

# ABC NEWS

## Craig McLachlan cleared of sexual harassment allegations by Doctor Blake Mysteries producers

By Lorna Knowles, ABC Investigations

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**The producers of the Doctor Blake Mysteries have cleared Craig McLachlan of claims he sexually harassed his co-workers, but admitted the show's workplace culture was "bawdy and crude" and may have offended some cast and crew members.**

Two weeks ago, production company December Media hired a workplace consultant, Fiona Bigelli, to investigate claims of sexual misconduct on the set of the top-rating TV show.

The allegations, revealed as part of a joint ABC/Fairfax investigation, included that McLachlan held a banana to his crotch and thrust it into the faces of an actress and director, that he "dry humped" a female crew member and that he pushed his crotch into a female crew member.

December Media said in a statement that Ms Bigelli had interviewed a "sufficiently large number" of people who worked on Season 5 of the production, and had produced a confidential report.

"But there were no findings of sexual harassment, sexual misconduct or workplace bullying by Craig McLachlan or any other person on Doctor Blake," the statement said.

"People highlighted the fact that Doctor Blake's workplace culture has consisted of, amongst other things, a workplace humour which has been described by many as sexual, lewd, bawdy, 'Benny-Hill-esque' and crude and that some of the behaviour relating to this humour may be offensive to people regardless of the fact no formal complaints have been received.

"While December Media has all appropriate policies and procedures in place with respect to workplace behaviour, the report does recommend some improvements to be in line with world-best practice.

"We intend to implement these improved practices and share them with the rest of our industry".

The report recommended implementing a "code of conduct as well as a grievance and conflict resolution process to manage any issues".

"This will involve establishing a best-practice reporting system whereby someone can report outside of the line management structure to help encourage employees to speak up if they have an issue," the report said.

Victoria Police are currently investigating separate allegations that McLachlan committed multiple sexual offences while performing in the Rocky Horror Show in 2014.

A joint ABC/Fairfax investigation revealed that three women from the 2014 production claim McLachlan took advantage of his raunchy role as Dr Frank-N-Furter to indecently assault, intimidate and harass them, both on and off stage.

McLachlan, 52, has denied the allegations.

**Topics:** television, television-broadcasting, law-crime-and-justice, sexual-offences, australia

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**PHOTO:** Actor Craig McLachlan plays Dr Lucien Blake in the series. (Facebook: The Doctor Blake Mysteries)

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