

MEDIA RELEASE

World First Research Exposes Alarming Findings on the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Australian Entertainment Industry Workers

Monday October 10, 2016: Entertainment Assist and Victoria University have today released a report uncovering serious health and wellbeing concerns for those who work in the Australian entertainment industry.

Health problems and suicidality are prominent among entertainment industry professionals. Suicide ideation is six times greater, suicide planning is more than four times greater and suicide attempts are more than double the general population. Indicators of moderate to severe anxiety are 10 times higher and depression symptomology five times over the general population norms.

The report, titled '*Working in the Australian Entertainment Industry: Final Report*', involved in-depth interviews of 36 professionals followed by an online survey of 2904 industry workers representing all sectors of the Entertainment Industry from performers to producers, sound and lighting technicians, roadies and crew.

While industry professionals report that they are passionate and committed to their creativity, they have difficulty negotiating their often negative and critical work environment and feel they lack support from the industry.

The research further found the Entertainment Industry workers suffered sleep disorders and insomnia at far greater rates than the general population. 35% of all Industry workers earn an annual industry income below \$20,000. These stressors contribute to a range of health and social problems.

"These findings strongly suggest the entertainment and cultural industry is in severe distress, and in urgent need of early prevention and intervention programs to reduce the impacts of those with health and wellbeing problems and to prevent new occurrences," said Professor Adrian Fisher, Head of Psychology, College of Arts, Victoria University.

The report offers key recommendations to address the health and wellbeing of the creative and passionate workers in the entertainment industry including:

- identifying psychological services with industry specific expertise and knowledge so targeted specialist interventions are readily available;
- developing support services specifically tailored for the entertainment industry that are easily accessible, run by people who understand the creative industries, and anonymous;
- developing early intervention and prevention programs carefully targeted to particular industry groups;
- build modules into curriculum which cover areas like protective factors, identifying and strengthening social support networks, informing students of the pitfalls of working in the creative industries, identifying the resources available, and other self-protective strategies.

Entertainment Assist, a health promotion charity established to raise awareness about mental health in the Australian entertainment industry, will utilise the findings to advocate for generational change. This will include the provision of tailored mental health training, educating Industry workers to take care of self and support their peers, and encouraging industry employers to actively support the mental health and wellbeing of employees.

The full analysis of the data and deeper explanations are detailed in the full report, which can be found at www.entertainmentassist.org.au

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For more information please contact:

Susan Cooper, General Manager, Entertainment Assist

M: 0417 776 830

E: Susan.cooper@entertainmentassist.org.au

A summary of key findings is attached.

Working in the Australian Entertainment Industry:

A research project by Entertainment Assist in association with
College of Arts, Victoria University, October 2016



WHO PARTICIPATED:

- 2904 Respondents across all sectors of the Entertainment Industry from all States and Territories of Australia.

Group 1: Performing Artists and Music Composers (including musicians, radio presenters, actors, singers, entertainers or variety artists, dancers or choreographers, television presenters, composers, music professionals and music directors)

Group 2: Performing Arts Support Workers (including media producers, film and video editors, program director, director, production assistants, video producer, film, television and stage directors, technical director, make-up artist, director of photography, stage manager, venue managers and artistic directors)

Group 3: Broadcasting, Film and Recorded Media Equipment Operators (includes sound technicians, camera operators, projectionist, light technicians, television equipment operators, roadies, performing arts technicians)

Key Findings

CULTURE:

- The majority of Australian entertainment industry workers express an overwhelming passion for their creative work.
- There is a powerful, negative culture within the industry including a toxic, bruising work environment; extreme competition; bullying; sexual assault; sexism and racism.
- There are high levels of mental health problems and suicidality.

INCOME:

- 35% of all Australian entertainment industry workers earn an annual industry income below \$20,000
- 63% of Performers, 28% of Support Workers and 20% of Technicians/Crew earn less than the Australian National Minimum Wage of \$34,112
- 72.5% of entertainment industry workers earn less than \$60K annually from the entertainment industry
- 65% have a combined income below \$60K from earning within and outside the entertainment industry
- 54.6% have been generating their primary income from the Entertainment Industry for 2-15 years.

Income generated from within the entertainment industry

Group 1: Performers	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	Other Perf Artists
Less than \$30,000 PA	75.4%	85%	76.5%	65.7%	60.4%
Less than \$60,000 PA	89%	96%	93.7%	85.1%	88.3%

Group 2: Support Workers	Stage Managers	Technical Directors	Other Perf Arts Support Workers
Less than \$30,000 PA	39.3%	12.4%	23.7%
Less than \$60,000 PA	78.6%	42.2%	68.3%

Group 3: Techs/Crew/Roadies	Lighting Technicians	Sound Technicians	Road Crew & Riggers
Less than \$30,000 PA	15.6%	30.4%	40.9%
Less than \$60,000 PA	62.4%	71%	81.8%

Income generated from outside the entertainment industry

Group 1: Performers	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	Other Perf Artists
No income from outside industry	12.5%	17.8%	24.2%	22.6%	27.9%
Less than \$20K from outside industry	41.4%	45.2%	31.6%	30.1%	37.2%
Less than \$30K from outside industry	73.2%	78.3%	68.7%	63.5%	86.7%

Group 2: Support Workers	Stage Managers	Technical Directors	Other Perf Arts Support Workers
No income from outside industry	54.8%	73.7%	60.1%
Less than \$20K from outside industry	33.3%	17.5%	26.6%

Income generated from outside the entertainment industry continued...

Group 3: Techs/Crew/Roadies	Lighting Technicians	Sound Technicians	Road Crew & Riggers
No income from outside industry	63.8%	55.7%	45.5%
Less than \$20K from outside industry	25.5%	22.8%	34.1%

WORK & SLEEP PATTERNS:

Working unpredictable hours

- 43.1% of Entertainment Industry Workers work most of the time in the evenings and night
- 41.9% work on the weekends
- 30.2% always work unpredictable hours

This is well over general population shift work patterns where 16% of the general population are shift workers.

Sleep Disorders

- 44% of Entertainment Industry Workers don't get enough sleep
- 45.5% have disrupted sleep.
- 6% of the Australian population has a chronic sleep disorder. Thus, Entertainment Industry Workers suffer sleep disorders seven times greater than the general population.

Insomnia

- 16% of Entertainment Industry Workers suffer from insomnia which is three times greater than general population at 5.6%.

Group 1: PERFORMERS who most of the time/always:	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	Other Performing Artists
Work in the Evenings and Night	43.3%	65.5%	57.3%	61.2%	38.3%
Work on the Weekends	51.6%	75.2%	66.9%	61.2%	73.6%
Work Unpredictable Hours	55.3%	49.6%	60.6%	38.8%	58.8%
Don't get Enough Sleep	64.6%	75.2%	65.1%	53.8%	47%
Have Disrupted Sleep	60.9%	68.2%	64.7%	74.7%	53%
Suffer Insomnia	39.5%	51.7%	46.3%	41.8%	38.2%

Group 2: SUPPORT WORKERS who most of the time/always:	Stage Managers	Technical Directors	Other Perf Arts Support Workers
Work in the Evenings and Night	72.9%	59.6%	35.4%
Work on the Weekends	74.6%	63.8%	36.2%
Work Unpredictable Hours	72.9%	68.1%	48%
Don't get Enough Sleep	74.6%	74.5%	73.3%
Have Disrupted Sleep	78%	78.7%	69.3%
Suffer Insomnia	50.9%	55.3%	47.3%

Group 3: TECHS/CREW/ROADIES who most of the time/always:	Lighting Technicians	Sound Technicians	Road Crew & Riggers
Work in the Evenings and Night	76.1%	78.5%	78.7%
Work on the Weekends	77%	81.8%	78.8%
Work Unpredictable Hours	77.1%	76%	78.8%
Don't get Enough Sleep	85.4%	76.8%	75.7%
Have Disrupted Sleep	60.6%	74.4%	84.4%
Suffer Insomnia	43.1%	53.7%	57.6%

Impact of irregular work patterns and sleep disorders

- 57.9% of Entertainment Industry Workers have problems finding time for their families,
- 63% have trouble maintaining a social life
- 45% have trouble keeping contact with their friends in the industry

MENTAL HEALTH:

Diagnosis of a Mental Health Disorder in their lifetime

- The most common mental health diagnoses reported across the three groups is depression followed by anxiety.
- 44% of industry workers have **moderate to severe anxiety**. This is **10 times higher than the general population**.
- The levels of **depression** symptoms are **five times higher than general population** scores.

	Group 1 (Performers)	Group 2 (Support Workers inc Directors, Producers, Stage Managers, Production Assistants, etc)	Group 3 (Technicians/Crew/ Roadies)
Diagnosed with a mental illness	40.8%	37.5%	31%
Diagnosis of more than one mental illness over a lifetime	34.6%	37.3%	39.8%

Group 1: PERFORMERS	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	Variety Artists
Diagnosed with a mental illness	21.4%	12.9%	23.4%	21.4%	27.9%
Moderate to Severe Depression	53.5%	29.2%	54.1%	54.1%	67.4%
Moderate to Severe Anxiety	25.6%	25.3%	24.4%	19.4%	34.9%

Group 2: SUPPORT WORKERS	Stage Managers	Technical Directors	Other Perf Arts Support Workers
Diagnosed with a mental illness	17.4%	13.6%	28.5%
Moderate to Severe Depression	60.5%	67.8%	58.1%
Moderate to Severe Anxiety	26.7%	32.2%	25.1%

Group 3: TECHS/CREW/ROADIES	Lighting Technicians	Sound Technicians	Road Crew & Riggers
Diagnosed with a mental illness	20.1%	20.2%	24.4%
Moderate to Severe Depression	64.6%	63.8%	64.4%
Moderate to Severe Anxiety	39.6%	30.1%	31.3%

Sought Professional Assistance for Mental Health Issues

- Overall 59.5% of entertainment industry workers have sought professional assistance for their mental health issues.

	Group 1 (Performers)	Group 2 (Support Workers)	Group 3 (Technicians/Crew/Roadies)
Sought professional assistance	65.2%	59.6%	45.2%

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKS:

- 59.9% of industry workers could not raise \$2000 from their networks in an emergency.
- 56.1% feel they either can not get help or only sometimes receive help from friends, family, neighbours and colleagues when in need.

Most entertainment industry workers do not know where to get support from in the entertainment industry and identify critical barriers to seeking support including:

1. lack of resources such as time, money and lack of good support resources;
2. problems inherent in the industry such as lack of trust, unsupportive environment, disjointed lifestyle, lack of respect for industry from outside;
3. a perception that seeking support may compromise future employment opportunities.

Group 1: PERFORMERS	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	Variety Artists
Cannot raise \$2K in an emergency	60%	79.1%	60.5%	51.7%	46.7%
Feel they can not garner support from friends, family or colleagues	49.4%	57.1%	49%	47.5%	56.6%
Do not know where to find support within the industry	48%	46.2%	51.4%	50.7%	38.2%

SOCIAL SUPPORT AND NETWORKS continued...

Group 2: SUPPORT WORKERS	Stage Managers	Technical Directors	Other Perf Arts Support Workers
Cannot raise \$2K in an emergency	55.2%	54.6%	47.5%
Feel they can not garner support from friends, family or colleagues	51.7%	63.6%	58.4%
Do not know where to find support within the industry	57.7%	48.9%	52.7%

Group 3: TECHS/CREW/ROADIES	Lighting Technicians	Sound Technicians	Road Crew & Riggers
Cannot raise \$2K in an emergency	56%	69.3%	81.8%
Feel they can not garner support from friends, family or colleagues	63.3%	65.2%	72.7%
Do not know where to find support within the industry	52.3%	62.8%	54.5%

SUICIDE:

Suicide Ideation and Planning

- **Suicide attempts** for Australian Entertainment Industry workers are **more than double** that of the general population.
- In the last twelve months **Road Crew members** experienced **suicide ideation almost 9 times more** than general population.
- In the last twelve months Australian Entertainment Industry Workers experience **suicide ideation from 5-7 times more** than the general population and 2-3 times more over a lifetime.
- **Suicide planning** for Australian Entertainment Industry workers is **4-5 times more** than general population.

Suicidal Ideation Responses - GROUP

	Group 1 (Performers)	Group 2 (Support Workers)	Group 3 (Technicians/ Crew/Roadies)	All Groups	General Population (Johnston et al, 2009)	Entertainment Industry Rate compared to General Population
Suicide Ideation in the last 12 months	13.1%	15.6%	19.1%	14.8%	2.3%	6 times greater
Suicide Ideation in their Lifetime	26.4%	31%	33.6%	28.9%	13.3%	More than double
Suicide Planning	16.0%	17.5%	19.9%	17.4%	4.0%	4-5 times greater
Suicide Attempts	7.4%	7.9%	8.5%	7.7%	3.2%	More than double

Suicide Ideation responses – PERFORMERS

	Actors	Dancers	Musicians	Singers	General Population (Johnston et al, 2009)
Suicide Ideation in the last 12 months	14.9%	7.1%	15.3%	12.2%	2.3%
Suicide Ideation in their Lifetime	30.2%	15.7%	30.0%	22.4%	13.3%
Suicide Planning	18.1%	8.6%	18.4%	16.6%	4.0%
Suicide Attempts	8.0%	3.7%	7.5%	10.2%	3.2%

Suicide Ideation responses – TECHNICAL and SUPPORT

	Road Crew	Lighting Techs	Sound Techs	'Other' Support Workers	General Population (Johnston et al, 2009)
Suicide Ideation in the last 12 months	20.0%	18.8%	19.0%	16.8%	2.3%
Suicide Ideation in their Lifetime	35.6%	29.9%	33.7%	33.0%	13.3%
Suicide Planning	17.8%	21.5%	17.8%	20.7%	4.0%
Suicide Attempts	4.4%	7.6%	8.6%	10.1%	3.2%