

DELVING INTO DANCE PUBLICATION

Turning Pointe: Gender Equality in Australian Dance



Written by Andrew Westle

Turning Pointe: Gender Equality in Australian Dance.

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www.delvingintodance.com/turning-pointe

Email: andrew@delvingintodance.com

About Delving into Dance

Delving into Dance is an online platform that profiles dance, with a specific focus on dance occurring in Australia. Starting as a podcast series in 2016, Delving into Dance now reaches a global audience of 15,000 people. Adding to the vibrancy of the sector, Delving into Dance aims to increase the profile of dance, while holding the space for important conversations. Increasingly, Delving into Dance is partnering with dance companies and organisations, including the special season 'Ancestors and Anecdotes', a partnership with Ausdance Victoria that focused on Australia's female dance pioneers in 2017.

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Cover Image: Chameleon by Stephanie Lake commissioned by the Queensland Ballet. Photo by David Kelly

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Gratitude is paid to the legacy of all female choreographers and dance practitioners who have shaped the field of dance. It is for these individuals that this report seeks to contribute to ongoing discussions of access, and to provide space to question the current state of play.



Image: Chameleon by Stephanie Lake commissioned by the Queensland Ballet. Photo by David Kelly

Executive summary

Gender equality in creative leadership has recently and importantly been placed on the agenda in film, music, dance, theatre and visual arts. Both locally and internationally, gender imbalances have been a source of concern. In dance these conversations have been had both in Australia and internationally, with a particular gender imbalance observed on our main stages. This project was instigated after conversations with a number of choreographers, while making the Delving into Dance podcast, who were concerned at what they were observing in Australia, and by little conversation or action on equality.

To date, statistical data about gender equality in Australian dance has not been collated across the sector. This report uses data sourced primarily from Major Performing Arts (MPA) dance companies and multi-year Australia Council-funded companies, as well as information from interviews with 23 individuals. Data will be significant for future benchmarking.

This report examines the current state of gender equality in dance. It addresses significant issues experienced by women in dance and is concerned explicitly with the advancement of women in artistic and leadership roles, more specifically as choreographers. We must recognise that if issues of gender cannot be adequately addressed in dance, we have little hope of addressing other forms of social and cultural inequities within dance.

Key Findings:

- Over an 11-year period MPA Companies programmed female choreographers 13% of the time for full-length works and 24% of the time for shorter works.
- Over an 11-year period women were commissioned at a rate of 26% in MPA Companies compared to men.
- Data examined over a six-year period from the multi-year funded companies revealed they were more reflective of the overall number of women working as dancers and choreographers than the MPA companies are. That is, the most heavily funded part of the sector has the worst outcomes for women.
- Project funding through the dance stream of the Australia Council, indicated more women were applying for grants than men
- Women are strongly represented at key industry awards, unlike in other creative industries, including music. This indicates that, despite being programmed at a significantly lower percentage than men, there is a body of work created by women that is of an exceptional standard.
- There are significant and intertwined issues that were raised during the interview process that revolve around particular gender bias.
 - There was the perception that men were given increased opportunities at the expense of women. These ideas were consistent with ideas of a “boys club” and it was said that men often have a sense of entitlement.
 - Men were said to be given more opportunities at MPA companies as they were seen as “safe bets”.
 - Confidence was said to be fostered in men and was seen as problematic in women. These perceptions limited where women sought to work and their willingness to pursue a range of opportunities.
 - Childcare responsibilities were said to be a significant financial burden and also meant there were particular opportunities that women miss out on, including international residencies and important networking opportunities
 - The role of the company boards came up for critique with many questioning why boards appointed more men as artistic directors than women in MPA companies.
 - There were several proposed ways of addressing this imbalance, including mentoring, early career opportunities and family-friendly work practices.

Key recommendations:

The issues are complex and, as a result, the solutions are not at all straightforward. Key recommendations are based on Visibility and Programming including quotas, Mentoring and Support, Childcare and Family-Friendly Practices, and Benchmarking and Vigilance.

This report indicates that there is a role for everyone including companies, industry and the broader sector, female dance makers, audiences, men in the industry and training institutions. Specific recommendations include but are not limited to:

- Quotas to be introduced as funding requirements.
- A separate grant category, which is open for applicants year-round, to provide support for childcare responsibility and to allow individuals to apply for funding on top of project funding or when commissioned at a company.
- Men to take issues of equality seriously and to use their agency for positive change.
- Increased mentoring opportunities, specifically in the skill sets required for artistic directors, to ensure there are women ready for these roles.
- All seasons should have a 50:50 gender balance, as a very minimum.
- Childcare arrangements should be included in the ticket cost of networking events like National Dance Forum.
- Training institutions to assess the ways they can better support women and students for considered choreographic opportunities.
- Audiences to take responsibility for ensuring they hold companies accountable for taking equality seriously.
- Better sector-wide advocacy to ensure gender equity remains on the agenda.

This project has been undertaken with a self-generated budget of under \$900. Future research should be commissioned to explore these issues in more depth. Certain focuses should include: festival and venue programming, an audit of wage earnings, a look at other creative roles in dance, an audit of the gender balance of company boards and a look at these issues over a period of time. While these are immense challenges, the time is right to set a stronger directive for an equitable future. The high participation of women in dance is not an excuse for an imbalance at the top levels. If there was one creative field where women should be leading, it would have to be dance with far more female than male participants. There are many good reasons we must act on this issue, namely Australian stages must reflect the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of the society from which they emerge.

It is hoped that this report will help stimulate the dance industry to consider the complexity of the issues contained within and provide a strong basis for action. This report is timely to these conversations and helps to articulate a way forward. The dance industry can only benefit through increasing the diversity of works. The dance industry itself can reimagine a more equitable future with strong leadership, resolve and a desire for change. Everyone has a role to play.



Image: Fun Run by All the Queens Men - Photo by Bryony Jackson



Image: Memoir for Rivers and The Dictator by Lillian Steiner (2018) Keir Choreographic Award - Photo by Gregory Lorenzutti

Introduction

Dance is a field filled with images of women and femininity and yet, men are often seen in positions of leadership. Australia's five Major Performing Arts (MPA) dance companies are artistically led by men, with only a small percentage of programming work created by women. The picture is better within the small-to-medium companies funded by the Australia Council for the Arts. We need to look at whose stories and perspectives are getting on our stages and whose voices are not being heard.

This report examines gender equity in regard to the Australian dance sector by collating the programming statistics of MPA and multi-year Australia Council-funded companies and asking:

Are women being adequately represented in key creative roles?

What are some of the significant barriers that need to be overcome?

The dance sector globally has received increased scrutiny on the programming and advancement of female choreographers (Mackrell, 2009; Van Dyke, 2017; Vincent, 2014).

This scrutiny is consistent with the increased attention that has been given to the gender disparities in other artistic and cultural spheres in Australia. Over the past ten years this has included the theatre sector with *Women in Theatre: a research report and action plan for the Australia Council for the Arts* (Australia Council, 2012); the film sector with *Gender Matters Women* in the Australian Screen Industry report (Screen Australia, 2015); the visual arts sector with *The Countless report* (2016) and the contemporary music sector with *Skipping a beat: Assessing the state of gender equality in the Australian music industry* (Cooper, Coles, Hanna-Osborn, 2017).

This work shares the common goal of outlining the current state of play and seeking to articulate a path forward for a sector that better reflects the society from which it emerges. While focusing on women in dance, this report recognises that there remains an under-representation of many other groups within dance, including culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities that similarly require attention.

This report examines gender equity in dance and presents data from a range of sources, including an analysis of dance programming in the MPA dance companies over a ten-year period and of the programming in Australia Council multi-year funded companies. Data has also been collected from 23 interviews to help understand the potential barriers facing women in regard to gender equity. This report concerns itself only with dance that is funded by the Australia Council. It is acknowledged that there is a range of dance occurring that is not funded by the Australia Council, but the decision was made to focus exclusively on Australia Council funded companies, similarly to that of *The Women in Theatre Report*. Findings based in this sample could be applied to parts of the industry beyond Australia Council funded companies. This report does not concern itself with the leadership of women in executive or general manager positions but is focused on artistic leadership and choreographic opportunity.

It is important to understand the barriers facing women are not dissimilar to that of other sectors, i.e. politics and business. Women represent over 50% of the Australian population (ABS, 2017), yet, across the board, are in fewer leadership positions; women are on fewer corporate boards and earn less than men (Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 2018). Issues around wage earning are consistent with the greater community in the arts. In the *Making Art Work* report, Throsby and Petetskaya (2017), found women consistently earn less than men.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges outlined are immense but deserve significant attention. This report concerns itself explicitly with the advancement of women in artistic and leadership roles, more specifically as choreographers. It has been written in consultation with a research advisory committee.

It is hoped that this report will help stimulate the dance industry to consider the complexity of the issues contained within and will provide a strong basis for action. Everyone has a role to play.

Terminology

Gender

The term "gender" and the way it is utilised is in a constant state of flux. This report uses gender in rather binary ways, with full awareness that this terminology is fraught with problems. While this report recognises the diverse ways in which gender is understood and practiced, it uses "male" and "female" in exploring gender equality in dance. "Female" and "male" includes everyone who identifies with either. It is recognised that for many, gender is not static. Issues of gender, including people who identify as non-binary are not the focus of this report, but do deserve their own examination, including the ways in which a dancer's body is often gendered, allocation of dressing rooms and gendered costume. Statistics contained in this report under the Australia Council project funding section, indicate in dance that 2% of applications come from those that used other or undefined gender categories.

Dance

Dance as a practice has a broad scope and takes place in a multitude of locations. This report concerns itself only with dance as funded by the Australia Council, specifically the Major Performing Arts sector and multi-year funded companies.

Major Performing Arts (MPA) sector

A national framework for government support sees the Australia Council administer funding for 28 companies that have Major Performing Arts (MPA) sector status. These companies receive core annual funding to "develop and present excellent artistic works and foster a vibrant and sustainable performing arts sector" (Australia Council, 2018). MPA companies include those in theatre, opera, circus, contemporary and classical dance. MPA companies are funded through state and federal funding agreements.

This report only focuses on the MPA funded dance companies: The Australian Ballet, West Australian Ballet (WA Ballet), Queensland Ballet, Sydney Dance Company (SDC) and Bangarra Dance Theatre (Bangarra).

Multi-year funded companies (previously Key Organisations)

Multi-year funded companies are funded by the Australia Council over a four-year funding term. This Four Year Funding program came into effect in 2017, replacing Key Organisation funding. The companies that receive multi-year funding are often quite different in their operations, with few operating with full-time dance ensembles and all operate on a smaller staffing and financial scale than the MPA companies. There are reasons that the comparison between the multi-year companies and the MPA companies is significant. The MPA companies have significantly more resources at their disposal than companies in the

next funding levels. In regards, to funding the multi-year funded dance companies as a combined annual total sit at just over 3 million, while The Australian Ballet's annual MPA funding sits at over 3.5 million.

The companies included in this report that have received or are receiving multi-year funding are: Australian Dance Theatre (SA), Chunky Move Ltd (Vic), Dancenorth (trading under North Queensland Ballet and Dance Company Limited) (Qld), Ballet Lab (Vic), Kage (Vic), Expressions, The Queensland Dance Theatre Ltd (Qld), Force Majeure (NSW), Lucy Guerin Association Inc (Vic), Restless Dance Theatre Inc (SA), Dancehouse Incorporated (Vic), Tasdance Ltd (Tas), Tracks Inc (NT), Shaun Parker & Company Ltd (NSW) and Marrugeku Inc (WA).

Background

In Australia, the dance industry has been pioneered by some incredible women, particularly when we look at the establishment of the contemporary dance sector (Vincent, 2014). Historically, The Australian Ballet has had more female artistic directors than male, while other ballet companies have had a longer history of male artistic directors. Dance is an industry in which women dominate as graduates and participants. Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) recently found that 69% of all dancers and choreographers were female, yet female artists, despite their interest and participation rates, are not being equally represented adequately across the whole dance industry. When it comes to ideas of gender equality it is also worth noting that for companies including The Australian Ballet there are more female administrative and company staff than male, with the total workforce being mostly women.

Globally, dance companies have increasingly been forced to answer questions related to programming and the lack of women being programmed. A recent international examples include Ivan Cavallari the ex-Artistic Director of WA Ballet, now at Les Grands Ballets Canadiens, commissioning a season originally called Femmes that was meant to be an ode to women in dance, but failed to commission one woman (Everett-Green, 2018). Similarly in 2017, Alexei Ratmansky posted on Facebook: "There is no such thing as equality in ballet ... I am very comfortable with that" (Wingenroth, 2017).

The common arguments about gender equity include ideas that appointments need to be merit based. Yet, how does an individual develop the merit to take on roles like artistic director and choreographer if opportunities are not being offered in the first instance? Why is it that men seem to continue to feature in more "merit" based appointments? These are complex questions with no simple answers.

INTRODUCTION

The success and promotion of men in dance frequently comes at the expense of women (Adair, 1992; Hanna, 1988; Larson, 2017; Van Dyke, 2017). While Australia's dance industry has many strong female pioneers, there are currently more men being programmed by MPA companies. Dance historian and commentator Jordan Beth Vincent (2014) wrote about dance:

It is clear that gender parity has not been redressed or even seriously considered as it has in other areas of Australian professional life such as business, politics and academia. It seems that the very acceptance of women in the art form signals the collective turning of a blind eye to the barriers to leadership. To this day, female dancers are fiercely aware of their relative value compared to their male counterparts; though it has not been properly documented, there is a general feeling that male dancers, administrators, choreographers and directors will always be highly valued and even praised for their participation in a 'female' artform.

There are structural issues at play here, with men seen to bring a sense of legitimacy to dance. Low participation of boys in dance has led to dance teachers struggling to attract and maintain the interest of young boys (Fisher, 2007;). Academic Doug Risner (2007) found that men have an advantage over women in dance schools: "males often receive more attention and cultivation in their classes, training, and scholarship awards" (p. 141). Dance training has been said to make women passive compared to the training for men (Risner 2007; Adair 1992; Van Dyke 1992).

Gender is institutionalised within dance, as has been demonstrated through the training and conditioning of individuals' bodies. One example according to Adair (1992) is the "structure of the daily class frequently results in 'unthinking' dancers, trained to accept unquestioningly the professional requirements. This structure mirrors women's expected role as passive rather than active in society." A number of authors have noted a correlation between men's confidence and their dominance in senior roles within dance companies (Stinson, 2005; Stinson et al., 1990). It may be, as Van Dyke (1992) argued, that women have been taught to be "good, to be obedient and silent" (p. 120).

Post-dance training, men have better chances of obtaining full-time employment, despite their lower participation rates (Banes, 1998; Burt, 1995). Risner (2009) wrote: "This bias creates a paradox wherein men in dance are at once devalued by the culture, yet prized by the field. Males hold leadership roles in dance far out of proportion to their numbers in the field" (p. 27). For women the "shortage of work acts as a controlling factor so that no matter how adverse the conditions, dancers do not withdraw easily from a company because there may not be an alternative company with which to dance" (Adair, 1992, p. 19).

Data that has come out of the USA indicates that issues of gender equity in dance are not unique to Australia (Hanna, 1988, Larson, 2017, Van Dyke, 2017). Writer, Van Dyke (2017) wrote about the USA:

"Although dance is considered a women's field, and dancers may think of themselves as enlightened about gender equity, the annual Gender Gap Index by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum shows that success figures for dance are in line with the general culture." (p. 32)

These issues are not unique to dance and are prevalent across a range of artistic disciplines. The 2012 Women in Theatre report found that programming in theatre companies was strongly weighted towards that of men, particularly as playwrights and directors. The report authors noted: "Women received lower pay than men, fewer and smaller grants from [Australia] Council. Lack of childcare and other domestic and financial pressures resulted in women dropping out of careers in the arts" (p. 9). The report found that in MPA theatre companies between 2001 and 2011, 25% of productions had a woman as a director, and this was 14% at its lowest point (p. 18). In multi-year funded companies between 2001 and 2011, 37% of directors were women. This report was a significant and important piece of research that put a range of issues firmly on the agenda. It identified a number of specific barriers that were believed to be limiting the participation of women in artistic leadership roles, including issues around autonomous artistic leadership, lack of transparency in selection, difficulties around self-promotion and challenges of family responsibilities.

While issues of gender equity in dance are not unique in relation to other creative disciplines, it is interesting that a field with such a strong history of female participation and one with so many more female than male graduates has a gender imbalance that favours men.

The following section presents data from the Australian dance industry to assess the current state of play.

SECTION ONE

Section one

Where we are at: Quantitative analysis

Methodology

To assess the current level of programming, data was collected from annual reports of all MPA dance companies from 2007 to 2017 and Australia Council multi-year funded companies from 2012 to 2017. Multi-year funded companies were previously funded as Key Organisations. This data addresses the percentages of programming of men and women, including new commissions, and in the case of MPA companies reports on full-length works and those works that are part of a program, such as a triple bill. The data is reported as the combined total of all companies in their funding group, i.e. MPA companies or multi-year funded companies.

An 11-year period was chosen for the MPA companies to avoid any discrepancies over the time period. A six-year period was chosen for multi-year funded companies, as there is less continuity with funding and a greater number of companies within the sample. Detailed notes of inclusion and exclusion are part of the Appendix on pages 40 and 41.

Additional data presented in this section includes the gender of artistic directors of MPA Companies and multi-year funded companies and the number of grant applications for dance projects and number of successful applications as awarded by the Australia Council.

The data presented in this section will be discussed at the conclusion of this section before attention is placed on qualitative data captured through interviews with a diverse cross-section of the Australian dance sector.

MPA Companies Artistic Leadership: A review of artistic directors of MPA companies

YEAR	Australian Ballet	WA Ballet	Queensland Ballet	Bangarra	Sydney Dance Company
2006	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	François Klaus	Stephen Page	Graeme Murphy
2007	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	François Klaus	Stephen Page	Graeme Murphy
2008	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	François Klaus	Stephen Page	No official AD
2009	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	François Klaus	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2010	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	François Klaus	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2011	David Mcallister	Ivan Cavallari	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2012	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2013	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2014	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2015	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2016	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela
2017	David Mcallister	Aurelien Scannella	Li Cunxin	Stephen Page	Rafael Bonachela

Key details: Over a 12-year period there has not been a single female artistic director at any MPA company. This would have been a different equation without the tragic loss of Tanja Liedkte, who was to take on the Artistic Directorship of Sydney Dance Company; although the gender balance still would have been significantly skewed. For some companies there has never been a female artistic director.

MPA programming an analysis of the gender of choreographers

Full-length works

Figure 1 presents full-length productions staged by MPA companies between 2007 and 2017 divided by the gender of the choreographer. These productions include all MPA companies as a combined total. Data reported here counts the choreographer of every work performed within a year. If a choreographer had three different works performed, they are counted three times. If there is more than one choreographer listed for a work, all choreographers are recorded based on their gender. The total number of individuals counted as choreographers is 154 over an 11-year period; this could include the same choreographer over multiple years or with different works programmed across more than one company. Figure 2 presents the combined average of programming over 11 years.

Figure 3 shows the percentage of works programmed by gender of choreographer based on the number of performances staged per year. This accounts for the number of times each work was individually performed rather than the number of choreographers programmed per year. As an example, there might be 12 choreographers programmed over a year but half of them have a two-night season and the remainder have a four-week season.

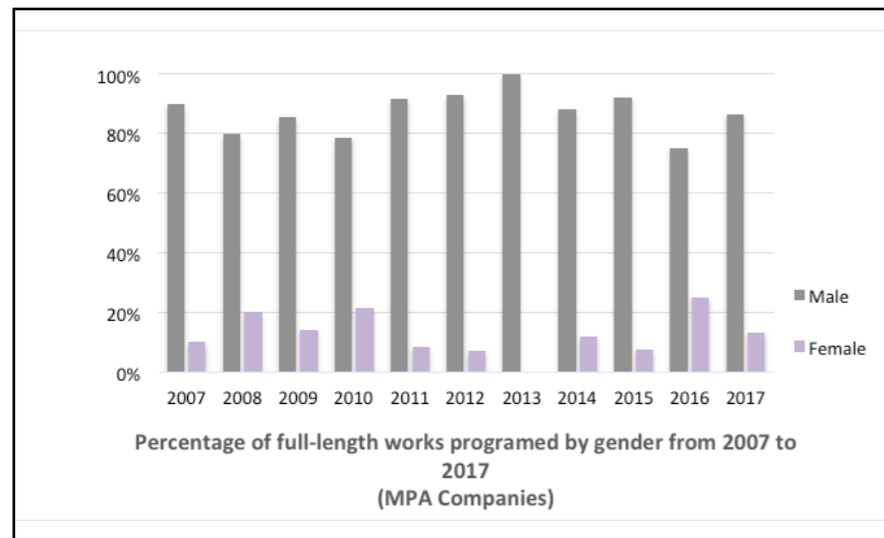


Figure 1: Percentage of full-length works programmed by gender from 2007-2017 (MPA Companies) Full-length works

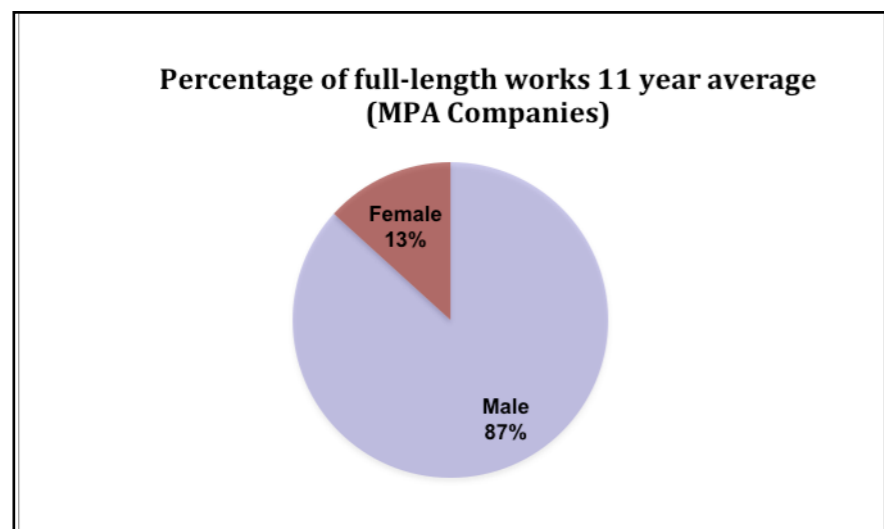


Figure 2: Percentage of full-length works 11 year average (MPA Companies)

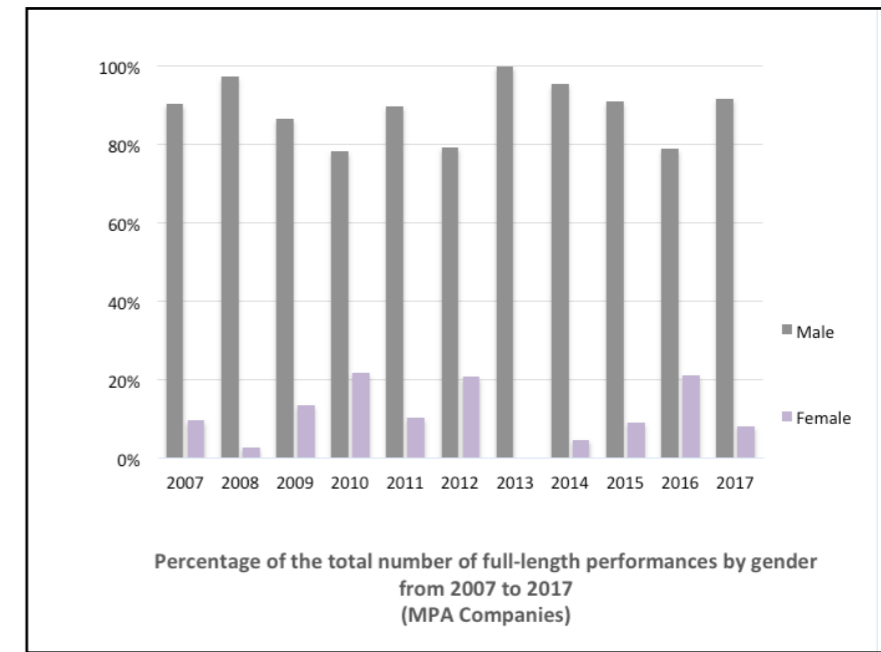


Figure 3: Percentage of the total number of full-length performances by gender from 2007-2017 (MPA Companies)

Key details:

- The MPA companies were programming higher numbers of male choreographers. Over the period analysed, 87% of work programmed was choreographed by men, representing 88% of stage time. Women were programmed 13% of the time and work was performed for 11% of the total season.
- Over an 11-year period an overall higher proportion of programming was presented by men than women, 87% of the time, compared to 13% for women over the same period. This was also represented by the number of times a work was performed.
- In most years, females represented less than 15% of the total number of choreographers programmed, with the lowest year being 2013 with 0% of works choreographed by women followed by 7% in the year 2012.
- Hidden amongst the numbers are some particular nuances. Over an 11-year period, The Australian Ballet, Queensland Ballet and Sydney Dance Company each programmed more than 85% of their full-length works from male choreographers. With Sydney Dance Company, this could be partly attributed to having a male artistic director who choreographs the majority of the full-length works.

Shorter works, part of a mixed season

The data presented here outlines the percentages of male and females represented in mixed seasons, such as double bill, triple bills, choreographic development seasons and galas. The length of these works depends on the company and the season involved; it can be one of 12 works as part of a program or one of two works presented as a double bill.

Each work is counted once per program it was featured in. For example, if Tracy's work is programmed as part of season A, with three other works and is then programmed in season B, with four different works, it is counted a second time, as this is considered a new context and a second opportunity for the choreographer. Excerpts from full-length works are also included, but free performances and development showings have been excluded from analysis. If there was more than one choreographer listed for a work, all choreographers are recorded based on their gender. Detailed notes of inclusion and exclusion as part of the appendix.

Key details:

- The works of female choreographers were programmed on average 24% compared to that of males at 76% over the same time period.
- While women's works were programmed at lower numbers than men's works, their full-length works were being performed slightly more frequently.
- 2007 represented the most equal year in the number of opportunities, with 52% of the year choreographed by men compared to 48% women, which represented 48% of the seasons.
- Of note is the success of Bangarra with many years having equal numbers of women programmed as men and several years having more women than men. The combined statistics of all the MPA companies are helped by the inclusion of Bangarra's programming.

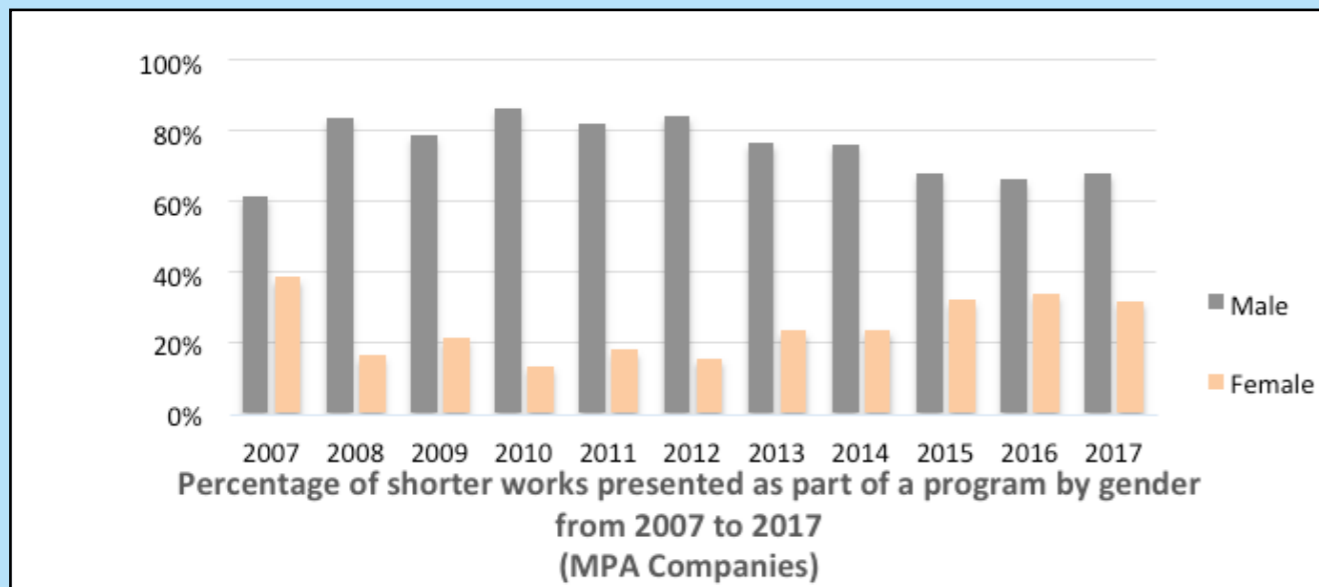


Figure 4: Percentage of shorter works presented as part of a program by gender from 2007 to 2017 (MPA Companies)

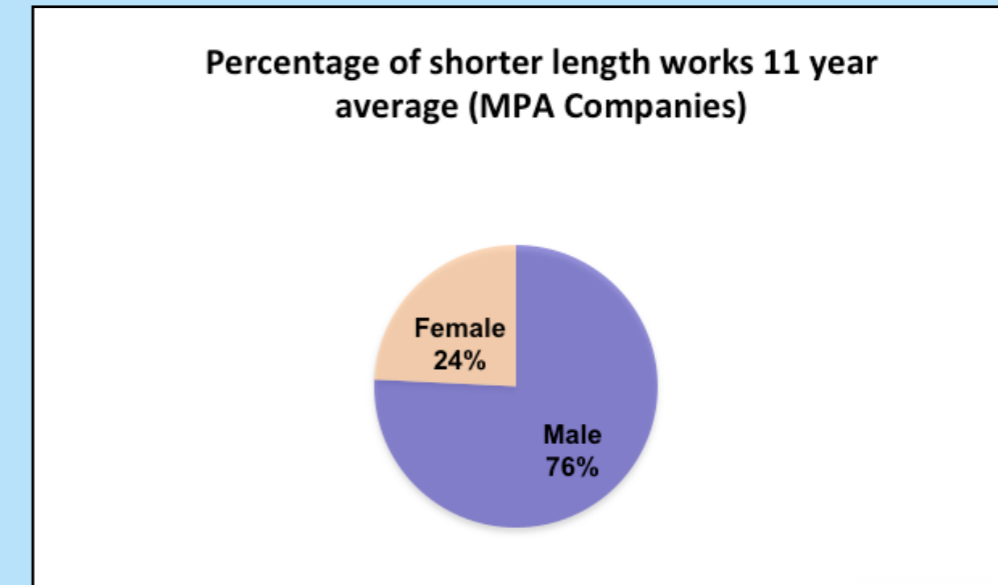


Figure 5: percentage of shorter length works 11 year average (MPA companies)

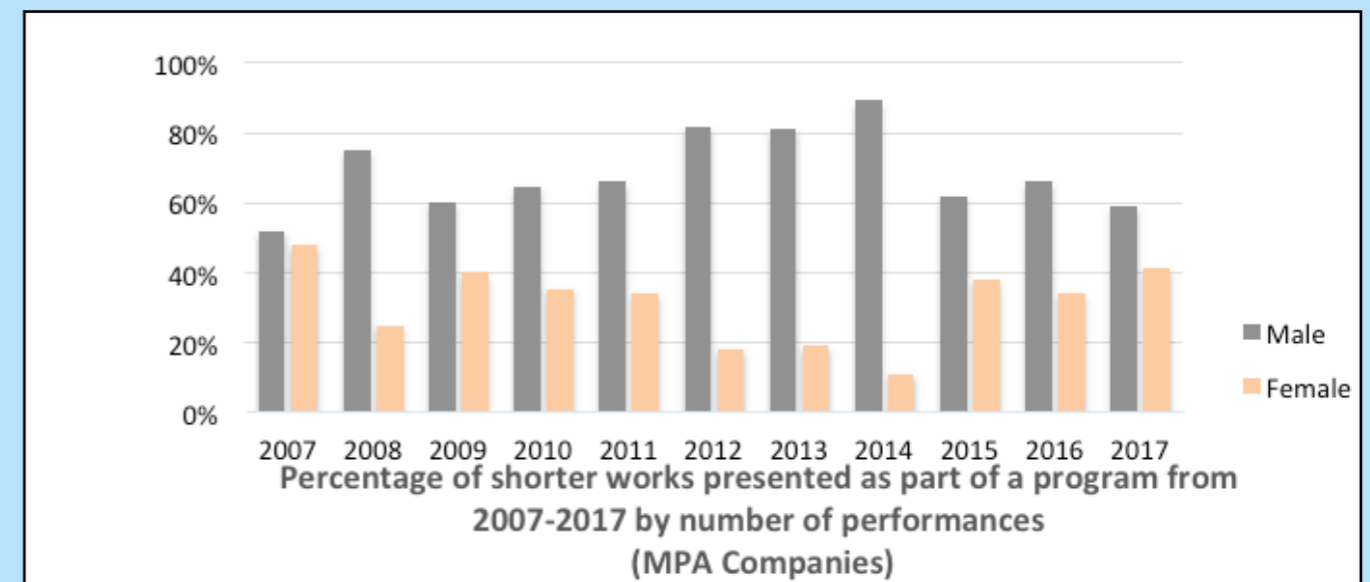


Figure 6: percentage of shorter works presented as part of a program from 2007-2017 by number of performances (MPA Companies)

MPA new commissions and Australian premieres

Significantly, MPA dance companies are dominated by ballet companies, who often program pre-existing works held in the repertoire. As a result, new work becomes an important measure of gender equity. It is through looking at new commissions and Australian premieres we can more accurately assess the current state of play within MPA companies. Figure 8 represents all-new commissions and Australian premieres and also includes works presented as part of development seasons, like New Breed or Bodytorque.

Key details:

- On the whole, men were being programmed in new work either as commissions or Australian Premieres at a rate of 74% compared to women at 26%. The best year for female commissions was 2007 at 44% and the worst year was 2017 at 20%.
- The work of men can be seen in 69% of performances compared to 31% of performances of women.
- There has been a steady improvement in the number of women being programmed in years 2015, 2016 & 2017.
- The examination of new commissions and Australian premieres indicates that a gender imbalance in programming is not just a result of the number of works from male choreographers being programmed from repertoire.
- These statistics are overly weighted towards shorter works that are part of an overall program. There have been few full-length commissions from women during this time compared to a significant number of works from men.
- Significantly, women were also under-represented in development seasons like Australian Ballet's Bodytorque, but there was a better balance in Sydney Dance Company's New Breed Season. These programs, while significant platforms, often sit peripherally to the company's main season. For example, Bodytorque in 2015 had only five works with only three performances; an incredibly small percentage of their annual season, when The Australian Ballet also only had three other commissions in that year.
- It is worth noting that these percentages include works choreographed by the artistic directors of companies. Significantly, in the case of Sydney Dance Company, Bangarra and, previously, Queensland Ballet, most years feature at least one full-length work choreographed by the artistic director. As a result, these statistics be improved simply by having female artistic directors.

Percentage of new commissions 11 year average (MPA Companies)

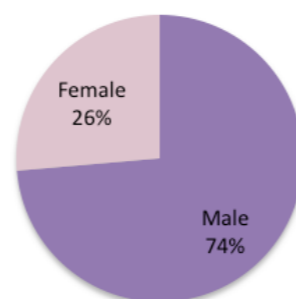


Figure 7 : Percentage of new commissions and Australian Premieres, 11 year average (MPA Companies)

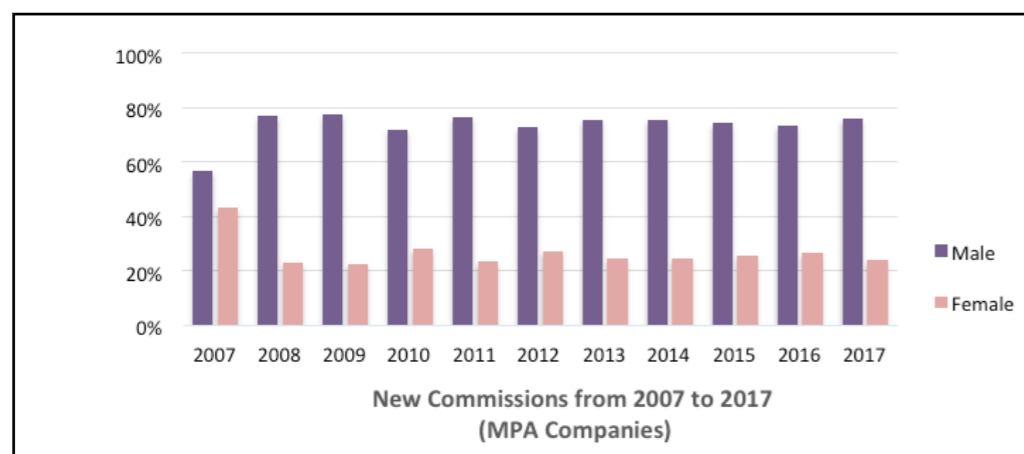


Figure 8: New Commissions and Australian premieres from 2007-2017 (MPA Companies)

Multi-year funded companies an analysis of the gender of choreographers

This section reports on companies that receive annual organisational funding by the Australia Council. Despite repeat requests, annual reports were not supplied by Shaun Parker & Company, Kage and Tasdance. Where possible this information has been taken from their websites.

Programming by companies is only counted for the years they were funded under the Key Organisation or Four-Year funding program. For example, Ballet Lab was excluded from 2017 data but Marrugeku Inc was included. Dancehouse (Vic) has been excluded for the purpose of this analysis as their programming model is very different from the other organisations included here. BlakDance Australia Ltd, the national peak body for Indigenous dance in Australia, is funded through Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts funding and does not program work. As a result they are not counted in this report.

No distinction is made in the multi-year funded companies between full-length work and works presented as part of a season. The percentages of new commissions are also not a relevant measure here as the majority of the companies have a focus on premiering new work, as opposed to a repertoire-based model.

Key details:

- The data from these companies indicates a stronger prominence of the work of female choreographers.
- Over a six-year period, 59% of the works were programmed by women compared to 41% by men.
- Many of these companies have female artistic leaders, which results in more women being choreographed as artistic directors were seen as routinely choreographing for their own companies.
- It could be said more women might be working in this sector as there are not the opportunities to work in the MPA companies.
- It is important to note that there are significant differences hidden in this aggregated data. For example Lucy Guerin Inc has programmed a much higher percentage of women than Australian Dance Theatre, whose programming is dominated by male choreographers.

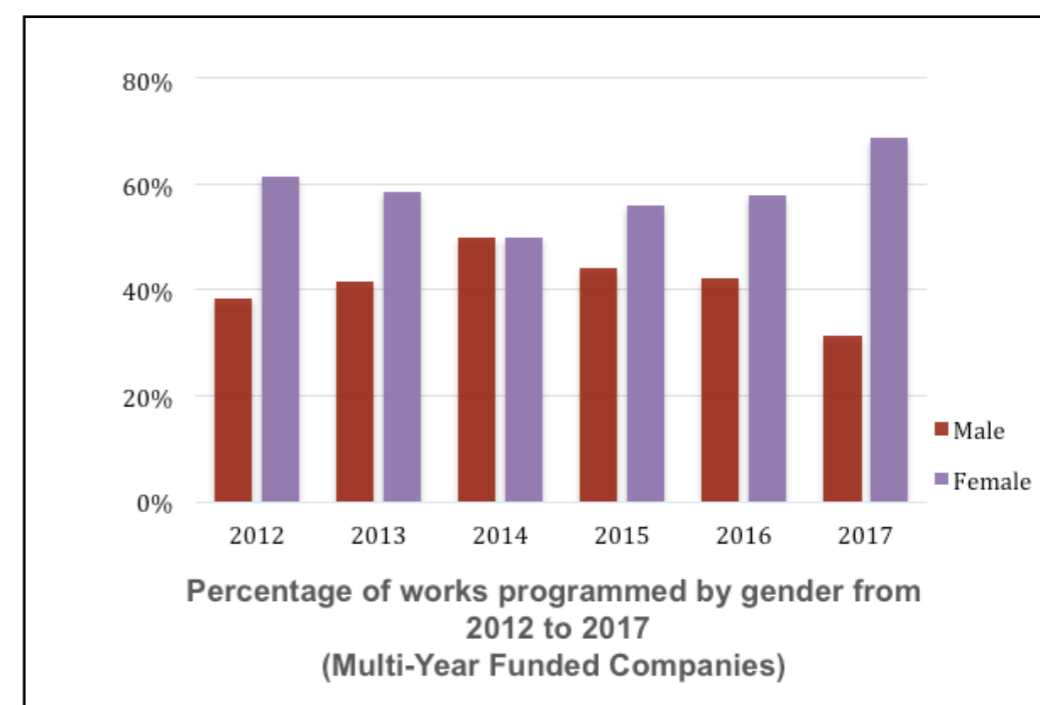


Figure 9: Percentage of works programmed by gender from 2012-2017 (multi-year funded companies)

Australia Council project funding

In more broadly assessing the participation rates of freelance artists and those interested in dance projects, data was provided by the Australia Council. This data compares the number of applications from individuals to the dance panel over the last seven funding rounds compared with that of all other arts panels, organised by the gender of applicants.

Dance (Applications from individuals to the dance panel over the seven rounds from March 2015 to June 2017)

	Received	% of total received	Approved	% of total approved	Success rate
Female	204	74%	36	72%	18%
Male	65	24%	13	26%	20%
Other/Undefined	5	2%	1	2%	20%

All panels (Applications from individuals to all panels over the seven rounds from March 2015 to June 2017)

	Received	% of total received	Approved	% of total approved	Success rate
Female	3469	57%	616	59%	18%
Male	2528	42%	416	40%	16%
Other/Undefined	75	1%	9	1%	12%

Key Details:

- There was much stronger interest from female choreographers in funding for projects at 74%, compared to 24% from males. These statistics are consistent with the recently released *Making Art Work* report, which found that 69% of all dancers and choreographers were female and indicating that there should be more applications from women.
- There were significantly more applications from women in dance compared to the combined totals of all other panels, where applications were more closely aligned to Australia's gender demographics.
- Funding in the context of project applicants for Australia Council funding indicates a strong sectorial interest. It could also indicate that more women were seeking the funding opportunities that are not seen as possible within MPA companies.

Industry recognition

It is worth assessing the key awards of the Australian dance industry, which tend to be dominated by individuals working within or for multi-year funded companies. The following table outlines the award winners of Australian Dance Awards: Outstanding Achievement in Choreography.

Year	Australian Dance Awards: Outstanding Achievement in Choreography
2004	Frances Rings
2005	Wendy Houstoun, Narelle Benjamin, Brian Carbee, Julie-Anne Long, Michael Whaites and Graeme Murphy AO
2006	Tanja Liedtke
2007	N/A
2008	Garry Stewart
2009	Tanja Liedtke
2010	Meryl Tankard and Paul White
2011	Rafael Bonachela
2012	Natalie Weir
2013	Rafael Bonachela
2014	Stephanie Lake
2015	Narelle Benjamin
2016	Lucy Guerin
2017	Lucy Guerin

Key Details:

- On the whole, more women than men won one of Australia's key choreographic awards, with women awarded 12 awards and men awarded seven over a 14-year period.

Summary of section one

Collating this data has been surprising and confronting. While there was the expectation that the data from the MPA companies would expose a gender imbalance, the extent of this imbalance was not expected to be so significant. It was expected that the data would present a similar picture to that captured in the Women in Theatre report, but the imbalance in dance is far more troubling. The significantly low programming from the MPA companies is especially concerning. The programming in the multi-year funded companies was far more balanced, but even these numbers do not reflect the overall female participation rates of the industry.

The Women in Theatre Report found that between the years 2001 and 2011, MPA theatre companies were consistently programming 25% of works from female directors; at its lowest year 14% and highest year 40%. The data analysed for this report indicated a more confronting and inequitable space. Women on average were being programmed 14% of the time for full-length works, with the best year sitting at 25%. Women were programmed on average 24% for works sitting as part of a season, with the best year at 38% and the worst at 13%. New commissions also revealed a worrying state of affairs. Moreover, women are under-represented in decision-making positions in MPA companies, where there have been no female artistic directors since 1996 across all companies. Some companies have never had a female artistic director, setting up a gendered structure that reinforces women's inequality.

Given this data is aggregated between all companies, it conceals companies that are performing worse or better. This has been a deliberate choice as this data has not been collected to create a league table between companies, instead it seeks to highlight the differences in the programming without targeting any particular companies. It is important to note that some companies are doing much better in their programming than others, and some companies are pulling down the overall percentages. That said, all MPA companies were programming significantly more men than women in all lengths of works.

This analysis reveals that there is an increased opportunity for women working in the smaller to medium sector; this is reflective of the overall participation numbers of women in the industry as a whole. There are several possibilities for the differences between MPA companies and the multi-year funded organisations that are explored through the interview data presented in the next section. Could it be that female artistic directors are more likely to provide opportunities to other female choreographers? Or is it that these companies are operating in ways that provide more opportunity?

While there are important differences between the MPA companies and the multi-year funded companies, the comparison between the two is important, as it exposes different barriers and highlights the capacity for the MPA companies to learn from the medium sector and look at what they can do to increase the programming of women.



Image: Work by Maxine Doyle: Photo by N. Klinger

Section Two

Perspectives from the field

To help in understanding the raw data, the following section reports on interview data exploring the barriers within dance and the different ways that women and men might be treated.

For interviews, individuals were directly approached and invited to participate. A total of 23 interview participants were recruited from different sections of the dance industry, including artistic directors, dancers, choreographers, producers and executive directors. There was a great diversity of respondents that provided a wide range of experiences. All participants had been working in the industry for over nine years and all were professionally employed. Due to the focus of the research, more women were recruited than men, with the largest percentage of participants being female choreographers. It is interesting to note that three men participated on the provision of not being named as a contributor. All artistic directors from all MPA dance companies were approached for an interview. All other contributors have been listed in the appendix and all identifiable information has been removed. This part of the project had University of NSW Ethics Clearance (project number: HC17579).

Questions asked were based around themes including personal experiences, professional lives and potential barriers (a list of sample questions is listed in the Appendix on page 39). All interview data was transcribed and de-identified and is presented here based on the dominant themes that permeated through the data. The issues presented here are nuanced and interrelated, collectively informing each other.

Male privilege: Boys club

There was a dominant perception from many of the female participants that they were treated differently to the males. These perceptions were based on a range of specific distinctions that were present at different parts of their career. The examples were many but included the way in which men might address women they work with differently to that of other men:

There were two men in the room and they were asking me to take notes, they treated me like a secretary, although we were all on the same level ... but I also feel like I can't say 'Can you write your own notes?'

The privilege exercised by men was often subconscious and many participants indicated that the men they work with would be horrified if they knew how significant their actions were. One participant explaining: "It is such a subconscious thing." Participants discussed the programming at MPA companies and did

not understand why men were being given more opportunities than women. Individuals were quick to highlight the number of seasons that had occurred without the work of female choreographers. Two particular seasons were discussed by a number of participants: Australian Ballet's Infinity season, where three men choreographed new works and, perhaps surprisingly, Sydney Dance Company's Le Grand Tango season, again with three men choreographing new works.

Several of the participants also spoke about the last focus on female choreography from an MPA company happening during the Spring Dance Festival in 2012. Although, even this focus on female choreography was something that individuals challenged, questioning why there needed to be specific seasons for women and why it was not something that is integrated into normal seasons; these sentiments were shared at the time by Deborah Stone (2012).

A range of experiences were reported by women about feeling that their status was seen as lower or more marginal than that of men

In Australia there are way more women coming out of the dance scene ... So even demographically it shouldn't be that it's half-half every year.

When you look around, it is like every single work in the ballet company is from a white European male.

I don't see women getting tapped on the shoulder and told 'we are giving you this big company'.

I just feel like there is quite a boys club in Australia, so it is about supporting each other and supporting other men.

I just can't believe how disrespected or ignored older female choreographers are in this country. I find that appalling and how the spotlight is always on these young guys coming out of school and starting their own thing.

The notion of a "boys club" was raised consistently, particularly when talking about MPA companies and some of the medium sector companies, all that had male artistic directors. One participant said: "I feel Australia really has a culture of people needing to be vouched for in some way". It was this participant's perception that companies artistically led by men were more likely to support other males. Many participants felt they did not have individuals within these companies supporting their work or with an understanding of their practice. One participant said:



Image: YONI by Prue Lang: Photo by Pippa Samaya

This is a more globalised trend that gets perpetuated because companies, venues and programmers - everyone seems to work together. There is definitely a culture of wanting to vouch for things or wanting to be on the same page as the other people who are all kind of championing that sort of thing.

These systems offer advantage to those already working within the larger companies or with existing relationships, perhaps established while working with that company. One choreographer explained that it was not until she had "people of a higher kind of standing profile" starting to vouch for her that she started to get significant main-stage opportunities. She said it "had nothing to do with a kind of work that I was making or anything like that; it was just about having someone saying 'Hey this woman's doing interesting things you should take her seriously'."

Confidence

There was a perceived and real gender bias within the industry that was said to increase the confidence of men at the expense of women. Men were routinely spoken about as having a confidence to express their ideas and visions over that of women. Data presented in this section related equally to those working both within the MPA and medium sector, with no significant differences across both parts of the sector.

The issues of training structures fostering different expectations for men and women is reported in previous studies and, for this reason, this report avoids delving into these issues explicitly - but it must be noted that the complex structures and the gendered expectations around body practice cannot be ignored. As one participant said: "Women

that have been in these highly competitive situations, highly critical of themselves and ... have a lot of self doubt so that they wouldn't make the step up to choreograph." These same pressures were not said to impact men in the same way.

The confidence men had was said to be a result of the systems and support put in place to foster their participation:

The male dancers that I've been around, there is this sense of confidence ... Maybe because they've always been propped up within the system. There's this confidence to try things and be a bit more bolshie about what they could achieve.

Another participant said: "I think sometimes when they have a bit more flair or attitude that is seen as something to be encouraged, whereas with women it's not always nurtured early on." The pathways into dance and the different supports put in place no doubt have an influence in this arena, with women often feeling more expendable than men, and, as a result, not developing the confidence to express their own creative voice. It is perhaps no coincidence then that many of the women who have gone on to professional choreographic careers, outside of ballet companies, started in their later teens or left dance for a period of time before recommencing dance at a later age. These findings are consistent with what Screen Australia (2015) identified as a "lack of self belief" in women.

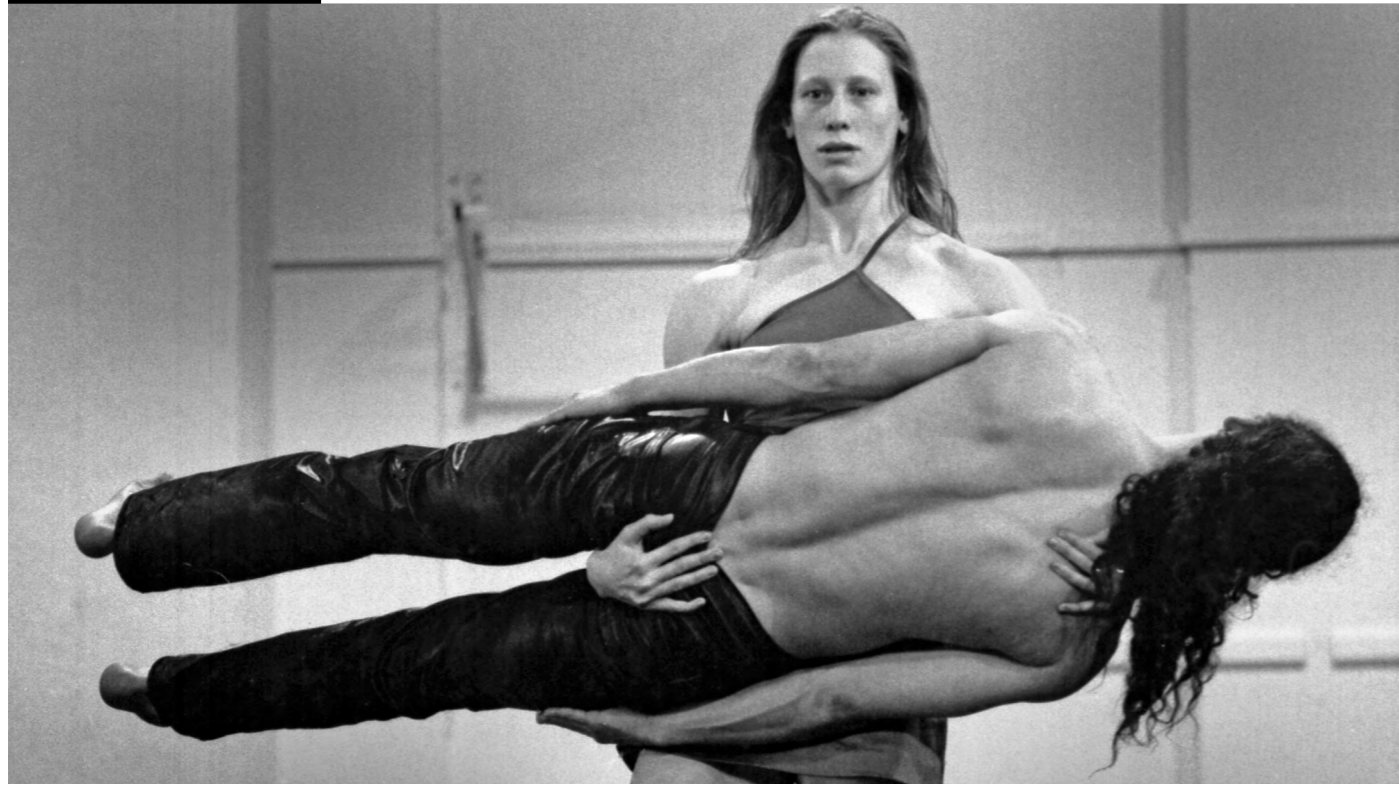


Image: INUK by Meryl Tankard Photo by Regis Lansac

Entitlement

Ideas of confidence were coupled with notions of entitlement and repeatedly came up in responses. One participant said: "Guys are always super entitled, individual, confident, trying everything." Other participants added to this:

There is a sense of expectation and entitlement and they know what they want and they will pursue it, sometimes quite rigorously as well, and I think sometimes as women we can be very respectful and very polite and not want to put that pressure on.

I do feel men are quicker at feeling entitled for certain things. Whilst they have done this and this, so they feel like they are entitled to do that, and that is something that I do see a lot.

I know of a lot of young men who are given these opportunities ... They look confident and they make it sound very special and unique whereas what they talk about is not unique at all, they are just salesmen. They can sell you something that sounds amazing, but actually it's what everybody is doing.

[In] talking to young male choreographers who clearly showed his entitlement like 'Well I've done this for two years therefore I'm entitled to that'. I'm talking about basic conversations with quite a lot of young guys.

You know it's just the confidence that comes across. Very assertive and very unemotional.

As indicative of the range of responses, these levels of confidence and entitlement were a significant issue reported by women, to a level that might surprise males in the industry. There was a call from many participants for men to become aware of their behaviour and the ways that they might be negatively affecting those around them. One participant said:

The level of habitual patterns where entitlement comes in and how that affects women on a really deep level, and men aren't aware of it; they are just not aware of it. That needs to happen and partially it's for women to speak up about it. So if anything can happen, I think, on a productive level, more awareness from the guys in the arts sector about this issue.

Confidence was a trait seen to be encouraged and supported in men, often stemming from training and from men seen as not participating in dance in such high number.

The majority of women indicated that they did not feel they could behave in the same way:

Confidence is appreciated in men, whereas I don't think it is appreciated as much in women. It can be seen as threatening, there is this want to put you back in a box ... My ideas and confidence got suppressed within the formal structure of a company.

Confidence in young women is also often not supported by other women. We need to get better at supporting each other.

I feel that if women are particular about their art and have a certain standard that they want to reach, sometimes that's seen as negative from a woman that may be complaining or nagging rather than actually pursuing excellence in their work. If a man was to do the same thing, it is seen differently, as if he is career orientated.

If you do push the agenda, you are seen as just a nagging woman.

A young ambitious man is different to a young ambitious woman.

Women can't afford to speak out as they will be labeled 'difficult' simply because we are not used to hearing women's voices. Whereas a male dancer or choreographer who is forceful, strong, he has a vision.

Women can come across as too in-your-face. I don't know if bitchy would be the right word, but too intense if they were to do something in a way that a man does. I think that we, yeah I definitely think we are seen in a different light, our actions would be seen very very different to how a man's would be seen if they were to be bold and take action.

These differences in the ways that behaviours of men and women might be read differently need to be considered by all individuals working in the sector. The extensive responses in this area deserve deep reflection from all. These were significant issues for women and were discussed as one of the main issues that they were forced to negotiate professionally. It was said: "Anybody who is in a position to commission an artist to make a work, man or woman, whoever is in that position has to be aware that women present themselves differently than men". This participant went on to say that these differences related primarily to confidence.

Programming and opportunity

There was a range of views about the ways opportunities were made available to men and women. More was said about the fewer opportunities with MPA companies compared to those with the small-to-medium sector, which is reflective of the percentages of programming within both tiers. One participant said:

In the small-to-medium sector there are so many women working in that area, but it feels like it is impossible to take a step into the higher MPA fields and grow a larger audience.

Other choreographers explained:

Nowadays trying to get an opportunity in the ballet companies is really hard, especially if you do not have experience - and that's the biggest thing, how do you get experience if no one gives you an opportunity? How do you develop your CV if you don't have

great dancers to work on? We need to ensure that people have these opportunities.

The scheduling of the ballet is getting tighter and tighter so to find enough time to experiment and experience what it is to choreograph ... that's a fairly daunting thing for anyone, especially if they are new to it [choreography].

In regard to opportunities, it was indicated by another participant: 'People need to exhibit skill to get an opportunity, you can't just go, I am going to give you this opportunity because of your gender'. The same participant indicated that, as a result, companies need to start looking at what happens earlier: "I look around Australia, looking for people to commission, and there are actually not many people right now that could create a work for a ballet company". Of course, not all women wanted to work in MPA companies, but many did and they wanted the opportunity available to other women.

There was recognition that in promoting emerging choreographic voices and providing entry-level opportunities for female dancers was more complicated in companies as women had increased performance demands, as reflected in rehearsal and stage time. A few participants spoke about why there are often fewer women in development seasons (i.e. Bodytorque):

I don't think it is a lack of desire [from women]. It is just they are busier than the men ... boys are not usually the big acts, whereas all the girls are dancing up a storm, and the guys are sitting in the dressing rooms reading books or playing video games, so they use that time to generate work.

The pressures of development seasons - as a dancer there is not always that much time available people doing work after hours or in time off, just to get the work done. This is more difficult if you have got a large performance schedule or have family pressures.

While there was a strong recognition of these challenges, many indicated that this was not an excuse that could continue to be used and that companies needed to look at structural changes to make more opportunities.

Developmental seasons were said to be incredibly significant for women working across the sector. There was strong praise for the development opportunities in programs such as Next Move, Bodytorque, Rough Draft and New Breed. A few women indicated that without these earlier opportunities they would have been unable to develop their choreographic voice, test the very possibility of choreography as a career option or have the important economic support to continue. One of the choreographers explained that it was "invaluable experience" without which she didn't think she would be choreographing now.

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In regard to the first opportunity to develop a choreographic voice, many of the female participants said that they only started choreographing because someone saw potential in them and provided them with support and earlier opportunities. One participant said about being encouraged to choreograph a work:

I always thought that it would be the lightning strikes and you get this lightning bolt vision of I have something to say, I have this voice, I need to be able to say this choreographically' – and it just didn't happen that way and I would have never of considered it.

There was the impression that men were more likely to be fostered in these choreographic opportunities and, as a result, women may not consider it as a career option as it is not something that they had seen possible. These points intersect with issues around confidence and visibility, which are explored in subsequent sections.

Safe-bets and audiences

There was an awareness from participants about the pressures of attracting and maintaining audiences and, as a result, MPA companies, in particular, were more likely to program work from choreographers already known to audiences. The irony that several Australian female choreographers spend long periods of time overseas creating work with large companies was not lost on many participants, indicating their surprise that senior Australian choreographers are getting more opportunities overseas than here in Australia. Several mentioned Meryl Tankard as the main example.

Some participants were of the belief that this is a result of increased funding pressures, but also as a result of Key Performance Indicators focusing on audience growth beyond artistic diversity. One participant said: "I think it's just about being safe and it's just run by business people to be honest and I think that they just look at what is the most safe package rather than risk with a bit of a lower profile." Another said: "The companies are becoming bigger and the audiences are becoming bigger, you have this delicate balance to maintain [audiences] ... but we also need to present work that is pushing their threshold." Another participant similarly suggested that "larger companies need to get better at introducing audiences to new work". Several participants highlighted the ways in which certain choreographers' works have made it into main-stage seasons through developing an audience for the work.

Participants were sympathetic to these pressures, but also saw the tension between providing spaces for new voices and maintaining existing audiences. There was the common belief that increased opportunities will add an important vibrancy and diversity to the main-stage companies: "We need to allow that freshness and other voices because we are fast becoming very stagnant, because we are just seeing the constant rehashing of the same language. I think we do ourselves an injustice."

Repeated references were made to Alice Topp, Gabrielle Nankivell and

Stephanie Lake, with participants highlighting the stepping-stones that they saw in these individuals' careers and their progression. They saw that these choreographers' career progressions have been provided by smaller but ongoing opportunities and support. With opportunities there also comes responsibility to ensure that companies support individuals to develop their own choreographic voice, recognising that this takes time and that not every work will be a success.

Pressures of opportunity

There was a view that with the limited opportunities for women in MPA companies there were increased pressures when opportunities were given. These increased pressures often related to the belief that if the work was unsuccessful, it would mean they would be unlikely to be programmed again. One participant said: "Female choreographers don't get a second chance, whereas with male choreographers, I find there is this little bit more of a tolerance to making mistakes. They still get another chance." Other participants said:

Whenever there's a female choreographer, if it's not a great work you don't really get a second chance."

It's one shot and you're out rather than you'll have a few opportunities to keep growing.

Some felt that they were representing their gender:

I find the pressure on female choreographers – it's because there aren't many female choreographers – you want to be a good female choreographer because you're a good choreographer regardless of gender and it's just the kind of thing that you get. Well, because she's a female she gets this opportunity and that I find really frustrating, and then the pressure put on it being good is then greater because then if it's not great you just get canned.

One choreographer indicated that she did not expect to get a second opportunity as her first big commission was not well received by reviewers: "Everything in his [the artistic director] head resides on box office and reviews; [he] will probably never commission me again."

Women said that when they got opportunities that they were expected to jump through different hoops than men were. One participant explaining her experiences said:

You've got to be more organised, more prepared, more clear. You've got to be more forward, the confidence you have to bring because I feel like you are scrutinised more. It feels like women have to be more competent in everything than men to get the same type of attention.

With the desire to capitalise on opportunities of various sizes, many

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women indicated that they have undersold themselves or have not been that tough in the negotiations, because they would rather have the opportunity to work for the company than to miss out. One participant discussed this in depth:

I undersell myself just to get the opportunity. You don't want the opportunity to be lost and any chance to get your work out there of course you'll take it. But I'm not confident enough to ask for what I'm probably worth, and I don't know why that is.

Other participants indicated that it was only through having a good producer that they understood their value and what was a fair price for a commission or set of workshops. There was the desire from many to better negotiate and manage the opportunities that might be offered, so they can best capitalise on the opportunity and be appropriately reimbursed.

Visibility and role-models

Notions of a clear pathway and visibility came up routinely in interviews. This is based purely on the premise that if you are female dancer, but you do not see or work with female choreographers, why would you consider it a viable career choice? This was particularly an issue for those who had previously worked or were currently working within MPA companies; many noting that with few women being programmed in these companies that there were few role models to look up to.

One choreographer spoke about a time she worked at an MPA company and her surprise at how many female dancers came and spoke to her about their experiences:

Honestly, I can't tell you how many of them said 'It's so nice to work with a woman'; it just doesn't happen unless they are their teachers or their rehearsal directors. They are always in those roles, they are never the director.

She followed, "Imagine your whole career is always men who are directing you. Of course, they aren't going to become a choreographer." Another woman said: "I've never worked for a female choreographer. In the 10 years that I've been with <company name>, I've never worked with a female choreographer ... I'd really love that opportunity."

One participant thought that she was uncertain and nervous working with women in positions of power compared to men, explaining:

I attribute that to [the fact that] as a performer there was only one time in my entire career that I've actually worked for a female choreographer. My experience is incredibly male dominated and I wonder sometimes how that's unconsciously positioned how I work with people in leadership roles.



Image: Noise Quartet Meditation (2017) by Lillian Steiner.. Photo by James Wright



Image: Pile of Bones (2017) by Stephanie Lake Company. Photo by Bryony Jackson

There is the impression that the low numbers of female choreographers commissioned within MPA companies has led to a space where female dancers are not viewing choreography as a viable or attractive option. Many indicated that if more women were commissioned that this would have tangible and long-term positive impact on the industry: "Obviously it's going to be a positive experience to have a female choreographer creating for the company to inspire the girls to possibly think about that as an option.". It is within notions of visibility and role modelling that the nuances and the interconnected aspects of these barriers present themselves.

Mentoring

Alongside many of the barriers that participants discussed in regard to their participation as female choreographers, mentoring in its various forms repeatedly came up as one of the most important factors for encouraging and supporting female participation. Participants said:

Mentoring, I think, works as a tool for harvesting that talent.

I think that mentoring is really important.

It was particularly in the issue of developing confidence that the importance of mentoring was raised. The more experienced female choreographers interviewed attributed their success to having strong mentors, who not only helped them up-skill, but also helped them deepen and develop their networks that expanded their opportunities. One choreographer explained: "Mentors have helped me get to where I am today.". Another explained the importance of mentors

in her networks: "I used to joke 'thank god, I have talented friends', because those networks are so important.". A few participants expressed concern that older female dancers and choreographers were not being supported and that this is where we should be looking for strong mentorship for emerging choreographers. One participant summarised this concern explaining: "We need to look after the few female choreographers that we have so they can mentor, inspire and nurture young creative women. Older women are just discarded."

The importance of mentoring alongside new opportunities also featured strongly in responses. Developmental seasons including Bodytorque, Rough Draft, Pieces for Small Spaces, Keir Choreographic Award, Next Move and New Breed alongside other similar programs were frequently raised as important platforms, although there was some concern that these opportunities were not always coupled with strong guidance and support. Mentoring was said to be something that might complement these opportunities. One participant said: "[Companies] need to understand the need for mentoring, not just throwing someone in the room and saying make a work."

Mentoring not only needs to be considered in regard to choreographic skills, but also in equipping individuals with the skills to take up particular roles, such as artistic directors. Many participants also indicated the importance of sector-wide leadership in this area, to "take responsibility to actually help and assist the next generation and not to be scared they are going to come and take over.". Mentoring discussed included choreographic skill development, support during applications, and in developing a range of allied-skills that support them as individuals. Mentoring discussed as helpful included informal relationships as well as formalised structures including, but not limited to, artistic associate positions at Chunky Move, a Resident Director at Lucy Guerin Inc and Assistant to Artistic Director at Expressions. In

these positions, individuals could expand on their skill sets beyond just choreography.

Several participants discussed these ideas as a way of ensuring that there are women ready and confident to step into leadership positions. This might include things like: "spending six to 12 months in an environment with an artistic director trying to get a sense of how it all works.". Another participant pointed out that support should include things like grant writing, marketing and strategic planning, as well as sitting in on board meetings and other planning meetings "because it is a significant leap, even in terms of things like financial literacy, to becoming a CEO, the artistic director of a company and all that [role] might encompass". This participant believed that this type of support could help prepare potential candidates for artistic leadership, in a climate where boards are "risk averse".

Childcare and family responsibilities

One of the most significant challenges around workplace participation was the need to balance children alongside a career, with the cost implications of childcare a real concern. One artistic director explained:

Managing children alongside my career has been the hardest thing I have needed to negotiate.". It is important to recognise that no two individuals manage their professional career and a family in the same way, but children were an added complexity for all participants who had children.

There were a few reported examples of discrimination in relation to parental responsibilities. An example was given about a particular male manager:

There was a company that I worked for where an opportunity of great responsibility was denied to an incredible capable and exceptional woman and the reason was directly stated that 'she has children, and I don't want her to have that much responsibility.'

This is blatant discrimination that contravenes The Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act, The Workplace Gender Equality Act and state and territory legislation. This is also a unique example of a particular culture in which women who have children can be seen as a hindrance and discriminated against based on family responsibilities. Two other similar examples were reported by participants, but the specificity of the reports make anonymity impossible and will not be quoted from. It might be fair to assume that these same responsibilities are not seen as a hindrance for working fathers. While many companies have significant and important maternity structures, these are irrelevant if workplace cultures preclude the voices and input of women who are otherwise exceptionally talented but may have young children.

Maternity-leave structures and support for child care

Many of the MPA companies have great maternity leave structures that were discussed favourably. The Australian Ballet has supported over 16 company dancers to take time off to have children and support them to re-enter the company. These same generous supports are just not available in the independent and small-to-medium sector where there are more short-term contracts. The financial restraints of childcare provisions were well recognised and women often struggled to manage these costs. Participants indicated that they all knew women who had left dance as they were unable to manage the competing demands, moving into things like yoga teaching, dance teaching or other careers that are flexible and more supportive when it came to children.

Freelance choreographers

The provision of childcare and maternity leave structures are limited in their reach. The pressures for freelance choreographers with childcare responsibilities were immense, with some indicating they would spend almost their total fees from their commissions on childcare. One choreographer explained that for seven years almost all the money she earned through dancing or choreographic opportunities went on paying for childcare: "I saw it as an investment in my future and I didn't have a choice.". These added financial pressures borne by women can become a significant burden, more so in the case of single mothers without the support of a partner. Others indicated that it was difficult to find childcare for short-term periods as the childcare system was more geared to those who had consistent working hours and days.

It is possible on many grant applications to apply for money for the provisions of childcare as part of the project overall costs. Surprisingly many of the women were unaware that this was even a possibility, let alone something that they had applied for. One participant commenting on the lack of awareness about the possibility of helping to cover childcare costs said:

A lot of people don't realise that is something that you can do in applying for grants, and in applying for funding. I think people leave it out, thinking that that extra cost will make their grant less competitive.

Most were not prepared to increase the budget, concerned that it would make their application uncompetitive. Two participants noted:

I've just always covered it. My partner and I have always done that - there's hardly ever been a time where it's been an additional payment through a job or I've factored it in the budget of something.

It's incredibly competitive getting independent funding for a project, so the thought of adding another line to a budget that I can probably absorb personally; it would just feel like too much of a risk I guess. That maybe that slight increase in the budget would be the thing that would knock you out. I wouldn't risk it.

When it came to negotiating contracts and work opportunities with children this was an added pressure that many said had meant that they had missed out on opportunities.

I was engaged to do a work for a company. I had to really fight tooth and nail to be able to get child care support to be able to have flexibility with my hours ... they want the artist but they don't want the package.

I feel like I make it pretty easy for companies; I don't negotiate anything into the contract, basically I carry the financial burden generally. So if I need to fly my kids with me on a job or if I need to fly back home every weekend or something like that, I just do that.

From my perspective, it was all about having a partner who was willing to be a full-time dad when I was away, and accessing good childcare and being able to afford childcare was really important. In the early days what I found really difficult, and I guess women still do, is when I had a young child and I went travelling trying to find daycare - good day care - in the city that I was traveling to; if I wanted to take the baby it was really challenging.

The support of a partner, parents or other people with childcare was something that allowed many women to pursue opportunities that were otherwise not available.

The cost of childcare and the responsibilities of parenting meant that many women missed out on important networking opportunities. These opportunities could be said to be related to formal networking events like conferences, and to less-formal events like seeing performances or being able to stay after a performance to do "foyer talk". One participant said: "People say they can't necessarily go to every single performance because they need to find a babysitter, so they miss out on potential networking opportunities and the capacity to do the foyer kind of thing.". Other participants were unable to pursue international residencies and other opportunities seen as important for career progression. One participant said: "I decided not to apply for residencies overseas because it wasn't going to work [with kids]."

Flexible working arrangements

There was strong recognition and support from women for the companies that had family-friendly practices. What these arrangements looked like depended on the company, but these practices could include anything from flexible work hours and the allocation of family-friendly accommodation when touring to the ability to bring babies or children into the studio. One of the artistic directors explained that sometimes it was important to change the rehearsal times to fit in with school times or childcare times. Another choreographer noted that at the start of a process they would negotiate with dancers what the requirements were for their time so that they could help to facilitate the rehearsal hours. Explaining that flexibility might mean "some dancers needing to leave early because of childcare".

A number of individuals working within management positions in companies indicated that they were happy for children to come on tour. Several of the participants had indicated that there were times when they took their children, as otherwise they would be away from them for too long. While many companies were open to this flexibility, the costs and responsibility for the travel arrangements were relegated to the female choreographer or dancer this was affecting. Due to funding restraints, all participants indicated that it was understandable but wished there was more funding available to help with these costs.

Boards and artistic leadership

The importance of governance and the board structure system came up repeatedly in relation to questions of advancement into positions of artistic leadership. There was much said about how the appointment of Tanja Liedtke to SDC would inform the broader sector, had she not passed away. Issues of board appointments and gender equality are well reported in other sectors and dance is not unique when it comes to this set of issues (Deloitte Access Economics, 2016).

One of the participants discussed applying for an artistic director role, but got no further than the shortlist and was not offered an interview. She wanted some feedback about what she could do to be in a better position the next time a job like this came up. The recruiter said to the applicant:

You're not male or European enough. He said every single candidate who was shortlisted for the job was a white male European between the age of 30 and 40 every single one ... I was like 'wow it's not until the boards change that I guess that would ever change.'

While this specific example speaks to only one company, the sentiment was shared by other participants.



Image: Fun Run by All the Queens Men Photo by Bryony Jackson

Prevalent model in society where they [the board] think a guy could deliver it better.

It's like a bit of an old boys club on the boards as well, and so it feels like a self-perpetuating problem at the top.

[The boards are] made up of mostly baby boomer white professionals, so you've got a lawyer, a legal advisor, a marketing person, a financial person, you know that kind of tick-a-box mentality, and maybe you have an artist on your board, maybe. Pretty much everyone is going to be on salaries, and they won't have necessarily worked in the arts, and to have those people appointing the artistic directors is problematic. Because they are about managing risk and governance, they're not about what's going to best develop the sector in Australia or internationally and they are not necessarily going to be thinking about the ways of working, methodologies, techniques, capacity for artistic innovation.

These ideas were shared with several participants who have been or are currently artistic directors, with one explaining: "I tend to think that boards like to hire people who look like them, and interact with them and feel comfortable.". No data was collected on the make up of the dance boards in Australia, although it was the view of many that they lacked diversity and not just in relation to gender equality.

Recommendations:

A path forward

The issues outlined in this report in regard to gender inequality in dance are immense and intertwined. Likewise potential ways forward are equally complex and possible solutions are not necessarily straightforward. However, there is a clear set of recommendations that will help to advance dance as a field. Advancing notions of gender equality should not be seen as a hindrance and should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen the sector by increasing and celebrating its diversity.

It is critical that, despite the complexity of the issues outlined in this report, the advocacy continues to advance the position of women in artistic leadership. Dance companies are heavily subsidised and, as a result, need to consider how they reflect the society and industry that they represent.

Throsby and Petetskaya (2017) reported that 69% of those working in dance as choreographers and dancers are women, but these statistics are not reflected in programming in MPA companies. While it would be fair to expect at least a 50/50 split in regard to programming based on gender ratios in the sector, dance is a unique field with more female participants and, as such, even a 50/50 split is not balanced in regard to participation numbers. Nonetheless companies should be programming, at the minimum, 50% of their works from female choreographers at all levels.

The MPA framework is meant for companies to “play a vital role in supporting the careers of Australian performing artists and creatives, bring works of scale to Australian and international audiences” (Australia Council, 2017). It is critical that this support is available to all irrespective of gender. A “vibrant and sustainable performing arts sector” (Australia Council, 2017) must ensure a diversity of voices are programmed and supported.

One of the most important things that can come from this research is an ongoing open dialogue and conversation. Several of the interview participants indicated that it was very difficult conversation to have and that raising issues of gender equality, at times, came at a cost. This was neatly explained by one participant: “If you do kind of push that agenda then again, you’d just be a nagging woman.” These are issues that need to be discussed openly without defensive responses.

The issues are complex and the path forward is equally not straightforward. It is clear that there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to addressing imbalances or helping to address potential barriers or challenges like childcare. This section outlines recommendations and the different roles that all individuals can play in ensuring a sector that is more reflective of the society from which it emerges. These suggestions should be seen as a holistic approach and not as single initiatives on their own. The following recommendations should also be read as potential starting points and by no means represent every possible intervention.

Visibility and programming

“I think that’s really important so people can practice, and if things don’t go so well it’s no great big deal, it’s part of the process.”

The onus is particularly on the MPA companies to steadily increase the programming of women, in line with participation numbers. While there was a firm understanding that MPA companies need to maintain their audiences, it is essential that these companies increase their content from a range of choreographers. New commissions should be seen as opportunities and not hindrances to the companies.

There needs to be a readiness from companies to offer opportunities for growth and to develop the capacity of individuals to undertake works of scale. In doing so, companies need to help scaffold an individual’s experiences and to provide the right level of opportunity. The increased performance demands placed on women, particularly in ballet, was one particular issue said to reduce the participation of women in development seasons. Companies need to remain aware of these barriers and look at how they can factor in space and opportunity within these seasons for women in a way that does not mean women have to sacrifice performance opportunities, or capacity to progress as a dancer also.

By increasing the visibility and the programming of women within companies that seldom program female choreographers, we might start to see an increase in the number of women seeing choreography as a potential career.

Quotas

When it came to discussing visibility and programming, quotas came up repeatedly. Many saw the only way to get to a level of sustainable change was to enforce quotas on the MPA companies. One participant said: “I think it needs to be concrete, it does have to be instituted. It’s not just a philosophical thing, I think it obviously has got to be formalised or there isn’t going to be a change.” There was the belief from many that this was the only way that the industry would change. Participants said:

I know that the big people who’d argue about the fact that it should be merit based, but there’s no longer an excuse. Big companies like <names removed> should lead the way with 50/50 programming; there’s just no excuse.”

You just can’t do a season ... a festival ... you can’t do any program without at least 50% women, you just can’t. You stop getting your funding if you do that.

Measures should be put in place [in the major companies] to increase their quota of female choreographers.

Put some quotas in.

You’ve got to be accountable for gender balance.

Participants often indicated that “money speaks louder than words” and, as a result, funders should be ensuring that measures are put in place. There was a frustration that these issues are often discussed but there is little evidence of change occurring at the top of the industry.

While funding bodies might be hesitant to bring in quotas, there was an overwhelming desire from participants that this was one of the clearest ways forward. Ideas of quotas are not unique when it comes to issues of gender equality and have been successful in a number of other creative industries. A few participants pointed to the changes in film industry funding, particularly Screen NSW. Public funding through the Australia Council or other funding bodies should not disproportionately favour men. Taxpayer subsidised companies should be providing equal opportunity to all.

Screen NSW introduced a requirement for their funding streams that by 2020 all applicants needed to ensure project had 50% female key creatives. This initiative saw immediate change with 50% participation rates achieved in just one year, without compromising the quality of the applications (Screen NSW, 2017). Courtney Gibson, then CEO of Screen NSW (2017) said:

Sustained change doesn’t happen organically – it happens when government subsidy comes with strings attached, and why shouldn’t it? At Screen NSW we believe we will have stronger, richer screen storytelling, and grow audiences, by enabling a diversity of voices to be heard.

While using levers of funding to inspire change are not new, they are always controversial. Although, when it comes to dance, it need not be seen as hindrance, because there are such high participation rates of women in the industry and women are well represented in industry awards; the industry could benefit from increased diversity and quotas. Quotas would deliver immediate and sustained change. These initiatives would have the backing by the majority of individuals who participated in this report.

Mentoring and support

Mentoring was consistently discussed as something that was critically important to career progression. Mentoring often happened informally, but it was suggested that developmental seasons should also be combined with formal mentoring. Some individuals indicated that they would have benefited by having mentors that work outside of the company they primarily work for.

There was the strong belief that mentoring, and supports surrounding mentoring, should also include skills beyond choreography and

encompass the tools required to operate as an artistic director. In doing so, not only are individuals better candidates for these positions, but they learn valuable skills that would assist them in their career, including help in negotiating and working with artistic directors, boards and companies more broadly. Specific skills that were discussed include strategic planning, governance and communication.

Childcare and family-friendly practice

There was great support among participants in regard to the childcare and maternity leave supports in place in many MPA companies. These are incredibly important initiatives. It is recognised that financial constraints that currently exist in the small-to-medium independent sector make it difficult for adequate support to be provided. We must ensure that this is an issue that is placed firmly on the agenda so that women are not forced to spend all their earnings on their childcare needs. Women need to be encouraged to apply for extra funding to accommodate the cost of childcare. There is also the need for funding bodies to better communicate what funding options are available for childcare.

Industry events like the National Dance Forum should trial the provision of childcare, collectively subsidised through a small increase in ticket prices. Small, but highly important, initiatives could go a long way towards equal participation.

Benchmarking and vigilance

“You’ve got to be accountable for gender balance.”

Companies should be celebrated for their achievements but also held accountable for their programming and its accompanying initiatives. This report provides a starting point for a continued conversation and the data contained in it can be used for reference and appropriate benchmarking. Companies should be encouraged to write their own policies and directives that suit their particular context and reflect their level of success in this area to date. The Australian Ballet is already leading in reporting with annual reports often reporting on the gender of their workforce.

The dance industry can only benefit through increasing the diversity of works. The dance industry itself can reimagine a more equitable future with strong leadership, resolve and a desire for change. Future research and programs in Australia should be looking at developing increased agency and confidence for dancers from a younger age and looking at potential ways to better address these structural issues.

The role of everyone, everyone's responsibility

As mentioned, these are interconnected issues with a range of different players and considerations. There is an opportunity for everyone interested and passionate about dance to play a part in an equitable future. This section outlines the potential areas different sections of the industry can contribute for ensuring gender equality. The focus here is on companies, dance industry and sector more broadly, males in the industry, females in the industry, audiences and donors, training institutions and future research.

Companies

- Ensure there is the space created for equal opportunity of men and women, and that equity is evaluated across all parts of the organisation.
- Ensure that commissioning processes are inclusive and there is the opportunity for both women and men.
- Mixed programming should present an equal number of works from male and female choreographers.
- Companies should be looking at high profile female choreographers that are working in an international and local context to start diversifying the programming on offer.
- Companies may consider programming smaller seasons more frequently, to allow the development of new work and new audiences. Where programs already exist, attention should be paid to ensuring that opportunities are provided to not just the loudest and more confident voices.
- Companies should look at internal quotas and benchmarking and should report such work in their annual reports.
- It needs to be recognised that women can be as interested in choreographic opportunities, even if they are not as confident or seen as forceful, as the men are. Numerous women indicated that they felt men were more confident and had a sense of entitlement that meant men were programmed more than women. Companies should extend their observation of women working in the industry to support and program these voices.
- The success of the development seasons was said to rest in the reduced risk and the lesser onus placed on reviews and audience responses. Companies should look at how they can continue to develop opportunities for individuals to develop a choreographic voice, with reduced emphases on finished or complete products.
- Female participants indicated that they felt increased pressure was placed on them when they were given opportunities. As a result, companies need to ensure that individuals are adequately supported and provided with multiple opportunities to develop their own choreographic voice.
- Companies should undertake a review of the potential barriers listed in this report with a look towards reducing and removing barriers within their own company context.
- Artistic directors should identify members of the company that would benefit from mentoring opportunities and seek to assist in making connections inside and outside of the company. Companies should also look at how they can help women up-skill in areas beyond choreography in order to increase their competency in all areas of artistic leadership.

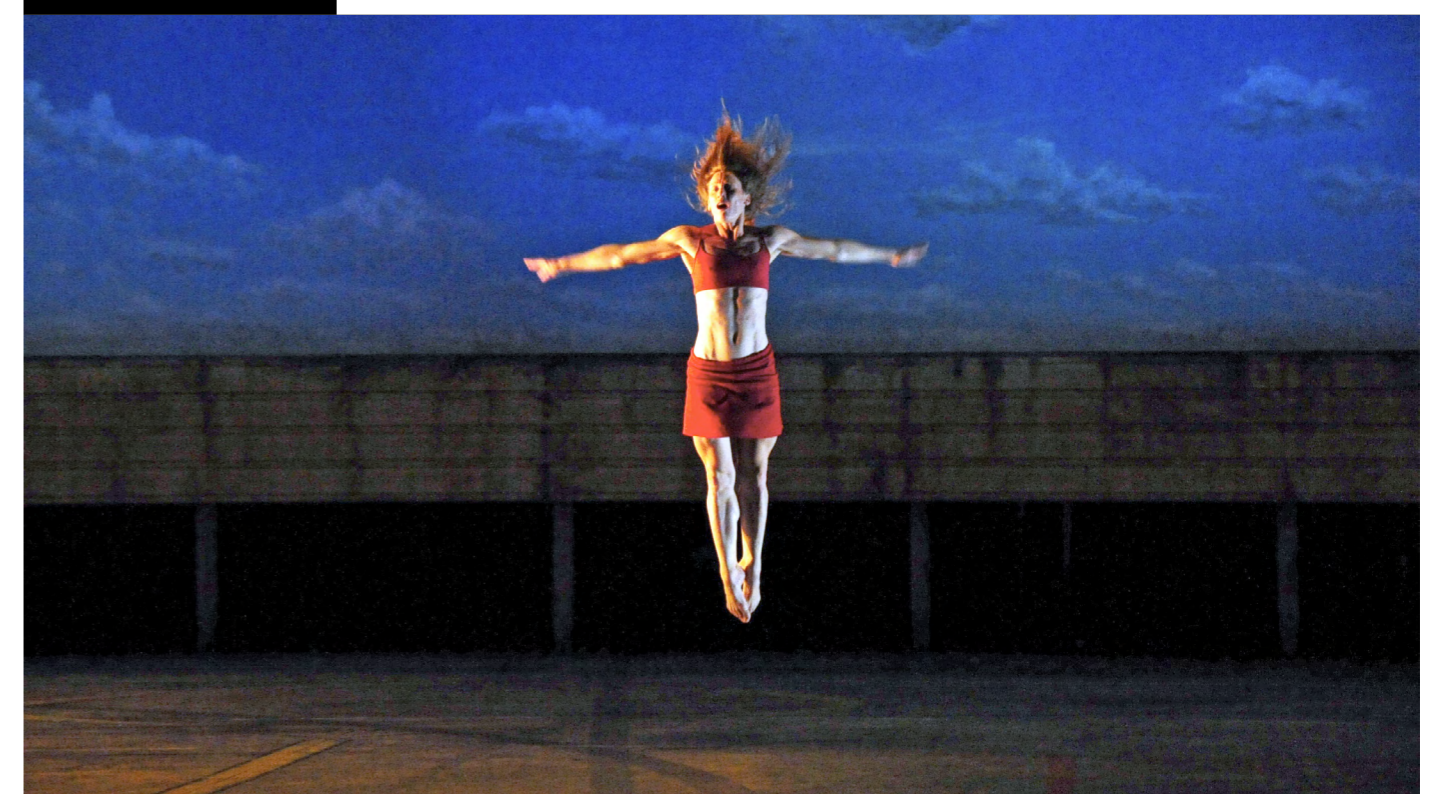


Image: INUK by Meryl Tankard Photo by Regis Lansac

Dance industry and sector more broadly

- Companies that do not commission works by women to the same number as men should have their funding re-evaluated. Gender equality should also be a requirement of future funding initiatives, similar to Screen NSW.
- Funding bodies should require key performance indicators in regard to gender equality for MPA companies and for the companies to report on their initiatives and programming in this area.
- There is the capacity for programs to be developed that are based on particular needs regarding mentoring, particularly in areas required for individuals to step in to artistic director roles.
- There is the capacity for funders to better promote the ability for individuals to apply for grant funding to cover childcare responsibilities.
- Separate funds should be established to allow for parents to apply for childcare provisions that sit outside of existing grant models. This fund would invite applications outside of traditional funding rounds for support for childcare responsibilities; applications could be from individuals or companies to assist in costs associated with childcare.
- There is room for better advocacy around the needs of working mothers.
- Sector meetings and networking opportunities (i.e. National Dance Forum) should look to a communal childcare arrangement to share costs and increase access. Examples of where these initiatives have been utilised include the Small Press Network in Australia, who offered free childcare at their 2017 conference. (see also <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2018/03/01/1803153115>)

RECOMMENDATIONS: A PATH FORWARD



Image: YONI by Prue Lang: Photo by Pippa Samaya

Males in the industry

There was no suggestion from participants that men were in any way malicious, but there were many examples of women feeling that their voices and experiences were minimised by men. Everyone has a role to play in addressing this imbalance.

- It would be a positive step for men to engage in conversations with female choreographers about their practices and experiences. "What's your role in the system?"
- Men can also give more space for change. For example, refusing to participate in a program of works unless there is an equal 50/50 representation.
- Men can challenge assumptions and refuse to remain silent, using their voice for positive change. They can become an advocate and agent for change.
- Attention should be placed on personal attitudes and ways that behaviour or attitude might negatively impact on women.

Females in the industry

- There was a similarity in many of the interview responses with many women indicating they were not prepared to talk about the issues more broadly for fear of being seen as a trouble maker. There needs to be space for women to collectively share their experiences as a group and with allies, and for women to support each other and collectively advocate.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A PATH FORWARD

Audiences and donors

- Audiences and donors have a great capacity to agitate and ensure that gender equality remains on the agenda. It is not unfair to ask companies what their position is on gender equality and ask what they are doing to provide space for a multiplicity of voices.
- The onus is on audiences to buy tickets and to support the work of choreographers that might be unknown to them. In doing so, individuals can provide the support so companies can evaluate the need to program new work and "unknown" choreographers.

Training institutions

- Given the significance training has in the lives of dancers and dance makers, the confidence and supports put in place within training were frequently raised. Training institutions need to ensure that the space for opportunities for development are given equally to men and women.
- There is perhaps the need for a more specific approach to help support talented young women and the encouragement to take risks, with appropriate support programs in place.
- Teachers should be aware of the particular differences in the way men and women present themselves and ensure that women can develop their own confidence.
- Training institutions provide a great opportunity for choreographers to develop their skills and to work with large numbers of dancers; these opportunities should be given to a range of different individuals who are seeking to develop a choreographic voice.
- Dance history classes should ensure an appropriate focus on female choreographers from Australia and the rest of the world.

Future research

- Future research should examine the programming of Australian major festivals and main-stage venues (i.e. Arts Centre Melbourne, Sydney Opera House, QPAC) to ensure an equal gender balance in programming.
- Research should be conducted into the earnings of individuals within dance to examine if there are any pay discrepancies that require attention.
- In establishing data for benchmarking, other creative roles in dance should be examined, including that of design and music composition. There should also be an audit of all boards to ascertain the participation numbers of men and women.
- Research projects should look at following particular dancers and choreographers, male and female, throughout their careers, looking at key pressure and turning points during their working life.
- Follow-up research should examine shifts and changes in attitude longitudinally.
- There would be great value in combining discussions across creative disciplines to look at the similarities and differences and to look at how lessons learnt about particular areas can be applied more widely.
- A survey of the gender of choreographers who make work with students in the tertiary training institutions.
- A survey of artists of colour who are making work of both genders across all dance companies. The lack of cultural diversity was evident in the analysis for this report (with the exception of Bangarra) but was outside the scope of this study. This should be seen as a high priority in the strive for a more equitable dance industry.

Conclusion

There are many good reasons that the whole sector must act on the issues presented in this report. Australian stages must reflect the diverse perspectives and backgrounds of the societies in which they emerge. If we cannot get the issues of gender imbalance sorted in dance, we have little hope of addressing other inequities when it comes to our stages and creative industries more broadly. This subsidised sector should be equitable, as government funding from all levels should be used in a way that is available to all.

Dance is unique in the creative industries in that it has a higher participation rate of women and much higher proportion of female graduates. Yet men are employed in top positions and given increased opportunities at MPA companies. The high participation of women in dance is not an excuse for an imbalance at the top levels; if there is one creative field where women should be leading it would have to be dance with far more female participants than male.

While this report has focused exclusively on choreographic opportunities, the problems illustrated in the positions of choreographers was also present in other key-creative roles within dance, namely design and music composition. It is important that these areas are not ignored and are addressed alongside the gender imbalance of female choreographers.

While this report focuses on gender, it recognises that other groups are also under-represented in dance. This report looks at one small part of the sector as funded by the Australia Council; due to scope and funding it does not cover every diversity issue. Other important focuses should include dance and disability, dance and cultural and linguistic diversity.

Importantly this project has been entirely self-funded, with a total budget of under \$900. Extra support has been provided on an in-kind basis. Future investment should be made into research projects to ensure that larger data sets can be analysed. For example, an exploration of the independent sector, project-based dance institutions such as Dancehouse, and a strong focus on training institutions.

We are in the middle of a particular cultural moment with the #MeToo movement drawing attention to the sexual harassment of women in creative industries. We are also in a moment in which gender roles are being re-examined, questioned and explored around the world. As companies are increasingly examining and rewriting sexual harassment policies, they should also be ensuring that they are looking more broadly at the ways in which gender is being thought about within their institutions.

While these are immense challenges, the time is right to set a stronger directive for an equitable future. Dance is one of the creative fields where issues of gender imbalance can be and should be quickly redressed.

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Appendix

Contributors

Research Advisory Committee

Lucy Guerin
Amy Hollingsworth
Stephanie Lake
Carin Mistry
Frances Rings
Michelle Ryan
Meryl Tankard
Maggie Tonkin
Jordan Beth Vincent

Interviewer participants

Angela Conquet
Julie Dyson
Madeleine Eastoe
Annie Greig
Amy Hollingsworth
Stephanie Lake
Prue Lang
Jo Lloyd
David McAllister
Larissa McGowan
Gene Moyle
Gabrielle Nankivell
Frances Rings
Michelle Ryan
Lilian Steiner
Meryl Tankard
Alice Topp
Anouk van Dijk
Annette Vieusseux
Natalie Weir
3 male participants who participated on the requirement of complete anonymity.

Interview questions

Interviews were semi-structured and based on the experiences and background of the participant being interviewed.

Below is a sample of particular interview questions and themes.

Background demographic information and dance history.

Do you feel that in your own career there's been additional barriers you have had to negotiate compared to men?

What was the process from dancing to a career in choreography?

From the data analyses, there are more men being programmed and commissioned in MPA companies. What are some of the reasons you think this might be the case?

What have been some important opportunities in your career?

How do you capitalise on opportunities?

What is your process in negotiating contracts and particular opportunities?

How important have role models and mentors been to you?

Why do you think there are more women working in the small-to-medium sector in Australia than MPA companies?

Do you have children? How do you balance children and your career? Are there particular issues that need addressing?

Are there ways that the industry could be better placed to provide the supports required for increased female participation?

What are some other potential constraints that you see no that could be limiting the advancement of female choreographers?

Are men and women treated differently as dancers?

What would your vision be of the field of dance?

Report limitations and restraints

The different levels of participation from companies means that some of the data is incomplete. Unfortunately, with the exclusion of a few multi-year funded companies, including Shaun Parker and Kage, the full picture is not completely known. That said, the data from the MPA companies is complete and compelling and the data from the multi-year funded companies does provide an in-depth snap shot.

Future research might want to include more voices from men. While a number of men were approached for this research, the topic and the exploration focused on women. The perspectives of men would provide a good base for exploring how these issues intersect with individual's backgrounds in training.

Explanatory notes about data from annual reports

The data from this report has been largely taken from annual reports. There are certain limitations from this method in deriving details reported on. These limitations include:

- The inaccuracy of some of the data reported on in annual reports with different numbers appearing at times in the same reports for a number of companies.

- Annual reports not always reporting on all performance activity.

- There were also times when reports were not made available. While annual reports should be publicly available documents, there were instances where companies refused to make reports available, reports were missing, or staff were too over-stretched to provide the reports.

Future research on data sets would be advantaged by company and industry cooperation, access to archival collections and the engagement of company and Australia Council personnel in cross checking all data. That data analysed for this report has been cross checked by at least one individual and we are confident that any refinement of data collection would not make a meaningful difference to the overall patterns in this data. This data as presented will form a significant data set for future benchmarking.

All data has been entered and crossed checked by at least two different individuals, from a pool including Carin Mistry, Kai Bradley, Samuel Harnett-Welk, Andrew Westle and Tom Halls.

In the interest of transparency, the following sections report on the types of data included and excluded in all companies. Given the different focus and remit of the companies, there were particular decisions that had to be made about some work. It is recognised that many of the initiatives and works excluded are great opportunities for particular emerging choreographers, but they do not have the same public outcomes that have been deemed the measure of this analysis.

Overall data rules

- For every year, each work was counted with the following details extracted: name of work, name of Choreographer, if the work was a remount or premiere, gender of the choreographer and performance numbers.

- If there were more than one choreographer listed, each choreographer was counted once.

- If the work was a developmental showing or a free performance, it was excluded.

- If the work was listed in two annual reports, as with a co-production, it was counted once per company.

- The gender of participants was taken from the language used in annual reports or within program notes. In the few instances of someone identifying as gender fluid or non-binary, they were not counted.

- Where a work is produced or staged by a person "after" choreographers of a previous version, only the gender of the person responsible for the current iteration is counted.

Australian Ballet

All data was complete for The Australian Ballet. There was a range of data excluded, which includes all The Dancers Company performances and Storytime Ballet's. Other programs excluded include: Telstra Ballet in the Bowl (2008), Telstra Ballet in the Gardens (2009), Open Air Performance (2010), Melbourne – Telstra Ballet in the Bowl (2013) and Ballet Under the Stars (2016).

Queensland Ballet

Analysis for Queensland Ballet excludes Vis-à-Vis Studio Series (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012) and Soirées Classiques (2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012), as each development season had very small audiences. All Pre-Professional Program Presentation have been excluded from all years.

Other programs excluded were:

2009: Step Forward!

2013: Studio Season (Dance Dialogues Summer, Dance Dialogues Spring), Ballet at the Ekka, Mercedes-Benz Fashion Festival Brisbane, The Nutcracker (Outdoor performance)

2014: Studio Season (Dance Dialogues), BCEC Advocates Partnership Dinner, 2014 Migration and Settlement Awards Dinner, Presentation to Guests on The World, An Evening with Queensland Ballet – Noosa Long Weekend, Ballet at Westfield Carindale, SU QLD Chaplaincy Frontline Appeal Dinner, Coppélia on Brisbane Riverstage, Private Performance for G20 Cultural Program, La Chaîne des Rotisseurs Brisbane Dinner, Lighting of the Brisbane City Christmas Tree, The Nutcracker (free outdoor screening)

2015: Dance Dialogues Studio Season, 2015 Prix de Lausanne, 2015 Dance Salad Festival, Launch of the ABC's AustraliaPlus.cn, Suncorp GOMA Dinner Performance, Sofitel Mother's Day, Moreton Hire Corporate Event, Cecchetti Gala, Creative Generation State Schools on Stage, Noosa Long Weekend Festival, Suncorp Annual Bank Awards, Royal Academy of Dance 80th Anniversary Gala, Tourism & Transport Forum Leadership Summit Dinner, Financial Planners Association Professional Congress, Lord Mayor's Christmas Carols.

2016: Dance Dialogues Studio Season Summer + Spring, Sofitel Mother's Day, Noosa Long Weekend Festival, Creative Generation: State Schools on Stage, Muscle Memory, Bleach Festival, QB 2017 Season launch, Music & Dance.

2017: Guest performances and Dance Dialogues

West Australian Ballet

Some of the WA Ballet data was incomplete in the first five years of analyses detail.

2007: Insight to Dance (six performances) – no information provided on what was programmed, so was excluded. StyleAid (one performance), The Tango; Hollywood Hospital Charity Gala Challenge Stadium, (one performance) 19; Chinese Chamber of Commerce 25th Anniversary Gala Burswood Casino (one performance), Inside Out.

2008: Bolero and other great works (three performances) – details not provided of whole season. Live at Woodside Woodside Plaza (one performance).

2009: Mixed Bill (one performance) – no information provided. Mozart Requiem; Commerce meets Culture; Queensland Ballet International Gala; Oasis Ball; Counterpoint; Wesfarmers Event.

2010: Ballet at the Walkington The Sleeping Beauty Suite Seventh Symphony – Second Movement 19 (one performance); Live@Woodside Suite No. 2 (one performance).

2011: One Starry Night (one performance); Live@Woodside (one performance).

Sydney Dance Company

Several years of annual reports for SDC have been lost and were not found by company staff. Archivists at the National Library and State Library of NSW were also unable to locate reports from years 2007, 2008, 2009. Performances names and choreographers were counted for years 2008 and 2009, although the total number of performances was unknown for 2008 and thus excluded for SDC for these years.
Other works excluded include: *13 rooms (2013)*, *Les Illumines excerpt (2013)*, *Big Dance (2014)*, *Screening event (2014)*, *Crazy Times (school performance) (2017)* and all Pre-Professional Year Performances.

Bangarra Dance Theatre

For some years data was not divided in to number of performances. When this was the case, information has been taken from a mix of resources including reviews and Austage database.

All Corporate Performances have been excluded. Other works excluded include: *Bloodland (2012)* *Page 8 (2014)* and *Bangarra Celebrates 25 years (2014)*.

Australian Dance Theatre

Data excluded: *Rough Draft (all years)*, *Collision Course (2013)*, *Adelaide Embedded (2015)*, *Ignition (2016)*.

Chunky Move

Performance data for Chunky Move was provided directly from the company, not in the form of annual reports.

Dancenorth

Excluded: *Townsville City Council Arts Awards (2012)*, *Art vs Sport (2012, 2013)*, *Shake a Leg (2014)* and *Dust (2017)*.

Ballet Lab

Residencies, developments and gallery performances have been excluded from analysis. Data was not counted in 2017 post their Australia Council funding loss.

Kage

Unfortunately, Kage were not willing to provide their annual reports. Where possible data has been taken from their website in the analyses. Data was not counted in 2017 their Australia Council funding loss.

Expressions

It was common for dancers to be listed as creative contributors. If they were not individually named, the artistic or choreographic vision was seen as resting in the first named individual and they would be the only one counted. There were a number of initiatives that were excluded from analyses:

2012: Launch Pad, Noosa Long Weekend Festival, Next Step (Creative Development) and ChoreoFUNK.

2013: Propel (the next step); Choreofunk; Noosa Long Weekend Festival.

2014: The Perfect American.

2015: Guangdong Modern Dance collaboration; Public Activation's.

2016: Lumen Body and corporate performances.

Force Majeure

Data was not counted in 2017 their Australia Council funding loss.

Lucy Guerin Association Inc

A range of works were excluded, including a range of developmental showings:

2012: First Run, Brian Lipson Commission, Melanie Lane Commission - *MERGE*, Lee Serle Commission - *P.O.V.*, Lucy Guerin collaboration with Brazilian visual artist *Marcos Chaves*, Choreographic Research Forum (Critical Path and Dancehouse), Lucy Guerin collaboration with Carrie Cracknell - *Sadler's Wells - Throwing Things*.

2013: Lucy Guerin Inc commission for Resident Director Stephanie Lake: *Axial*, *Frontier Danceland (Singapore)*, *Hotbed Workshop #7 with Eleanor Bauer*, *First Run*

2014: ROLL - Lucy Guerin solo as part of Melbourne Now NGV; *I'm Trying to Tell You* - Collaboration with Finnish Artists from Joensuu City Theatre and Routa Company, *Medea* - Commission with National Theatre London, Soft Centre - Commission, David Hughes Dance Scotland, *Microclimate* - Adaptation of Weather with presentation in Paris.

2015: First Run.

2016: First Run.

Restless Dance Theatre Inc

Restless has a range of developmental programs that have been excluded, these include workshop seasons and masterclasses.

Dancehouse Incorporated

Dancehouse annual reports were examined although given the different remit of Dancehouse, this data was excluded from analysis.

Tasdance Ltd

Unfortunately, Tasdance did not provide their annual reports in time for analysis. Where possible, data has been taken from their website in the years analysed.

Tracks Inc

Tracks has a particular focus that is different to other analysed companies. Many of their community initiatives have been excluded from analysis. The following works were excluded:

2012: Milpirri Festival; Lajamanu Banner Project; The Year Of The Dragon: Choreographic Development Program; Grey Panthers.

2013: All 'Community Skills Development' activities .

2014: *Milpirri 2014 Jarda-Warnpa* (one performance in the remote Indigenous community of Lajamanu) and Choreographic Development Course.

2015: Hidden Meaning; Engine Room; Studio Residencies.

2016: Milpirri - Kurdiji And Dirt - Choreographic Development Program and Fresh Tracks.

2017: CARAVAN, Space Time Studio Residencies, Nightcliff Foreshore, Make a dance in a week, Caught Falling Choreographic program, Development program, Participation program, Grey Panthers & Milpirri people.

Shaun Parker & Company Ltd

Despite repeated requests, Shaun Parker & Company were not willing to provide their annual reports, stating they don't make them publicly available. Where possible data has been taken from their website in the years analysed.

Marrugeku Inc

Given its new position as a multi-year funded company data was only included for 2017.



Image: INUK by Meryl Tankard Photo by Regis Lansac

