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**There's a line in the report about leaders perceiving improvement on cultural diversity but that not being reflected in the data. IS there any historical data to show there's been no improvement? How incremental has change been?**

The leaders we interviewed highlighted that the outcomes of a lack of cultural diversity were not by design. No one sets out to create barriers. All the leaders we spoke to were well meaning and recognised the issue. However the evidence speaks for itself. The talent pipeline and the senior leadership are lacking in cultural diversity.

In the three years since MDA was founded, there have been some changes although they're generally ad hoc and short term. There have been one or two diverse hires in commercial media, and while we applaud that, without specific policies in place to support staff retention, it's largely ineffectual. We know meaningful change takes time, but it needs to be deliberate and a whole network approach. This includes taking a good look at executive boards and leadership teams.

Is there historical evidence? Work specifically looking at the talent pipeline and the senior leadership suite has only emerged in the last decade. In 2011 one of the report authors conducted work with the Diversity Council Australia (DCA) – and the landmark report Capitalising on Culture which drew on some 3500 survey responses found that while the talent pipeline was culturally diverse, there was a drop off point, impacting on the senior leadership suite.

In 2016 the AHRC released the Blueprint for Leadership report and it noted that some 93% of CEOs in ASX 200 listed companies were Anglo Celtic and European men. The subsequent Leading for Change report released in 2018 noted that 97% of the 2500 senior executives surveyed were Anglo Celtic and European men.

When it comes to senior leadership, change is happening at a glacial pace.

**Interested in the international comparisons too. How would you sum up the UK and US data in the report? Do you think Australia is generally doing worse?**

It is hard to know if Australia is doing worse because we just don't have the data from Australian commercial networks. That being said, you're far more likely to see asian, black and brown faces across the networks in the US, and while they're not perfect they are further along the diversity and inclusion path than we are. The ABC knew its strategies weren't working and so completely revamped its approach through the 2019-2022 Diversity Plan which has set measurable targets.

In the UK, the BBC has been getting closer each year to reaching its targets, and discloses staff demographics annually. Interestingly in the UK, some of the most successful networks when it comes to cultural representation are commercial ones and there are instances where executive bonuses are linked to meeting diversity targets.

That is why this study is such a good starting point to know whether future initiatives are making a

difference. I think that both the US and UK have made concerted efforts to increase CD with varying success.

### **What would you say is the main barrier to change?**

Until all networks have publicly available diversity and inclusion policies and collect and release annual data on staff diversity - the Australian media can't say it's taking representation seriously or trying to fix a very long-standing and widespread problem. This process is far further along in the UK and is overseen by the media regulator OfCom, something Australia's media regulator ACMA should consider.

### **Seven, Nine and Ten have all complained about discrepancies in the data and that the methodology is problematic ...**

These networks are attacking the study to distract from the heart of the problem which is the fact that the Australian media has a significant diversity problem.

The study is not the final answer, but a practical step in the right direction to get better information on an issue which no commercial Australian media organisation or the government systematically tracks.

The issues raised by the networks are not new to us. Together with our four university partners - we have spent the last 2-3 years thinking about how to track this data - we ultimately concluded that this approach is the most practical way to get to the true picture. For example, we concluded that additional tracking time (beyond two weeks) would've required substantially more investment and not significantly changed the answer.

We shouldn't let quibbles about the methodology distract from the fundamental problem of the lack of diversity in the Australian media.

We look forward to working with all media organisations to improve the quality of the data and welcome any information they have on their staff to help with the process.