

14-August-2025

Statement from Mitch Wallis,

As someone who was in the room, there's no doubt it was uncomfortable. It became very opinion based, vs. fact based, with a lot of the dialogue straying quickly from the original topic. That's why you saw me opting out of particular questions that veered off course, and reorientating (where possible) back to data to regain balance. I would have preferred the segment to be a 'discussion', not a 'debate', as this may have positively influenced the energy of the conversation.

I think the segment was managed "well" in that the lead producer (Michelle) was actively involved in moderating behind the camera during filming whenever things went off course – pulling things back on topic, or giving a voice to those that hadn't had a chance to comment. I think it was a 'productive contribution to the topic of masculinity' in that it allowed us to shine light on what's true – not a curated panel of what we wish was true.

Many people found this a tough watch, and I understand why. Some things that were said were controversial and objectively unfair/offensive. That doesn't mean the show shouldn't have aired. This is a panel that represented a cross section of Australian society in 2025 – to the extent that's it's possible with a 6 person sample size. People got a fair chance to comment, but that doesn't mean the comments made were 'fair' in the eyes of the viewer. The edit was toned down relative to the extended/actual discussion – with some of the even more polarising content omitted.

My main takeout from the experience was that this experience was a meta-commentary on the state of masculinity. Many men feel they need to move to the fringes of political/social structures – far right or far left - which leaves a big hole in the middle for modern masculinity. We've lost the middle path for men and we are paying the price for that across the spectrum of society.