

Recommended for ages 15+ / Year 10, 11 and 12

The production runs for approximately 130 minutes with an interval.

Kelly Sheppard, a naive but excited junior staffer in the Electorate Office of Ruth Mandour, a first-term Member of Parliament, unexpectedly gets the chance to travel to Canberra with the passionate MP she idolises and Ruth's brilliant but exhausted Chief of Staff, Anna Cooper. Anna is juggling Ruth's new policy launch, a husband who can't deal with their kid in her absence and the type of muffins the Member requires for a meeting while Kelly's over the moon to get behind the scenes at Parliament and to watch her hero in action. But getting what you want in the nation's capital requires some fancy footwork. What they all experience that week makes them question their ambitions, ideals and the value of democracy itself. The play explores themes of misogyny, power imbalance, motherhood, unfulfilled dreams, and the suppression of Parliament.

Coarse Language:

The word 'fuck' or 'fucking' is said multiple times during the play, and words like 'shit,' 'dick,' 'bastard,' 'crap,' 'slut' and variations are mentioned throughout the play.

Sexual Content:

Sex is mentioned multiple times throughout the play. For example, 'I heard a couple having sex last night' (p.70).

One of the key plot developments in *Housework* is Kelly, the junior staffer, choosing to sleep with the Minister of Science (Paul). This relationship sparks a lot of outrage, with characters like Mim, a member of the opposition party, stating that the Minister isn't going to be able to ride the public sympathy vote if he's 'fucking a staffer' (p.79). Publicists try to capture evidence of Kelly and Paul's relationship, with Duncan, the Chief Strategist for the Leader of the Opposition, stating that he wants 'pictures of the blow job she gave him' (p.93).

There are references to the idea that sexual activity will progress your career, 'If [Paul] can get you in his pocket by supporting your proposal, and you wield some influence over Kelly, then you're going to get Kelly to keep her mouth shut, and we all will carry on as if nothing has happened' (p.99). There is the question of ethics within Kelly and Paul's relations given the power imbalance that exists.

Misogyny:

Housework highlights the misogyny women face in professional life. Men not having to put as much effort into their appearance, the idea that women can sleep with men for their ideas to be seen and supported, the manipulation tactics older men use on younger women and the lack of consequences for men.

Power imbalance:

The Minister for Science and Environment appears to have a history of engaging in sexual relationships with young staffers. He and Anna had a relationship, and he engages in sex with Kelly. The question arises around the power imbalance that exists. Kelly tries to justify Paul's actions, stating 'he's been going through a lot' (p.72). At the beginning of the second act, the power imbalance is explicitly mentioned by Mim in a conversation with Sarah, stating that the unethical nature of their relations was their age difference, power imbalance, and Paul's infidelity (p.78).

Infidelity

The Minister (Paul) cheats on his ill wife, Vicky, with Kelly. Vicky has cancer and is suspected to only have a few weeks of life left. It is mentioned that Paul has also been unfaithful to Vicky in the past.

Homosexuality:

Homosexuality is briefly mentioned, with Ben, Ruth's Media Advisor, stating 'I got my first job as a staffer, and I got to go to Canberra, and when I got there, I looked around and I realised - I'm gay, I don't get to be a Minister...Parliament is full of gay men. But we're not politicians; we're staffers.' (p. 113)

Motherhood:

Anna struggles with the balance of work and being a parent. Her daughter, Lucy, has a seizure and Anna leaves a work dinner early to go and care for her child despite her husband, Tim, already being there. Anna is met with judgment from Ruth, with Ruth telling her '[her] mind isn't always on the job' and that if she really trusted Tim, she would have stayed at dinner and done her job (p.67-68). The struggles of motherhood and a career are highlighted, depicting the stress and anxiety that occur when managing it all.