen before and after… I mean, it wasn't all like that, but I think having to be mindful of your wellbeing stops me from having a whole lot of experiences, some of which may have been wonderful.

Like many of the women in our study who had been in the industry a long time, Tonya, a veteran of the electronic music scene, who described sexual harassment in the 90s as 'horrible,' had developed conflict-avoidant coping strategies then to counter abuse and stay safe:

> I'd just always talk myself out of things. Happy, smiley, friendly, sneak away kind of thing.

Tonya (female, 62)

She had become relatively inured to sexual harassment over the years, even allowing herself to be the target of harassment to protect less experienced, younger women around her.

> Actually, it did happen to me just last year. It was a guy at some festival who was really harassing me. "Have sex with me, blah blah blah." Just being annoying. He was one of the other musicians on the line-up. Constantly. The whole weekend… In my head, I sort of thought as long as he's harassing me, he's not harassing anyone else, but I probably should've said something to the organizers, but I don't see it as their problem; it's his problem.

10.2.1 The perils of reporting

Maintaining the low-conflict approach Tonya had developed in the 90s is perhaps an understandable coping mechanism, but it does nothing to prevent the abuse or change industry culture, much less hold the perpetrator accountable. However, the negative consequences of reporting sexual harm are clearly documented in *Raising their Voices*. It shows that women suffer the greatest impact of reporting; women who reported their abusers were more than twice as likely (53%) to suffer financial impact than men (20%); and more than three times as likely (65%) to experience impacts to their general well-being than men (20%) (Support Act 2022, p. 58). While 40% of women reported being victimised by colleagues, peers, or bandmates for reporting sexual harm, no men reported such consequences – evidence of the strength of the Boys' Club culture in music. It also found that for people of any gender who made a complaint of sexual harassment, 24% reported that no action was taken, and that overall, those who complained were dissatisfied with the way their complaint was handled (ibid.).

While Elise's story (outlined above in case study 1) is tragic, it is also inspirational in that she had the courage to report her abuse and was successful in seeking redress and holding her perpetrator accountable. In doing so, she is in a distinct minority: the Music Industry Review found that only 3% of people made a formal report of their sexual harassment, with a full 87% of victims making no report whatsoever- either formal or informal. It found that many people had little or no knowledge of available systems for reporting sexual misconduct (ibid. p.56).

Despite lapsing into extended hiatus in her music career, Elise was at least able to identify another small benefit from reporting her sexual harassment: the support she had received from her social media followers:

> So, because of publicly confronting something difficult, I feel more seen and more supported at the moment—even though I'm not out playing shows or anything.

Elise (female, 34)

In our study we observed in respondents' remarks evidence of poor awareness of reporting, a feeling there was no support to tackle complaints, or that their complaints would not be taken seriously or acted upon if they found the courage to come forward. In some cases, this was seen to be true, with no action ensuing from their reporting of sexual harassment, adding to the injury victims experience from the abuse itself:

> I made a complaint, and it didn't go any further...I had one ongoing situation, but it wasn't dealt with properly during my employment period. It was dealt with very unsatisfactorily, and I felt very disempowered and frightened physically. Physically frightened.

Gretel (female, 57)

Talia's testimonial below illustrates the degree of vulnerability individual music workers have without strong industry-wide accountability processes.

> Once someone snuck backstage at a show I played and asked me 'so who's dick did you have to suck to get on this tour?' and I was too scared to slap him so I went and got the male tour manager to deal with him. It's a huge regret of mine (that I didn't slap him)!

Talia (female, 31)

Talia's tour manager on this occasion was apparently able to 'deal with' her harasser, but this may not always be the case – and such processes are still too *ad hoc* to be a valid pathway to protect people like her. We believe that the lack of clear and satisfactory pathways for reporting sexual harm in the music industry is part of the reason this problem persists. Overall, our evidence compels us to support the third recommendation in *Raising their Voices*: to establish an industry Code of Conduct that includes procedures for reporting grievances and clear sanctions for breaches in conduct (see Support Act, 2022, p. 18). The need for such a code and effective reporting and accountability mechanisms were also highlighted as priorities for the UK music industry in research commissioned by ISM (Williams & Bain 2022).

As we have seen, toxic workplace cultures are a major liability for the music industry. Yet even just witnessing a culture that allows sexual harassment and violence to go unchecked can be upsetting and frightening, can deter women and gender diverse people from starting out in music, and can hold back their careers:

> I never realised it but all the shake downs at the big majors lately have affected me. I thought "it's just the culture" and I swept it aside. In hindsight I believe the sexual harassment and bullying I experienced has made me fear the men in the industry.

Maria (female, 45)

> The effect of past violence and abuse has played a part in holding me back and ... it's also had a detrimental effect in holding me back in terms of confidence to take the next step or approach a bigger label or management to take things to the next level.

Jo (female, 38)

10.3 Domestic violence and its impact on work

We put the question: *have you ever experienced domestic violence*? to our interviewees.[6] We specified that domestic violence can encompass emotional, sexual, or physical violence from a former or current intimate partner. 42% (*n*=8) had experienced domestic violence, 47% had not, and just over 10% (*n*=2) declined to answer. While taken from a small participant group, these percentages align with the findings of the Royal Commission into Family Violence which found that for female respondents, 25% had experienced emotional violence, 15% had experienced physical violence, and 5% had experienced sexual violence (State of Victoria 2016, p. 50). This equates to a total of 45% for all three forms of violence, similar to the levels of domestic violence reported by our female and gender diverse interviewees.

Research reveals that in Australia the impact of violence on women, 'whether at home, online, or in the community, can also have an impact on their workforce participation and economic security' (Australian Government 2020, p. 61). Domestic violence is known to be a leading cause of homelessness and affects people with disability at nearly twice the rate of those without disability (Mission Australia 2023). Further, the 2016 Royal Commission into Family Violence noted that LGBTIQA+ experience specific forms of family violence that can include: telling a partner they will lose custody of children as a result of being outed; telling a partner they deserve the violence because they are LGBTIQA+; refusing or ceasing to recognise the victim as a man, woman, or non-binary gender; hiding, and withholding or otherwise preventing a partner from taking medication or treatment such as hormones (State of Victoria 2016, p. 145). Domestic violence impacts First Nations communities significantly more than non-Indigenous communities as reported by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW 2019). However the same report also acknowledges that 'programs that empower communities to develop local solutions to local issues such as family violence are showing promising results. For example, the Maranguka project has successfully demonstrated reductions in police-reported family violence incidents and improvements in community safety' (AIHW 2019, p.106).

Due to its widespread prevalence in society, it is perhaps unsurprising that we also found domestic violence had a significant impact on the working lives of the music creators we interviewed. For those in our study who reported experiencing it, they described varying degrees of impact to their work. Blithe described a relationship of coercive control, or 'a pattern of controlling and manipulative behaviours within a relationship' (Relationships Australia Victoria 2023) with someone she met through work. They dated over a period of several months until a violent incident occurred:

> *He lived 45 minutes away…He'd go to a gig over here and somehow have to go past my place on the way home, and of course not leave. Anyway, cut a long story short, that got nasty and came to pushing and shoving, but I stood my ground, and I told him to get lost and I managed to shut the door and then I rang the police.*

Blithe (trans female, 59)

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[6] *We felt that broaching the topic of domestic violence might be too dangerous for respondents to the online survey, who were answering questions unsupported by us and possibly in their homes.*

Blithe also revealed the impact this incident had on her both emotionally and financially:

> It had become a very stressful relationship and it was one of those things that took up a lot of emotional energy. It did distract me from my work at the time. To complicate things, we were doing some duo work together… I had to extricate myself from that… I was like "no, forget it, find someone else." I just had to pull the shutters down…He was using the gigs as a bit of a control mechanism, finding the gigs so you had a reason to have to come around and rehearse and demand that I do this and that.

Emily had also experienced domestic violence:

> With me, it was – apart from the physical – it was that stuff where you've got a manipulative bloke who's drawing you away from your friends, and then the band, the band goes on to the next tour, and you're there, and then you're stuck in that cycle… it stopped me from doing some nice tours, and work.

<div align="right">Emily (female, 55)</div>

Emily describes above a textbook pattern of coercive control where her then-partner cut her off from the support of friends and colleagues and limited her freedom and independence through not allowing her to work (Relationships Australia Victoria 2023). Like Blithe, the domestic violence she experienced impacted her financially through lost work and earnings, as well as physically and emotionally. In November 2022 the NSW Parliament passed a new law, making coercive control in intimate partner relationships a criminal offence and recognising it as a form of domestic abuse (NSW Government 2023).

> " Turned my entire life and career upside down and took years to recover. At the time no one discussed trauma or mental health and its impacts on your ability to function on a daily basis. "

Impact from domestic violence on productivity, earnings, and emotional and physical well-being were characteristics of others' experience:

> Well, it was with somebody I was collaborating with…It really fucked up the project, and it was my album… it got to a point where I had to walk away from the project for quite a while.

<div align="right">Ingrid (female, 52)</div>

Bonnie described how experiencing domestic violence exacerbated the confidence issues she struggled with already, and also said she was 'lucky' to have avoided more violence in recent years:

> I had to take one of my exes to court… It was not good. It was really bad. I almost lost my placement for uni when one of the situations had escalated and—yeah, really, really, really tough. Yeah… It probably affected my confidence to an extent… that's when I put my boundaries in what I will and would [not] stand for… I've been lucky that nothing that bad has happened since then.

<div align="right">Bonnie (female, 32)</div>

In a curious twist Bonnie goes on to describe how coming out of a violent relationship actually empowered her as a songwriter, fuelling a key lyric that led to a successful song and to high sales of her merchandise displaying the lyric. While we lament the unfortunate circumstances that led to this, her story is yet another example of the resilience that is scattered throughout the stories of domestic violence shared by other interviewees, such as Elsa:

> It was easy…I packed all his things up and said, "Look, you're not sleeping in my house again. I've had it." He accepted that and I said, "You can see the children whenever you like but this is it." That was the end. I wrote hundreds of songs after that. Every day. I had a job and three kids and I could still write songs. I wish I had that energy now. [Laughs]

<div align="right">Elsa (female, 75)</div>

Kim provides a clear example of how different factors combine to increase risk of harm from domestic violence. They described the impact of the domestic violence they experienced as having a 'deep and lasting and continuing impact.' When asked whether they believed their gender was a contributing factor in the abuse, they minimised gender as a factor (they identified as female at the time of the relationship) and instead cited their disability as the key contributing factor:

> No. If anything—in terms of identity factors contributing to how things unfolded—I think probably autism had a fairly major role to play in the sense that I wasn't able to unplait the cues that a neuro-typical person might have that would suggest that I was in danger. I'm fairly sure that my ex targeted me because I was neurodivergent. I was pretty obviously a little bit peculiar and she saw ways that she could leverage that to control and harm me. I mean I am glad and sad that I didn't come out as non-binary while we were still together. It was a good decision in the sense that it preserved me from further violence and harm.

<div align="right">Kim (non-binary, 46)</div>

The impacts of sexual harassment and domestic violence on those who experience such abuses can take a huge toll, as seen in our case study of Elise in Section 10.1 and as stated plainly by Kim:

> I am in acute trauma recovery. I have been for five years and there's no end in sight. The impact is enormous. My executive function is completely shredded and I'm not sure if I'm ever coming back.

10.4 Imagining a safer industry

> " A space where other women are present, where men listen to women, where I am included in conversations and decisions about my work, where women are among the leaders in any space or organisation, and where my contribution is respected and valued. "

As a topic of key relevance, APRA AMCOS requested us to pose this question to our online survey respondents: *What does a safe space feel or look like to you?* Of the 136 responses to this question, only seven people (around 5%) explicitly stated they felt they already had a safe space to work in. The vast majority instead articulated the ways they did not feel safe and the culture and behaviours that needed to change to provide them with safe spaces to carry out their music work. Given the numerous accounts of sexual harassment due to the toxic and unsafe workplace culture discussed above, many comments focused this particular aspect of music industry culture:

> *I will settle for a space where no one expects that they should be able to have sex with me.*

Tammy (female, 33)

> *Somewhere where I don't feel like men are going to demean me or make moves that enter into my personal space when they are drunk.*

Catherine (female, 56)

Several respondents also highlighted the need for spaces that were more genuinely inclusive of diversity in all its forms:

> *One that is queer as f*ck and with a BIPOC community presence.*

Colleen (female, 41)

> *Even numbers of diversity. I would feel more confident but 9 times out of 10 I walk into a room [with just] straight white men and myself and it can be super intimidating even if the session is for me. My...label/publishing/management are mainly white straight men. I would love to see more diversity in my teams.*

Val (female, 28)

> *Safe spaces look like gender inclusive bathrooms, award ceremonies that include gender diversity not just separating by [binary] gender.*

Lee (non-binary, 31)

> *Mixed people - genders, races, age groups. Representation.*

Ro (female, 43)

"A concerted, measurable effort by the people behind the space to eliminate discrimination based on race, gender, physical ability. A hard-line, zero tolerance policy to any kind of dangerous or disrespectful behaviour, especially sexual assault or abuse. Supportive, caring and attentive staff."

As noted above, many of our respondents displayed encultured attitudes driven by sexist tropes that indicated they felt somehow responsible for the abuse they had experienced. Despite this, we also noted

several respondents who put the onus squarely back onto music industry leaders to take responsibility for the poor behaviour of its workers and its toxic culture if they genuinely hoped to attract more diverse genders:

> *Toxic work environments and sexism and harassment are not limited to major labels. They are thriving in all areas of this industry…there is very little regulation and monitoring which is a large issue. Also the government has little awareness of how this industry works. We need stronger advocacy.*

<div align="right">Paula (female, 40-50)</div>

> *Tell organisations to stop supporting misogynistic artists like Rancid Eddie and Sticky Fingers…Stop giving artists platitudes and start giving them what they actually need - money for shows and less assholes who sing about rape at the top of the charts.*

<div align="right">Mica (female, 31)</div>

Mica refers to controversial Sydney band, Sticky Fingers, who have faced allegations of 'violent, racist and transphobic behaviour' (ABC 2023). The decision taken by Bluesfest to withdraw Sticky Fingers from its 2023 line-up is an example of pro-active (if not decisive)[7] action to demonstrate that the music industry does not tolerate toxic attitudes and behaviour. We applaud such action and recommend more leaders embrace this kind of allyship as a key step towards including diverse genders and women in greater numbers in the music industry and ensuring their well-being and safety within music workplaces. It is time to cease catering to a culture that prioritises the feelings and successes of examples of 'bad boy' musicians (ibid.) over everybody else.

> " There needs to be more education about appropriate behaviour in the industry, so women feel comfortable entering this space. "

10.4.1 Reforming venue culture

Venues are workplaces; music creators, road crew, technicians, and performers alike all have a right to feel safe in the venues where they go about their business. Many respondents indicated a desire for reform in terms of venue safety. This was expressed as wanting respect for their personal space, that the consumption of drugs and alcohol was effectively regulated (including at gigs), and that dedicated safety zones were provided to them within venues. Some also identified the need for signage at venues that communicate safety protocols and clear processes around accountability:

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[7] *The decision was taken by Bluesfest organisers only after several major artists sharing the festival bill withdrew, citing Sticky Fingers' problematic values.*

A space should be welcoming, friendly, flexible and clean. Following this I would like to see clear boundaries, rules, etiquette for people in the space, processes in place should anyone have a complaint, and good processes for accountability and improvement.

<div align="right">Yuna (female, 34)</div>

In the workplace, i.e. a music venue or studio - there is a fair balance of male and non-male staff and musicians, there is a private place for me to go before and after a set and safely store my gear, there are clear signs (especially in licensed venues) that make help available for me and other people to ask for help (e.g. at the bar) if someone is bothering or threatening me.

<div align="right">Saint (female, 22)</div>

Chelsea (female, 54), a single parent, 'constantly struggled with babysitters both financially and with their reliability,' so was obliged at times to take her children with her to gigs. Yet she felt there were no safe spaces for them there. Green rooms 'were often filthy with no privacy,' and there was 'the inevitable dick-and-balls graffiti' which she felt was inappropriate for children. For Chelsea therefore, safe spaces were, 'Green rooms [with] suitable female change rooms/toilets' that could cater to the needs of mothers and their children. We endorse this idea, but take it a step further, and would recommend gender-neutral retreat spaces for all parents with babies and children, including for those who are breast-feeding. Such spaces are already available in some large retail stores, shopping centres, and hotels, and could be required as part of licensing requirements at all-ages venues and family pubs where live music is played, to better support music workers and audiences.

Our study contained some concerning first-hand accounts of sexual assault occurring while women were working:

Venues where the owner doesn't get drunk, grope your breast in front of everyone at the bar then tell you "It's okay, I thought they were fake".

<div align="right">Jamie (female, 29)</div>

When venues start to incorporate SAFE spaces. I've been physically and sexually assaulted at my places of work and I'm OVER IT.

<div align="right">Nadia (female, 35)</div>

These remarks speak directly to the findings in *Raising their Voices* as to the very real risks women experience in venues where they work, where behaviour is largely unregulated, and where alcohol increases risk of sexual harm.

I don't think I know what "safe" means.

<div align="right">Andie (non-binary, 46)</div>

Music Victoria has published a set of 'best-practice' guidelines for venues for transgender and gender diverse inclusion (Music Victoria 2023). These include the provision of bathrooms and retreat spaces for all people including an all-gender bathroom, making any sanitary bins and tampon dispensers available across all toilet facilities, and free posters and signage that communicate a no-tolerance policy towards transphobia. We recommend these guidelines to all venues taking safety reform seriously.

10.4.2 The importance of 'soft skills'

Beyond the issue of physical and sexual safety, our data also revealed another high priority: for many, safe spaces are workplaces where high-level soft skills are practiced and expected. Perhaps because they are traditionally encultured to practice them, so-called 'soft skills' are highly important for women. They include careful communication, kindness, sensitivity, acceptance, and welcoming, flexible, inclusive, and respectful attitudes and practices. These ideal spaces also feature more diverse teams, payment for work, clear codes of conduct, and female and gender diverse leadership:

> *A place where I, and all of my bandmates and crew, are respected, listened to and treated with kindness.*
>
> Oxana (female, 41)

> *To me it's a space where people can say how they feel and be taken seriously. Where I don't feel like if I express myself I'm going to jeopardise my professional relationships or my career.*
>
> Alice (female, 28)

> *One where I can ask for help without people thinking that it's a sign of weakness, one where my gender and my newfound status as a mother isn't considered a liability.*
>
> Olivia (female, 39)

> *People listening to each other and giving each other space and time to talk/contribute.*
>
> Maggie (female, 40)

> *One where I am not harassed, sexualised, put down, underestimated. One where I feel an inclusive energy, celebrating people coming from all different (positive /truthful) places, where I am paid in some way for the work I do, rather than taken advantage of.*
>
> Jewel (female, 50)

> *Inclusive language, actions not merely words relating to diversity, openness, and willingness to learn and be corrected.*
>
> Ricky (non-binary, 33)

> " Where references to my gender are not made or rarely used.
> Respect. Professional boundaries. No drugs or alcohol in the work
> environment. "

10.4.3 A focus on their work

Many respondents said that emotional and psychological safety was a priority. For them, this meant being taken seriously for their music and ideas, rather than being valued for their appearance or being judged according to their gender, age, dress, sexual desirability, or physical attributes:

A space I can wear whatever I want and not feel judged/looked at. A space where I can voice my opinions and feel respected.

Frankie (female, 22)

Respectful attitudes towards me and my profession. Taking my work seriously and taking me seriously regardless of my look or gender. No belittling pet-names please ...I'm not your darling or your love unless you're my life partner or close friend.

Shauna (female, 41)

A safe space feels like a place where I can dress how I want, say what I want and have none of that thrown back at me simply because of my gender.

Maya (female, 20)

A space where I am allowed to work without being sexualised or judged for my sex or age, rather than just my ability.

Kenya (female, 41)

In a work situation, it's where people talk openly, exchange ideas and conversations, but don't make sexual advances or bring the conversation around to what I look like.

Eva (female, 40)

A place where the men in the industry are not sleezebags [and] people are honoured for their talents not their sex appeal.

Kylie (female, 56)

The sheer volume of comments from women and gender diverse people whose definition of a safe space boiled down to feeling included, valued, seen, heard, and respected for their talents and opinions, points to a very problematic music industry culture where it would appear they are currently not accepted for who they are, or treated and respected as equals.

10.4.4 Leading change with sound values

The links many respondents automatically made between a culture of respect and a sense of increased personal safety are reinforced by the research; as already discussed, small acts of disrespect can often lead to more egregious forms of harm (Support Act 2022). With greater awareness emerging of the ways in which the toxic Boys' Club culture that has traditionally dominated the music industry contributes to gendered disadvantage and sexual harm, it is likely that studios, venues, and professional organisations that demonstrate genuine inclusivity and respect will attract increasing numbers of clients. One respondent even went so far as to name a studio that set a gold standard as a safe space:

[Studio] in Christchurch. Run by two guys who have, in the few times I've worked with them, never shown a hint of any kind of discrimination or chest puffing. No signs of "don't touch that, little girl, you don't know what it does" or mansplaining. No big name dropping, no clock watching – just creative humans, supporting other creative humans. That should be the bar.

Rae (female, 36)

Others spoke of the importance of eliminating ignorance, power games, and structural hierarchies as a pathway towards safe industry practices:

A place where there is very little hierarchy - where everyone is treated equally and managers etc. don't pull rank.

Amy (female, 74)

Formal education, empathy and systemic change for inclusive, accessible structures.

Bo (non-binary, 24)

Female-led workshops by successful people... the freedom to create without the intrusion of people with a vested interest in the business aspects of your career throwing their weight around and feeling they have a right to influence the creative process. No bullying or power tripping.

Clementine (female, 30)

It's one where the players are able to feel they are all on an equal footing, and where gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, race or any other non-musical factor is acknowledged but not in any way an impediment to working together to create music. Everyone's input will be listened to and treated respectfully. It's where everyone is striving for the best possible result.

Annette (female, 61)

It feels like a mutually respectful relationship amongst all collaborators where humour and kindness are our super powers. It's joyful and brimming with creativity.

10.5 Conclusion

The visions expressed by our survey respondents paint an optimistic picture for safer spaces where all voices are heard, and all people are treated professionally and valued for their music. They hold up a model that the music industry can and should aim for. However, they represent a utopia that is a long way from reality for most female and gender diverse music creators today. Our study found that approximately one half of female and gender diverse music creators had experienced career impact from either sexual harassment in music workplaces with a similar percentage experiencing career impact from domestic violence. Some respondents had experienced both. Our research provides solid evidence of impact from sexual harassment and violence to music creators' careers that adds to a growing body of research about sexual harm in the workplace (e.g. Support Act 2022; Australian Government 2020; Australian Human Rights Commission 2020). Sexual harm can occur at any age, to people of any gender, but is more prevalent for women and is further increased when intersectional attributes such as diverse ability, trans and/or diverse gender, and minority race are present in people's identities.

As stated in the Women's Economic Security Statement, 'preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace is central to boosting women's workforce participation' (Australian Government 2020, p. 61). This is a chicken-egg situation; it is known that a key driver of sexual harm and sexual harassment is gender inequality, which means music creators work in an industry that is predisposed to these risks due to the entrenched gender inequality that exists within it.

However, we believe there is much the music industry can and should do to avert workplace sexual harm and we believe the onus should be squarely on music industry leaders, organisations, educational institutions, and business owners to ensure safe workplaces as far as possible by developing widespread understanding across the industry about appropriate conduct through consultation with stakeholders, resulting in an industry-wide Code of Conduct. This should not only be limited to physical and sexual safety but should also lay foundations in respectful ways of communicating and treating others in work contexts.

Further, we believe another urgent priority is to create industry-wide, formal reporting pathways. We observed from our survey responses an urgent need to communicate with all people in the music industry the ways in which they can hold people accountable for sexual misconduct and can be held accountable themselves. As per Recommendation 15 of the Music Industry Review's report (Support Act 2002, p.21), this needs to be backed up by strong industry mechanisms for reporting. From our qualitative analysis we believe that until these standardised pathways are in place and widely understood by music workers of all genders, reporting will continue to be ad hoc, and any support received will be dependent on the good will (or otherwise) of those individuals in positions of trust and power to whom the abuse is reported. Standardised systems for reporting are long-overdue for the music industry and are urgently needed as a priority to ensure all music creators can work safely and without fear of harm to achieve their full potential.

Industry culture is also in need of reform; after-parties, gigs, and industry networking events create a toxic culture where predators are enabled, and alcohol exacerbates poor behaviour that puts women and gender diverse people at even higher risk than they would otherwise be. Intersectionality affects some music creators more regarding sexual harassment than others. The non-Indigenous population can and should assist and support Māori, Moriori, and First Nations people to feel safer. The same need for allyship applies to POC, trans, and gender diverse people. Being an effective Ally means being educated, aware, and vigilant to the impact of compounding marginalisation. Calling out racism, sexism, homophobia, and transphobia when it occurs; listening to and valuing the input of Māori, Moriori, First Nations, POC, and LGBTIQA+ people; 'having their back' in music workplaces, in venues, at gigs and networking events; making sure they have support in professional, public, and online situations are easy places to start, where all in the music industry can make a difference.

Domestic violence also impacts female and gender diverse music creators' careers at unacceptable levels, with consequences to their financial, emotional and physical well-being reported. While preventing domestic violence is beyond the control of any industry, the music industry could do more to provide its workers with support when it occurs. Recognition of the prevalence and impact of domestic violence on music workers is needed first, followed by industry-specific support services for those impacted by it.

These might include financial hardship relief, referrals to safe housing, provision of temporary studio facilities, rehearsal and office spaces, free counselling and medical services, and childcare.

We observed a general wariness, defensiveness, and strategizing around safety as an aspect of managing survival for women and gender diverse people that is taking up their time, and mental and emotional energy unfairly. Again, the onus should be on workers of all genders to look out for each other and take responsibility for their own conduct. Free allyship training to support women, LGBTIQA+ people, Māori, Moriori, First Nations, POC, and those with disability is needed from within industry organisations to accelerate cultural reform that leads to safer workplaces.

Although safety in the workplace is a human right, we observed attitudes among a number of female respondents that reflected a skewed perception regarding their right to safety. Several said felt 'lucky' to have escaped sexual harm or domestic violence. Education is urgently needed to create an industry free of victim-blaming, where expectations and standards around professional behaviour, consent, and respect are clearly communicated to workers of every gender. The current accepted workplace culture that normalises small acts of disrespect must also change. Where people's opinions are undermined or dismissed, sexual harassment is more likely to follow. Unfortunately, such expressions of power are common occurrences for women and gender diverse people in music workplaces as seen in our study's testimonials. Instead, our study revealed that women and gender diverse people value and seek workplaces where high-level soft skills such as respectful and inclusive communication are practiced and expected. Further, they view such workplaces as safe spaces. It was clear that for many their emotional and psychological safety was a priority, which they felt was supported by being taken seriously for their music and ideas rather than being judged according to their physical attributes.

While we acknowledge recent efforts by certain organisations such as APRA AMCOS and Support Act to address these issues through commissioning research, we believe the Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand music industries are the poorer in every way for allowing an ongoing culture of disrespect, sexual harassment, and sexual violence to go largely unchecked, and individual workers are suffering unacceptable levels of harm for their choice to work within these industries. Meaningful and decisive action is now needed. In financial terms alone, this issue is costing the industry dearly; according to the Women's Economic Security Statement, each year sexual harassment costs the Australian economy $3.5 billion; and domestic violence against women and children costs Australians $26 billion each year, with victims and survivors bearing half that cost themselves (Australian Government 2020, p.62.). Such a loss of potential revenue is unsustainable in a music industry that is under pressure to keep pace with rapid technological and social change. Further, the loss of expertise and artistic output for both individual creators and the industry represents a huge waste of human and cultural capital that is unnecessary and avoidable. Reforming safety procedures in the Australian and Aotearoa/New Zealand music industries will have the greatest impact on women and gender diverse music creators and will assist in addressing and ameliorating many of the related issues this report.

Intersectionality

This research deliberately took an intersectional approach to its design and data analysis to account for the perspectives of women and gender diverse people whose experiences in music practice may be complicated by the various social identities they embody. Intersectionality, coined by American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), is a lens of critical feminist analysis that facilitates a nuanced understanding of how institutional biases impact people in marginalised groups in different ways. With its roots in critical race theory, the concept of intersectionality was originally designed to explain the compounded experiences of marginalisation experienced by Black women. In her 1989 essay, Crenshaw uses the US legal case of Degraffenreid v General Motors to demonstrate the ways that Black women experience racist marginalisation in a way that is different to Black men, because it is compounded by sexism, and experience sexist marginalisation in a way that is different to White women, because it is compounded by racism.

Contemporary applications of intersectionality apply this framework of analysis to a variety of intersecting social characteristics that may compound marginalisation and prevent access to power and resources. Used in this way, it problematises the assumption that the experiences of all members of a marginalised group, for example, women, are going to be the same, and that social phenomena such as the gender pay gap, discrimination, political marginalisation or violence are going to be experienced by all women in the same ways and at the same rates.

> I think you can't just look at gender alone - you need to think of it across class, race, sexuality, and disability. A white cis woman with financial means does not have the same barriers.

In acknowledgment of this, an intersectional approach asks us to consider disadvantage and privilege within groups as well as between them; in this context, how working-class, rural, First Nations, Māori, Moriori, trans, primary carers, older, or disabled women and gender diverse people may experience sexism and marginalisation in unique ways that demand specific analysis and tailored interventions to address.

In the context of the Australasian music industry, an intersectional approach can provide valuable insight into the institutional and societal factors that contribute to issues such as poor representation of, or lack of opportunities for diverse women in music. Issues such as racism, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism were mentioned by a number of the participants in this research as significant barriers to their careers, job satisfaction and personal wellbeing.

11.1 Racism

The barriers presented by racism were sometimes reflected upon by First Nations participants and those with culturally and linguistically diverse family backgrounds. There was a broad acknowledgement across all participant backgrounds that there were institutions and individuals within the music industry that were implicitly or explicitly discriminatory towards 'outsiders':

> *Based on being any kind of outsider, like a woman or a queer person or if you're brown or whatever, I think there are people who will just never hire you if you're in the creative fields. I think that filters out a lot of people.*

> Judith (female, 32)

This particular quote from Judith reveals a low level of confidence in her capacity to achieve equity and a sense of belonging in the music industry. Regardless of the actual rates of discriminatory practices in hiring, such a perception is concerning as it is likely to have a negative impact on an individual's aspirations and ability to see themselves as competitive for jobs or other opportunities. In addition to negative perceptions, there were examples in the research of women and gender diverse people experiencing direct, interpersonal racism in their work. Participants' explanations of these situations usually identified stereotypes and prejudices as the underlying causes:

> *The more you get out of Sydney and [into] your remote, local, regional [areas], you get the two-car welcoming committee, with the local…police, when they see a carload of blacks with one or two whites, that stuff is still there…You just try and get a taxi in any city with a group of blacks, you're not gonna get it.*

> Emily (female, 55)

Emily describes a range of racist situations drawn from personal experiences of herself and her First Nations colleagues. These range from racist expectations of her behaviour (drunkenness or unreliability), to being refused a taxi or drawing the scrutiny of local police in rural areas due to prejudicial assumptions about the character and the intentions of First Nations people who gather in groups.

Some participants also reported a sense of generalised anxiety about the risk of experiencing interpersonal racism. A particular narrative from a First Nations musician reflected findings from the Australian e-Safety Commissioner (2022) that publicly visible women experience disproportionate rates of unwanted, negative comments or abuse on social media. She reflected on the consequences of featuring in a televised discussion about First Nations' perspectives on January 26 (Australia/Invasion Day). The abuse that she received directly and indirectly on social media following the interview was surprisingly intense for her:

> *I did a [TV] interview for Invasion Day and the comments were so bad, and it's not like I said anything bad. That's just the nature of being a First Nations artist in this day and age in Australia. It's something that hopefully will change over time, but it's something that I feel like I will always have to struggle with in my career.*

> Sunny (female, 21)

Disappointingly, Sunny and other non-White participants expressed a resigned acceptance of the status quo; that structural racism and racist abuse were 'the nature' of being active in their chosen career in Australia, a sentiment mirrored by participants in Valencia-Forrester and colleagues' (2023) research on the online experiences of First Nations journalists. These findings reveal the need for strong antiracist leadership in workplaces and representative bodies, and further consideration of the impact of social media abuse on women and marginalised populations in the Australian music industry.

Aside from direct, interpersonal racism, some participant narratives revealed the perception of a general institutional bias that devalues First Nations perspectives and ways of working:

> It's asking us, me, our mob to work in a way that is not natural to us… and our value is not easily recognisable in [the industry] anyway, so why are we gonna go and try and fit that window?

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

Lena's views on the Australian music industry reflect the concept of 'Whiteness,' a term that is used to argue that existing social institutions have been built to be responsive to the expectations, aspirations, truths, sensibilities, and other cultural protocols of their architects – in this context white, Australian men. Lena's comment about being expected to 'work in a way that is not natural to us' speaks to the problems often experienced by minoritised populations who try to navigate the institutions of a society that, in some cases, carries a legacy of actively working against their interests. In the context of the Australian music industry, Lena's reflections provide insight into the tensions that can arise between the status quo norms within musical practice, management, and decision-making, and First Nations ways of knowing and working, which can result in feelings of being dismissed, overlooked, or not valued.

11.2 Homophobia

Encouragingly, explicit examples of contemporary homophobia were not often reported by participants, though those with careers spanning multiple decades frequently reflected on social progress concerning the respect afforded to LGBTIQA+ people in public spaces and in the music industry specifically. Pockets of progress appear to be different depending on the time, the location, and the genre of music practice; for example, Blithe (trans female, 59) noted that 'the rock and roll scene back in the 1970s and 80s was a haven' for gay and gender diverse people, but also recounted an experience of being ejected from a band in the 1980s before she transitioned because another band member would not tolerate the inclusion of a gay person.

As discussed in the earlier analysis of the Boys' Club, being a lesbian was not always felt as a negative in a male-dominated environment:

> I think if you know who you are, and you're open about something like your sexuality, I think people are gonna be a little bit more careful, maybe… I think men would be even more careful because… if something feels sexual, a gay woman is gonna pick up on that immediately because there's no way that that can fly under the radar.

<div align="right">Judith (female, 32)</div>

I've said… "I've quite enjoyed the Boys' Club. I've been able to get in there and they've given me opportunities and I've gone to meetings. I've had drinks with them." [My partner] said to me— "Do you think maybe it's because you're gay, that it's easier for you?" I said, "Well I think it's just a personality." Then she said, "But do you think also that there could be that it's easier for you to be part of the boys?"

Tania (female, 36)

For Judith, being gay may serve to draw a firm boundary and essentially deflect sexualisation and the male gaze in the workplace. Meanwhile Tania's personal anecdote reveals that, while there are still a multitude of ways that queer people are not affirmed within the workplace, there appears to be progress in some environments for some individuals, whereby their sexuality is an advantage as to how they are perceived and treated. It is also very important to restate the importance of community in supporting queer people in the music industry, where queer people and their allies have forged networks that provide mutual social, logistical, and financial support to address structural inequities.

11.3 Transphobia

For the small number of gender diverse participants in this research, transphobia and prejudice were characteristic of their career development and contemporary experiences. Fortunately, most of the explicit examples of transphobic abuse or discrimination had occurred in the distant past, suggesting that there are genres, scenes, and locations where being trans is not an insurmountable barrier to social acceptance and career success.

Some responses from non-binary respondents revealed there was an increased sense of isolation, marginalisation, and difficulty for these individuals in navigating music work environments. As above, trans participants often reflected on how the 'scene' they are involved in as queer music practitioners provided a sense of community that they can draw on as a resource. Some of the participants described their social and professional circles consisting of other queer or marginalised artists who were funnelled in by alienation and discrimination. For these participants, their communities were a valuable source of strength and affirmation, as well as practical career support.

11.4 Ableism

Participants who have a disability often mentioned this as a significant, and often insurmountable barrier to success in the music industry; its institutions, workplaces and social norms are often inaccessible for people with disability, causing an extraordinary amount of additional labour:

Autism is a mixed bag. It's one of my greatest gifts. It can be extremely disabling. I actually think that really, to the extent that autism is disabling, society is to blame, not autism. I am disabled by the fact that I don't work very well within what counts as societally normal. In order to work well in normal society, I have to bend myself into an extremely exhausting pretzel shape.

Kim (non-binary, 46)

Kim importantly acknowledges that disability is largely a social construct; that individual people are not disabled by their physical, intellectual, or psychological conditions, but by the social, cultural, and

physical infrastructure that is inaccessible to them. Their autism is one of their 'greatest gifts', affording them an invaluable perspective that enriches their music practice. However, masking their disability to meet the social expectations of others drains the energy they require to achieve success in their field. Kim indicated further that having a disability often evoked a generalised scorn from the industry, commenting that they feel like a risk, a problem, or 'a terrible proposition' for promoters, funding bodies or potential employers (see Section 7.2). Kim's comments about their body and appearance reveal important insights into how their disability, age, and gender intersect to produce a specific set of disadvantages for them.

Earlier in Section 7.1, the beauty standards and sexualisation that women in the music industry are subject to were discussed. The pressure to achieve a certain physical appearance was particularly strong for women who saw themselves as 'old' – or at least, not 'young'. Many of the participants who commented on this pressure see mainstream success or recognition as increasingly out-of-reach as they age because of feminine beauty standards and the consequent marginalisation of ageing women. Women and people who are gender nonconforming, or with disability, evidently feel additional layers of pressure, where the intersections of beauty standards, gender norms, sexuality, and disability come to bear.

Other participants raised more general concerns about their ability to feel a part of the music industry or to access the training and opportunities they need to develop their careers:

> I lack a sense of belonging. I feel there are cliques in our industry, and I feel on the outer a lot. I don't feel I can get the big success I have always desired for due to it feeling so inaccessible to me – because of my appearance, my disability, and my skill limit.
>
> Monica (female, 32)

Here, Monica also mentions her appearance and her disability combining to limit the opportunities she has been able to access. On the impact these problems have had on her career, her outlook was rather bleak:

> I feel I can't reach my goals. It feels impossible.

These participant reflections on the deeply embedded institutional ableism in the contemporary workplace and our broader culture highlights the need for more specific attention to be paid to disability. It is important that industry bodies, promoters, and individual businesses commit to fostering equity in opportunity, developing more appropriate work environments, and facilitating representation in music practice, both behind the scenes and on stage.

11.5 Rural and regional music creators

A significant number of participants discussed the personal and work-related challenges of living outside of major urban centres. These issues were raised most often by those who live in regional or rural areas of large Australian states and outside of capital cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The most prominent themes in the narratives of women and gender diverse people in rural and regional areas are the challenges associated with distance from job opportunities, local networks, venues, and poor industry support for regional creators.

By far, the most common issue raised in discussions with women and gender diverse music creators in rural and regional areas was the distance from major urban centres. Participants did not express resentment about living outside of capital cities, but usually acknowledged that this is where the majority of music practice, networking, and job opportunities take place. For some, the distance meant that travelling for gigs or for regular work was, at best, cumbersome and inconvenient, and at worst, impossible:

> When I was living in [location], it was a bit hard sometimes, because when opportunities would come last minute, I couldn't just be like, "Yeah, I'll be there." It's like, "Oh, well, I have to travel for hours," and factoring in getting ready and coming all the way back.

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

While Sunny lived in the outskirts of the nearest capital city, requiring hours of travel to attend events, most others lived far enough away that travelling without significant prior organisation was not possible to do. Ingrid, who lives some distance from the nearest capital city for her physical and mental wellbeing, acknowledged that all activity associated with the genre she is active in is concentrated exclusively in urban areas:

> The only reasons I would want to be in the city is because you need to be in a city to get any work, but also to sort of have a participation in the electronic music scene or production at whatever level.

<div align="right">Ingrid (female, 52)</div>

This narrative demonstrates the ways that music creators in rural and regional areas actively balance the demands of their health, wellbeing, and family life with their careers. Unfortunately, in most cases, career trajectory appears to be negatively impacted by living outside of urban centres, perhaps for some genres and forms of music practice more than others. As a result of her circumstances, most of this participant's interaction with other musicians and consumers is via the internet.

Similarly, Xanthe, quoted below, acknowledges the 'blessing' associated with living far away from capital cities, or the 'rest of the world'; there is little congestion, the air feels cleaner, and there is more of an idyllic, small-town environment. On the other hand, the 'curse' associated with living in these areas is, again, the lack of career opportunities:

> I mean, being in New Zealand is always a blessing and a curse because it's so far away from the rest of the world. You can go overseas and make connections, but it's very hard to continue them. It's also harder in terms of finance to make it look like a good idea to sign a band or to tour a band out of New Zealand.

<div align="right">Xanthe (female, 35)</div>

According to Xanthe, the music scene in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in a broad sense, suffers from its geographic isolation from the rest of the world. Its location provides logistical and economic challenges both in bringing in major international acts to perform and for local acts wishing to tour internationally.

There were a small number of others who acknowledged initiatives that provide networking and mentoring opportunities for women and gender diverse people but critiqued the lack of meaningful involvement extended to people outside of major urban centres.

> *Being far away, you don't have a lot of those networking opportunities and stuff that you might do, say if you're in Brisbane, and everyone gets to meet people and you can pick their brains and see a little bit behind what they're doing. Whereas we sit in the background and see them on computers and on phones. It's a bit weird to just send them a message and be like, "Hey, how did you write that song? What was in your head then?"*

Bonnie (female, 32)

Here, Bonnie recounts experiences of online networking sessions where there is little opportunity for organic, face-to-face conversation with potential collaborators or mentors. We chose to highlight this issue to problematise one-size-fits-all approaches to promoting the interests of women and gender diverse people in music; clearly, in cases such as these, the provision of mentoring and networking events in a hybrid, online format is not fully satisfying the needs and desires of those unable to attend in person. The experience of participants like Bonnie urge that we rethink what inclusion looks like for music creators in rural and regional areas, where offering an opportunity to spectate on an in-person event does not always lead to meaningful outcomes.

For these participants, a secondary challenge to living in rural and regional areas was how small the music scenes tend to be, and the politics and cliques that can impact opportunities as a result. Living in a rural or regional area meant that a high level of social capital was required in order to navigate the local music scene. Opportunities in some areas appear to be circulated within specific social circles, and those not involved can struggle as a result.

> Being so far away from a big music capital [is challenging]. It's pretty small and cliquey up here in Far North Queensland and it's a bit of who-you-know as to whether or not you are successful.

In some areas, according to Kim, the local music scene was under-supported because of a sense of 'cultural cringe'. A broad preference for interstate and international acts meant that local music creators feel overlooked or underappreciated:

> *Getting a foothold where there's a massive cultural cringe and people are imported from the mainland as a rule, rather than local talent being used—is also a big problem.*

Kim (non-binary, 46)

Despite these challenges, there are participants in rural and regional areas who have dedicated much of their careers to championing local music. The sense of attachment to, and pride in place is demonstrated by some of the reflections about living in rural and regional areas:

I live rurally, [and I] need to be part of something that gives back to my community. I count a lot on funding because I feel like I'm bringing value to my community.

<div align="right">Jo (female, 41)</div>

Examples of the efforts made by participants include building local enterprise; starting events; managing databases of venues, musicians, and relevant opportunities; and co-ordinating social media pages. The aim of these activities is to ensure that there is raised awareness of local talent in rural and regional communities, and that music creators in these communities can be connected to opportunities. However, there was near-universal acknowledgment among the participants who took roles as local advocates that these efforts came at the expense of their own career trajectories:

[I] try to make regional community a viable context for quality art music-making. I don't have many performances and recordings by performers with cred. I've written for those in my community, few of whom are really expert. I still believe in the cause, but over 30 years it has taken a professional toll.

<div align="right">Bhuva (female, 65)</div>

Many participants in regional and rural areas raised what they perceive as a general lack of industry-level or government support. Consequently, being an active music creator outside of a capital city was often described as tough, requiring a disproportionate amount of effort and self-investment:

I've struck quite a lot of difficulties and had to be very resourceful in terms of being a mum and being isolated and not having opportunities that you get in the big smoke. I've definitely had to make a lot of stuff happen for myself, and if I don't do it, nobody else is going to.

<div align="right">Jo (female, 41)</div>

Here, Jo refers to the experience of having to create opportunities for herself, as there is a lack of a self-sustaining music scene in the area that she lives in. In cases like these, the responsibility for cultivating an environment that can support music careers rests largely with individual artists, requiring meticulous planning and self-advocacy. Opportunities to find work and host events are therefore limited by a lack of financial resources and people power. To remedy this, participants expressed a desire to see stronger support and advocacy for the interests of rural and regional creators at an industry level:

I feel there would be more amazing work coming from the Deep South if there was a stronger presence of support and advocation from the music industry here, encouraging them to thrive and stay, rather than feel they need to leave home to achieve opportunities.

<div align="right">Chloe (female, 40)</div>

Chloe argues that the talent in the 'Deep South' of Aotearoa/New Zealand needed stronger industry support to grow the local music scene, rather than creating the need for artists to leave in order to find work. In the view of participants like Chloe, the talent flight caused by under-resourced regional areas creates a self-fulfilling prophecy; people leave, which causes the scene to shrink and lose life, which causes more people to leave, and so on.

11.6 Conclusion

An intersectional analysis of women's and gender diverse people's experiences of music practice reveals rich insights into compounding barriers to success and wellbeing. While traditional modes of analysis would view the experience of women and gender diverse people as homogenous, with a sole focus on shared experience, an intersectional analysis accounts for the ways that their experiences and worldviews vary within and between the varying social and political identities they embody. It allows us to understand how the experience of being disabled, living in a rural area, being trans, POC, Māori, Moriori, or First Nations can present complex or unique challenges or (dis)advantages that require specific attention for women and gender minorities. It demands a response that is not simply one-size-fits-all, but that is targeted, tailored, effective, and importantly, socially just.

The analysis in this section reveals that continued investment in support, mentorship and career development opportunities for First Nations, Māori, Moriori, and artists who are POC/Women of Colour is required. Such support must be delivered in a culturally appropriate way, responsive to legacies of injustice, and mindful of stereotypes and prejudices that, evidently, still permeate broad sections of society. Continued championing of marginalised artists, including queer, trans, and disabled artists is identified as a need by several participants. The narratives of these participants in particular reveals the need to foster a broad sense of belonging that does not simply relegate artists to specific geographical areas or social scenes.

An important factor to consider in developing equity initiatives for women and gender diverse musicians is geography. The analysis in this section reveals significant need for participants living in rural and regional areas, who do not have access to the same social supports and work opportunities as those living in urban centres and capital cities. A lack of opportunities and talent flight has a negative impact on local music scenes, and creates a vacuum of talent, demand, and networking opportunities. Importantly, a small number of participants criticised the tendency for equity initiatives to be, quite literally, phoned in; providing an online link for rural and regional people to spectate on networking events in capital cities provides neither the experience nor the outcomes that they desire.

A theme that runs across most participant narratives in this section relates to mentorship, reflecting our findings regarding role models (see Section 4.2). Participants who have social experience of marginalisation are interested in accessing and providing mentorship with and to others like them. The development of peer mentorship opportunities at an industry level may provide marginalised artists with mutual social and career support from somebody with similar life experience, illuminating pathways to success and wellbeing that are relevant and possible for their circumstances.

Resistance, solidarity, and support

An important objective of this research was to examine the ways that women and gender diverse people make space for themselves and support others within the Australasian music industry, particularly where that support may not be freely available to all. Participants were asked about their feelings of belonging, the communities they participate in, and the impact of representation and solidarity from others, particularly those with shared experience of marginalisation. From this data we identified some primary themes: practices that cultivate belonging; activism and resistance to industry norms; and solidarity within 'the Sisterhood' and queer communities.

12.1 Cultivating belonging

One of the primary ways that participants actively cultivated a sense of belonging was through formal and informal mentorship to other women or queer people. Importantly, there were examples of women who had been mentored or supported by the men in their workplaces. However, the desire and the need for mentorship from other queer people was articulated well by Kim:

> *[I have] a really multi-faceted mentoring role also. I'm modelling good musicianship, basic skills, listening skills, ensemble skills, but also communication skills. How to be accepting, how to be open. How to be successfully queer. All those things. How to be successful in your own divergent way.*

> Kim (non-binary, 46)

The ability to look at paragons of success and see people like themselves was particularly powerful for a lot of the participants who discussed role modelling and mentorship (see Section 4.2). This shows how mentoring is a powerful intervention in creating a more welcoming music industry where more diverse creators can feel like they belong.

Another important initiative identified by participants as central to cultivating belonging was high-level industry support for the work of women and gender diverse people in music. A number of participants commented that they had taken advantage of scholarships, funding schemes, residencies or commissions that were specifically identified for women, gender diverse people, or First Nations people. These opportunities allowed them not only to work and receive financial support, but to get the experience required to encourage career development. Devi commented that the visibility of these initiatives is gradually increasing, and there is broad awareness that such opportunities exist:

> *The music industry has also become increasingly supportive ... through equity initiatives that are open to women and non-binary composers, such as calls for works.*

> Devi (female, 57)

However, many of the participants commented that more work needed to be done in this area. Especially where projects, gigs, and other work opportunities were concerned, participants commonly called for more commissioning targeted to marginalised populations. These opportunities are seen as a valuable way to bolster the portfolio of women and gender diverse people, allowing them to take advantage of future work opportunities:

> *Commissioning for people who are disabled, commissioning for people who are not men. Commissioning for people who are not women or men. Commissioning for culturally and linguistically diverse people. Commissioning for Indigenous people. All those communities should have a crack. I think for every open commission, there should be one of each of those.*

> Kim (non-binary, 46)

Kim's proposal highlights a shared concern among many of the participants in this research; at present, some feel there are simply not enough opportunities for women, especially queer women, disabled women, CALD women, and First Nations women to be able to get a foot in the door to mainstream opportunities (see Section 4). Acknowledging the real benefit of recent and emerging initiatives such as Dr Christopher Sainsbury's First Nations composer program, Ngarra-burria (with the Australian Music Centre and Ensemble Offspring); the APRA AMCOS suite of annual mentorships for women and gender diverse composers; the AIR Women in Music Mentorship Scheme Australia; the Australia Council's targeted grants for First Nations artists and organisations, among others, there is still a need for industry bodies, governments, and mainstream commissioning organisations such as symphony orchestras and opera companies to address this issue to rectify past exclusionary practices. This support should be ongoing and embedded into industry structures, and, according to participants such as Gretel, needs to come from the top:

> *I actually think at the top level, we need a dedicated minister with a portfolio [to], number one, acknowledge the arts, and then quotas from there. I actually think that at a really high level we need this value of what we do and a value that everybody can do it.*

> Gretel (female, 57)

> " I think quotas are an important way to move towards equality. Specifically, in [screen] music, where there is such a huge gap, I think it would be really good if production companies look at the slate that they have and think about how many of those composers are women. "

The concept of quotas was specifically mentioned by several participants as a potential remedy for a lack of representation of women and gender diverse people in the music industry, especially within the upper echelons of project management and industry representation. While there was no consensus among all participants that organisations and government departments should use employment or line-up quotas, they were widely seen as a potential first step in fixing immediate problems in workplaces, representative bodies, and music events that have traditionally been constituted largely by men. UK music industry body

PRS has led the Keychange initiative,[8] which asks festivals, orchestras, and event curators in every genre of music and all territories to adopt targets for programming an equal mix of male and female (or non-binary) composers' works. While the Keychange mantle was taken up also by some of the more equity-conscious organisations in Australia, such as Ensemble Offspring, it has not gained the same level of traction in our own region as in the 23 countries that pledged a 50/50 gender balance by 2022 across 130 festivals. This might be the focus of future activism from our own music industry leaders, as expressed by Rilke when asked about quotas:

> I can't really see how else it's gonna change. Certainly. I think festivals, I don't see why that should be so hard. Why should it be? It's not like we're not as good at it. You know what I mean?

> Rilke (female, 41)

A sense of belonging was actively cultivated by developing positive workplace environments. Often, participants discussed positive workplaces that were actively co-constituted with other women, other queer people, and with the men they worked with. Positive workplaces were certainly not reported by all, and we feel it is important not to minimise the experiences of sexism, misogyny, and sexual harassment reported by many people in this research. However, encouragingly, many of the participants who are active in music practice reported having very positive relationships with the men they work with, considering them important sources of career support and mentorship.

> Generally I feel more respected and that the workplace is more 'woke' with more guys being allies, being more aware of what is appropriate and calling out behaviour if it comes up. I feel like I can call it out more safely too, without feeling like I will lose the gig if I call someone on something dodgy.

> Ro (female, 43)

> [I've been] very [supported], particularly by men - key partners without whom I would not have succeeded. They've had high regard for my skills & knowledge, and me for theirs.

> Kate (female, 72)

For these participants, the allyship of men has been instrumental in their feeling safe and valued in their workplaces. Particularly in the case of Ro, there is a tacit acknowledgment that this is the result of positive momentum; that workplaces have improved over time, becoming more 'woke,' as she puts it. Unlike the common pejorative deployment of this term, Ro sees a 'woke' workplace as a positive. Such a workplace, in her view, provides a space where she can play an active role in negotiating protocols, practices, and standards of behaviour without facing the negative consequences of speaking out.

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[8] Keychange is led by PRS Foundation, supported by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union, in partnership with Musikcentrum Sweden, Reeperbahn Festival, Iceland Airwaves, BIME, Tallinn Music Week, Way Out West, Liverpool Sound City and Mutek.

12.2 Activism and resistance

In the undertow of discussions on inequity, there was evidence of organised resistance to industry norms and the status quo. A theme in many responses was the act of taking matters into one's own hands; some women and gender diverse people who were unable to access opportunities or acknowledgement within the mainstream turned their backs and forged a path for themselves. In other cases, where women and gender diverse people were dissatisfied with the pace of social change, they created grassroots initiatives to address equity locally where they saw it and felt it.

For a group of the participants in this research, resistance against industry norms meant actively eschewing the support offered by industry bodies and other funders. For these women, their independence in style and practice was a specific feminist act.

> I've made a point never to [seek funding]. I've never applied for any grants or anything like that. I just don't. I don't want to be beholden to anybody.
>
> Tonya (female, 62)

> I have received little or no interest from the "industry" in terms of management, booking agencies, etcetera. I have conducted my career on my own terms to cater for the needs of my family.
>
> Chelsea (female, 54)

> This study is long, long overdue and the misogyny and sexism in the music business has long existed. It can be debilitating for a female songwriter and artist to continue with so much negative messaging. I stopped writing and recording for years when "the industry" told me being a parent was not cool, and being older than 25 was not viable. The damage has been devastating emotionally and taken many phases of healing to bring me to a place where I am now writing and recording on my own terms in a way that I am truly creatively satisfied. With absolutely no support from "the industry" currently.
>
> Ash (female, 52)

These artists clearly see participation in mainstream industry practices as inherently compromising their values and their artistic vision. Especially in the cases of Chelsea and Ash, this attitude appears to come from a perception that the industry, parsed within scornful double-quotations in their survey responses, is not interested in the success of musicians like them. This feeling of alienation from the industry (thoroughly discussed in Section 6) is articulated too by other participants whose independent practice is a result of their perceived marginalisation, rather than a conscious decision to operate on the fringes. For these participants, the sense of frustration and exasperation was palpable:

> I'm at the point where I don't care anymore. I can't be assed trying to interface with what passes for the music industry in this country, or even in an independent underground way.
>
> Ingrid (female, 52)

Concerningly, there are a small number of participants such as Ingrid who see no point in engaging with the Australian industry because they have not been able to receive support to achieve the success that they feel they are capable of. Despite this, very few of these respondents said they had left, or were

considering leaving music. This resilience and determination to succeed despite perceptions of harshly stacked odds were evident in the way that some participants talked about their music practice. Especially for those who considered themselves independent or 'anti-industry,' there was resigned acceptance that mainstream recognition and success were not going to factor in their careers. But the love of music and music practice keeps many of these artists in the field. This sentiment is summarised by Anna, commenting on her resilience in the face of discrimination:

> I keep pushing through. Discrimination makes me more determined to not give up but also to hone my craft.

<div align="right">Anna (female, 45)</div>

Where the pace of social change was too slow, or where industry bodies and governments were taking too long to act (or were not acting at all), women and gender diverse people in music were creating solutions to identified problems. Social media was a particularly strong theme in discussions about activism and organised resistance. Many participants disclosed that they were involved in or ran Facebook groups or other online collectives that shared opportunities, or served as a body for collective agitation in service of women's interests, and those of gender diverse people. This phenomenon was commented on generally by Xanthe, who discussed how social media groups had improved women's music practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand:

> Because of things like the #MeToo movement, people have been working to be more connected. So, Facebook groups or organisations trying to start more meetings and put on more seminars and helpful things like that. I think it's galvanised people around things like festival line-ups.

<div align="right">Xanthe (female, 35)</div>

Other participants also reported using social media as a tool of activism and awareness-raising concerning issues such as representation of women and gender diverse people in events and festival line-ups and local gig opportunities. However, there were also examples of individual participants who were heavily involved in activism concerning broader social issues affecting women and gender diverse people in music, such as mental health, burnout, and social movements for racial equality.

There was a growing realisation that women and non-binary people were beneficiaries of new industry initiatives that promoted their inclusion through positive discrimination, for which some expressed gratitude and excitement. This was evident in Bonnie's remark, that revealed not only did such initiatives assist her in combatting the lack of confidence she expressed earlier, but also the disadvantage and isolation she felt as a regional musician:

> I've recently got into the Women in Music mentoring program… I was really excited about that because we don't get a lot of real industry knowledge, solid stuff up here because we're so far away, it's really hard to know any of that inside stuff.

<div align="right">Bonnie (female, 32)</div>

12.3 The Sisterhood

An important theme that emerged from our analysis was that of women music creators drawing on and supporting other women. This theme can be traced throughout our report and is evident in many responses already quoted. Expressions of female solidarity or 'sisterhood' ranged widely – from remarks that indicated that the lack of visibility of women in the industry was a hindrance in terms of envisaging and achieving success, to regular reflections that show that women feel the most supported when they can see others like themselves working in their field (see Section 4.2):

> I don't feel unsupported, but I do wish I had a few more older women to talk to about their experiences. It just feels quite lonely at times.

Alice (female, 28)

> I am self-employed. I have had the most support from other women in the industry.

Ruth (female, 58)

> These observations can be linked to the theme of isolation and alienation experienced by many women in the music industry see Section 6). Where there was not such a network women expressed a craving for it:I would like a network of like-minded women in the music Biz.

Maria (female, 45)

> "I have been gigging for 10 years and it has astounded me how male dominated the industry is. I feel like I am fighting barriers every day and every now and then something amazing happens like the Australian Independent Record Label women in music mentoring which I am very grateful for. I do hope things change I am only sad that it will not be in my time but maybe for the young women we can set an example."

Several respondents provided evidence of what, for most women, is knowledge based on an encultured aspect of growing up female - which is that they are safest around other women. This enculturation involves women looking out for other women, or a sense of duty to support and protect each other (see more in Section 10). This way of being is expressed below by Tonya in a multi-faceted way, visible through her instinctive drive towards solidarity through mentoring younger women, physically protecting female colleagues, and offering female 'groupies' support:

> I had a jam yesterday with a girl who just wanted to learn bass, and she wasn't very confident, so I was showing her some bass. Especially in the early days, the early 90s, I felt there were a lot of women who were being, you know, guys would try things on them. You know, buy them drinks blah blah blah, and I was very protective of them, 'cause I was always 10 years older than everyone else. There was one example I can think of, there was a guy, and he said to me, "Can you drive [x] home, and I'll take [y] home?" I said, "Well, no, because they live in the same street,

so I'm driving both of them home." I would always talk to a lot of the groupies. I'd just try and give them more self-worth, I guess.

<div align="right">Tonya (female, 62)</div>

Some women reported solidarity with their own gender as a very intentional means to strengthen each other:

My manager's male and my label head is male and I made a big thing to them. I was like, "Everyone needs to be female on my team." Then that's what they did, so it is just all females working on my team: marketing, publicist, my social media person, they're all women. Then my booking agent's a woman as well, same as my creative director.

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

I've always had other Black women around me in my performing life or had other Blackfellas around me.

<div align="right">Lena (female, 46)</div>

Lena extended her expression of solidarity with her own gender to solidarity with other First Nations people. These two aspects appeared to go hand in hand, showing that, for First Nations women, solidarity is intersectional. Similarly, some queer women expressed solidarity on intersectional terms:

I think the feminist and queer stuff is overlapping inherently. I think those people are thinking about the same kinds of social constructs...so they're people who are trying to push boundaries and get ideas out into the world. Those things have always overlapped.

<div align="right">Judith (female, 32)</div>

Numerous participants revealed that they experienced the process of engaging in our study as a positive intervention that felt like an act of sisterhood in itself:

I have so many more personal stories and there are so many more aspects to these issues. I was surprised how good it felt to be 'heard' and answer these survey questions.

<div align="right">Jen (female, 62)</div>

It's really nice to be asked. Sometimes I feel like no-one cares about these issues and I ask myself "aren't there other mothers who are musicians out there experiencing the same challenges I am"? It would be lovely to get us all together for a sing and cry and hug one day!

<div align="right">Shauna (female, 41)</div>

I think it's wonderful this study is happening. I would be happy to be more involved in future. Despite the challenges, I feel genuinely optimistic about the future and how the industry is slowly but surely starting to really value the perspectives of historically silenced creative people.

<div align="right">Billie (female, 31)</div>

I'm just glad you're reaching out and asking the tough questions!

<div align="right">Maya (female, 20)</div>

Such responses provide further evidence of the all-too-prevalent awareness of their own marginalisation and disadvantage women music creators possess, and the alienation they experience as a result. To the research team, such comments (which were freely volunteered in response to a final question that asked if respondents had anything else they wished to mention) indicate that there is an urgent need for greater support through professional networking, informal social interaction, and other tailored opportunities for women at the industry level. We suggest that, in co-design with stakeholders, these interventions might be regularly held, and embedded within industry; importantly, they should take an intersectional format and be promoted as events for female and gender diverse composers, including those who are queer and trans, carers, older, Indigenous, POC, or differently abled.

It is evident from the wide range of responses where a sense of solidarity was articulated that 'the sisterhood' is a natural source of strength for female music creators. We believe there is power to be harnessed here, were the industry to leverage it fully, that has the potential to go a long way towards countering the isolation, lack of confidence, paucity of role models and many other issues identified throughout this report to be holding women back. If the music industry could commit to more fully supporting and connecting women and paying them to lead in forming strong, lasting and widespread networks, at all levels of the community, the current issues that dominate and limit their participation and success as music creators might instead give way to pride, inspiration, and strength.

> I'm very proud to be a woman. I love being a woman, I can't imagine being anything else. I feel that it connects me to all the other women in my life that inspire me and all the women that have gone before as well that inspire me, and that's a very strong current for me.

12.4 Queer communities

As mentioned in Section 11, many of the participants who disclosed that they were LGBTIQA+ reported that they felt supported by queer communities both in their personal social circles and in their professional lives. In response to a survey question that asked about the kinds of communities they are involved in, queer participants tended to list queer communities, LGBTIQA+ communities, or gender diverse communities specifically. Participants who were openly queer shared experiences of being connected with other queer musicians or workers in the industry, where opportunities, favours, mentorship and other forms of practical career support were circulated between each other. For some queer participants, this was an important source of solidarity and friendship, and fostered a strong sense of belonging:

> *Well, there is the Gang of Four, we call ourselves, which are the other three trans women that I've known for a long time.*

> Blithe (trans female, 59)

*I've sort of found myself amongst some really amazing queer creative people. I'm queer myself,
and so that's been an important thing for me to find, my community.*

Judith (female, 32)

For many of the participants who commented on sexuality and gender identity, queerness, in general, was perceived as normal within music and music practice:

*Most of my friends are people that I work with, or people who also are gender diverse or in other
ways not straight, not cis. Queerness in general is overrepresented in creative industry.*

Kim (female, 46)

However, we note this theme was localised specifically in the data gathered from queer participants, suggesting that queer musicians and workers in the industry gravitate to each other in genre, in social scenes, or through marginalisation, being pushed to the margins and, often, away from the mainstream. In Section 11.1, we included a quote from Judith, who said that 'outsiders' such as queer people and people of colour were routinely discriminated against in the creative fields, and so they are often prevented from taking advantage of major career opportunities. However, she continued to discuss how occupying the margins with other similar people has certain advantages:

*There are pros and cons to that. I think that's how I've ended up in quite a diverse set of people
because I am different and they're different, and we kind of found each other.*

Judith (female, 32)

As discussed in Section 11, experiences of overt homophobia or transphobia appear to be very rare in contemporary music practice, although it was characteristic of the Australasian music industry in previous decades. However, a similar appetite for mentorship and for specific, focused opportunities for queer and gender diverse people exists within this data.

12.5 Conclusion

This section accounted for participants' feelings of belonging within the broad fabric of music practice in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand, and emphasised the importance of communities, solidarity, and mentorship (as initially identified in Section 11). These experiences were reported as particularly valuable for participants who are First Nations, disabled, or LGBTIQA+. These participants usually reported being connected to informal networks of care, consisting of others with shared experience. Within these networks, social support, job opportunities and casual mentorship are circulated. Taken together with the evidence reported in Section 4, it is clear there is a need to create opportunities for community involvement and mentorship at the industry level, to support the careers of women and gender diverse music creators and others who are socially marginalised.

Special industry focus: Production careers

APRA AMCOS indicated during initial consultation for this study that addressing the stark lack of diversity in producer roles was a key priority for their organisation. For example, in the end-of-year top 10 singles charts in the UK in 2022 just 1.67% of songs were produced by women (Donne Women in Music 2022); and the Annenberg USC's 2021 analysis of the US Billboard Hot 100 year-end chart found that just 3.9% of music producers for this collection of songs identified as female, a figure which went down to 2.8% when averaged across their seven-year longitudinal analysis (Hernandez, Smith, & Pieper 2022). While reliable figures for this area of music in the Australian and New Zealand contexts are not currently to hand, there is a similar distinct deficit of women and gender diverse music producers within the mainstream music industries of these countries.

In response, the research team asked respondents to the online survey: *Would you call yourself a music producer?* We received 181 responses to this question. Nearly half, or 48.61% (*n*=88) responded 'No'; 36.46% (*n*=66) responded 'Yes'; and 14.91% (*n*=27) were unsure or did not give a clear response.
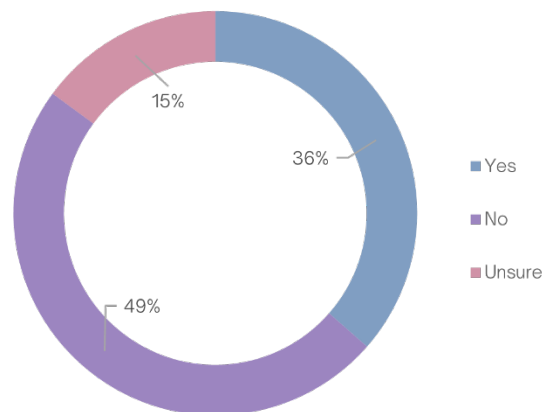
Figure 16: Proportion of online survey participants who identify as producers.

While we found the number of affirmative responses to this question encouraging, it does not correlate to the data found in many other surveys that place percentages of female producers on high-level commercial projects consistently in the single digits (see Smith et al. 2019; Hernandez et al. 2022). To understand the gap identified here between the number of women and gender diverse music producers who are recognised by the industry and the number who self-identified as producers, we qualitatively examined the responses to the following parts of this question: *If so, please describe what you do? If not, what stops you producing your own or others' music?*

13.1 Confidence in technical aptitude

Taking the latter part of the question first ('*what stops you producing?*'), participants regularly cited either a lack of skill or a lack of confidence as a reason for not calling themselves a producer or not producing others' music. Often this was expressed as a sense that although they may have had the musical skill and directorial vision to produce, they felt they did not have an adequate degree of technical skill to advance in this area. This reflects the dominant theme in our discussion in Section 5: that for women and gender diverse people, low confidence and low perceived competence with music technology can inhibit their progression in music tech roles.

Further, for them, musical and technical ability are conflated in their assessment of the skillset required to be a producer. The reasons they cited for not producing their own or others' music typically included a lack of confidence or anxiety about their technical skills, particularly with computer software, or a lack of access to the necessary equipment.

> *I would love to produce my own music (and when I have dabbled with making demos in the past I've enjoyed it and had good outcomes) but I am not naturally technologically minded and find it difficult to summon the energy to learn.*

> Toni (female, 43)

Toni's self-assessment as not being 'naturally' technologically minded is perhaps indicative of internalised unconscious bias about what women are supposed to be good at and reflects the commonly held view in society that technology is a male domain (Hopkins and Berkers 2019, p.50). Many responses indicate that women subconsciously subscribe to this view without interrogating their own assumptions:

> *I believe I co-produce a lot of my work. But I do not credit myself as a producer on my records, not sure why. I think it's due to my lack of technical knowledge.*

> Frankie (female, 22)

> *I write my music and know how I want it to sound but my technical abilities hold me back in recording my own music.*

> Jamie (female, 29)

> *I wouldn't call myself a producer as when I produce my own music (which I have to do often...) I feel like I don't really know what I am doing. I just use my ears and hope for the best!*

> Raven (female, 27)

> *I would [call myself a producer] in the way of creative direction and arrangement but the technological side that I think this question is referring to, I haven't got a grip on. I feel pressure to be good at it straight away and get embarrassed when I'm unsure of anything. I think it definitely stems from this unconscious expectation for women to have to be close to perfect at something before they're taken seriously for it.*

> Ky (female, 28)

Ky's comment echoes Jess's comment in Section 5.2 that there is extra 'pressure on women to be extraordinary' which is perhaps a result of being in a minority in the music industry and receiving more scrutiny as a result. Their responses conjure the commonly cited trope that women have to work twice as hard, or be twice as good at something as their male peers do. In particular, Frankie and Raven, quoted above, show reticence to claim the title of 'producer' even when they are, by definition, producing their own music. Perhaps due to the added pressure women and gender diverse people feel, it was felt by many that being highly technologically proficient was a necessary hurdle to overcome before being able to call themselves producers or seeing themselves producing for others.

> *I don't think I have enough experience as a producer to feel comfortable producing someone else's music, although I do think I have some skills in the area.*

<div align="right">Oxana (female, 41)</div>

> *No. Probably lack of confidence in recording and editing techniques although I'm working on this. At the moment I am employing others who have expertise in these areas to help me.*

<div align="right">Su-Yun (female, 57)</div>

However, as with the comments in Section 5 about music technology use, there was a strong undercurrent in respondents' overall remarks of a willingness to build on their technical capacity to become a producer by shoring up their existing skills.

13.2 Producing is men's work

Some women felt that the blocks to producing were directly related to their gender:

> *I never felt there was a place for me to study production easily and the industry is so male dominated that I felt intimidated to enter this world.*

<div align="right">Kenya (female, 41)</div>

> *I produce my own music but producing for others is largely not possible as there is no real vehicle for being hired as a producer, or available network. The known 'producers' have become their own little 'boy' click & the industry is stuck, always using the small pool of men who are already known as producers, so they continue to get the work and other capable visionary women producers have no avenues.*

<div align="right">Pip (female, 50+)</div>

> *I produce my own and have worked with female artists to produce their vocals and backing vocals. I have had great reviews for my work but all offers to produce local male artists have been fruitless.*

<div align="right">Rae (female, 36)</div>

> *It's hard to find female producers who want to produce for other people (that aren't DJ's). It's quite lonely and feels like a boys' club that is super hard to crack.*

<div align="right">Coco (female, 34)</div>

In education settings, music production and technology tend to be coded as masculine (Wilcox 2022a; Hopkins & Berkers 2019; Strong & Cannizzo 2019) – a factor that feeds forward to disadvantage women and minority gender music producers. This was evident in several responses:

I went to a music school up until year 12 and I wasn't forced to learn production - even though it was taught - as I was normally the lead singer, being the only female in the class. If I could have my time again I would have pushed harder to learn more instruments and especially learnt how to use the production software.

Val (female, 28)

Xanthe observed the discrepancy in her progression as a producer compared to her brother. She attributed the delay in her use of technology to her gender and to the lack of female producer role models:

I started doing producing now when I'm 30, I think it started two years ago...I think I see a lot more men who have started that earlier, whereas I've only got a few role models in the last few years who're women doing production... I only recently came to learning what good plug-ins are, and how to use certain things a bit more extensively... I've always been interested in production. Straight out of high school I did a live sound course, and as one of like four out of 30 women in the class. I do think there was a boys' club thing that existed where they go off and talk about that kind of thing. ...I think that still exists today, but people are a lot more aware of it existing and I feel a lot more like I can go and be like, "Hey, what are you talking about?" Whereas [before] I wouldn't have been in a position to ask, I wouldn't have even been there in the room.

Xanthe (female, 35)

> " Time, resources and motivation are factors preventing me from being a more active music producer. "

13.3 Other factors

In line with our findings in Section 5 that socioeconomic status and available time were key factors in determining a music creator's access to, and time with professional music technology, it was observed in many responses that time and money were also factors that limited people's access to gaining the specific skills required for producing:

I would love to be able to produce my own, and the music of others, but the ability to get my head around the technology involved is incredibly time consuming. It is hard enough as it is to make it as an artist, to then have to add on an in-depth knowledge of music production software, and then find the money required to afford the equipment - it's all a bit too hard from my end.

Yoko (female, 37)

No. I would like to however do not have the skills and can't afford the equipment.

Amelia (female, 40)

I have produced strings for a few artists, dance, rock, acoustic rock. I have recently produced a world music show. What stops me is money.

Yuan-Mei (female, 44)

I feel I don't know what to do and it would be a financial risk to buy the equipment if I am not good at it.

Liz (female, 36)

I produce my own music and I am interested in collaborating with other producers. I probably could produce for others but I am not actively pursuing purely production for another artist as it is not financially viable for me right now.

Penelope (female, 32)

I haven't had enough time to learn how the technology works. I've spent more time song writing and learning my instrument and making ends meet.

Alice (female, 28)

I would describe myself as an emerging producer. I have self-produced for a long time but have only recently begun taking on projects with others... I feel there is a lot I need to learn before getting further into pop production. The things that have hindered me include a lack of time (due to other work and life commitments) and lack of access to the education that could help me to fast track my skill development.

Yuna (female, 34)

In several cases, time constraints were directly linked to respondents' carer responsibilities:

As a single mother with 2 children when I started...my free time to develop my career was very limited. Due to financial constraints couldn't afford childcare and didn't have much support...so if I had any free time it was used in writing songs not Producing them.

Kylie (female, 56)

I have never had time to gain any real mastery over technology as have been a sole parent often working 2 jobs outside of music.

Chelsea (female, 54)

I wish! I very much enjoy recording and producing at home, but I have kids now and my life is ruined.

Harley (non-binary, 50)

Disability was again cited as a factor that further inhibited progression to producing roles:

My disability has slowed my learning progress and my mental health adds to this stress.

Monica (female, 32)

I can produce rough demos of my own music, and in most cases certainly do more than write melodies and lyrics. I work with my producers to get the sounds and structure that my songs

require, however, my technical skill level with DAWs prevents me from doing a lot more. Also, ADHD really makes working with the relevant technologies VERY challenging/overwhelming for me.

Georgia (female, 34)

> I'm never sure exactly what it means. What stops me is probably limited time as a mother of 3 and also wanting to use the time I have on making my music.

13.4 What is a producer?

Overall, a notable confusion as to what being a producer actually entails was evident in many responses, which indicates a lack of transparency about the role. For example:

No. I don't really know what a music producer is.

Nat (female, 39)

I've never tried it. Don't know how to start.

Lindy (female, 45)

An air of mystery surrounding the producer role was clearly articulated by Nina:

I am co-producing a current album recording, and through this process have realised that the creative ideas I have for production and arranging, as well as the technical knowledge of how to achieve those sounds are the key elements of a producer in this environment. I have previously fully produced an EP, as well as co-producing a previous record, but didn't consider (or know, really) that fleshing out the sonic landscape and having a clear vision for the sounds that I wanted is still producing, even if someone else then refines and engineers those recordings.

Nina (female, 38)

Nina's testimonial is evidence of how keeping information about the producer role confined to the tightly held circles within which producers move is stopping others from understanding the work producers do, which makes it difficult for them to identify their own production skills. As work in this area is dominated by men who, in relation to women, are hired as producers at the rate of 35:1 in the US (Hernandez et al. 2022), this knowledge is largely being denied to women and gender diverse people. Further, we observed that, through their poor understanding of a producer's role, many outside it set standards and expectations for themselves in this area that are unrealistic. This compounds with the previously cited pressures women feel to be 'perfect' in their work and appears to stop them either self-describing as producers, or even trying to become producers. Counter measures are urgently needed to fill this gendered gap in knowledge if the field of music production is to ever become a more inclusive one.

We observed in the responses a general feeling that being a producer is out of reach, a closed shop, or 'secret men's business,' even among those who disclosed that they are, by definition, successfully producing music. It is important to underline that such remarks were not isolated but recurred across the

online survey in notable numbers. This was clearly expressed by Lee as a block to which they offered a solution in the form of mentoring:

> *After studying it at uni, a lot of the secrets have been demystified. I have found over my career, men behind the console tend to hold on to their information as a means of holding onto power. It's nowhere near as confusing or mystical as people make it out to be. I am now a practising recording and mixing engineer and am delving into more electronic production aided by a mentorship.*

<div align="right">Lee (non-binary, 31)</div>

Education and mentoring were cited as beneficial to demystifying the producer role and empowering artists to take control of their music. Sunny was able to name just one female producer whom she had worked with. Nonetheless, this had been enough to inspire her to try to take charge of her own production:

> *She's a bit older than me… she doesn't really need anyone to help her finish a project. She can mix and master it, produce it, and that's something I aspire to be… To be honest, I've only ever had one session where a female has produced …and I don't think I've ever been in a session where it's been another woman on the desk actually doing stuff…It's only once I've ever had that experience. Then that influenced me to really get into production.*

<div align="right">Sunny (female, 21)</div>

Perhaps a key issue here is that the role of producer is seen as a primary, creative leadership role within music industry culture. Producer roles are highly sought after, making them very competitive. Further, producers can become very powerful within professional circles, as their specific form of creativity is fundamental to generating an aesthetic or 'brand' that artists benefit from in reaching particular audiences and selling songs. This can in turn result in high earnings for producers, a high level of professional influence, and in the most successful cases, even celebrity. In short, being a professional producer is high-stakes music business.

The blocks recorded here speak to those we have already observed in participants' testimonials: not seeing themselves adequately or positively represented in their field of practice; not being able to envision pathways forward; not seeing themselves represented as leaders. These industry-specific inhibitors are not helped by traditional associations in mainstream society between 'masculinity, technological skill, and control' (Hopkins & Berkers 2019, p.50). If women and gender diverse music creators are not stepping up to be producers, we suggest it is in part due to their overall absence as leaders and creators in high-stakes areas of music (such as high-grossing popular songs, mainstream orchestral and operatic repertoire, feature films and series soundtracks). Addressing these areas of invisibility will also have flow-on effects for gender balance in producing more broadly.

13.4 Ways forward

As a possible indicator of how the music industry and music educators might address the 'producer problem' to include diverse genders in this field, it was noteworthy that some participants redefined the term 'producer' to reflect a different kind of leadership role less grounded in technology and more grounded in their own approach to their music practice, which they felt equipped to lead and control:

Only in the last year have I dared to call myself a producer. I am halfway through recording and producing an album of my work. I recorded and released 8 albums with producers. This is my first time self-producing. It is something I believed I could NEVER do. I thought it was beyond my ability.

Ruth (female, 58)

I think when people hear producer they think you make 'beats' or electronic music (neither of which I do). I write my own songs, and then when I can, I record them and share them with the world.

Star (female, 32)

I produce/compose my own music but I use the label composer rather than producer.

Angela (female, 40)

I currently record, engineer, mix and master my own music, and I love having creative control over my music throughout the whole process of composition. I believe mixing and mastering are creative pursuits, and as a composer with a clear creative vision, I want to bring that vision to life every step of the way...I also think it is of paramount importance for women to be technically proficient, to be able to see their vision through, and prove to a patriarchal world that we are the masters of our own creative ideas.

Billie (female, 31)

Many respondents were getting the results they wanted for their music by working in tandem with other producers:

[I am] learning how to produce my own music with my producer.

Ella (female, 20)

I would call myself a budding bedroom producer...I'm currently learning how to demo out sounds and styles that I'm attracted to...In studio sessions for myself or others I can vocalise my ideas but not necessarily create them myself so need to work alongside another producer or engineer.

Dexy (female, 32)

I go to a studio to "produce" my songs with an experienced producer.

Catherine (female, 56)

I produce to demo level and work with other musicians and producers who are more skilled or trained in music production for the finished product.

Ghita (female, 43)

Several responses from women affirmed that increasing the numbers of female role models in the music production space might be a powerful way to provide a pathway for other women to take up producing:

I am learning the skills I need to become a producer on my own. At the moment I rely on others with more skills in the technology side of things to help me realise my visions. Until last year I didn't believe I could produce my own music and always relied on men to help me with this. Now I

work with women who have shown me that its absolutely possible to do it if I put in the time to learning the tech.

<div align="right">Violet (36, female)</div>

It's taken a while to get me to the point where people see me as a producer in that I'm now being asked to remix and produce for other artists. What I do notice though is that when emerging female artists are coming through they seem to be always recommended or teamed up with the same young male producers every time. I actually believe these young women would have a better experience working with someone who relates to them more - but that's just me.

<div align="right">Chantelle (female, 45)</div>

Chantelle's statement speaks to our discussion in <u>Section 4</u>, where we found that same-gender role models were more effective than male role models for most women and gender diverse music creators.

Those who were leading projects as producers were notably few. However, they provided some strong statements that articulated a clear sense of self-worth, technical skill, and confidence in their capacity as producers:

I produce all original electronic music ... across a range of genres including electronic, downtempo/chill and cinematic electronica.

<div align="right">Jamala (female, 39)</div>

I produce my own albums, singles, and music videos. I oversee the creative vision from start to finish.

<div align="right">Jelena (female, 38)</div>

I'm a regional musician, so nearly all my original performances or recordings are self-produced.

<div align="right">Bhuva (female, 65)</div>

> " I am a music producer. I have credits on about 50 CDs and probably another 50 tracks released digitally ... I produce tracks for myself, collaborations, and remixes. "

13.5 Conclusion

Many participants indicated either directly or indirectly that they do produce their own music or have done so in the past. However, they were reluctant to call themselves 'producers' because of a lack of understanding of the role, lack of confidence in their skills and abilities, or lack of specific experience. Often, they felt they had the musical and directorial skills to produce but as they did not have a perceived adequate degree of technical skill they did not identify as producers according to the standards they assumed were needed by the music industry. Many responses reflected an unrealistic expectation that being a producer means being able to carry out every aspect of the engineering, arrangement, technical, and creative production of a project, which in reality is usually shared around a team.

These findings speak to what we discovered as a notable lack of understanding as to what being a producer involves; for many female and gender diverse music creators, it is clear that mystery enshrouds the term 'producer,' which works further to lock them out. Those who were active as producers were mostly working as co-producers or learning the role with the support of more experienced colleagues. Reaffirming our conclusive remarks in Section 5, many respondents stated or implied their willingness to consolidate and build on their existing technical capacity, if supported to do so, in order to become producers. This was felt by many to be a necessary step before being able to produce for either themselves or others.

On this point, the online survey asked participants in a later question if there were any areas of music they would like to be professionally engaged in but felt unable to move into (Q26). A number of participants responded that production was such an area and indicated either that: they did not feel they had the requisite education or skills; did not feel supported to secure these opportunities; or did not feel confident leading in an environment that they perceived to be male-dominated.

We believe the question of access is a key concern here. Access to this professional area was generally seen to be problematic, whether due to gendered cliques, lack of transparency, financial constraints, time pressure, disability, caring responsibilities, or lack of access to technology and professional studio equipment. There were some overt references to a Boys' Club culture that overlooks women and gender diverse music producers, making it difficult for them to get hired. In addition, there were multiple references to production being a tightly held and competitive domain that was difficult to break into for those who were not cisgender men.

The music industry's concern over the stark gender gaps in production must now be backed up by vigorous, consistent, and targeted action informed by these data and other international surveys cited in this report. To address these critical gender deficits, especially at the high-stakes, high-status end of the industry, we urge APRA AMCOS and other leading organisations to now take concrete measures to:

- Increase transparency within the music industry to facilitate greater understanding among women and gender diverse music creators as to the detail and scope of the role of producer.

- Organise established male producers to take a lead in demystifying their role and increasing accessibility for women and gender diverse people.

- Roll out unconscious bias training within the music industry and education sectors to counter prevailing sexist attitudes around music technology and producer roles.

- Establish (paid) mentoring programs for women and gender diverse music producers, where they can co-produce on high-level projects with established producers. Offer same-gender mentors where possible and ensure that mentees receive a co-production credit on all releases.

- Spotlight and champion established and emerging female and gender diverse music producers, to enhance their visibility, grow their potential, and attract more gender diversity into producing roles.

Recommendations and conclusions

The five sets of recommendations below are developed from the findings of the Women and Minority Genders in Music study. The research team acknowledges that they are ambitious as a suite of changes, and that it will take years to action them. We also acknowledge that the report and these recommendations were co-designed and co-authored by researchers living in Australia. Therefore, while we put these suggestions to the music industry and others living in Aotearoa/New Zealand, we acknowledge the many people there who are already working on these issues and suggest that that they should be consulted with regard to any of our recommendations below. We extend that acknowledgement to all those already working to address these issues in Australia.

We therefore envisage these recommendations as a set of guidelines by which the music industry and education sectors might navigate towards reform between 2024 and 2030. We strongly encourage their implementation with appropriate stakeholder consultation over the course of the next six years to position the music industry as a safer, more welcoming, and more profitable space for all music creators.

14.1 List of recommendations

14.1.1 The education sector

We recognise the way that western society sees 'formal education' is through more institutionalised teaching. Further, as researchers, we acknowledge that, while now rising to be recognised as more equal in the music industry, Indigenous-led forms of music have been suppressed and subjugated by colonial structures and that music has been an important form of resistance for First Nations, Moriori, and Māori peoples. In regard to the western, institutionalised model of music education, we believe the gender gap for music creators begins in this system. Reform is needed to categorisations that exist inside this system that define composition and music technology as male domains. We recommend that music industry organisations:

1. Mandate music technology education as part of standard secondary and tertiary music syllabuses.

2. Develop and offer training modules for university lecturers and secondary school music teachers to promote awareness of the gendered biases pertaining to music technology and develop pedagogies that engage women and gender diverse students more effectively.

3. Encourage greater participation of female and gender diverse students in technical roles in tertiary and VET music programs.

4. Improve access to and availability of First Nations musical and cultural educational pathways in Australia, and Māori and Moriori musical and cultural educational pathways in Aotearoa.

5. Support further research to identify the reasons why female and gender diverse graduates are not gaining purchase within the industry in proportion to their engagement in tertiary music education.

14.1.2 Mentoring and role modelling

To promote visibility of female and gender diverse music creators and to support the development of their careers, we suggest co-design of a series of workshops, mentorship and role modelling initiatives between government, education sectors, and music industry organisations. In view of our findings, these initiatives must prioritise the recruitment of same-gender mentors and also account for intersectionality, with a specific focus on providing accessible, meaningful opportunities for people who are LGBTIQA+, older, ethno-culturally diverse, First Nations, Māori, Moriori, living with disability, or in rural, regional and remote areas. Where applicable, mentoring programs should aim to acknowledge mentees as co-composers, co-producers, and team members via official credits. We suggest the following priority areas:

6. Establish ongoing, affordable, and accessible workshops for women and gender diverse music creators to develop and update their technical skills, self-promotion capacity, and marketing skills.

7. Establish and fund mentoring programs for women and gender diverse music producers to co-produce high-level, commercial projects and receive credit as co-producers.

8. Pay and promote senior women and gender diverse role models to provide access and advice to others through talks, meet-and-greets, and networking events.

9. Ensure that all career development initiatives allow for full, meaningful participation of people in rural and regional areas in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

10. Develop and sustain investment in culturally appropriate career development opportunities tailored to Māori music creators, Moriori music creators, and First Nations music creators in their separate and specific contexts.

14.1.3 Safety and support

In consideration of the many women and gender diverse music creators in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand who have experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence, and aggressive, prejudiced behaviour in their working lives, we advocate for both remedial and preventative measures:

11. Establish a *Music Industry Code of Conduct* and a formal reporting mechanism for breaches of the Code.

12. Establish an independent Music Industry Human Resources body responsible for enforcing the Code of Conduct and ensuring reporting mechanisms are broadly disseminated, transparent, and effective.

13. Provide incentives to music businesses and organisations to attract diverse teams, ensure fair payment for work, establish clear internal expectations for conduct and pathways for reporting within their own houses, and promote female and gender diverse leadership.

14. Implement an industry-wide campaign for safer venues that promotes more effective alcohol regulation, best-practice principles for the dignity and wellbeing of gender diverse patrons and workers, and safe and clean retreat spaces for parents and their children.

15. Establish a system of paid maternity leave for freelance music workers in line with other industries.

16. Advocate for state-subsidised childcare for touring musicians and after-hours music industry workers who are parents.

17. Co-develop and establish industry-specific support services for those impacted by domestic or family violence. These might include referrals to housing services; emergency financial hardship relief; provision of temporary studio facilities, rehearsal, and office spaces; free counselling and medical services; and childcare.

18. Consider the impact of violence from policing, police harassment, and racism within any measures from the music industry to reduce violence against cisgender women, transgender women and gender diverse people.

19. Consider the significant and specific types of violence wielded against transgender women and people.

14.1.4 Unconscious bias and ally training

In addition to physical safety concerns, the results of this research reveal the myriad ways that the experiences of women and gender diverse music creators are negatively impacted by unconscious bias and stubborn, stereotypical expectations in the workplace. Our findings identify a need for broad, industry-level initiatives to address the unspoken, unconscious, and casual attitudes that limit possibilities for women and gender diverse music creators. We note the efforts made in Australia through organisations such as Support Act, whose opt-in Access All Areas music industry training educates members of the music workforce how to actively intervene when they witness sexual harassment, sexual assault, and bullying. Such initiatives are important steps on which we would build. Further effective ways to engage music workers with the cultural reform needed would be to develop online training modules concerning these issues for music creators and music industry employees This would provide working music creators and administrators with an opportunity to upskill and recieve regular updates in music industry best practice. Where it is not already in place, access to modules such as these should also feature in all state-funded/government music and performing arts organisations. Such workplace training would be in line with other industries where compliance with online workplace training is often expected as a condition of employment. As such, our chief recommendation emerging from these findings is:

20. Develop and implement online training modules within all leading music organisations (private, government, and not-for-profit) for music creators and music industry workers that:

    o Foster a critical understanding of gender (dis)advantage within the various facets of the music industry, and the negative impact of Boys' Club dynamics.

o   Identify and promote positive and supportive attitudes by male music workers towards people of other genders, while seeking to eliminate sexist attitudes.

o   Develop Allyship within all areas of music industry towards women and LGBTIQA+ people to accelerate the cultural reform that leads to safer workplaces. These materials should include anti-violence materials pertaining to homophobia, transphobia, and sexism, and awareness of individuals' legal rights.

o   Educate music industry leaders on ways to modernise hiring, funding, signing, and marketing practices to better include, protect, and support female and gender diverse artists as they age.

o   Develop 'soft skills' capacity for respectful communication.

o   Promote cultural awareness to increase opportunities for the advancement of First Nations, Moriori, and Māori music creators.

o   Offer resources pertaining to anti-racism which include awareness of individuals' legal rights.

14.1.5 Co-designing for systemic inclusion

This research found much of the marginalisation that is perpetrated in the Australasian music industries is a result of systemic exclusion and disadvantage. To counter this, we advocate that music industry organisations involve those traditionally marginalised as co-designers of the new systems required for the 21st century.

21. Engage women and gender diverse music creators, and those from other minorities, to lead in devising new, specific models for inclusion that reflect their wishes and enhance their opportunities.

22. Advocate for all organisations, festivals, and curating bodies in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand to normalise the programming of music by female and gender diverse music creators in every line-up.

23. Co-design guidelines that would assist in including more diverse music practice and practitioners in mainstream concert programming, particularly regarding First Nations, Moriori, and Māori musical cultures, and improving access for music creators with disability.

24. Spotlight and champion established and emerging female and gender diverse producers, to enhance their visibility, grow their potential, and attract more gender diversity into producing roles.

25. Celebrate taking a risk! Include more women and gender diverse people in top-level opportunities and accompany such 'high-risk' programming with yarns and/or artist talks, to involve audiences and increase understanding and engagement for such models of practice.

26. Co-design supportive, family-friendly music industry models with primary carers that increase accessibility and promote their sustained engagement, inclusion, and wellbeing.

27. Co-design and fund strategies with women and gender diverse music creators over 50 to provide targeted opportunities and initiatives to nurture and promote their careers.

28. Eliminate eligibility criteria linked to age for 'emerging composer' opportunities and instead link these to career stage and experience.

29. Foster strong, lasting, and widespread peer networks among women and gender diverse music creators by supporting, connecting, and paying people to lead in their formation.

14.2 Conclusion

Overall, this study of the music industries in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand has revealed that there is a deeply entrenched 'matrix of barriers' that complicate and inhibit the careers of women and gender diverse music practitioners. These range from broad, structural problems (such as a lack of financial support for working parents), to deep-seated social attitudes (such as the negative evaluation of women's skills and abilities), to experiences of interpersonal sexism, racism, homo/transphobia, harassment, or violence. Each of the issues analysed in this report speaks to a long legacy of disadvantage experienced by women and queer people in mainstream workplaces and reveals an entanglement of vexed problems that there is no simple, quick solution for. In this section, we have provided a suite of recommendations by synthesising the views of our participants, accounting for the intersection of marginalising characteristics, and our analysis of the systems and institutions that facilitate the 'matrix of barriers.' We hope that the recommendations described in this section can provide some guidance to music industry bodies, employers, and state and territory departments in fostering safe, affirming environments that promote wellbeing and foster success for individual artists and groups.

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