

Seeing Ourselves 2023

How diverse is Australian TV?



Easy Read report



How to use this report



Screen Australia wrote this report. When you see the word 'we', it means Screen Australia.



We wrote this information in an easy to read way.
We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold

We wrote some important words in **bold**.

Not bold

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these bold words mean.

There is a list of these words on page 41.



This is a summary of a report we call
Seeing Ourselves 2.

A summary only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other report on our website.

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/seeing-ourselves-2



You can ask for help to read this report.
A friend, family member or support person
may be able to help you.

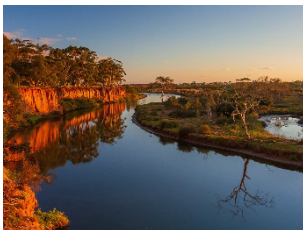


We recognise First Nations peoples as the traditional
owners of Australia.

They were the first people to live on and care for the:



- land



- waters.



We respect First Nations peoples and stories.

What is in this report?

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What is diverse TV?



When TV is **diverse**, lots of different people take part in it.

This includes people with different:



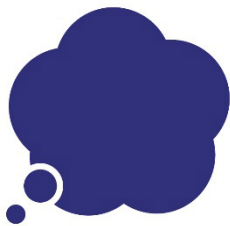
- ages



- abilities



- backgrounds



- beliefs.



It also includes people with different:

- **genders**
- **sexualities.**



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

You might think of yourself as a man or woman or something different.

You can choose the words that are right for you.



Your sexuality is who you:

- love
- are attracted to.

What is this report about?



Australian TV should show how diverse Australia is.



This will help Australian TV:

- include more ideas
- connect with more people.



We did some research to find out how diverse Australian TV is.



We published our first report in 2016.

We called it *Seeing Ourselves*.



In this report we look at what has changed since 2016.

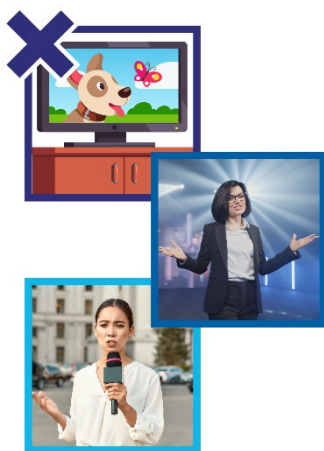
How we did our research



Our research looked at Australian TV shows running between 2016 and 2021.

We focused on TV dramas.

These shows follow a script.



We did not include:

- cartoons
- reality TV shows
- news.



Some of these TV dramas were on Australian TV channels.



Other TV dramas were on **streaming services**.

People pay for streaming services to watch TV shows and movies on the internet.

For example, Netflix.



We also looked at Australian dramas on free online services, like YouTube and Facebook.

What did we look at?



We looked at:

- how diverse people in TV dramas are
- if they are as diverse as the people in Australia.



We looked at the:

- opportunities for different groups of people in TV
- challenges to making diverse TV.



For example, when people with different backgrounds and experiences want to tell their own stories.



We also looked at research reports about how diverse TV is in other countries.

How diverse are Australian TV dramas?



We looked at 3,072 characters in 361 TV shows.



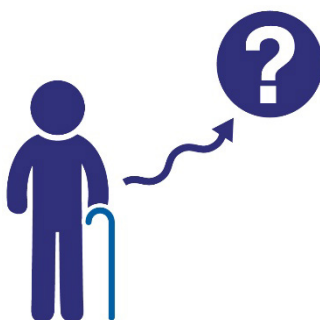
We looked at if a character explained:

- who they are
- where they come from



We also looked at what:

- country their name comes from
- language they speak
- they look like.



We also looked at what happened to each character in the story.

For example, if a character falls in love with someone.



We also looked at the actors who played the characters.

We found this information about the actors online.



We compared what we found to our research in 2016.

What did we learn?



We learned TV characters are still not as diverse as the people in Australia.

But characters are more diverse than they were in 2016.



Now there are more First Nations characters.



There are also more characters not from European backgrounds.

For example, people from Asian or African backgrounds.



There are more disabled characters.



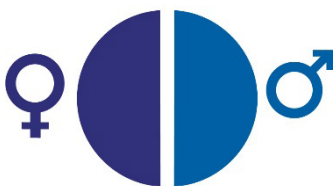
And there are more **LGBTIQ+** characters.



LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex and queer or questioning.



The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community but do not talk about themselves using a word from this list.



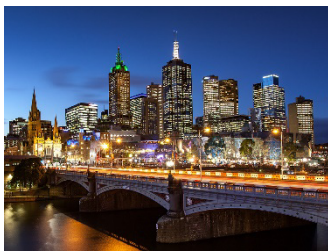
We learned that about half of all main characters are women.

And the other half are men.



There are also **5 non-binary** characters .

When a person is non-binary, they do not feel they are male or female.

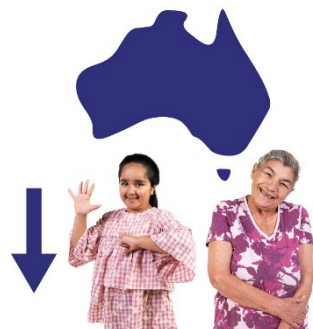


We learned that most TV characters live in capital cities.

Not many of them live away from cities.



We also learned that most characters are between 18 and 44 years old.



Compared to people in Australia, there are less TV characters who are:

- younger than 12 years old
- older than 60 years old.

First Nations characters



We learned there are more First Nations characters in TV dramas than there were in 2016.



But they are still not in many different TV dramas.



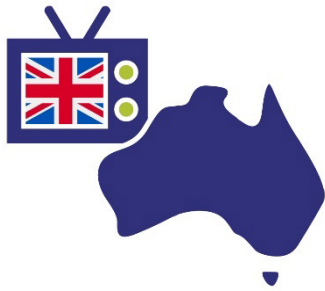
First Nations characters are also less diverse than other characters.

There are not many First Nations characters who are:

- LGBTIQ+
- disabled.



Characters with diverse backgrounds



We learned that most characters in Australian TV dramas are from an **Anglo-Celtic** background.



Anglo-Celtic people are from British or Irish backgrounds.



1 in 4 TV shows have only Anglo-Celtic main characters.



In 2016 it was **1 in 3**.



We learned there are more Anglo-Celtic characters than Anglo-Celtic actors.



There are now more characters who are not from a European background.

There are **twice as many** as there were in 2016.



But this still is not as diverse as the people in Australia.

So there should be more characters who are not from European backgrounds.

For example, more characters who are:



- Indian



- Chinese



- Filipino



- Vietnamese.



There should also be more characters from European backgrounds who are not Anglo-Celtic.

For example, characters who are:



- German



- Dutch



- Italian.

Disabled characters



We learned there are more disabled characters in TV dramas than there were in 2016.



But there should be a lot more because this is not as diverse as the people in Australia.



7 out of 10 TV dramas do not have disabled main characters.



Most disabled characters have:

- Anglo-Celtic backgrounds
- European backgrounds.



Only 3.9% of the actors who play main characters say they are disabled.

LGBTIQ+ characters



We learned there are more LGBTIQ+ characters than there were in 2016.



But there should be more because this is not as diverse as the people in Australia.



Almost 7 in 10 TV dramas do not have LGBTIQ+ main characters.



And almost half the TV dramas that have an LGBTIQ+ character only have one.



Most LGBTIQ+ characters are women.



LBGTIQ+ characters are more likely to be from a background that is not European.



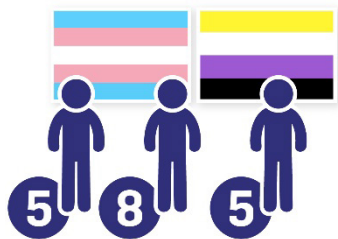
LBGTIQ+ characters are more likely to be disabled.



We learned there are **18** characters who are **trans or gender diverse**.



If you are trans or gender diverse, your gender is different now to what you were given when you were born.



There are:

- **5** trans men
- **8** trans women
- **5** non-binary characters.



4.8% of actors in Australian TV dramas say they are LGBTIQ+.



Trans or gender diverse actors play most trans or gender diverse characters.

Characters with different jobs



We learned most types of characters have all kinds of jobs in TV dramas.



But some groups are less likely to have jobs that need high skills.

These include:



- First Nations characters



- characters not from European backgrounds



- disabled characters.



We learned that characters in TV dramas often have jobs that need higher skills.

And this is more than people in Australia do.



These jobs earn more money than jobs that do not need higher skills.

So characters in TV dramas often have more money than people in Australia do.

Children's TV shows and comedies



We found that some types of TV dramas have different types of diverse characters than other TV dramas.



This includes:

- children's TV shows
- comedies.

Children's TV and comedies have more:



- First Nations characters



- characters that are not European.

But they include less:



- LGBTIQ+ characters



- disabled characters.

What are the challenges to making diverse TV shows?

We wanted to understand the challenges people face when they:



- come from different backgrounds and communities
- want to tell diverse stories.



We also wanted to understand how **inclusive** it is to work in Australian TV.



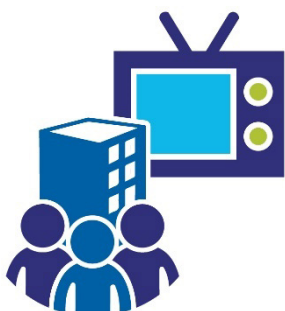
When something is inclusive, everyone feels:

- included
- like they belong.



We talked to 35 experts.

They were from 23 different organisations.



Some of these organisations make TV shows.

Other organisations:



- provide education and training



- support people's **rights**.

Rights are rules about how people should treat you fairly.



They told us about big challenges for diverse TV.

But they also told us about opportunities.



We wanted to learn more about this.

So we talked to **28 people** who make Australian TV shows.

We call them TV makers.



For example, we talked to people who make decisions about what TV shows are made in Australia.

We also talked to:



- directors



- writers



- actors.

The TV makers we talked to:



- come from diverse backgrounds
- or
- work on diverse stories.

Telling diverse stories

TV makers told us they experience challenges about:



- knowing what stories they can tell



- how TV shows include people from different backgrounds and communities.

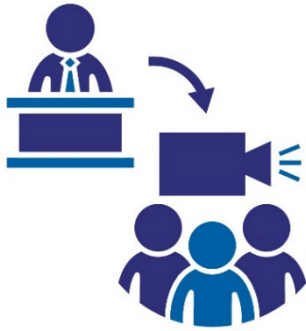


They told us a script can be diverse at the start, but it can change later.

For example, when they choose actors or while they film the show.



TV makers shared challenges about learning to work together on First Nations stories.



They also told us that often it is only a few people who make the decisions for a TV show.

For example:

- directors
- producers.



TV makers explained it can be hard for people from different backgrounds and communities to have a say.



Their community might want TV shows to tell their story.



But their community could be unhappy with how they try to do this.

Diverse people working in TV



TV makers told us it is difficult for some kinds of people to get jobs creating TV shows, including:

- disabled people
- people with less money than other people.



TV makers shared that more leaders should come from different communities.

And there should be more disabled leaders.



TV makers also told us it can be hard to find actors from different communities.

They also told us diverse people should get the chance to:



- learn new skills
- work in jobs that need higher skills
- change jobs.

For example, when an actor wants to be a writer.

Understanding diverse groups better



TV makers told us many people who work in TV do not understand how to make sure diverse groups:

- take part
- feel safe at work.



They told us people who work in TV need training to be inclusive.



Diverse TV makers told us they feel they have to:

- teach other people about being inclusive
- speak up about what they need.



Some diverse TV makers think other TV makers might treat them badly.

So they feel scared to speak up.



Leaders expect them to help create diverse stories.

But they do not reward them for it.

What opportunities do diverse people have in TV?



We wanted to understand the opportunities people have who:

- come from different backgrounds and communities
- want to tell diverse stories.



TV makers told us diverse stories are more popular now.

This means people want stories showing how different people experience life.



TV makers also shared that more First Nations people are:

- telling their own stories
- in their own way.



TV makers told us about ways to create better stories that are more inclusive.



This includes working with people who make stories from their real experiences.



TV makers told us TV shows often try to tell the story of a whole community.

But they should focus on personal experiences.



TV makers also shared that TV shows should think about who they choose to play a character.

And the way they are different to other people adds to the character's story.



People who work in TV should make sure everyone feels safe being who they are.



And they should also do research to understand different communities.



This includes:

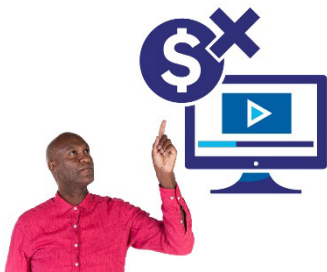
- listening to those communities
- working together with them in ways that help everyone.

Diverse people working in TV



TV makers told us TV shows should make sure their crews are more diverse.

This can help different actors feel more comfortable.



They told us it's easier for people from diverse backgrounds to get a job on TV shows that are on free online services, like YouTube and Facebook.



TV makers told us experienced TV staff can help new staff from different backgrounds and communities.

They can help them:



- get better skills
- meet people they can learn from
- find jobs.

Understanding diverse groups better



TV makers told us some leaders in TV create:

- inclusive teams
- **accessible** places to work.



When something is accessible, it is easy for disabled people to take part.



These leaders also understand that the experiences of diverse people can make storytelling better.



People also shared that it is important for people who work in TV to learn what is:

- safe for diverse people
- accessible.

How does Australia compare to other countries?

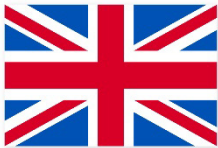


We wanted to know how Australian TV shows compare with other countries.

We looked at research reports from:



- the United States (US)



- the United Kingdom (UK)



- Canada



- New Zealand.

What we learned from the research reports



We learned that our TV shows can be more diverse than some other countries.

We are more likely to have:



- First Nations characters



- characters who are women.



The reports show the US and UK are doing well to include Black characters in TV shows.



This part of their TV shows is as diverse as the people in their countries.



But countries usually had less characters from some other backgrounds than they should.

For example, people who are:



- Latino



- Asian



- Pacific Islander.



All the countries we looked at should have more disabled people in their TV shows.



This also includes disabled people working in the crew.

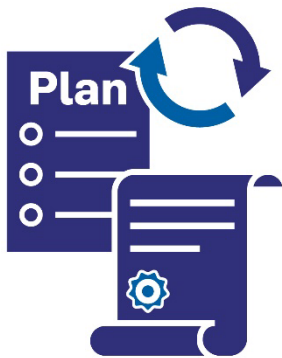


UK research also showed there are not enough older characters in TV shows.

What other countries are doing

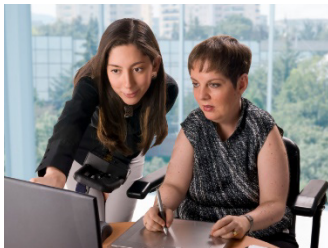


We found other countries are trying to make their TV shows more diverse.



For example, they are doing this by changing:

- plans
- laws.



They are training people in new skills.



And they are changing how TV show awards work.

Resources to support being inclusive



We found resources you can use to support Australian TV to be more inclusive.

These resources include:



- guides



- stories



- training.



We made a list of these resources in our report.

You can find the report on our website.

www.screenaustralia.gov.au/seeing-ourselves-2

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.



Accessible

When something is accessible, it is easy for disabled people to take part.



Anglo-Celtic



Anglo-Celtic people are from British or Irish backgrounds.



Diverse



When TV is diverse, lots of different people take part in it.

Gender



Your gender is what you feel and understand about who you are as a person.

You might think of yourself as a man or woman or something different.

You can choose the words that are right for you.



Inclusive

When something is inclusive, everyone feels:

- included
- like they belong.



LGBTIQ+

LGBTIQ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or gender diverse, intersex and queer or questioning.

The '+' is for people who are part of the LGBTQ+ community but do not talk about themselves using a word from this list.



Non-binary

When a person is non-binary, they do not feel they are male or female.



Rights

Rights are rules about how people should treat you fairly.





Sexuality

Your sexuality is who you:

- love
- are attracted to.



Streaming service

People pay for streaming services to watch TV shows and movies on the internet.



Trans or gender diverse

If you are trans or gender diverse, your gender is different now to what you were given when you were born.

Contact us



You can call us.

1800 213 099



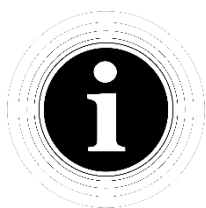
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