



WOMEN CALL FOR AN END TO TOXIC CULTURE IN THE AUSTRALIAN MUSIC INDUSTRY

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Women are demanding an end to the toxic culture of sexual assault, harassment and coercion in the Australian Music Industry, as described in industry media this week.

As reported by [The Brag Media](#), harassment occurs across the breadth of the industry, with certain incidents covered up “with cult-like precision”.

Four years after coming together to establish the inaugural *Australian Women in Music Awards* (AWMA) to recognise and celebrate the achievements and contributions of women in all areas of the Music Industry, AWMA founders and supporters are once again calling for change.

Helpmann Award Winning Producer & AWMA Founding Executive Director **Vicki Gordon**, an outspoken advocate for gender equality in the music industry throughout her entire career, said: *“The reports of latest findings by University of Technology Sydney (UTS) researcher Dr Jeff Crabtree are disturbing and should be of great concern to the entire sector.”*

Dr Crabtree’s report: *“Tunesmiths and Toxicity: Workplace harassment in the contemporary music industries of Australia and New Zealand”* concluded that “perpetrators of harassment are never called to account. Thus, despite the illegality of both workplace and sexual harassment, those working in the music industry are effectively without legal protection.”

Dr Crabtree’s research found that 65% of women surveyed who work in the music industry have experienced pressure to have sex while 85% experienced other forms of sexual harassment.

Two women revealed they had experienced non-consensual sex, while several others told of female friends or colleagues they knew had been raped. The report also contained numerous accounts of physical and sexual assault, harassment and inappropriate behaviour along with accounts of sexual coercion by powerful ‘gatekeepers’.

It found that the problem was so widespread that women in the music industry were vulnerable from every direction: from their bosses and managers, their colleagues and also from audience members.

The report found: “Those vulnerable to workplace and sexual harassment include female early career artists and musicians, and those who have much to lose if they get ‘on the wrong side’ of power figures. Music industry professionals who have been harassed suffer ongoing harm in the form of PTSD-like symptoms.”

The research was undertaken over a two-year period and included in-depth interviews with 33 women across various sectors of the music industry, and data from a further 145 online survey respondents.

Ms Gordon said: *“Sadly, while AWMA is trying to empower women in the music industry, the culture that prevents women from succeeding continues to prevail.*

“Every new ‘disturbing’ revelation about the culture of the Australian Music Industry confirms the importance of the work AWMA is doing to elevate, celebrate and give voice to women.

“We are incredibly grateful to all of the women for their bravery and courage in speaking up and being prepared to put their careers on the line.”

Dr Crabtree’s research found that workplace sexual harassment is “both pervasive and normalised” in the music industry.

The report said: “There is an industry wide gender-based discrimination that leads to gender harassment. Thus women experience far more workplace bullying as well as sexual harassment than their male counterparts.”

It included a number of recommendations to address economic disparity and systemic sexism in the Australian Music Industry.

Ms Gordon said AWMA would continue to shine a light for all women in the music industry and honour the strong and courageous women who refuse to be silenced.

In just two years, AWMA has driven a major cultural shift across the entire sector to address the industry’s chronic gender inequality.

The third Australian Women in Music Awards and Conference will be held on 5 & 6 October in Brisbane. The two-day event includes a series of forums, a keynote address, showcase and networking opportunities as well as the coveted AWMA ceremony and concert.

The 2021 inductee to the AWMA Honour Roll will be announced in September with this year’s recipient joining Helen Reddy (2018) and Judith Durham (2019) in recognition and appreciation of exceptional creative pioneers in the music industry.

To read Dr Crabtree’s research thesis, visit <http://hdl.handle.net/10453/148011>

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