

Women's Leadership Institute Australia

Women for Media Report 2024

An Unfinished Story: Understanding Gender Bias in Australian Newsrooms

By Andrea Carson, Simon Jackman, Phoebe Hayman and Diana Bossio



About the authors



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Acknowledgements

The authors acknowledge Australia's First Nations peoples as the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community.

We respectfully acknowledge the role that First Nations people play in shaping Australia's democracy.

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About Women's Leadership Institute Australia

Founded by Carol Schwartz AO, Women's Leadership Institute Australia (WLIA) is focused on growing the critical mass of diverse women leaders – because we're firm believers that shared power and decision-making between men and women leads to better outcomes for all Australians. WLIA sees politics, media, policymaking and capital as pivotal engines for propelling gender equality forward.

For nearly a decade, WLIA has conducted extensive research into women's representation in Australian news. Examining women featured in news stories as well as the authors behind the headlines, our analysis sheds light on gendered content creation.

Read the prior [Women for Media research reports](#).

Browse the [Women for Media Database](#) that provides journalists and event organisers with quick access to over 200 experienced and respected Australian leaders from a range of industries.



Foreword



For decades, I've worked to dismantle the barriers that hold women back from fully contributing to our nation.

This is about more than just gender; it's about creating a more inclusive, responsive and collaborative society.

It's why I founded the [Women's Leadership Institute of Australia](#) (WLIA), a not-for-profit organisation growing the critical mass of diverse women leaders – because I firmly believe that shared power and decision-making between men and women leads to better outcomes for all Australians.

WLIA is focused on politics, media, policymaking and capital allocation as pivotal engines for propelling gender equality forward. We undertake high-impact investments, strategic partnerships, philanthropy and research in these four influential spheres.

I am particularly passionate about elevating the voices of expert women in the media. The unfortunate reality is that women's perspectives are being overshadowed, as men's voices and images continue to dominate the media landscape. The result is that we all miss out on ideas and solutions that benefit everyone.

I am determined to change this, because I believe that female representation in the media is essential. We need to shift the norm of who we see and hear as leaders and experts – and that starts with bringing more diverse voices into public commentary.

WLIA achieves this in several ways – we work directly with media organisations to help strengthen their approach, and we manage a ["Women for Media Database"](#) that provides journalists and event organisers quick access to over 200 experienced and respected Australian leaders across a range of industries.

It is equally critical to continue shining a spotlight on the current state. **So, it is with a sense of urgency and resolve that I launch this groundbreaking report "An Unfinished Story: Understanding Gender Bias in Australian Newsrooms".**

It is the sixth instalment in our *Women for Media* research series and the most comprehensive study to date. Led by WLIA Fellow Professor Andrea Carson, the report examines the presence of women's voices in Australian news not only as creators of news stories, but also as expert voices we hear within it.

Twelve years after our initial report, it really is "unfinished business". We still see slow progress towards gender parity in media. While our study of over 200,000 articles shows near gender balance among journalists, gender bias persists. Women remain overrepresented in "soft news" topics like arts and entertainment, while men dominate "hard news" topics that matter such as politics, foreign affairs and business. Women appear less often on front pages and in opinion sections, and men are still quoted more frequently as experts.

The Editors acknowledge that progress is being made, especially with more women in the newsroom, but they agree that further work is needed, particularly to elevate voices from diverse backgrounds.

There is no doubt that media organisations are facing tough times, with business models under pressure, increasing news avoidance, and the rise of disinformation on social media. Despite these challenges, it is crucial that we continue to prioritise diverse voices in our news coverage. The stories we see, the voices we consider authoritative, and the narratives we embrace all determine the future we build.

I want to sincerely thank our 2024 authors, Professor Andrea Carson, Professor Simon Jackman, Phoebe Hayman and Dr Diana Bossio, who have worked with great determination and innovation to refine our methodology and analyse complex data sets.

I would like to acknowledge the many Australian news editors who generously gave their time and consideration to the report's theme and findings.

Finally, thank you to the wonderful WLIA team, Sarah Buckley and Arielle Rutman, who led the development and launch of this research, with Connor O'Brien supporting the report's design and publication.

Research like this is essential. I hope it motivates media organisations to maintain their focus and find enduring solutions to gender bias. We'll keep fostering collaboration and supporting their initiatives in the meantime – as tackling this unfinished story clearly depends on a sustained collective effort.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carol Schwartz'.

Carol Schwartz AO

Founding Chair,
Women's Leadership Institute Australia

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Key Findings

This 2024 *Women for Media* report is the sixth edition in a series initiated by WLIA in 2012. Bringing together an expert team of media and political science scholars to assess the current state of women's representation in the Australian news media – from the perspective of who produces the news, and who features in it.

This report is the largest and most innovative study of its kind to track gender representation in bylines across key news topics and major Australian media outlets. Analysing over 200,000 articles with advanced machine learning techniques for topic clustering, complemented by generative AI and rigorous manual coding, this report represents a significant advancement in media and gender research.

More than a decade after the first *Women for Media* report, we find that progress towards gender parity in media representation is moving slowly. Despite nearly equal numbers of male and female journalists in our sample, a long shadow of gender bias persists. As in the past, women still disproportionately cover “soft news” stories, while men write the “hard news” topic areas. And women have less access to exclusive taglines, enjoy less visibility on newspaper's premium pages and are underrepresented in the opinion and commentary sections.

The gap extends beyond just who's writing the stories. On the other side of media coverage – the quoted experts, the people who are bestowed with authority in the media – the same old story persists. As in past reports, men dominate the quotes, and they tend to quote other men more often. Women are better at quoting their fellow women.




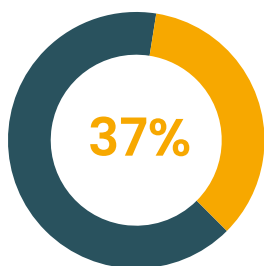
KEY FINDINGS

This ongoing disparity is reflected in the following key findings:

Unequal front-page and exclusive coverage:

Men wrote the majority of front-page articles and were quoted exclusively more than twice as often as women. Their stories are more common, more often tagged “exclusive” and typically contain more words, revealing their prevalence and prominence on premium news pages. Women’s stories less often feature on premium pages, or carry “exclusive” taglines, highlighting a significant gender disparity in visibility and prestige.


A snapshot of front-pages shows women account for only



of front-page authors

Source: Authors using a snapshot of Factiva and Newsbank data





Gender bias in story topics:

Women more often cover “soft news” such as the arts, lifestyle, and entertainment while men dominate “hard news” such as sports, business, and foreign affairs. National and financial publications reflect this with a predominance of male bylines on their front pages and opinion articles.

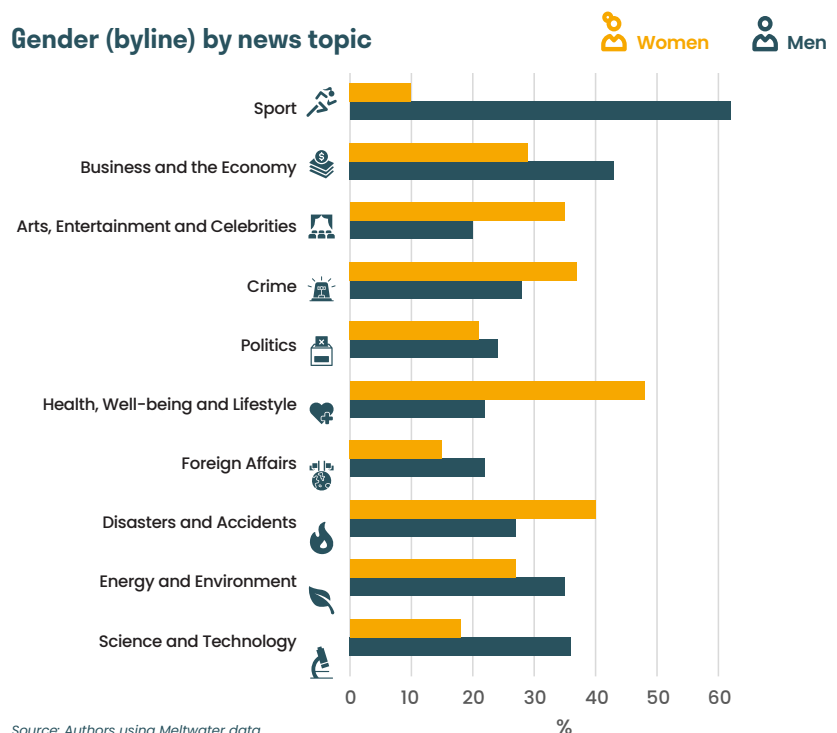
Women are more likely than men to write about

-  Health, Well-being and Lifestyle
-  Arts, Entertainment and Celebrities
-  Crime
-  Disasters and Accidents

Men are more likely than women to write about

-  Sport
-  Business and the Economy
-  Energy and Environment
-  Science and Technology

Gender (byline) by news topic

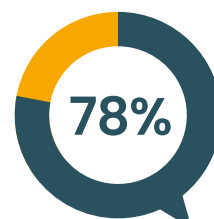


Source: Authors using Meltwater data

Men as default quoted experts:

Men are cited as experts more often and are quoted first more frequently in front-page stories than women. Women are more likely to quote other women in front-page stories. The same is true for opinion articles. Men account for 78% of quoted sources on front pages. Female opinion authors are more likely to quote women than men do.

A snapshot of front-pages shows men account for



of quoted sources on front-pages

Source: Authors using a snapshot of Factiva and Newsbank data

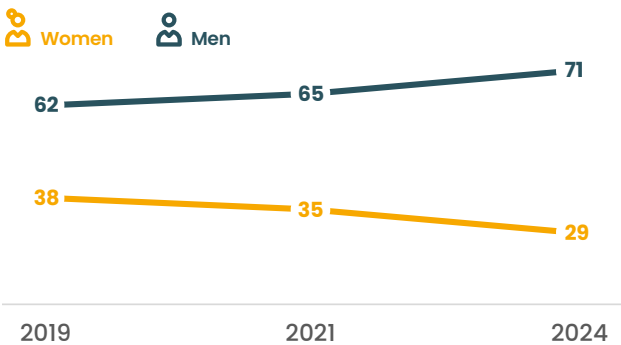
KEY FINDINGS

This ongoing disparity is reflected in the following key findings:

Gender imbalance in opinion article authors:

Men pen the most opinion articles, contributing to more than two-thirds of articles in the dataset. Women account for less than a third (29%) of opinion article bylines. Men's opinion articles are typically longer, and the authors are more often in-house reporters. In contrast, women's opinion pieces are usually written by external contributors. The findings represent a slow decline in women's commentary whereby women authored 35% of opinion articles in 2021.

Gender of masthead opinion authors 2019 - 2024 (%)



Sources: Authors from 2021 Women for Media Report: 'Take the Next Steps' (Price and Williams 2021), 2019 Women for Media report: 'You can't be what you can't see' (Price and Payne 2019), and Commentary and Opinion dataset using Factiva, News Bank and Saturday Paper data.

Syndicated stories amplify male-dominated content:



Story syndication is common in Australia and typically boosts audience reach of male-dominated genres like sports and business. Of 185,734 media items analysed, 90,647 were unique, highlighting the sharing of stories across masthead stablemates.

Tabloid vs. Broadsheet coverage:

Tabloids, with their focus on crime, disasters, and lifestyle, feature more women bylines in these areas. In contrast, broadsheets, covering business and foreign affairs, are predominantly male authored.

Print media's persistent influence:

Despite new media entrants in the digital age, print and its online versions remain the major content drivers, affecting gender visibility and equality perceptions in journalism. Some newspapers are doing better than others on women's representation on their premium pages as both authors and quoted sources. For example, *The Herald Sun* and *Canberra Times* have similar numbers of men and women writing front-page stories and opinion articles.

Front-page articles by gender (byline)

Publication	Women	Men
AFR	15%	60%
Canberra Times	52%	46%
Herald Sun	38%	28%
The Age	35%	61%
The Australian	29%	56%

Source: Authors using Factiva data

Leaders acknowledge progress and challenges:

Editor interviews indicate that newsroom leaders are committed to improving gender representation, and progress has been made, with more women staff and women leaders in the newsroom. But most acknowledge more work needs to be done, particularly representation of women from diverse backgrounds. Another key challenge area is developing policies to deal with online harms that disproportionately target women.

"I'm a believer in 'sunlight is the best disinfectant'. I think transparency of who is cited in the media, who's shown on television, is really helpful and certainly things are moving that way."

– Gemma Acton, Director of News Operations, Seven West Media

"... It's going to be a slow process, but we have to change it. Simple as that. We've got no choice."

– Fiona Dear, Director News and Current Affairs, Nine

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings of this report and building on past scholarship and empirical data, the key recommendations to ensure equal representation and participation of women leaders and journalists in Australian news organisations are included below.

For Newsrooms, Media Leaders and Media Organisations:



Challenge and reduce horizontal segregation:

Encourage and support women to take on roles in traditionally male-dominated reporting areas, and have newsroom policies and practices that ensure a more balanced distribution of story topics to both men and women journalists.



Promote gender diversity in high-visibility, high-impact journalism:

Increase the representation of women in high-visibility pages such as the front page and opinion and commentary sections, and in male-dominated topic areas such as sports, business, economics, and international affairs.



Ensure conscious, equitable expert sourcing:

While some news events may dictate who is quoted, journalistic discretion should be exercised when able to actively engage more women as expert sources across all topics. Men, in particular, should be mindful of their tendency to default to male sources and make a conscious effort to include women experts in their reporting. Editorial oversight should challenge default reliance on male sources.



Consider and address syndication disparities that perpetuate gender imbalances:

Reflect how syndication practices can exacerbate gender disparities and ensure that women's perspectives are integrated across all areas of news coverage, not just in "soft news" topics.



Develop, strengthen and monitor gender equity and diversity policies:

Implement robust newsroom policies to promote gender equity and equality, including initiatives to actively increase women's presence in bylines, opinion pieces, "exclusive" taglines and as quoted experts. Support women with training and mentorship to build expertise in these areas. Establish clear processes to track and monitor progress, and publicly report outcomes to maintain accountability.



Tackle online harassment and protect women journalists:

Prioritise the development of policies and practices that protect women journalists and other vulnerable groups from online harassment and trolling to prevent a chilling effect on their participation in the media and public discourse.

For Governments and Policymakers:



Protect public interest journalism in tough economic times:

Governments should consider further policy incentives to support public interest journalism to enable newsrooms to support and sustain gender equitable workplaces and produce gender equitable journalism.



Advocate for digital safety standards:

Collaborate with media organisations and digital rights civil society organisations to establish and enforce digital safety standards that protect journalists (and women in public life) from online abuse.

INTRODUCTION

Why gender equality matters in the news media



It's essential for democracy and civic engagement

In democratic societies, gender equality means that everyone should have the same opportunity to participate in public life, free from any form of discrimination. Although this principle is widely recognised, it's clear that we haven't achieved it yet. There are still significant gaps in gender representation across society, including our democratic institutions like government, the judiciary, and, as this report highlights, the media. This ongoing disparity underscores the need to continue working towards this important goal.

If a gender-equal society is a central concern of democracies, then it follows that gender equality should also be reflected in the news media that we consume and as a primary site where we engage in public discourse: both in terms of who produces the news and who features in it.

When women and other marginalised groups are underrepresented or misrepresented in the media, their concerns, experiences, and contributions may be overlooked, leading to a lack of accountability and democratic participation.



Because media shapes societal norms and attitudes

When the voices and perspectives of all genders are represented in news coverage, it helps to counteract stereotypes and biases – fostering a more balanced and nuanced understanding of issues.

By portraying diverse gender roles and identities, media reporting can challenge traditional gender norms and promote social change towards greater gender equality.



You can't be what you can't see

Additionally, fair and equitable representation in the media is crucial for the empowerment of women and other marginalised groups. Seeing oneself reflected positively and accurately in the media can boost self-esteem, inspire aspirations, and provide role models for future generations.



It's good for the economy

Beyond ethical and representative reasons for closing the gender gap, there are compelling economic arguments for achieving gender parity. A McKinsey Global Institute report estimates that closing the gender gap across public, private, and social sectors could add \$12 trillion to global GDP by 2025 (Woetzel et al., 2015).

Overall, gender equality in media reporting is not just a matter of fairness—it is necessary for creating a more inclusive, democratic and equitable society.

Setting the context for gender bias in newsrooms: A Literature Review

Existing literature demonstrates the ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality in news media. Historically, women have always been underrepresented – especially in reporting "hard news," having been assigned to less prestigious "soft news" or lifestyle pieces. This imbalance in representation not only impacts career opportunities, but also affects how news is framed and consumed.

The literature also underscores the continued prevalence of gender bias in the selection of sources and experts, and how these biases impact media narratives and public discourse. The concept of "primary definers" highlights how the most authoritative voices in media – typically white men – are often privileged, shaping public discourse in ways that reinforce existing power dynamics. This background sets the stage for broader challenges facing gender parity in news media, including: sexual harassment in newsrooms, financial pressures from digital competition and increasing news avoidance.

The literature review shows that achieving gender parity in newsrooms, news content, and audience perceptions is crucial not just for fairness, but also for fostering a more inclusive and representative media that supports a healthy democracy.

A history of under-representation of women in the news – nationally and globally

It has been well documented that gender gaps in the media exist in Australia and across the globe. For example, in Australia, Kathryn Shine (2021) explores barriers faced by women experts in engaging with the media and suggests ways to enhance their visibility. Jones and Baekstrom (2020) highlight the under-representation of women in business and finance press, and advocate for increased visibility in these male-dominated spaces.

Sport is also another area of under-representation of women's reporting (Schoch, 2022; Victorian Government/iSentia, 2024). The comprehensive *Change our Game* report analysed 34,600 media items and found women were both under-represented as subjects of sports stories (just 15 per cent) and as bylined authors. Across all mediums, women represented on average 27 per cent of bylines. Yet, women were much more likely (62 per cent) to report on women's sport than men (Victorian Government/iSentia, 2024). A similar phenomenon was found for climate change reporting in Australia in 2024, with almost twice as many articles about climate change authored by men as compared to women (McNolty et al., 2024).

In terms of globally, Ramsay (2018) notes a gender imbalance in quoted sources by UK news outlets, stressing the need to highlight women experts. Price and Payne (2019) reveal significant gender disparities in news coverage and representation of women as sources. Finally, the 6th Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) (2020) provides a thorough review of women's portrayal in the media, calling for ongoing efforts to address gender stereotypes and promote equality. The GMMP is the world's largest longitudinal study and shows an enduring gulf between the over-representation of men in the world's news media and under-representation of women. Its data analysis from

INTRODUCTION: LITERATURE REVIEW

116 countries finds that women are significantly under-represented in the news, with only 24 per cent of women serving as news subjects and sources (Macharia, 2020: 4). In 2020, Australia, as part of the Pacific analysis, recorded women's media representation at 31 per cent, above the global average. North America had the highest representation, with women making up 33 per cent of media presence (Macharia, 2020: 21). On any of these metrics, women are not as visible in the news media as men.

Under-representation of women reporting "hard news"

In the news media, not only are women under-represented as sources and subjects in coverage of daily events as identified above, but there is also a longstanding absence of women's presence in newsrooms' reporting of "hard news" (North, 2016). While definitions of hard news are inexact, it tends to centre on "serious stories about important topics" (Bender et al., 2009: 133) and its publication is time critical (North, 2016: 356). Its opposite, "soft news" is not time critical and tends to centre on human-interest stories, trends, entertainment, personalities or lifestyle stories (see North, 2016: 357). Hard news traditionally has been seen as more prestigious in newsroom hierarchies and, in the past, predominantly undertaken by men reporters (Ross and Carter, 2011: 1149).

Studies find that women experience both vertical segregation – typically fewer women in key decision-making roles in newsrooms – as well as horizontal segregation, gendered divisions in the types of stories that men and women reporters are assigned to cover (Romano, 2010; North, 2012: 358).

In the past, these segregations were deliberate and explicit. Throughout the twentieth century, women reporters were often relegated to lifestyle, fashion and society news (soft news) or being confined to the "pink ghetto" (Franks, 2013). Meanwhile, men were allocated to "hard news" stories involving politics, economics, major crime/accidents, business, sport, technology/science and foreign affairs (North, 2016: 369).

This ghettoisation of story topics by gender had significant career implications as hard news areas were generally more highly regarded and served as a fast-track pathway to future career opportunities. As the twentieth century rolled on, some editors strove to

breakdown these hegemonically masculine divisions. In the 1970s, for example, the ground-breaking *National Times* (now defunct) supported women reporters in hard news roles with several pioneering Australian investigative journalists among its staff, including reporters such as Marian Wilkinson, Anne Summers, Wendy Bacon, Deborah Snow and Adele Horin. But this was the exception rather than the rule for the era.

In his second term as editor in the 1980s, the *Sydney Morning Herald's* John D. Pringle was reported to have openly challenged the newspaper's conservative values that supported the patriarchy of, "Christian belief, the rule of law, family life and all the middle class virtues," as described by Sir Warwick Fairfax, the great grandson of John Fairfax, one of the paper's proprietors from 1841 (Inglis, 1981: 1). Pringle did so by bringing women reporters into the male-dominated newsroom rather than restricting them to writing for the society pages (Brooks, 1981: 7).

But Australian newsroom cultural change is slow. A 1996 report by the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) revealed that most women reporters surveyed felt that traditional reporting roles assigned to women were viewed as less important within their organisations (MEAA/IFJ, 1996: 35). More than a decade and a half later, North found, in her 2012 landmark survey of 577 Australian women journalists, that the hope that a critical mass of women in newsrooms would drive equality at all levels (Gallagher, 1995) was not yet an Australian reality. Rather, "women remain steadfastly pigeon-holed in soft news areas that are deemed less prestigious than hard news genres," declared North (2016: 369). She concluded:

While it appears that more women are working in the hard news genres than in the past ... women still do the bulk of the soft news reporting. A noteworthy number of respondents suggested that some women choose to work in soft news rounds because it fits with their caring roles and responsibilities outside work. Yet not one respondent who had a caring role wrote that soft news was what she wanted to cover (2016: 369).

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Experts as Primary Definers: Privileging sources in the media

A further element to news hierarchies is the premium pages of newspapers, broadcast bulletins and online news. Editors determine page one story placements and opinion editors select who has the privileged position to write commentary pieces. These authors may be on staff (in-house) or external experts. Who is quoted on these premium pages matters. Media scholars term the sources quoted in stories as “primary definers”. Stuart Hall (1978) and colleagues introduced the concept of “primary definers” to describe institutional figures – such as politicians, policymakers, academics and other experts – who are recognised as the most reliable and authoritative sources in news media. As Carlson (2009) points out, journalists rely on

these sources as “definers” of reality. Who “earns” this status in the media matters in society as it signifies authority and carries agenda-setting and framing power in how reality is represented. Carlson (2009: 530) puts it this way, that notwithstanding the necessary reportage of official spokespeople, news content studies repeatedly “demonstrate the overabundance of white male sources” (p. 530). In other words, sources that attain primary definer status are usually the political and cultural elites in society (Dhoest and Paulussen, 2024: 4). As part of the analysis in this report we turn our attention to these premium pages to understand who is afforded this agenda-setting and framing power.



INTRODUCTION

News audiences and the gender-gap

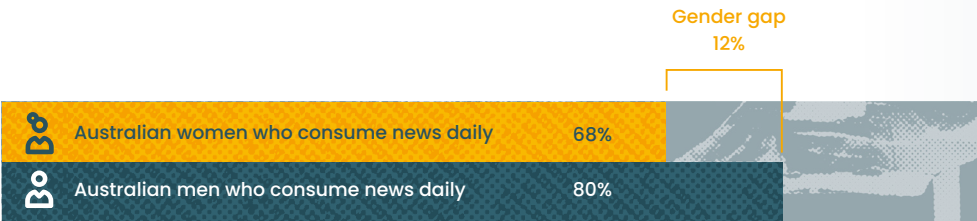
The inequities in representation may go some way to explaining contemporary news audience behaviour and the widening gender gap in news consumption and gendered attitudes towards news (Lee et al., 2023).

Aggregated data of nine issues of the *Digital News Report: Australia 2015–2023* reveal that the gender gap in news interest in Australia is the widest in the world. Australian data showed a 12 percentage point difference in daily news access between men and women (68 per cent for women and 80 per cent for men); whereas the global average was a gap of four percentage points (80 per cent for women and 84 per cent for men) (Lee et al., 2023: 11). Australian women (39 per cent) were also less trusting of mainstream news than men (48 per cent) and young women, in particular, felt they were unfairly represented in mainstream news. Not only was the gender gap in news interest larger in Australia than the global average, but Australia’s gap was widening over time (Lee et al., 2023: 13). The authors concluded that: “this report emphasises the necessity of tailoring content, tone, and perspective, to effectively engage women and foster a gender-balanced, more inclusive media landscape in Australia,” (Lee et al., 2023: 26).

The existing research underscores the multifaceted nature of reasons to strive for gender equality in media reporting, and the stark reality that in most cases women are not equally reported in the media compared to men, nor are they equal producers and contributors of news contents across topic domains.

From the literature review, it can be seen that from newsroom culture to news content and audience perceptions, achieving gender parity is not only a matter of fairness but also essential for fostering a more inclusive and representative media that informs our democracy.

This 2024 report seeks to revisit this enduring challenge and to understand the current state of gender equality in Australian news reporting and women as news sources. But before we do so, it is important to understand the political, economic and cultural environment in which the Australian news media operate that may shape the findings.



Challenges to Australian news media and implications for gender equality

Business model under pressure

As is well documented, with the arrival of global digital competitors and the combination of the global financial crisis, traditional news media has experienced financial hardship as advertising revenue has migrated online. The Australian media industry is no exception and has experienced waves of cutbacks and the loss of thousands of journalists from professional newsrooms – with regional and rural areas hardest hit (Carson, 2019; Zion et al., 2018). In response, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) instigated an investigation into digital platform power that led to many recommendations, including to correct bargaining power imbalances between multinational technology platforms such as Facebook and Google and Australian news media organisations. In 2021, the Australian government, following this ACCC recommendation, passed into law the News Media Bargaining Code (NMBC). In passing this world-first legislation using competition law, politicians stated the importance of public interest journalism to democratic health and gave bipartisan support to enact the NMBC, stipulating that Facebook and Google pay for third-party news content on their platforms (Bossio et al., 2023).

The NMBC was not enforced but it nonetheless resulted in a number of voluntary deals between news media outlets and digital platforms that provided an estimated \$200 million a year to news organisations (Bossio et al., 2023). However, after the first tranche of deals expired in 2024, Meta stated it would no longer voluntarily participate in the NMBC and would not renew the media deals (Facebook, 2024). While exact figures are unknown due to commercial-in-confidence provisions, some pundits estimated this left a \$70 million shortfall for media companies, which in combination with rising interest rates and cost of business contributed to further rounds of journalism redundancies in 2024 (Buckingham-Jones and Kehoe, 2024). Amid this difficult financial media environment, proprietors and editors declared in the 2021 *Women for Media Report* that they strove for gender diversity in their newsrooms but

also that recruitment opportunities to correct existing imbalances were limited (Price and Williams, 2021: 62). As Kerri Elstub acknowledged: “You can’t be expected to appeal to your audience if you don’t reflect them,” (Price and Williams, 2021: 68). These past reflections realise a tension between managing the harsh economic reality of news organisations and an editor’s capacity to achieve gender parity in their newsrooms and coverage, which we further explore in this report.

Sexual harassment in newsrooms

At the time of writing the 2024 *Women for Media* report, a number of women at one of Australia’s largest media owners, Nine Entertainment, were in talks with lawyers to form a class action against their employer for “sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination” (Jolly, 2024). Law firm Maurice Blackburn released a statement in June 2024 confirming that it is “currently assisting a number of women in the commercial television industry to pursue claims of sexual harassment and unlawful discrimination” (Jolly, 2024). The law firm is also acting on behalf of a woman who filed a formal complaint against Nine’s former news boss, Darren Wick (Buckingham-Jones, 2024). Wick left his role in March 2024 after claims he had allegedly engaged in “inappropriate behaviour” at a TV award night after-party. Former Nine CEO Mike Sneesby departed the organisation in September 2024. Before he resigned, he had responded to reports of the allegations with an all-staff email assuring employees that the organisation would respond to any complaints, and urging them to report any inappropriate behaviour in the workplace (Jolly, 2024). A report released in October 2024 describes the extent of harassment and bullying behaviour across the network, with many examples targeting women. In releasing the Independent Review entitled *Out in the Open: Changing the Culture at Nine Entertainment*, Nine’s new Chair, Catherine West, stated: “We are deeply sorry... I unreservedly apologise.” The interview section of this report discusses this specific issue.

INTRODUCTION: CHALLENGES TO AUSTRALIAN NEWS MEDIA

News avoidance, disinformation, AI and online news use

The 2024 *Digital News Report* finds that news avoidance – the public actively avoiding news content – has been occurring for the past decade, with a brief reprieve during the COVID-19 pandemic years (Newman, 2024: 26). Three in five Australians surveyed avoided the news at various times, and it was more likely to be women (Park et al., 2024: 19, 55). On average, trust in the media globally, and in Australia, is also low at 40 per cent (Newman et al., 2024: 11), while concern about misinformation and disinformation is especially high in Australia (75 per cent) and greater than the global average of 59 per cent (Newman et al., 2024: 132). The 2024 *Digital News Report* finds most Australians (75 per cent) get their information online and most use their mobile phone to access it (67 per cent) (Newman et al., 2024: 133). One quarter of Australians rely on social media platforms as their main source of news – and more so women than men (Park et al., 2024, 14). The top social media platforms for news among Australians are Facebook (32 per cent), YouTube (26 per cent) and Instagram (16 per cent) (Park et al., 2024: 14). At the same time, traditional news outlets are deploying generative AI to produce journalism, with Australia's largest news proprietor, News Corp, reportedly producing 3,000 articles a week using artificial intelligence (Newman et al., 2024: 133). These AI-generated stories typically cover weather, fuel prices and traffic reports for News Corps' local mastheads.

These changing media trends and low trust levels for Australian news outlets suggest that the Australian news media sector will continue to face financial challenges if news users continue to switch off news altogether or switch to social media and other sources, which has gendered implications. *The Australian Digital News Report* (Park et al., 2024: 38) finds Australian women have higher news avoidance than men (74 per cent). It also finds they are interested in different topics compared to men. Women are more likely to be interested in stories about mental health and wellness, lifestyle, culture and entertainment and exhibit less interest in sport, business and economic news, and science and technology reporting (Park et al., 2024: 72). It is unclear whether this lower level of interest is because men tend to write on these topics more than women and thus adopt a male lens to these topics as suggested in the scholarly literature, or because of personal preference. Finally, the rapid uptake of AI-generated stories has future implications for tracking author's bylines and providing gender visibility on news stories.

REPORT AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this report is straightforward: to assess the current state of women's representation in the Australian media from the perspectives of who produces the news and who features in it.

In doing so, the 2024 report is the sixth edition in a series initiated by the Women's Leadership Institute Australia in 2012. It brings together an expert team of media and political science scholars to address the following objectives:

- Provide a comprehensive analysis of women's authorship of news stories compared to men across a large media sample of radio, television and print (>200,000 stories).
- Examine women's authorship specifically on premium news pages, including front pages and opinion/commentary sections.
- Analyse the representation of women as quoted experts on these premium pages.
- Utilise advanced data gathering and analytical methods to reflect changes in the media landscape over the past decade.
- Provide detailed insights into how editors and proprietors think about gender equality in the newsroom and representation of women in their news stories.
- Outline what measures news leaders are taking to address existing gender inequalities.
- Provide an overview of the number of men and women in newsroom leadership roles.



RESEARCH DESIGN

To achieve the stated aims, the report combines cutting-edge quantitative and qualitative methods. Just as the media landscape has changed substantially in the past decade, so too have the data gathering and analytical skills used in the report.

Using the latest computational methods including generative AI tools, this report more than doubles the number of stories analysed compared to in 2021, which analysed about 61,000 stories. In 2024, the development of new methods and access to multiple media data sets enabled us to undertake the largest study of Women for Media reports to date. Together our different analyses examined more than 200,000 Australian news articles from 30 media entities, across 10 broad story subject areas.

While it still combines qualitative and quantitative methods to triangulate the findings, aspects of the methodology differ from previous reports due to access to new data collections and computed automated analyses techniques and therefore we apply caution when making direct comparisons between report findings.

We incorporate big data media sources – utilising the global media monitoring company Meltwater and global news archives such as Factiva and Newsbank – with computational and manual coding to study a corpus of more than 200,000 news items. To analyse the data, we developed a large language model with the help of generative AI for data extraction. For more granular analysis of primary definers (see p.14), we also undertake manual coding of page 1 and opinion/commentary sections of Australia's major mastheads in the first week of March 2024.

Despite these methodological updates, the general areas of inquiry remain consistent with past editions. We have maintained the same story categories and broad areas of analysis (front pages, op-eds, editor interviews) to enable careful comparisons between news outlets, journalists' bylines (by gender) and story subjects over time.

As such, the 2024 report uses a diverse publication sample representative of the Australian media landscape to build on the 2021 methodologies that were used to explore the 'big picture' of men and women's bylines across different story subject areas and outlets (see Price and Williams, 2021: 96–98). We also adopt Price and Williams secondary 'top billing' analysis, which was designed to understand who writes for the front and opinion and commentary pages and the topics on which they write. This analysis also looked at the gender of sources – who is quoted in stories.

Finally, we combine qualitative data from 45-minute in-depth interviews with some of the media leaders in the study to understand workforce gender composition and practices, with quantitative data providing a gender breakdown of senior positions in Australian newsrooms. To do this, we accessed public webpages and other publicly available data of news organisations to chart the number of men and women in editorial leadership roles.

Research Questions

The report aims to fulfil the outlined objectives and in doing so address three broad research questions (and sub-questions) in the “Detailed Results” chapter. We specifically answer these questions in each of the results’ summary sections. The questions are:

- 1 What Types of Stories Do Women (and Men) Produce in the Australian News Media? (Big Picture)**
 - How does this content vary across different media organisations and subject areas compared to their male counterparts?
- 2 How Are Women Represented as Sources on Premium News Pages Compared to Men? (Top Billing)**
 - How often are women quoted and on what topics and how does this compare men?
- 3 What are News Editors’ Views on Promoting Gender Equality? (Interviews)**
 - How do news editors perceive their organisation’s role in advancing gender equality and what actions are they taking to promote gender equality?

Methods



Big Picture

- What types of stories do women (and men) produce in the Australian news media?
- # stories: 185,734
- Sample: One-month, March 2024, across 30 news outlets



Top Billing

- Focused on the premium news pages – front page and opinion/commentary
- Who writes the front and opinion and commentary pages? And on what topics?
- # stories: <13,000
- Samples: front page (12,358 stories/year), front page (200/one week in March), opinion/commentary pages (260/one week in March)



Editor Interviews

- In-depth interviews with nine media outlet leaders to understand workforce gender equality and equity policies and practices



Big Picture (185,734 news stories):

A one-month sample of Australian news articles from March 2024 collected from 30 diverse news outlets (for full list, see Appendix A1) using Meltwater’s extensive database. More than 185,000 news articles were analysed using machine learning techniques with OpenAI’s GPT4, to classify stories into 10 subject areas aligning with the 2021 report. OpenAI’s GPT4 was used for “zero-shot” classification of an initial batch of 4,000 randomly selected unique articles (see Appendix A2 for an example of classifications).

A manual inspection of randomly selected articles confirmed a high rate of correct classifications and that the categories accurately reflect the content of the articles. A full set of articles was then run through GPT4 for classification of all stories. Fewer than one hundred articles (required manual classification (i.e. GPT4 was unable to classify 0.054% of the sample)).

Figure 1: Topic classification

Category	
	Arts, entertainment and celebrities
	Health, well-being and lifestyle
	Energy and environment
	Politics
	Foreign relations and international security
	Science and technology
	Business and the economy
	Sport
	Crime
	Disasters and accidents

Source: Authors. Notes: N=185,734 articles; 10 categories defined as per past Women for Media reports, with some minor extensions and modifications



Top Billing (<13,000 news stories)

To understand who Australia’s “primary definers” are – that is, who influences news coverage on premium news pages – three different but complementary analyses were conducted to record story subjects, author bylines, and quoted individuals. The three separate analyses were:

Front page – large sample
(12,358 stories/year)

Drawing on the full text of news stories appearing on the front pages of our sample of Australian media outlets using automated methods and assistance with OpenAI’s GPT4 to extract author bylines of 12,358 stories from 1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024. These computational methods sorted the stories by front page byline (gender) into our 10 subject categories and ordered by masthead.

Front page – small sample
(A week’s analysis 4-9 March)

For a granular analysis of 200 unique front-page stories appearing in Australian publications during the first week of March (4-9th), 21 data fields were manually coded. Key fields recorded included gender of all byline authors, story topic (as per Figure 13); gender of experts or “primary definers” quoted in the story, gender of the first person quoted, approximate article word length; if the story was exclusive or not (see Appendix A3 for an excerpt of the full coding frame) and the story title.

Opinion/Commentary pages
(A week’s analysis 4-9 March)

Using a similar code book as the front-page analysis, 260 unique opinion stories appearing in Australian publications during the first week of March (4-9th), were manually coded across 17 separate fields. Key fields recorded included gender of all byline authors, story topic (as per Figure 27 and Figure 28); gender of experts or “primary definers” quoted in the story, gender of the first person quoted, approximate article word length; if the author was an in-house journalist or invited external expert (see Appendix A3 for an excerpt of the full coding frame) and the story title.



Editor Interviews

An awareness of the underrepresentation of women in journalism and particularly in top positions in the media organisation has prompted many outlets to review their policies and practices. This study draws on interviews with nine Australian media leaders from a range of different types of national media organisations (i.e. digital only, print, broadcast) with varied ownership structures (i.e. public, private, non-profit) to understand how Australian media organisations think about gender equality and equity and what measures are put in place (or not) to achieve it. See Table 1 for interviewee details.

Table 1:
List of editor interviewees

NAME	TITLE	MEDIA TYPE	MEDIA OUTLET	OWNER
Gemma Acton	Director of News Operations	Broadcast/Online	Seven West Media	Seven Group Holdings Limited
Sophie Black	Editor in Chief	Online	Crikey	Private Media
Fiona Dear	Director News and Current Affairs	Broadcast/Online	Nine	Nine Entertainment
Kerri Elstub	Director	Digital/Online	Nine Digital	Nine Entertainment
Felicity Hetherington	Editor	Online	The Daily Mail	Daily Mail and General Trust (DMGT)
Cosima Marriner	Editor	Print/Online	The Australian Financial Review	Nine Entertainment
Justin Stevens	Director of News	Broadcast/Online	Australian Broadcasting Corporation	Commonwealth Government of Australia
Lenore Taylor	Editor	Online	The Guardian	Guardian News and Media Holdings (GNMH), which is owned by Guardian Media Group (GMG), The Scott Trust Limited
Kerry Warren	Editor	Online	News.com.au	News Corp Australia

Source: Authors. Notes: Interviews were undertaken between 5/7/2024 and 27/8/2024 and averaged 45 minutes. Of the 22 invitations for interview, 13 media leaders did not respond.

Limitations of the study

There are limitations and methodological challenges for researchers that should not be underestimated in the contemporary information environment that relate largely to media accessing data – which is largely proprietorial and expensive. In addition, not all media outlets are represented in full in available databases – *The Guardian* and other online only publications were only available in the Meltwater data and in these instances full story text is unavailable, but bylines, headlines and opening sentences provide some insights. We implemented various efforts to obtain the full text of stories, which added complexity to merging data and extracting comparable fields from different databases. To address this, where warranted we conducted manual checks to ensure coding accuracy.

Further, not all stories have visible bylines in the databases. This is a common problem for researchers doing similar studies and is due to several factors: the story is a composite of other stories; it was provided by a wire service like Australian Associated Press (AAP); story is AI generated, or the database neglected this field. In any case, determining gender from bylines is not straightforward. To do this, we used the R package, *Gender: Predict Gender from Names Using Historical Data* (Gordon, 2024) and manually sampled for accuracy. We state instances where we only use story data with a named byline. However, the algorithm can only make a binary gender prediction, classifying individuals as either male or female (noting this may include both cis and trans women). As a result, non-binary individuals are not accounted for in the algorithm's predictions and we apologise for this limitation.

It is also important to acknowledge that current data collection limitations prevent us from considering and analysing the gendered impacts of cultural diversity and other elements of intersectionality. While the need to proactively support all forms of diversity is recognised in various editor interviews, we hope future advancements in data collection will allow for a deeper exploration of how diverse identities are represented in the media in future research reports.

Some emphasis is given to print/digital mastheads in this report when analysing who is quoted in the media. This is for practical and theoretical reasons. Theoretically, newspapers remain collectively the largest employers of journalists in Australian media and have intermedia agenda-setting functions notwithstanding the digital age, meaning that other media look to press coverage when determining what stories to cover each day. For practical reasons, mastheads offer text-based stories that are more readily accessible in databases. The drawback of this approach is that we do not collate data from significant mastheads such as *The Guardian* under this method as it is not available in the dataset. However, to ensure we include this masthead and other online-only publications as well as a representation of broadcast (radio and television) stories, our big picture analysis draws from Meltwater data which we access through a commercial license with a La Trobe University grant.¹

Finally, this report is focused on how women are represented in the media as producers and as sources. It does not analyse audience perceptions (which was outside the scope of this study), which is an important area for future research. Neither does the report deconstruct women's representation at a media organisations' corporate board level, as this is considered work worthy of separate investigation and we do not wish to infer board interference in news coverage.

¹ Meltwater offers its users access to more than 1200 print and broadcast media outlet's content in Australia and New Zealand and 12,000 online publications. It also enables data collection from social media sites: Instagram, Facebook, Reddit, X (formerly Twitter), Pinterest, Twitch and TikTok at the time of writing (Meltwater, 2024).

RESULTS AT A GLANCE

Big Picture, Top Billing & Interviews

More than a decade since the first Women for Media report was produced, we find that change in women's representation towards gender parity is moving slowly. A long shadow of gender bias exists both in the types of stories women cover as journalists compared to men which includes their access to exclusive taglines and having their stories visible on newspapers' premium pages such as the front page, and opinion and commentary section of the paper. As in the past, women still disproportionately cover "soft news" stories while men gravitate to writing "hard news" topic areas.

On the other side of media coverage – the quoted experts, the people who are bestowed with authority in the media – we also find a persistent gender inequality. As in past reports, we find that men receive greater coverage as quoted experts and are far more likely to quote other men in their stories than women. Women are better at quoting women.



Big Picture: Summary

Focused on

"What Types of Stories Do Women and Men Produce in the Australian News Media?"

- Horizontal segregation persists. Men and women journalists work in similar numbers, but men dominate the most visible and high-impact content areas, such as sport, economics and business, international affairs, and science and technology.
- Syndication exacerbates this disparity, as nearly half of the 185,734 stories analysed are duplicated, with high-volume story areas often being male dominated.
- This inadvertently gives men's bylines greater audience reach since they write for the two largest content areas identified in the study: sport and business/economics. In contrast, women are largely assigned or choose to write "soft news" topics, such as health and lifestyle.
- To address these imbalances, it is crucial to focus on print media and its online iterations, which produce the most authored content, and to recognise the gender skew in various media outlets.





Top Billing: Summary

Focused on “How Are Women Represented as Sources on Premium News Pages Compared to Men?”

By-lines, exclusives and opinion pieces

- Men dominate the prestigious front-page and opinion sections.
- Men not only secure the majority of bylines, exclusive taglines, and opinion pieces, but are also more frequently quoted than women.
- Story topics often reflect entrenched gender biases: while both genders write extensively on politics, men are disproportionately represented in stories about foreign relations and business, whereas women are more likely to cover health, well-being, and lifestyle topics, particularly those requiring a “lived experience” or personal perspective.

Expert sources

- This trend extends to who is perceived as an expert and quoted, underscoring a long-standing gender difference in media coverage.
- Despite the influence of International Women's Day coverage in the study, which increased the proportion of women quoted, a significant gender gap was detected on page one and in opinion and commentary sections.
- These findings reflect a long-held status quo in Australian media coverage and are consistent with past Women for Media reports.
- It may also reflect author-source relationships, which can become insular by promoting the same voices and reducing pluralism of perspectives in news (Magin and Maurer, 2019)—in this case, diversity of gendered perspectives.





Editor Interviews: Summary

Focused on “What are News Editors’ Views on Promoting Gender Equality?”

- News editors take seriously their roles in advancing gender equality.
- They have taken several actions to remove structural obstacles to women’s professional advancement in their journalism careers, such as more flexible work conditions and mentoring support for leadership roles.
- More women are in leadership positions than in the past.
- More broadly, hiring practices have seen similar numbers of men and women in newsrooms.
- However, challenges persist in protecting women and minorities from online harassment and tackling the lack of diversity within newsroom leadership.
- Several leaders suggest women require more leadership mentoring and training to overcome confidence issues.
- Policy and programmatic development to address intersectional disparities and online safety is underdone.
- In terms of news coverage, there is recognition that some topic areas are not well represented by women’s voices. Leadership responses to this are mixed, as is the degree of the problem across newsrooms.
- Leaders’ observations that women are not forthcoming as experts to be quoted in stories contradicts recent studies that find women were as agreeable to an interview request as men (Shine et al., 2023). But we do find women authored opinion pieces are less than previous *Women for Media* reports and may be indicative of the online incivility women face compared to men when engaging in public discourse.
- In any case, these findings reinforce the need for newsroom policies and practices need to more clearly focus on underrepresentation both in terms of women’s bylines and quoted sources.



RESULTS

Big Picture (185,734 news stories)

A trawl of the 30 selected Australian media organisations (see Table 2) for the month of March 2024² identified 5,031 unique author names with similar numbers of men (2,604 or 52 per cent) and women (2,423 or 48 per cent) author bylines.

Table 2 shows the breakdown of author gender across publications and highlights instances where either men or women dominated a publication's by-lines. We note where articles were not attributed to an author at all.

Table 2:

News Outlets and their owners included in the Big Picture analysis

Author gender (Number)					Author gender (Percentage)			
Source	Women	Men	Non-Binary	No author	Women	Men	Non-Binary	No author
7 News	626	747		1,681	20.5%	24.5%		55.0%
9Now	167	67		119	47.3%	19.0%		33.7%
Channel 9 News	394	343		936	23.6%	20.5%		55.9%
nine.com.au	119	19		8	81.5%	13.0%		5.5%
nine.com.au - 9Honey	16			615	2.5%			97.5%
nine.com.au - 9Honey - Coach				16				100.0%
nine.com.au - 9Honey Celebrity				344				100.0%
nine.com.au - 9Honey Style	20			21	48.8%			51.2%
nine.com.au - 9Honey Travel	101	5		27	75.9%	3.8%		20.3%
nine.com.au - 9kitchen	37			14	72.5%			27.5%
AAP News	752	1,529		820	24.3%	49.3%		26.4%
ABC Online	1,568	1,091	2	3,123	27.1%	18.9%	0.0%	54.0%
Brisbane Times	1,252	2,015		1,306	27.4%	44.1%		28.6%
Crikey	35	128		9	20.3%	74.4%		5.2%
NT News	4,056	4,750		5,672	28.0%	32.8%		39.2%
News.com.au	1,804	1,851		2,899	27.5%	28.2%		44.2%
Perth Now	1,998	2,704		2,242	28.8%	38.9%		32.3%
Sky News Australia	358	470		3,492	8.3%	10.9%		80.8%
The Advertiser	4,487	5,304		3,897	32.8%	38.7%		28.5%
The Age	1,268	2,042		1,033	29.2%	47.0%		23.8%
The Australian	1,705	3,293		976	28.5%	55.1%		16.3%
The Australian Financial Review	506	1,062		456	25.0%	52.5%		22.5%
The Canberra Times	1,751	2,667		1,885	27.8%	42.3%		29.9%
The Courier-Mail	5,136	6,037		7,760	27.1%	31.9%		41.0%
The Daily Advertiser	1,351	2,032		1,140	29.9%	44.9%		25.2%
The Daily Telegraph	4,702	5,522		7,203	27.0%	31.7%		41.3%
The Guardian	246	254		148	38.0%	39.2%		22.8%
The Herald Sun	4,769	5,826		6,797	27.4%	33.5%		39.1%
The Mercury	3,943	4,698		7,050	25.1%	29.9%		44.9%
The New Daily	311	350		298	32.4%	36.5%		31.1%
The Saturday Paper	69	147		12	30.3%	64.5%		5.3%
The Sydney Morning Herald	1,257	2,017		1,347	27.2%	43.6%		29.1%
The Weekly Times	1,324	1,532		4,008	19.3%	22.3%		58.4%
The West Australian	2,762	4,642		1,056	32.6%	54.9%		12.5%
WAtoday.com.au	1,259	1,999		1,293	27.7%	43.9%		28.4%
Wide World of Sports	4	49		733	0.5%	6.2%		93.3%

Source: Authors using Meltwater data. Notes: N=185,734 news items; Conversation removed from analysis as too few stories.

Notes on the data

The first observation is of the 185,734 media items, 90,647 are unique – showing the high proportion of syndicated media content in the Australian news eco-system. This also speaks to Australia's high concentration of media ownership compared to other liberal democracies (Carson, 2019). The second observation is that nearly half of the articles do not have a named author. This is a commonly cited issue for this type of content-driven research (see Victorian Government/iSentia, 2024: Price and Williams, 2021). Of the 115,838 articles with a byline, we identify 5,031 unique author names, providing a useful guide about the number of journalists working in major media outlets in Australia. It is also notable that the greatest amount of authored content is coming from print media.

Many of the broadcasters often do not carry bylines. Among the reasons observed in the data for this is that many embed the journalist's name in the audio and are not picked up in the text analysis. Further, some are using producers to create news packages that are non-attributable to one person.

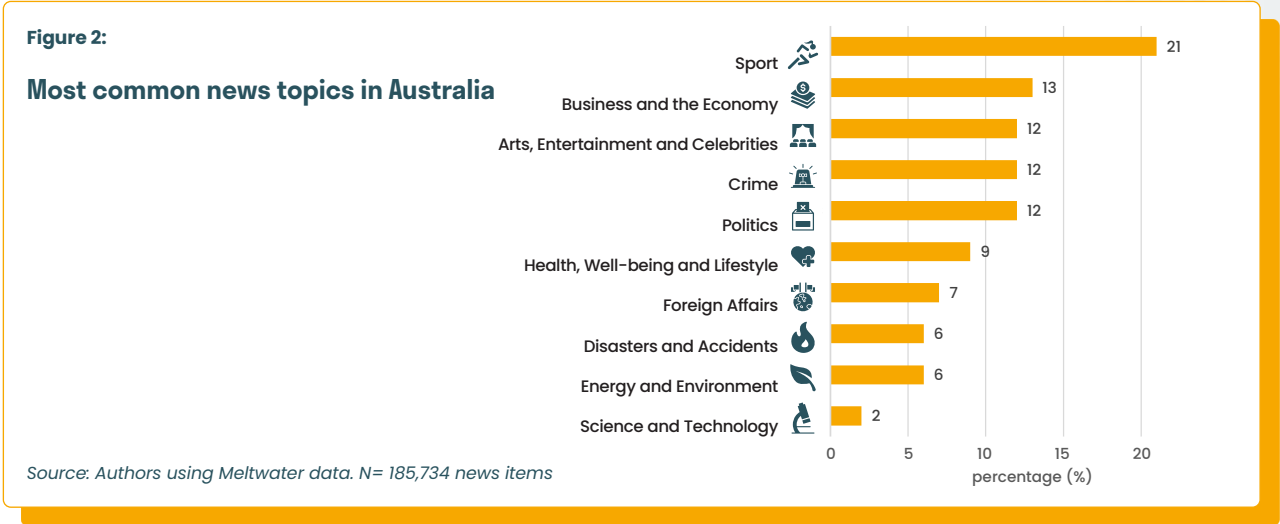
Where we see gender skewed in one direction or the other is Nine's specific lifestyle and entertainment content (i.e. 9Honey) is disproportionately women reporters. In contrast, Crikey, Australia's only two national papers – *The Australian* and *Australian Financial Review*, along with the weekly *Saturday Paper* and 7 West Media's, *The West Australian*, all skew in favour of more male bylines (see Table 2).

2 For comparison, the 2021 report draws on 57,000 articles across the month of May 2021.

RESULTS: BIG PICTURE

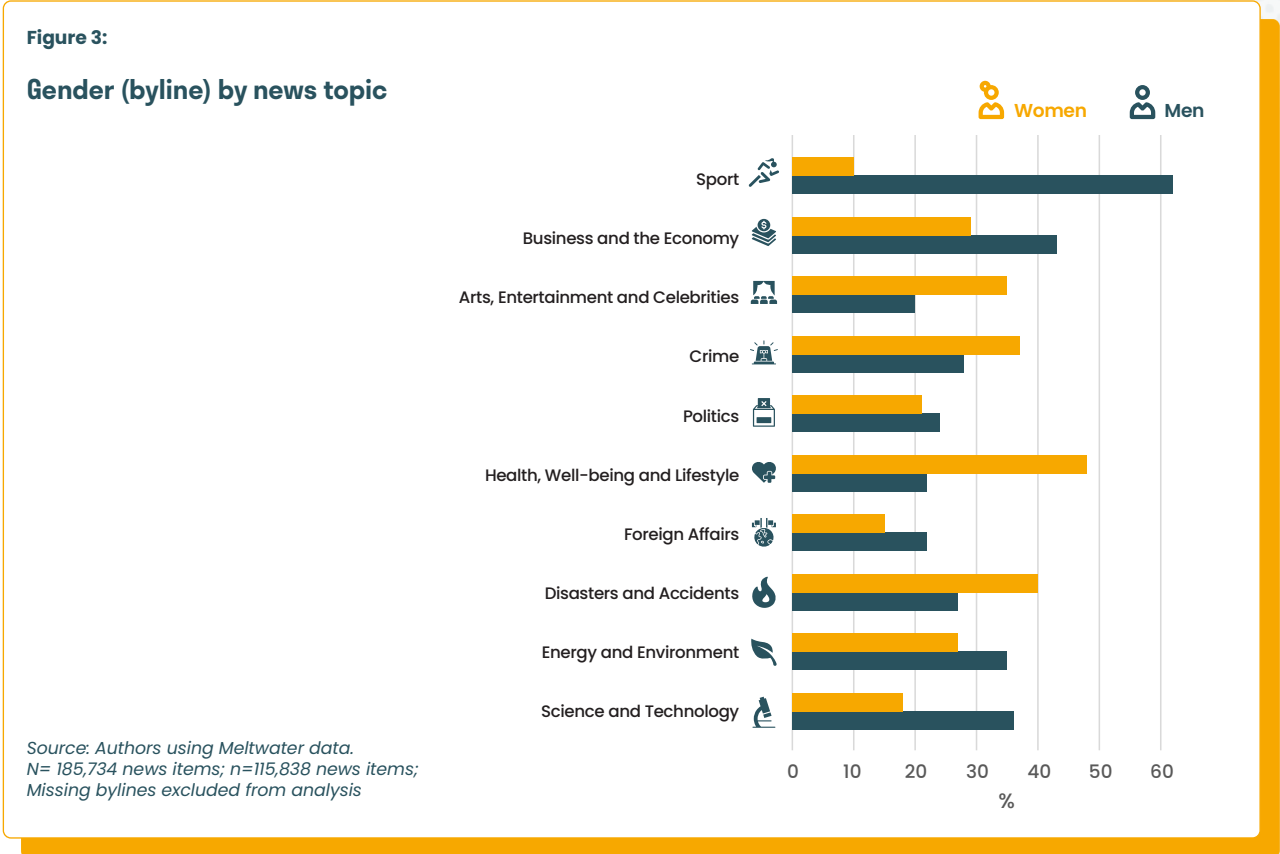
What are the most prevalent news topics?

In the Australian media sample of more than 185,000 stories, the most prevalent story topics are sport – reflecting the nation’s strong sporting interest – followed by business and the economy, politics, the arts and crime reporting (see Figure 2).



What men write about

Examining the data by the 10 broad news topics, we see that, as in 2021, sport is easily the most popular subject area for men to report on. This is followed by business and the economy, and science and technology. While the second and third position swapped places in 2021, these remain the same top three news topics or male bylines – consistent with the previous report.



RESULTS: BIG PICTURE

What women write about

In contrast, women journalists most frequently write about health, well-being and lifestyle stories, followed by disasters and accidents and crime – areas commonly covered by television and tabloid news. The next most reported topic by women was arts, entertainment and celebrities. These accord with the 2021 results, where health and arts and entertainment were the two top topics for women. On the other hand, the topics women write about the least are sport, science and technology and foreign relations (see Figure 4). The gap in sport reporting between men and women was also highlighted in the Victorian government's *Change our Game: Representation of Women in Sports News Coverage 2022–23* report.

When we compare this to men's byline distribution a very different pattern emerges: sport, business and politics are the favoured topics (see Figure 5).

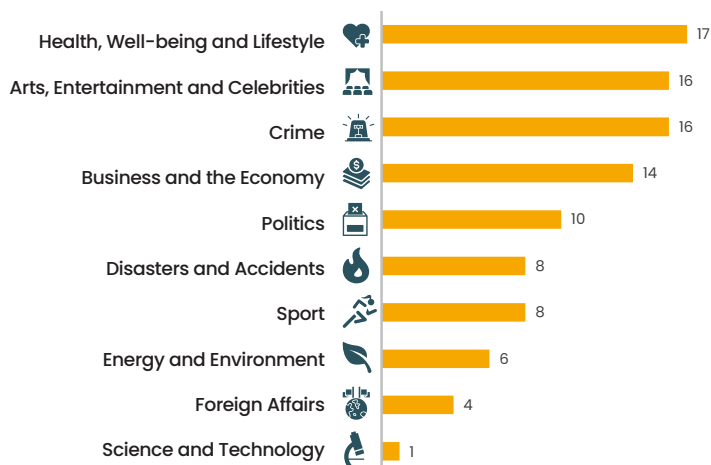
What topics show the largest gender gaps?

The largest gender gaps in favour of men's bylines continue to be sport and business as recorded in the last report. Traditionally, foreign affairs and international relations (North, 2016: 369) were seen as male dominated reporting areas, and we also find this to be the case in this 2024 report. In contrast, consistent with the literature, women predominate with bylines in subject areas labelled as "soft news" such as well-being, lifestyle and arts and entertainment stories. With the exemption of political coverage – which is fairly evenly reported by both men and women – horizontal segregation between men and women continues to exist in Australian newsrooms.



Figure 4:

What women write about – distribution across topics (% of total articles written by women)

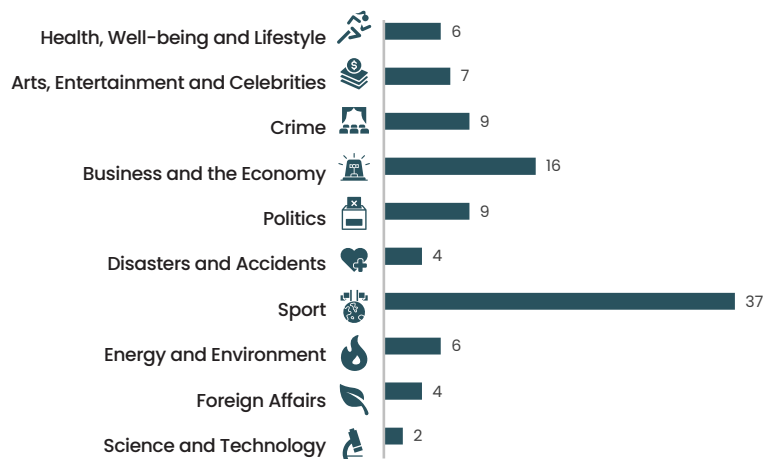


Source: Authors using Meltwater data. N=115,838 news items; Missing bylines excluded from analysis



Figure 5:

What men write about – distribution across topics (% of total articles written by men)



Source: Authors using Meltwater data. N=115,838 news items; Missing bylines excluded from analysis

RESULTS: BIG PICTURE

Which media outlets feature women's bylines?

Finally, turning our attention to newsrooms to see which outlets most often utilise women journalists. We used a statistical model to analyse whether certain news outlets are more or less likely to feature women's bylines. By looking at different topics and news outlets, we can see if some news outlets have a stronger or weaker tendency to profile women journalists, regardless of the topics they cover. See Figure 6 for results.

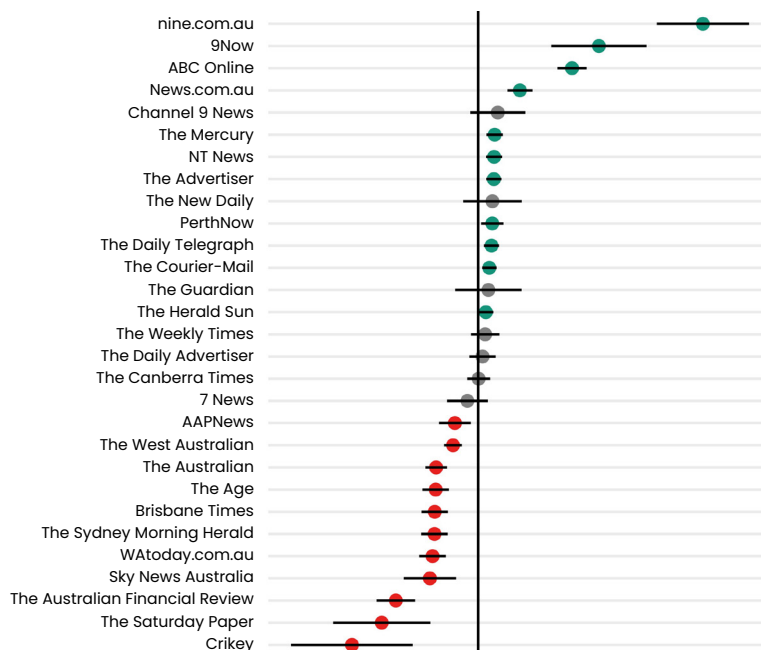
Our statistical analysis (Figure 6) confirms that both the mix of topics covered and the mastheads themselves play a significant role in how often women's names appear as authors. The topic of an article has a much larger impact, while the specific publication adds only a small amount of additional predictive accuracy. In short, overall, gender differences in authorship are driven *far more* by the types of topics being covered and prioritised, rather than by any gender biases specific to a masthead.

Nonetheless, some mastheads emerge as clear over or under-performers from this analysis. Two of the online Nine mastheads — nine.com.au and 9Now — have a marked propensity to utilise women journalists, over and above the large emphasis on lifestyle content in their output. Similarly, two popular on-line outlets, news.com.au and ABC Online, also show a marked propensity to utilise women journalists, net of the topic mix of their content. Tiny but nonetheless statistically significant rates of relative over-representation of women's bylines appear in a mix of News Corp tabloids, spanning the *Hobart Mercury*, the *Adelaide Advertiser*, the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Courier Mail*.

Women journalists are observed to be relatively underutilised in the output of the *West Australian*, *7 News*, and *WAtoday.com.au*, even after accounting for the types of topics covered. The *Saturday Paper* and *Crikey* also display significant tendencies to underutilise women journalists, though these effects are estimated imprecisely due to their relatively small number of articles and authors. More prestigious legacy newspapers such as *The Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the *Australian Financial Review* all utilise fewer women writers than the industry average, even when using statistical controls to adjust for industry-wide gender differentials within specific topics.

Figure 6:

The newsrooms that use women's bylines



Source: Authors using Meltwater data $n=115,838$ news items; Missing bylines excluded from analysis. Notes: We fit a logistic regression model predicting female authorship on fixed effects for topic and masthead; Propensity for female authorship relative to male authorship, net of mastheads' mix of content. Vertical line indicates industry-wide average propensity; horizontal lines indicate 95% confidence intervals. Green dots correspond to statistically significant propensities for female authors, net of topic mix; red dots correspond to statistically significant propensities to underutilise female authors.³

3 In a validation sample of 1/8th of the corpus of articles ("held out" from model fitting), topic mix alone produces 66.2% correct predictions of the gender of the by-line and an AUC (area under the receiver-operator characteristic curve of 0.717). The percentage of correct predictions is unchanged when masthead random effects are added to the model while AUC improves slightly to 0.725. A model using only random effects for masthead has poor predictive performance in the validation sample, with an AC of 0.553.

RESULTS: BIG PICTURE

Big Picture Summary

In summary, the Big Picture analysis reveals that, despite more than a decade since the first Women for Media report, gender parity in journalism remains elusive. In addressing the first research question—***What Types of Stories Do Women and Men Produce in the Australian News Media?***—we find that horizontal segregation persists. Men and women journalists work in similar numbers, but men dominate the most visible and high-impact content areas, such as sport, economics and business, international affairs, and science and technology. Syndication exacerbates this disparity, as nearly half of the 185,734 stories analysed are duplicated, with high-volume story areas often being male dominated. This inadvertently gives men's bylines greater audience reach since they write for the two largest content areas identified in the study: sport and business/economics. In contrast, women are largely assigned or choose to write "soft news" topics, such as health and lifestyle. To address these imbalances, it is crucial to focus on print media and its online iterations, which produce the most authored content, and to recognise the gender skew in various media outlets. The next section examines who reports on, and who is quoted in, the premium pages of mastheads.



RESULTS

Top Billing

We now turn our attention to the whether men and women get equal access to the front pages of news media, both as authors and as sources. We also test who is quoted in front-page stories to understand gender differences about who is bestowed with “primary definer” status, which carries social power.

Deciding who to quote matters

Specifically, we are interested in understanding the roles editorial decision-makers and journalists themselves play in deciding who to quote. This matters, because as discussed, it bestows authority and legitimises the perceived expertise of those quoted. Media visibility is a form of social capital (Wallack, 2000) that can be used as power to advocate for an issue, policy position, political preference or even personal promotion.

The importance of front-page placement

Editors reserve front-page placements to signal to the audience the perceived importance of a story or issue. Despite the complexities introduced by online news and the use of algorithmic distribution of social media content, page one decisions nonetheless are still being made in 2024 and provide insight into newsroom judgements of newsworthiness. Put another way, Mensing and Greer (2013: 4) argue: “most newspaper readers understand clearly that articles placed above the fold on the front page are the most important in that issue and that the story with the largest headline is the top story for the day.” Their research comparing hardcopy and news story placement online found that the front pages (or most prominent positions) of online sites favoured breaking news and were event orientated (Mensing and Greer, 2013: 32). This observation reinforces the prominence and delivery of “hard news” that traditionally has favoured male authors over authors of “soft news” stories. The previous section of this report found that in 2024 women are skewed towards producing “soft news” content compared to men.

Opinion and commentary pages shape public opinion

Finally, we also investigate opinion journalism on the opinion and commentary pages of print and online mastheads because these articles are typically reserved for expert and privileged sources and authors (both in-house and external). Wahl-Jorgensen writes that this type of journalism enables the media to “contribute to shaping and articulating public opinion” (2008: 67) McNair put it this way about opinion pages: “In this capacity the institution of the press takes the lead in establishing the dominant interpretative frameworks within which ongoing political events are made sense of” (McNair, 2000: 30). While both scholars acknowledged that increasingly opinion and news reporting are entwined across news pages and within stories, editors and journalists still make deliberate decisions about who writes these conventional forms of opinion journalism and who is quoted in these stories.

The opinion and commentary pages of print and online mastheads are typically reserved for expert and privileged sources and authors.



RESULTS: TOP BILLING

A year of front-page stories

Beginning with a year’s sample of front-page news stories (March 2023 – March 2024), we calculate gender breakdowns in page one authorship. This analysis relies on the news archive database, Factiva, and is not a straightforward task with methodological and interpretative challenges (see Appendix A3). From 12,358 articles, we yielded 7,782 articles with a byline. Some articles, particularly front-page blurbs, do not attach a byline and are therefore authorless.

Notwithstanding, Figure 7 shows the gender mix of the total number of front-page bylines by publication. The graph includes multi-author stories as well as single author stories and makes no distinction between first author or last author. However, the proportion of front-page joint bylines was very small overall. It should also be noted that Factiva includes both front-page stories on the “main book” (the news pages) of a given masthead and those leading various specialised sections like business, sport and so on, providing a broader representation of key articles throughout the newspaper.

As with the full year’s sample discussed earlier, we see that more men bylines are present in the dataset. In this case, men constitute 40.5 per cent of page one bylines compared to 28.4 per cent women (the remainder are unknown). Excluding the unnamed bylines, women represent 41 per cent to men’s 59 per cent.

When we study the sample by unique author and remove unlabelled stories, men make up 54 per cent (544 unique bylines) and women 46 per cent (474 unique bylines) on the front pages of Australian mastheads during a year. Although the number of unique men and women writing front-page stories is relatively balanced (54% men vs. 46% women), the data shows that a smaller, more frequently featured group of men tends to dominate front-page bylines, while women’s bylines are spread among a larger number of different authors.

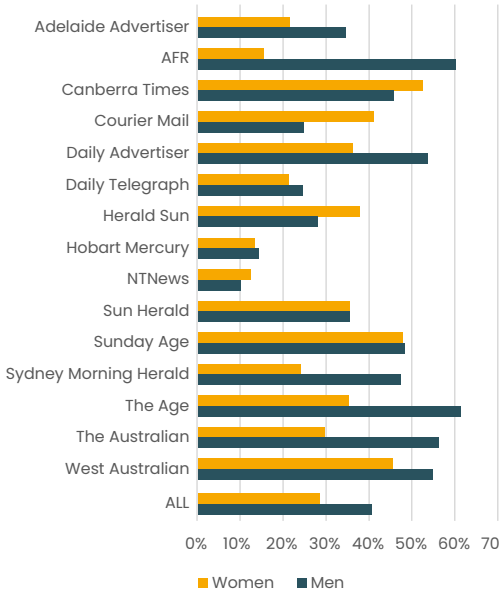
We find by comparison with the “Big Picture” data that fewer women make front pages compared to the publication of women authors across all pages of a newspaper. The difference is slight – women constitute 48 per cent of Australian media bylines on any page (Big Picture data), compared to 46 per cent that feature on front pages. But it yields the same finding: women journalists are less likely than men to get top billing.

This is true across most of Australia’s major publications. As can be seen in Figure 7, the vast majority of publications carry men’s bylines on the front page compared to women, with the exceptions of *The Canberra Times*, News Corp’s Brisbane and Melbourne tabloids the *Courier Mail* and the *Herald Sun*. These patterns also reflect our granular week-long study detailed below, which we discuss shortly.

Men constitute 40.5% of page one bylines compared to 28.4% women. Excluding the unnamed bylines, women represent 41% to men’s 59%.

Figure 7:
Front-page articles by gender (byline)

Publication	Women	Men
Adelaide Advertiser	21%	34%
AFR	15%	60%
Canberra Times	52%	46%
Courier Mail	41%	25%
Daily Advertiser	36%	53%
Daily Telegraph	21%	25%
Herald Sun	38%	28%
Hobart Mercury	13%	14%
NTNews	12%	10%
Sun Herald	35%	35%
Sunday Age	48%	48%
Sydney Morning Herald	24%	47%
The Age	35%	61%
The Australian	29%	56%
West Australian	45%	55%
ALL	28%	41%



Source: Authors using Factiva data. Notes: N=12,338 articles with a name n=7,779; n=3827 stories with women bylines and n=5,540 stories with men’s bylines and 4,560 articles unnamed

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

What men most often write about on page one

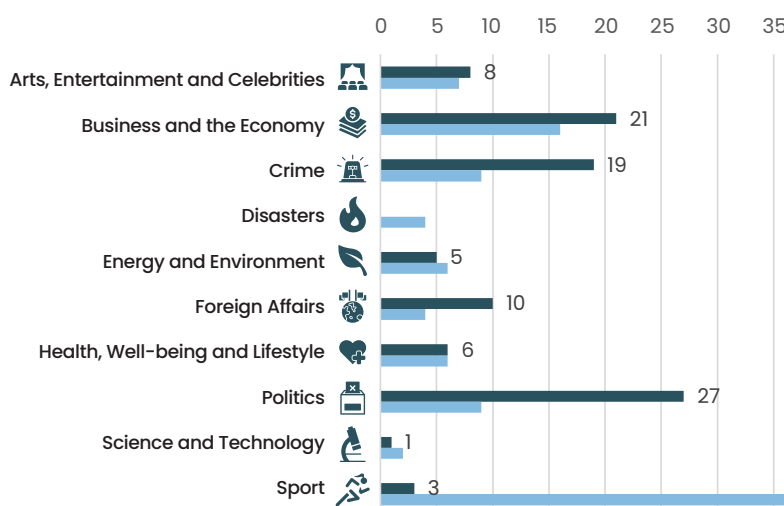
Our analysis shows that men are most likely to earn front-page coverage when writing about politics (27 per cent), business and the economy (21 per cent) and crime (19 per cent). In Figure 8, the stories men cover for page one are similar to the relative proportion of men's bylines *across* the newspaper. However, sport stories are much less likely to make the front page, while politics, foreign affairs, business and crime stories are well represented there. This shows that both the "Big Picture" and "Top Billing" data sources provide relatively consistent results about how topic choice relates to the gender of byline authors.

What women most often write about on page one

On page one, women most often write about crime (25 per cent), politics (23 per cent) and health, wellbeing and lifestyle stories (17 per cent). Notably, women do not have the same opportunity to write about business and economy stories on the front page compared to men (see Figure 9). As can be seen in Figure 4 and Figure 5, women are more likely than men to write about arts, entertainment and celebrities; crime, and health and well-being stories. Why are women so likely to write about crime and disasters? These topics are usually assigned to more junior print journalists to general news teams in TV and radio, who cover daily news reporting. These are considered less prestigious than specialist rounds or beats such as politics, which is at the top of the organisational hierarchy (Magin and Maurer, 2019).



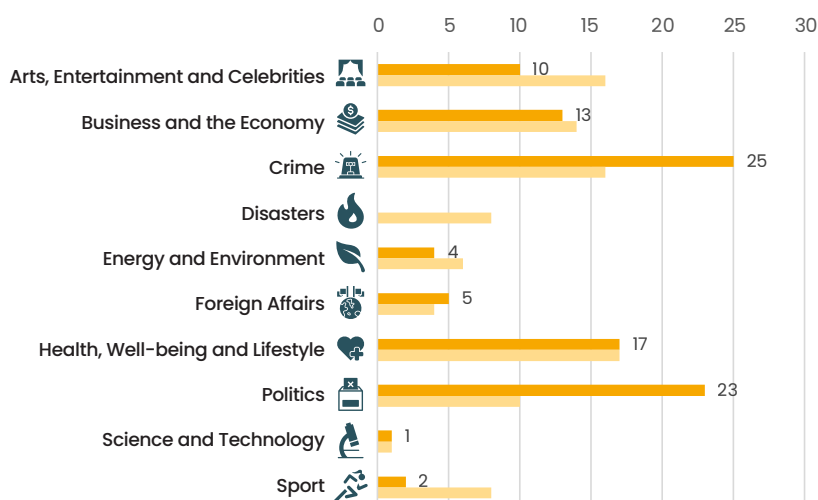
Figure 8: What men write about: front page vs whole paper (%)



Source: Authors. Front page data n=7,779 stories with bylines from Factiva; Whole page n=115,838 stories from Meltwater



Figure 9: What women write about: front page vs whole paper (%)



Source: Authors. Front page data n=7,779 stories with bylines from Factiva; Whole page n=115,838 stories from Meltwater

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

What front-page topics show the largest gender gaps?

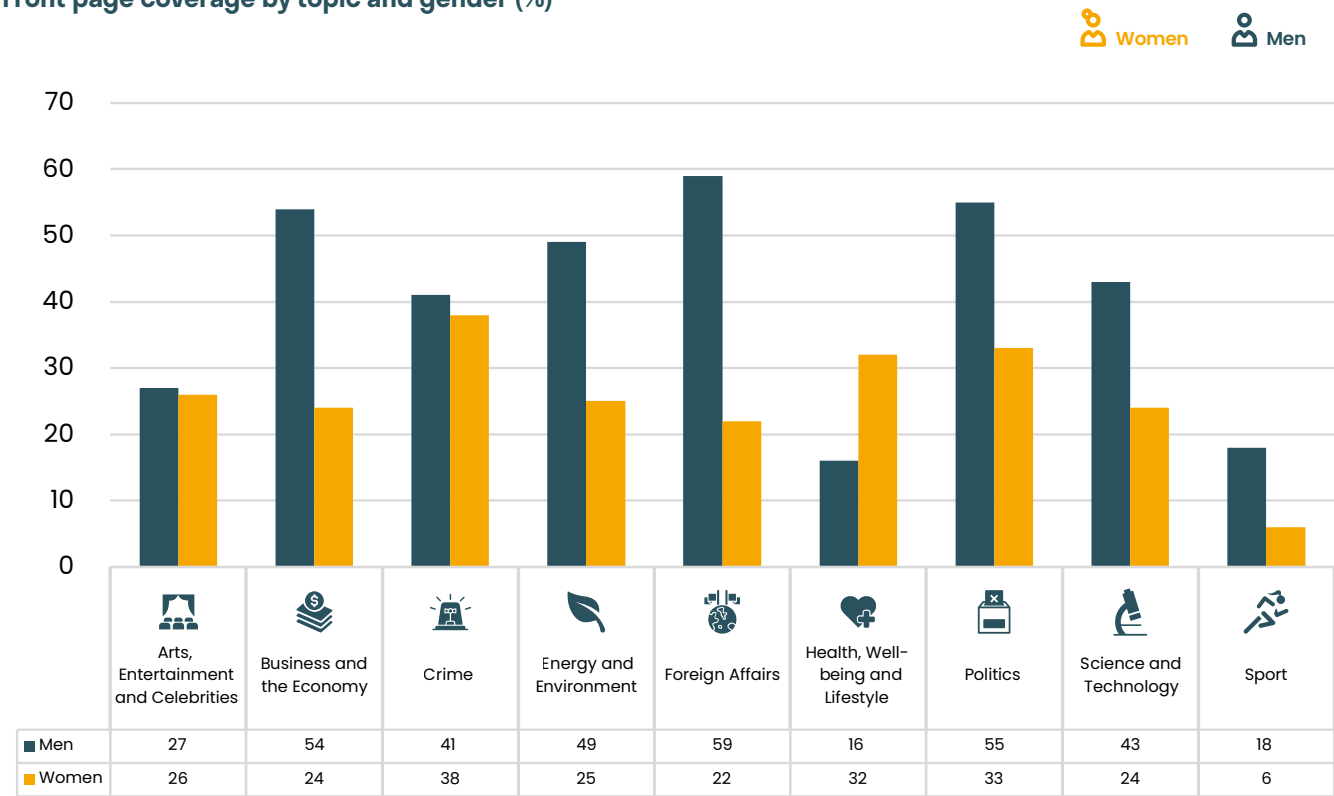
Turning our attention to what story topics are more likely to be written by a man than a woman on the front page, we find that men are given front-page status more frequently than women for all topics except health, well-being and lifestyle stories. Figure 10 shows the front-page stories with the biggest gender gap are foreign affairs, business and the economy and energy and the environment. Interestingly, although both men and women write about politics frequently, men are more likely to be granted front-page coverage for their political stories than women. The reasons for this are unclear. It may be that they get better “scoops” or because editors treat male and female bylines differently.

Who writes front-page stories? (Under the microscope)

To delve deeper into front-page bylines and to see who is quoted and under what circumstances, we manually coded a week of page one stories from Australia’s major daily newspapers⁴ for the first week of March⁵. See Appendix A3 for full methodological details. We note that International Women’s Day (IWD) occurred during our data collection and all but three (*The Australian*, *The Canberra Times* and *The Age*) featured IWD on page one. This front-page coverage was typically limited to a brief teaser for an article within the paper and may have inflated the number of women quoted in front-page stories – an issue we return to in the conclusion.

Figure 10:

Front page coverage by topic and gender (%)



Source: Authors. Front page data n=7,779 stories with bylines from Factiva

4 The Adelaide Advertiser (Adelaide, South Australia); The Age (Melbourne, Victoria); The Australian (National); The Australian Financial Review (National); The Canberra Times (Canberra, Australian Capital Territory); The Courier-Mail (Brisbane, Queensland); The Daily Telegraph (Sydney, New South Wales); The Herald Sun (Melbourne, Victoria); The Hobart Mercury (Hobart, Tasmania); NT News (Darwin, Northern Territory); The Saturday Paper (National); The Sydney Morning Herald (Sydney, New South Wales); The West Australian (Perth, Western Australia).

5 Sunday 10th of March was excluded for comparability, as not all of the publications publish a Sunday edition.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Front-page bylines by gender and publication

We recorded the gender of authors' bylines for front-page news articles published from 4–9 March 2024, a subset of our broader year-long front-page analysis. To repeat, the larger scrape of a year's sample of news stories provided an overview of the gender bias in all front-page coverage including front specialised topic sections of a masthead (i.e. Sports, Business). This found men had a slight monopoly on page one stories and set the stage for our deeper analysis into who gets quoted in these articles and under what circumstances.

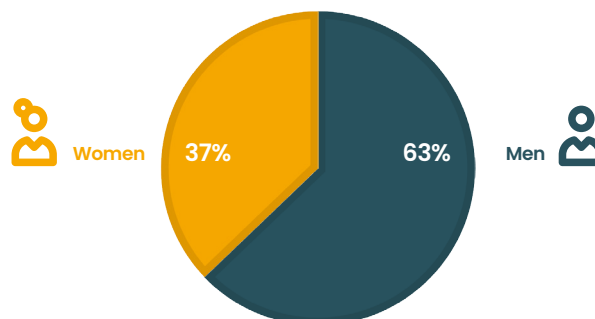
In the week-long analysis, front-page bylines are double checked against the visual front page of the masthead to ensure they are genuine front-page bylines of the "mainbook" or news section and not sub-sections of the publication. Under these conditions we find two-thirds (63 per cent) of front-page stories were written by men and a third by women (37 per cent). The findings from this 'week under the microscope' are consistent with the year-long data analysis above, which found women constituted 41 per cent of named bylines on front pages.

Notwithstanding a different methodology from 2021, the 2024 macro and micro analyses of front-page stories yields similar findings to the 2021 report. The 2021 report also found women's bylines accounted for less than half (43 per cent) of front-page stories. Both reports between mastheads (Price and Williams, 2021: 18) as Figure 10 shows.

In our sample of all front-page bylines, the lowest percentage of women's bylines was nine per cent in Darwin's daily tabloid, *NT News*, as compared to the more gender equal (46 per cent) of women's bylines that featured on the front-pages of Brisbane's *Courier Mail* and Sydney's *Daily Telegraph*.

Figure 11:

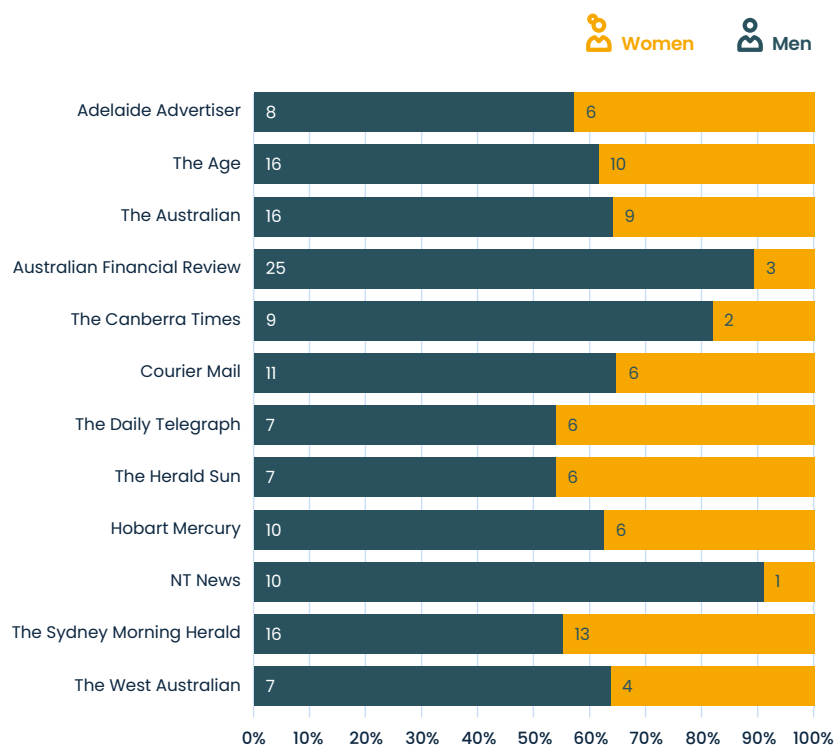
Front-page authors by gender



Source: Authors using Factiva and Newsbank (N=200 total front-page stories; N=218 bylines) 4–9th March 2024.

Figure 12:

Front-page bylines by publication (count and percentage)



Source: Authors using front-page masthead data from Factiva and Newsbank (N=200), 4–9th March 2024.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Front-page bylines by topic

Across our dataset, tabloids were more likely to include women’s bylines on their front pages, a result likely shaped by the topic areas featured in these publications, which often featured front-page reporting on crime, disasters and accidents, arts and culture and lifestyle. But also, perhaps due to a concerted effort by News Corp to lift the visibility and prominence of women reporters (see Interviews: Kerry Warren).

The tabloid exception was in sports reporting; this topic area featured prominently on tabloid front pages and these stories were overwhelmingly written by men. Meanwhile, the national broadsheet-styled mastheads – *the Australian* and *The Australian Financial Review* – focused their front pages on foreign relations and business. Unsurprisingly, given earlier findings, these stories were predominantly written by men.

These results broadly align with existing and gendered understandings of the news topics associated with men and women and of the gendered nature of journalism. Topics like crime and disasters are usually assigned to more junior journalists who cover daily news reporting and are considered less prestigious than specialist rounds or beats such as politics, which is at the top of the organisational hierarchy (Magin and Maurer, 2019).

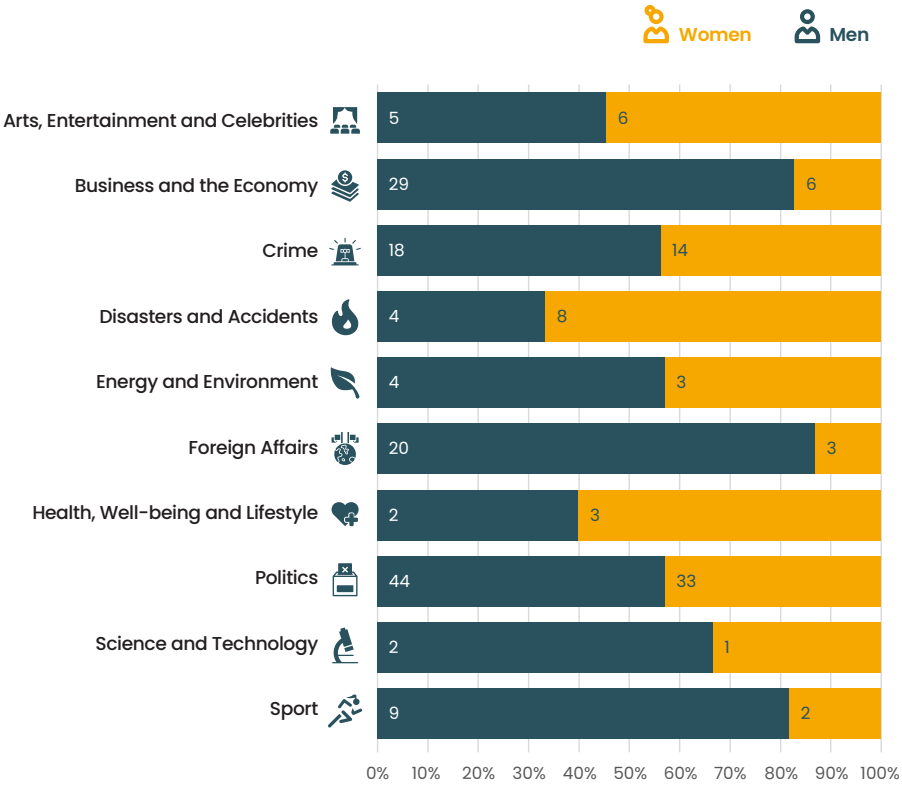
Who has first author position on front-page articles?

We also reviewed who was named first in front-page articles that included both men and women’s bylines. First author position typically denotes workload distribution between authors and carries greater status.

Despite anticipating that men would be more likely to receive top billing, our findings showed that men and women were equally likely to be listed first in articles featuring both men and women’s bylines. However, the number of articles with joint bylines was small, and some gender-based distinctions in topic areas aligned with our broader story genre results.

Figure 13:

Front-page by gender and topic (count and percentage)



Source: Authors using Factiva and Newsbank data (N=200), 4–9th March 2024.

“...tabloids were more likely to include women's bylines on their front pages...”

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Who gets front-page bylines tagged as 'exclusive'?

To further interrogate the relationship between gender and topic, we examined who authored front-page news articles by topic that were branded as "exclusive". The use of "exclusive" tags denotes special insights or access held by the journalist, and carries prestige as a much-vaunted "scoop" or put another way offers "Journalistic capital, the functional influence within the field of the various press outlets," (Marchetti, 2005: 7). Research shows that "competition to be first, to bring out "exclusive news", tends to be relatively weak in the social issues or educational beats," (Marchetti, 2005 :7). Increasingly as newsrooms shed staff due to financial pressures, specialised rounds have reduced or disappeared. This raises the intra-newsroom competition to belong to a beat. (Magin and Maurer, 2019: 3) add that "soft news" beats are often the first to be shed from legacy mainstream media:

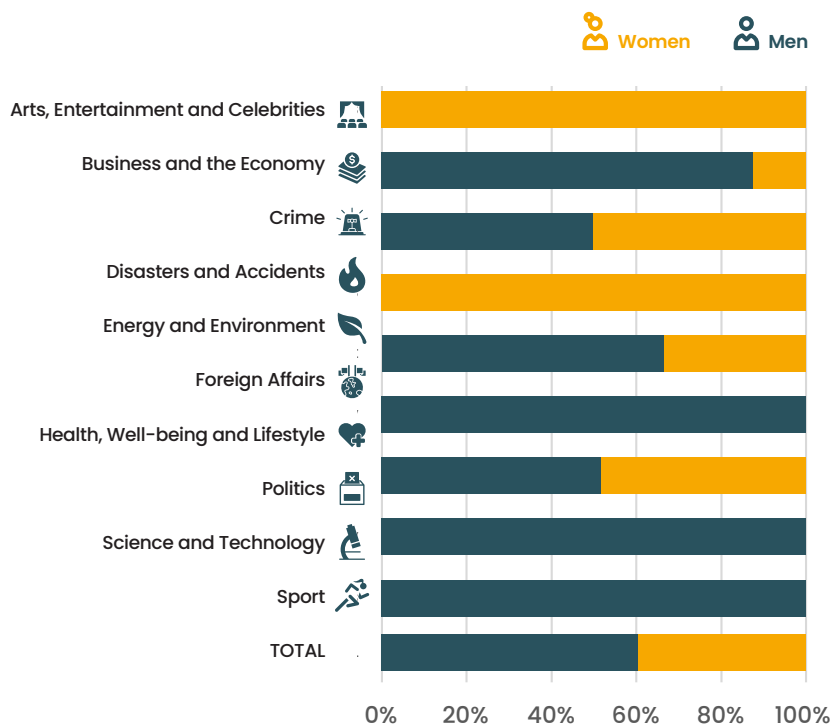
The beat structure of big-city U.S. newspapers used to include beats like arts, theater, film, music, and food in addition the "hard-news beats" such as politics, economy, or education. The smaller, "soft" beats still exist at the largest, most prestigious newspapers although they are increasingly migrating to niche online outlets.

The gendered nature of topic areas seen across all front-page articles in topics like crime and disasters are usually assigned to more junior journalists who cover daily news reporting and are considered less prestigious than specialist rounds or beats such as politics, which is at the top of the organisational hierarchy (Magin and Maurer, 2019).

The gender divides depicted in Figure 13 become more pronounced when assessing what bylines are tagged "exclusive" indicating a strong association between gender and topic and issue ownership that can be the reward of being assigned to a prestigious beat. Consistent with our overall findings, women were more likely to have authored exclusives on crime, disaster and accidents, or arts, entertainment and celebrities, and men predominantly authored exclusive front-page articles on sports, foreign relations and international security, and business and the economy.

Figure 14:

Front-page authors tagged as 'Exclusive'



Source: Authors using Factiva and Newsbank data (n=46), 4-9th March 2024.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

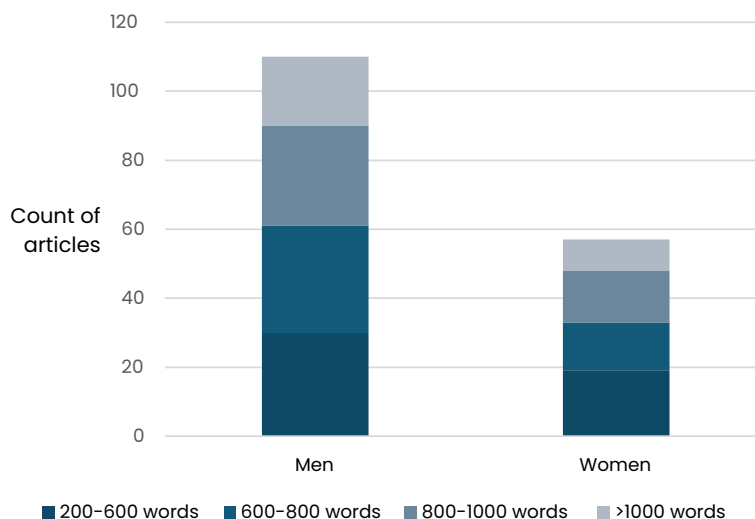
Front-page stories by article word length

Finally, we also examined story length – another measure of front-page prominence and prestige. Generally speaking, men were allocated more front-page space than women. Across our front-page dataset, women wrote the shortest articles (those between 200 and 600 words in length) while men were given more ink, so to speak, to produce longer articles (those over 1000 words).

Together, our results speak to enduring gender divides in newsrooms, where women journalists remain more likely to author short-form responsive coverage of daily events such as crime, while their men counterparts published longer-form articles on specialised areas such as business and foreign relations. **Noteworthy is that politics – a prestigious round – has similar men and women’s front-page bylines.** This is important, given the topic’s importance and prevalence on the front pages of Australian publications, but is not typical of our results in other subject areas.

Figure 15:

Length of front-page articles by gender



Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (N=200), 4-9th March 2024.

Across our front-page dataset, women wrote the shortest articles (those between 200 and 600 words in length) while men were given more ink, so to speak, to produce longer articles (those over 1000 words).

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Who gets quoted on front-page articles?

Next, we examined the gender of who was quoted in news articles. We find a gendered difference in quoted sources: men are quoted exclusively in front-page stories at double the rate of women. This is meaningful because it helps shape the framing of major events and news stories, indicating who journalists and newsrooms see and present to the public as an expert authority (Scheufele, 1999). In doing so, journalists can reinforce the source as a “primary definer” – an authoritative and credible expert on the topic area. Who is quoted in news stories helps shapes public perceptions of who is worth listening to on a given issue. In short, if news articles consistently utilise men sources, they reinforce societal understandings of men as experts and analysts, and contribute to the prominence of male experts within their fields.

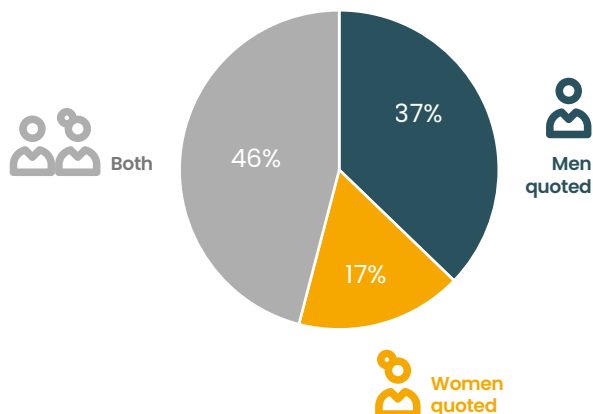
Initial analysis showed that men were quoted more than twice as often in front-page news articles. However, some articles included multiple quotes from both men and women sources. To understand influence within a story, we analysed who was quoted first, as this hierarchical placement reflects the inverted pyramid structure of news reporting (Walters, 2017). Even when opposing or diverging views are presented within the article, the hierarchical structure of who is quoted first arguably influences the framing and agenda-setting functions of news stories.

We found consistency across our front-page analyses of men and women sources (see Figure 16 and 17). Our findings showed that the gender distribution of sources quoted first and those quoted exclusively were almost identical, despite these analyses being conducted on different subsets of our dataset.

With cautious comparison over past years, the latest result indicates a fall in the use of authoritative women’s voices as the first source quoted within page one stories. The 2021 report recorded 31 per cent of quotes were attributed to women, a decline from the 2019 report’s finding of 34 per cent of women (Price and Williams, 2021: 6; Price and Payne 2019: 6) and falling again to 29 per cent in the 2024 findings.

Figure 16:

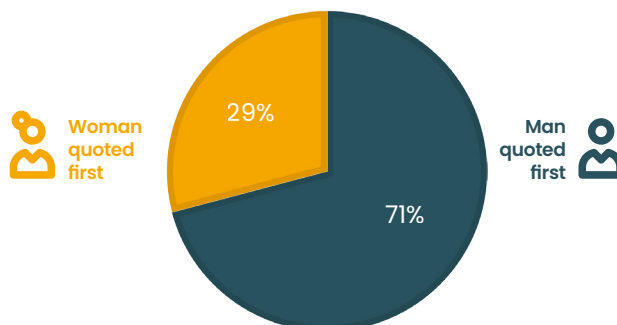
Front-page stories and gender of quoted sources



Source: Authors using Factiva and Newsbank data (n=171 articles), 4–9th March 2024.

Figure 17:

Gender of the first quoted source in front-page articles



Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (n=79 articles that quoted both men and women), 4–9th March 2024. Notes: Excludes articles that quoted only men or only women sources. However, including such articles has minimal impact on the results. When these articles are included, 31 per cent quoted a woman first, while 69 per cent quoted a man first.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Bylines on front pages:
who quotes whom?

Our review of the relationship between the gender of the story byline and the gender of quoted sources reveals that women were significantly more likely to quote other women compared to male journalists. Not only were women authors more likely to feature women as sources in their stories but they were more likely to quote women first in the story, and more than twice as likely to quote women exclusively in the story (see Figure 18).

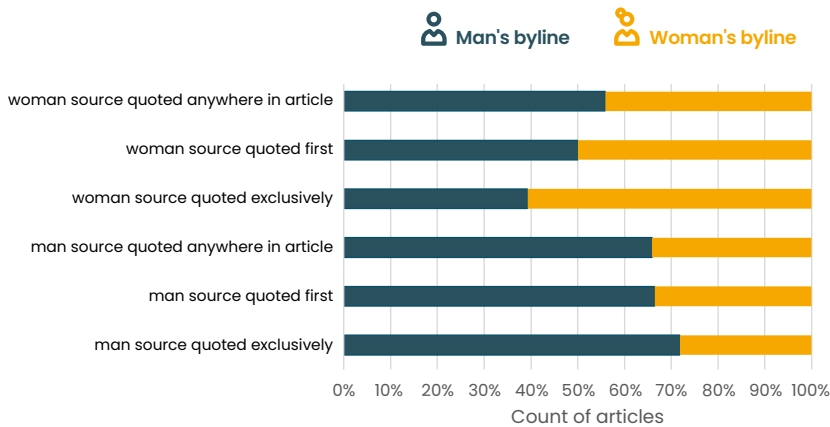
Despite these findings, men were more frequently quoted first and/or exclusively. Even when men feature women as quoted sources, these sources were often not given prominent placement in the story. Overall, men as sources dominate front-page coverage and arguably this prominence enables these men to be influential in the framing of the issues in the story, reflecting consistent patterns observed in previous *Women for Media* reports.

Examining the gender of sources
by publication

Examining the gender of sources by publication, the pattern that emerges is similar to the results in the analyses of front-page bylines and gender (see Figure 19). Daily tabloids such as the *NT News*, *The West Australian* and the *Courier Mail* included more quotes from women sources than men in their front-page articles. Men sources were overwhelmingly featured in broadsheet-styled mastheads such as the front pages of the *Australian Financial Review*, the *Australian*, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *Herald*, and *The Age*.

Figure 18:

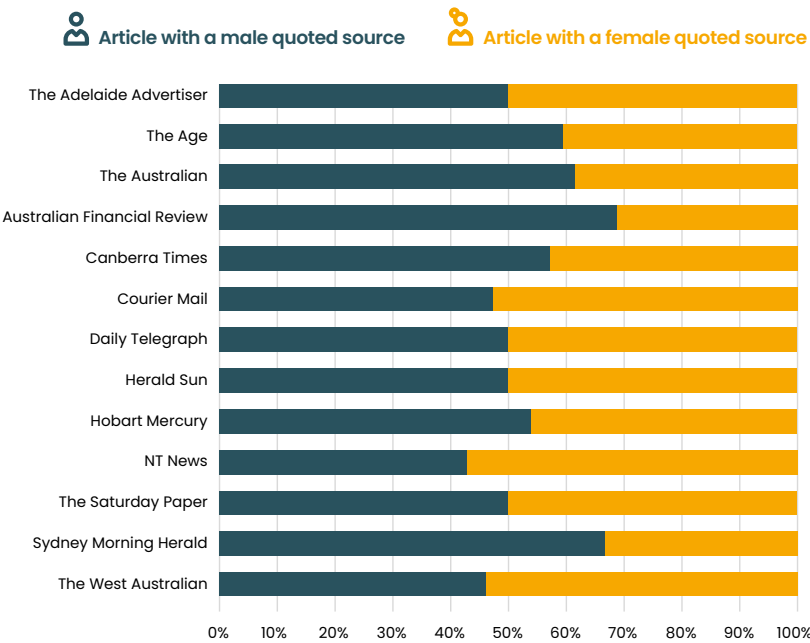
Authors on front pages: Who quotes whom?



Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (n=122 articles with men's bylines that include sources and n=76 articles with woman's bylines that include sources), 4-9th March 2024.

Figure 19:

Publications and the gender of quoted sources in their front-page stories



Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (n=171), 4-9th March 2024.

Daily tabloids... included more quotes from women sources than men in their front-page articles. Men sources were overwhelmingly featured in broadsheet-styled mastheads...

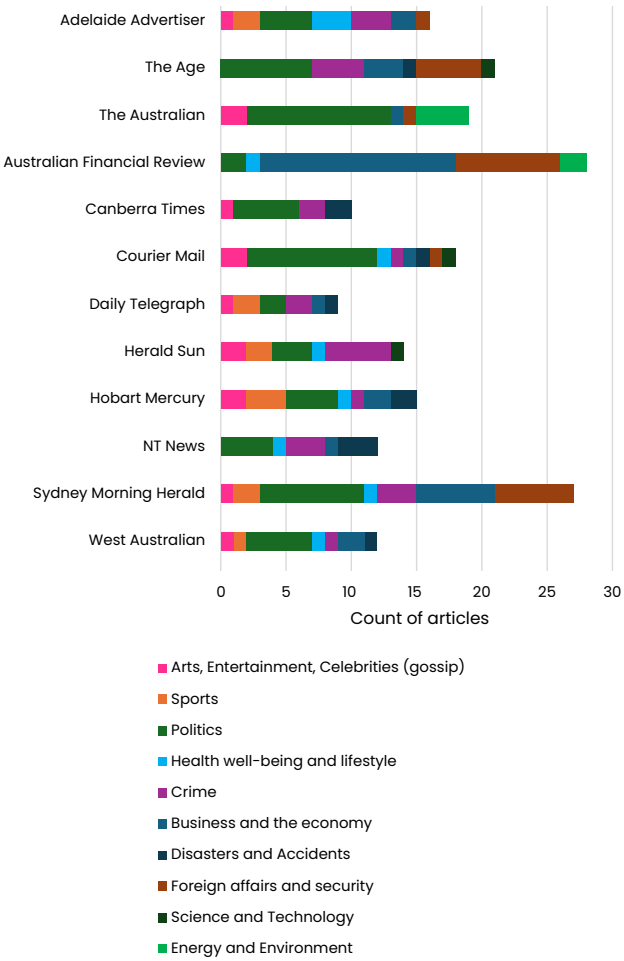
RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Examining the gender of sources by topic

The differences in sources quoted by different mastheads seem to be linked to the topics most commonly featured on their front pages, similar to our findings on front-page bylines. Women were more likely to be quoted as a source on “soft” news (i.e. arts, entertainment, etc) while men were more often sources for stories about traditionally “hard” news areas such as foreign relations, business and the economy, or sport. National broadsheet-styled publications were far more likely to feature front-page articles on topic areas such as foreign relations, business or energy and environment. State-based tabloids were more likely to feature articles on crime, disasters and accidents, and arts, entertainment and celebrities (see Figure 20).

Figure 20:

Topics of front-page articles by masthead



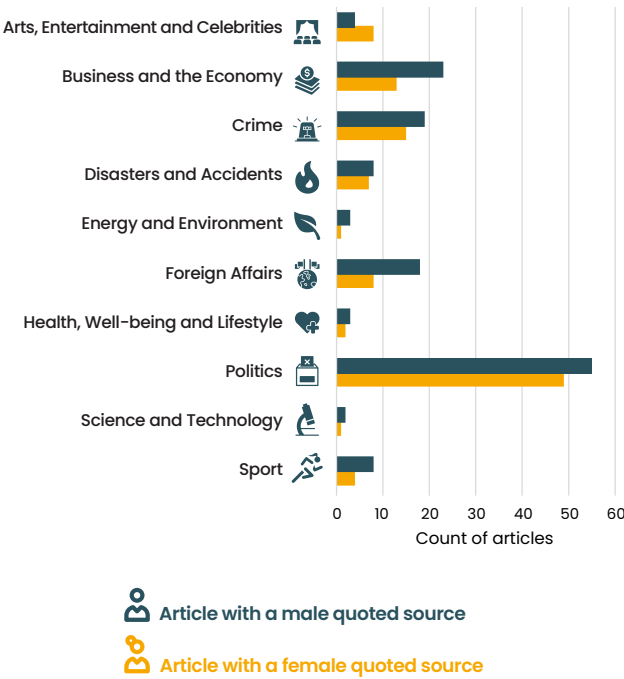
Source: Authors. Notes, N=200 articles, 4–9th March 2024.

Politics was the most common front-page topic with stories about politicians' activities, policy announcements, and events. Our analysis showed nearly equal quotes from men and women (at 47 per cent) in political stories. In all other topic areas except the arts and entertainment, men were quoted more often than woman.

Our analysis showed nearly equal quotes from men and women (at 47%) in political stories. In all other topic areas except the arts and entertainment, men were quoted more often than woman.

Figure 21:

Gender of quoted sources in front-page articles by topic



Source: Authors using Factiva and Newsbank (n=171), 4–9th March 2024.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Who is quoted? And how often?

Next, we examine who is quoted and how often. For instance, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is one unique source, but is often quoted. We report both the unique number of men and women sources and also the total number of quotes attributed to each. The unique count provides nuance to the analysis by minimising the impact of frequently quoted individuals, giving a clearer view of the range of men and women sources. By including both unique and total counts, our measure captures a clearer picture of gender representation in front-page articles.

First, looking at total quoted sources, a small group of male politicians, both domestic and international, police, crime victims and agents of the law were frequently quoted in front-page articles. This was partly due to coverage of Ballarat woman, Samantha Murphy's death, which heavily quoted her husband, Michael Murphy, and Victoria Police Commissioner Shane Patton (see Figure 22). Front-page quotes from politicians were usually dictated by the article's topic and newsworthiness rather than the journalist.

This measure highlights how events and stories determine who gets quoted in news articles and shapes our understanding of those events. However, it's important to note that far fewer individual women were quoted across multiple stories.

Even so, the number of quotes from women may be inflated by article duplication across mastheads and influenced by the events covered during the week. However, the data still shows that women are quoted less often in front-page stories. This gender gap is especially pronounced in state politics, which dominated front-page coverage and contributed to the prevalence of male politicians in our analysis. This disparity is likely due to the lower number of women in senior public roles.

Figure 22:

Front pages including articles on the search for Samantha Murphy and the subsequent murder charges related to her disappearance, 4-9 March.



Source: NewsBank.

charged with murder over her disappearance.

Victoria Police Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said investigators allege a 22-year-old man deliberately attacked Murphy, 51, at Mount Clear, on Ballarat's southern fringe, on February 4 – the day she vanished on a morning run in the area known as Canadian Forest.

The Murphy family did not know the accused, Patton said.

The man, from Mount Clear, appeared in Ballarat Magistrates' Court yesterday afternoon after his arrest early on Wednesday morning at a home in Scotsburn – a

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Gender divides also persist in cases where journalists have more discretion in choosing sources. This is particularly evident with academics, analysts, and researchers who are quoted for their expertise. The preference to quote male professionals likely reflects and reinforces societal norms that views men as experts. In contrast, women were more often quoted as members of the public, creatives, activists, and advocates, confining women to domestic, cultural, and marginal public roles (see Figure 23).

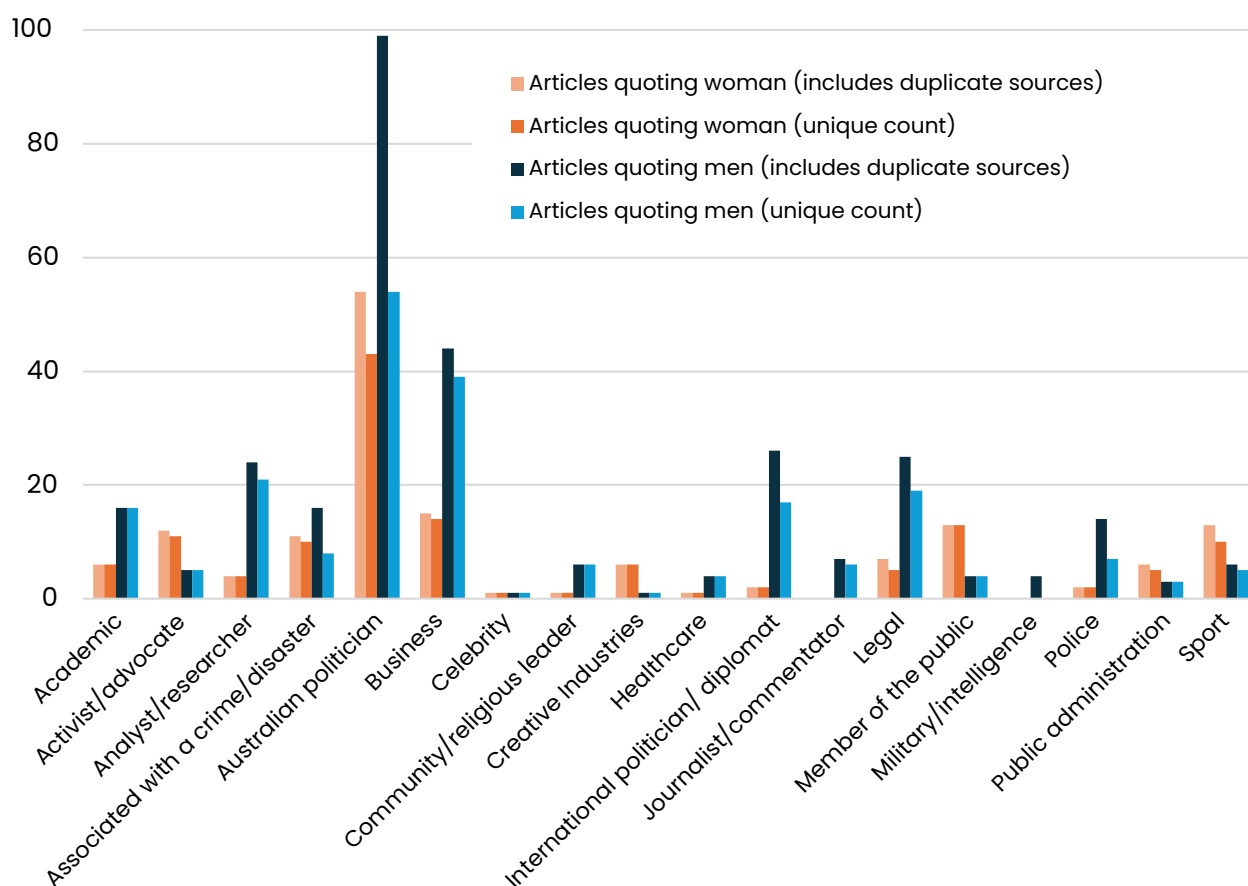
Australian politicians were the most commonly quoted profession, unsurprising given the prevalence of front-page articles about politics. Tellingly, among the 19 sources quoted in three or more front-page articles, only four were women. Their inclusion was generally in “soft-news” stories such as the interview with jockey Jamie Kah, which featured across multiple mastheads. In other cases, women were quoted more for their proximity to news events than for their expertise or opinions. For instance, WA Senator Linda Reynolds was quoted not for her political expertise but primarily regarding her defamation proceedings against Brittany Higgins and her response to Higgins’ hospital visit, as reported by Perth tabloid *The West Australian*, (see inset).



Source: Front page of *The West Australian* featuring Brittany Higgins’ hospital visit, Thursday 7 March.

Figure 23:

Professions of quoted sources from front-page articles



Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (n=171 articles that included quoted sources), 4–9th March 2024.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Table 3 shows men were frequently quoted for their professional perspectives, expertise, or opinions on events and policies. While our sample is limited to a week of front-page coverage, men's visibility as news sources compared to women's, and the media's deference to them as experts or powerful figures, is a consistent theme in the Australian news media.

Table 3:

Individuals quoted three or more times across front-page news articles, 4-9 March 2024

Gender	Name	Title	Professional area	Article Count
M	Anthony Albanese	Prime Minister of Australia	Politics	14
M	Jim Chalmers	Federal Treasurer	Politics	8
M	Michael (Mick) Murphy	Husband of deceased	Associated with a crime or disaster	8
M	Shane Patton	Chief Commissioner of Victoria Police	Police	7
M	Anwar Ibrahim	Prime Minister of Malaysia	Politics (International)	5
M	James Johnson	CEO of Football Australia	Business	5
M	Jeremy Rockcliff	Premier of Tasmania	Politics	5
M	Steven Miles	Premier of Queensland	Politics	5
M	Lee Hsien Loong	Senior Minister of Singapore	Politics (International)	4
W	Linda Reynolds	Senator for West Australia	Politics	4
M	Tony Burke	Minister for Home Affairs	Politics	4
M	Guy Barnett	Minister for Resources of Tasmania	Politics	3
W	Jamie Kah	Jockey	Sport	3
M	Mark Butler	Minister for Health and Aged Care	Politics	3
W	Michelle Mykytowycz	Victorian Magistrate	Law	3
W	Penny Wong	Foreign Minister	Politics	3
M	Peter Malinauskas	Premier of South Australia	Politics	3
M	Shane Drumgold	Former ACT director of public prosecutions	Law	3
M	Stephen Kaye	ACT Supreme Court Judge	Law	3

Source: Authors using data from Factiva and Newsbank (N=171), 4-9th March 2024.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Who writes commentary and opinion articles? (Under the microscope)

Just as we have examined the front pages of news publications, the Top Billing analysis now examines who writes opinion articles and who is quoted in them. Commentary and opinion pieces indicate whose opinion, analysis and expertise is valued by news media publications. Opinion articles set the agenda for both the public and elites, and their authors' perspectives shape and frame the ensuing discussion and analysis (Coppock, Ekins, & Kirby, 2018; Sommer & Maycroft, 2008). This cultural value and influence have historically and globally been more commonly associated with men, and opinion articles are among the most gendered types of news content published (North, 2016).

To construct a week-long Commentary and Opinion dataset, we retrieved all articles from the selected mastheads used in the front-page analysis from the online news media repository Factiva for the first week of March 2024 (see Appendix A3 for full details). This provided a sample of 260 articles.

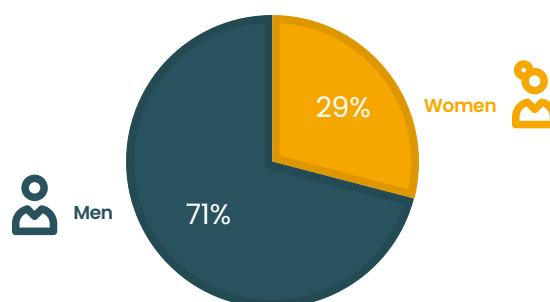
March was chosen for consistency as it overlaps with our wider analysis. The major news and events of the week included International Women's Day; Australian Soccer star Sam Kerr's charge for racial harassment in the UK, and Foreign Minister Penny Wong's attendance at the ASEAN summit.

Despite these events, more than two thirds of opinion articles (71 per cent) were written by men (see Figure 24). Women opinion article writers accounted for only 29 per cent of pieces in our dataset.

Previous editions of the *Women for Media* report found that women accounted for 35 per cent of opinion bylines in 2021, down from 38 per cent in 2019.⁶ Although there have been some variations in the timeframe and scope of data collection between reports, our results show a slow decline in the number of women writing opinion pieces across Australian mastheads. Price and Payne (2021) observed that "while women were trusted to report the information, they were not trusted to interpret it".

Figure 24:

Men and women's op-ed bylines (%)

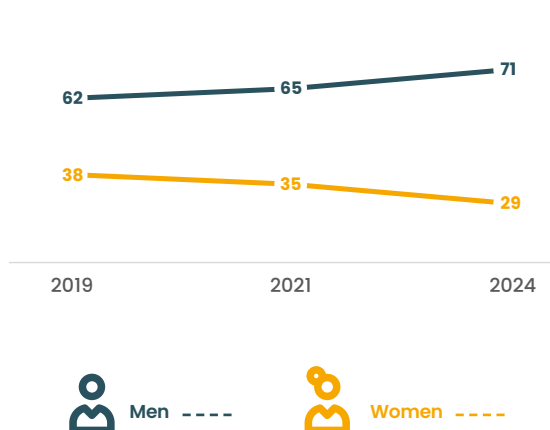


Source: Authors using Factiva, Saturday Paper and Newsbank data; Notes, N=260

"Our results show a slow decline in the number of women writing opinion pieces across Australian mastheads."

Figure 25:

Gender of masthead opinion authors 2019 - 2024 (%)



Sources: Authors from 2021 *Women for Media* Report: 'Take the Next Steps' (Price and Williams 2021), 2019 *Women for Media* report: 'You can't be what you can't see' (Price and Payne 2019), and Commentary and Opinion dataset using Factiva, News Bank and Saturday Paper data.

⁶ Jenna Price and Anne Maree Payne (2019). *2019 Women for Media Report: 'You can't be what you can't see'*. Women's Leadership Institute of Australia (WLIA) and the Trawalla Foundation, <https://wlia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/2019-Women-for-Media-Report.pdf>;

Jenna Price and Blair Williams (2021). *2021 Women for Media Report: Take the Next Steps*. Women's Leadership Institute of Australia (WLIA) and the Trawalla Foundation, <https://wlia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/2021-Women-for-Media-Report-revised.pdf>.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

There were notable quantum differences between publications in men’s and women’s opinion articles. For the selected week, this ranged from the majority-male authorship of the Northern Territory’s daily tabloid, the *NT News*, to the near-parity of Victorian daily tabloid the *Herald Sun* and the Australian Capital Territory’s *The Canberra Times* and the slight majority of Perth’s daily tabloid, *The Western Australian* (see Figure 26). Note that the *Herald Sun* and *Canberra Times* also had near parity with front-page coverage – suggesting a concerted effort at these publications to achieve gender parity in story coverage.

Opinion and Commentary Topics

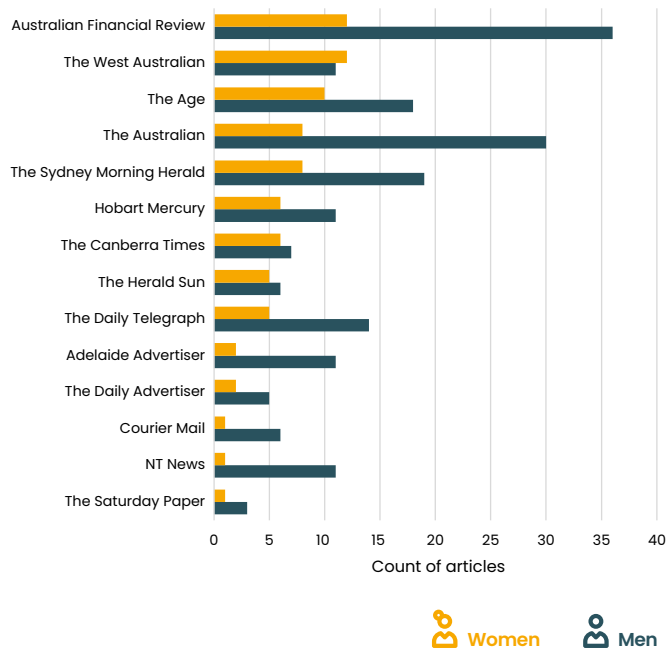
Each publication had preferred topic areas, and none published commentaries across all of the ten categories that we are studying. Politics was the most favoured topic area for opinion articles irrespective of the author’s gender. The second top topic for men’s opinions was foreign relations. For women, it was health, well-being and lifestyle – the only topic area where the author was more likely to be a woman. This seems to be a remnant of an era when topics were strongly gendered, with woman opining on “soft news” topics such as lifestyle and gossip (North, 2016).

Opinion pieces written by women in this topic area included pieces such as Bella Westaway’s ‘I was a ‘high achiever’ – until I started university’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 March: 23) or Kellie Floyd’s ‘Nine days, no screens: a family holiday turned digital detox’ (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 March: 18). These articles were syndicated in Nine’s Sydney and Melbourne dailies *The Age* and *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Opinion pieces on foreign relations were only authored by men in three mastheads *Sydney Morning Herald*, News Corp’s tabloid *Courier Mail* and its South Australian tabloid, the *Adelaide Advertiser*. While still falling short of gender equality across its opinion bylines, the *Australian Financial Review*’s inclusion of perspectives from both in-house and external women on international politics was noteworthy. Finally, *The Canberra Times* stands out as the only publication in which women exclusively authored opinion articles discussing foreign relations.

Figure 26:

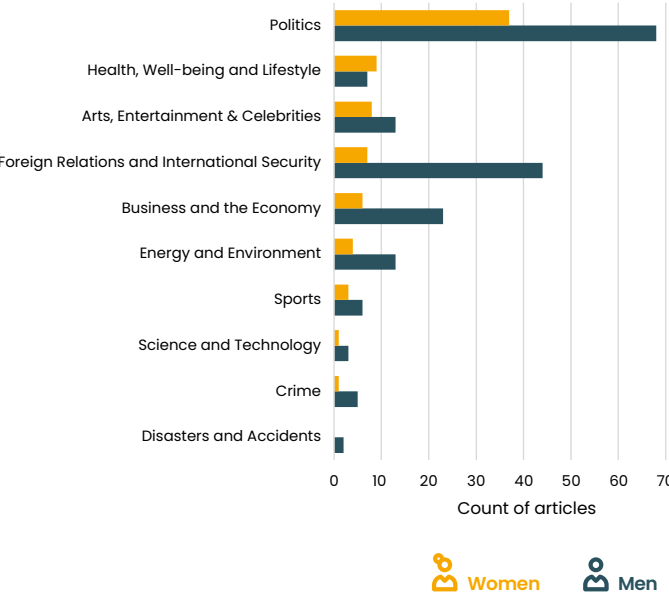
Gender of opinion authors by masthead



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, N=260.

Figure 27:

Opinion author gender by article topic



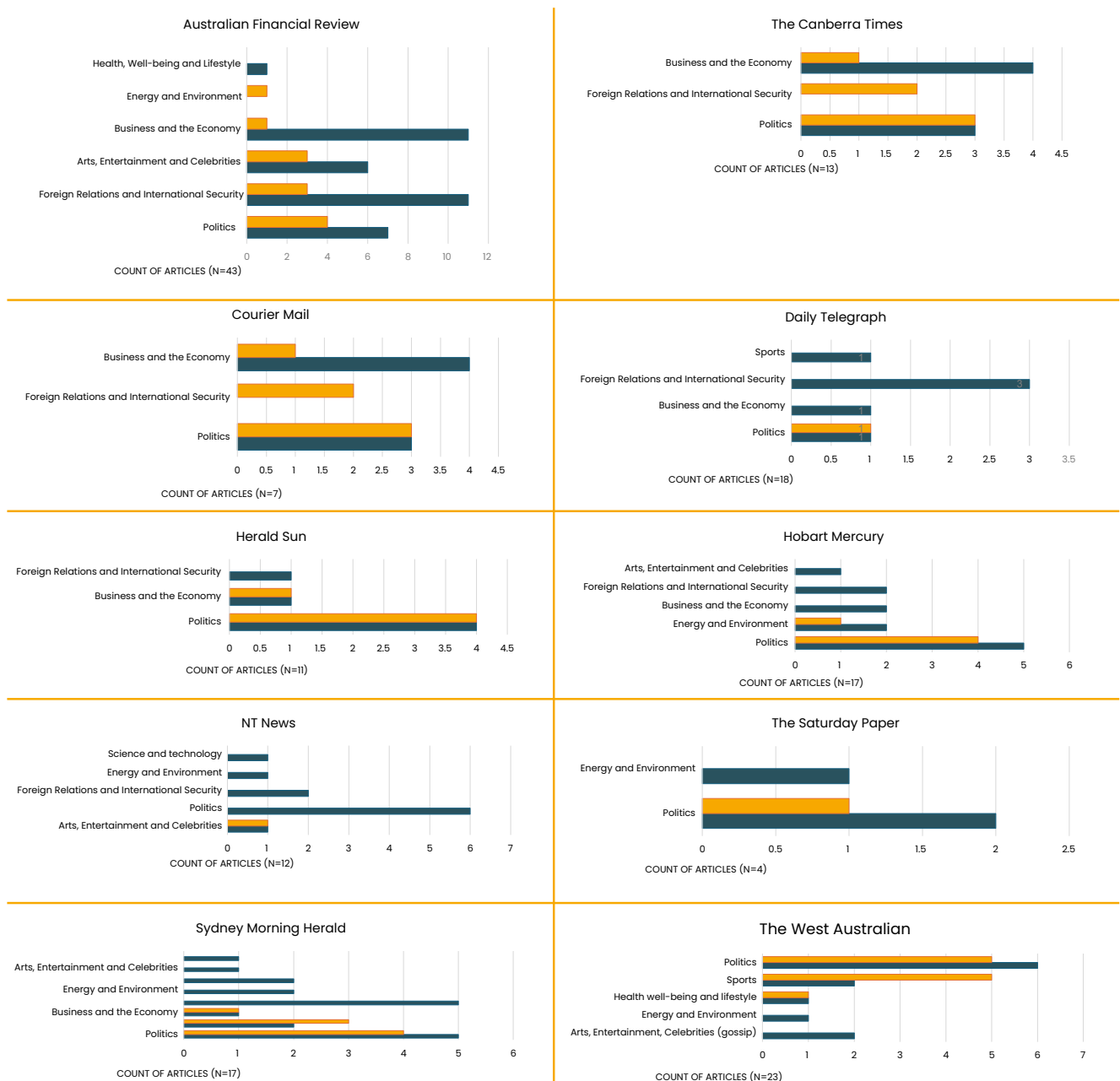
Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, N=260.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

We have singled out the gender of authors on foreign relations and health, well-being and lifestyle because of the prominence of these topics in the dataset and the gendered stereotypes associated with these areas. The findings indicate to us that despite gains in some historically gendered topics such as politics or sport, the persistent gendering of topics continues to shape who is considered an expert. For other topics gender gaps see Figure 28.

Figure 28:

Opinion article topics by gender for each masthead



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, N=260.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Who quotes whom and on what topic?

Across the dataset, men were quoted frequently, accounting for 78 per cent of the quoted sources, and 88 per cent of all articles containing quotes. However, the opinion writers' own gender influences the likelihood of women being quoted in an opinion article. Women were less likely to use quotes overall, but when they did, they were more likely to quote women than were their male counterparts – in line with previous research on the relationship between author and source gender (Armstrong, 2004). This was likely shaped by differences in the topics men and women write about, but other elements, such as whether the author is on staff (in-house) or external, may play a role.

Of the articles written by women, 16 exclusively quoted men, while eight exclusively quoted women. In comparison, women were the exclusive sources for seven stories authored by men – although four were quotes of soccer player Sam Kerr referring to a British police officer as a 'stupid white bastard'. Men were the *only* sources quoted in 59 articles written by men.

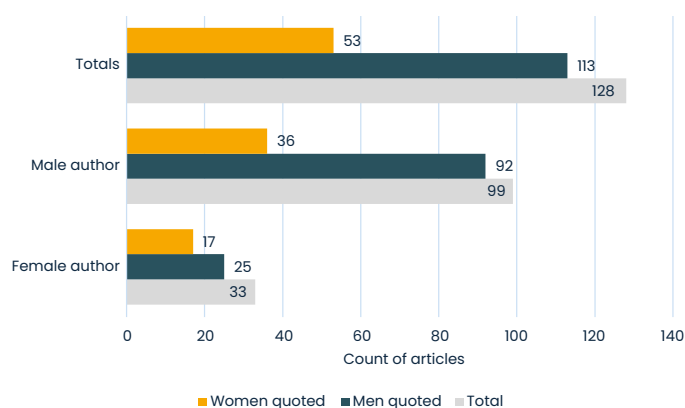
Analysis by publication showed that these disparities were not consistent across mastheads. Many approached or achieved gender parity in the number of articles quoting men compared to women. *The Herald Sun*, in particular, stands out as it was the only publication that included more commentary quoting women than men.

With some cautious comparison given changes to methodology, women appear to have made minor gains in certain topic areas such as politics since the last report, reflected in the sources quoted in opinion pieces. In the 2024 report, women sources account for 36.5 per cent of those quoted in politics opinion articles, and as discussed above, 33 per cent of those quoted in politics front-page pieces. With caution, given the methodological differences, this represents an increase from 2021, in which women accounted for 28 per cent of indirect sources and 32 per cent of direct sources used in politics articles (Price & Williams 2022: 17).

This can likely be attributed to the record high number of women in parliament and cabinet, and women ministers holding prominent portfolios such as foreign affairs and finance (Hough, 2022). This trend was not replicated across other topic areas such as energy and environment, science and technology or business.

Figure 29:

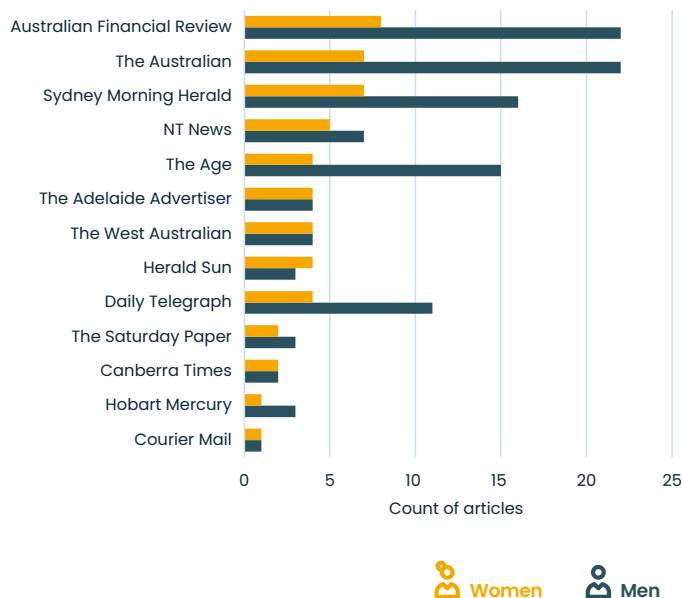
Comparing gender of quoted source by author gender



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, Notes: n=128, not all articles quote a source.

Figure 30:

Gender of source in opinion articles by masthead



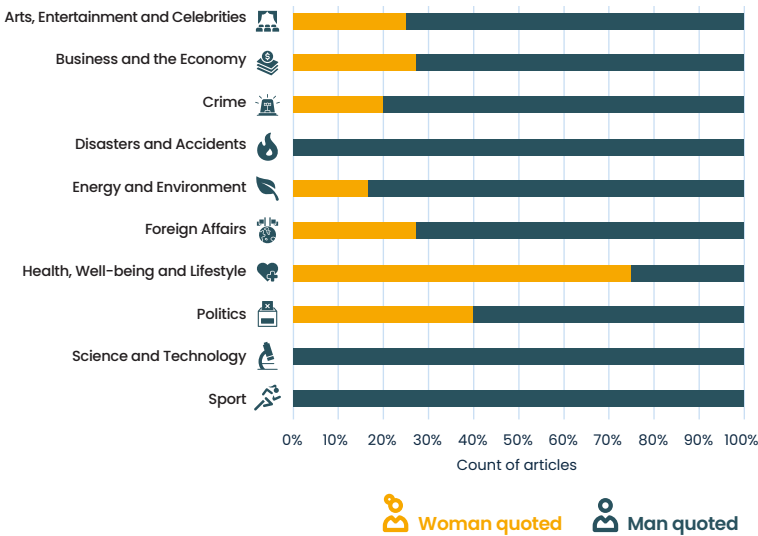
Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, n=128.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Reviewing the top eight men and women quoted in opinion articles, quotes were most likely to come from politicians and, in most cases, frontbenchers, such as Sussan Ley (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party) or Chris Bowen (Minister for Climate Change and Energy). Beyond parliament, of particular note was the business sector and the growing number of women taking up leadership or spokesperson roles in Australia (Duncan, Mavisakalyan, and Vu, 2023). This finding highlights the role that institutions such as political parties and businesses have in contributing toward the visibility of women in public and political leadership. Ultimately, the number of women available or suitable to be quoted on politics or business often depends in large part on the number of women who hold prominent positions within these institutions.

Figure 31:



Source gender by article topic



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, n=128.

Table 4:

Top 8 most quoted men and women in sample

	Woman quoted	Profession	Story Count		Man quoted	Profession	Story Count
	Sam Kerr (Soccer player) Sportsperson	Sport	8		Donald Trump Former US President	Politics	9
	Sussan Ley MP Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party	Politics	6		Anthony Albanese Prime Minister	Politics	8
	Michelle Rowland (Labor Party) Minister for Communications	Politics	5		Chris Bowen Minister for Climate Change and Energy	Politics	5
	Minister Penny Wong (Labor Party) Minister for Foreign Affairs	Politics	3		Paul Keating Former Prime Minister	Politics	5
	Bisan Owda Journalist and activist	Media	2		Stephen Jones Assistant Treasurer	Politics	5
	Eve Ensler Playwright	Arts	2		Tony Kendall Managing Director, Australian Community Media	Media	5
	Sally Dowling NSW Director of Public Prosecutions	Law	2		Jim Chalmers Treasurer	Politics	4

Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, n=203.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Quoted source’s professions

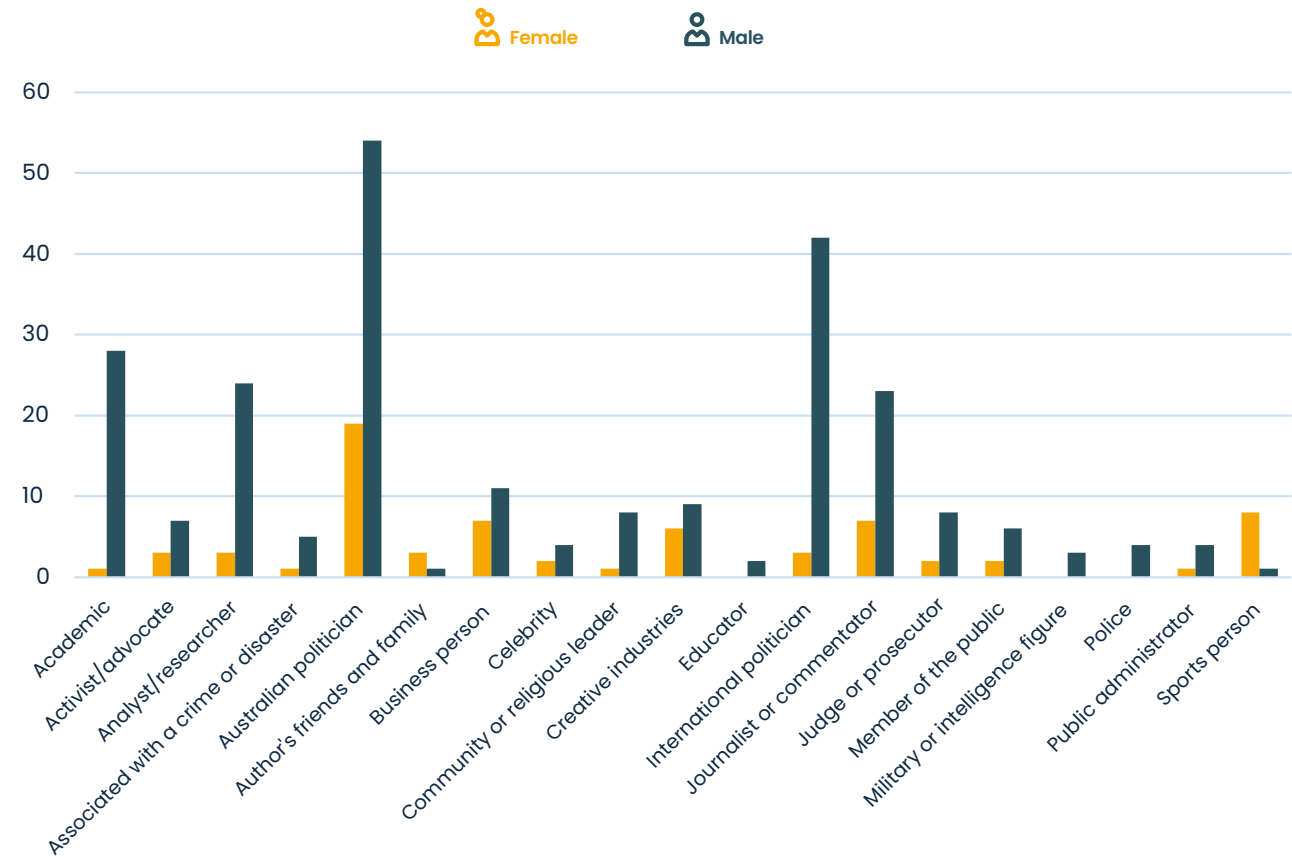
While these are positive changes for gender representation in the media, a common difficulty in measuring gender parity in media using quotes is that who is quoted is shaped primarily by who holds important roles in society, such as Ministers or CEOs. To address this, we analysed the professions of those quoted, to garner deeper insights into who is viewed as a credible ‘expert source’ – someone who is quoted for their subject matter expertise, analysis and opinions, not just the position they hold. From this analysis, women were far more likely to be quoted when their expertise was drawn from their lived experiences, whether personal or professional. In particular, women artists or activists were well represented in our dataset, speaking about their own careers or lives – a persistent trend globally (Macharia et al., 2015).

Men dominated the professions of academics and analysts. The overwhelming number of men quoted as expert sources here reinforces our social understanding of this authoritative role as typically masculine and may contribute to men’s prominence and opportunities for promotion in their fields.

Unlike quotes from those holding particular roles, authors have more freedom in their choice of expert perspectives. These results are, therefore illuminating, as they appear to be within the author’s control. More optimistically, this should also make the issue rectifiable, and we urge authors to consider the issue of gender equality in opinion formation when drawing on experts.

Figure 32:

Profession of quoted source by gender



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, n=313. The count is of articles, so sources quoted in multiple articles are counted once for each article.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Opinion article word length and byline (gender)

The lengths of opinion pieces written by men and women varied substantially and again, as in the findings on front pages, men occupy more space on these premium pages. Men were more likely to get the longest opinion articles, and women were slightly over-represented as the authors of mid-length 600 to 800-word pieces typically of tabloid opinion articles. Two-thirds of the men writing opinion articles between 200 and 600 words were in-house authors. Digging deeper, we find that these pieces were often short daily updates or news commentary blogs, such as NewsCorps’ Tom Minnear’s updates from the US campaign trail. Women were not accorded the same degree of privilege.

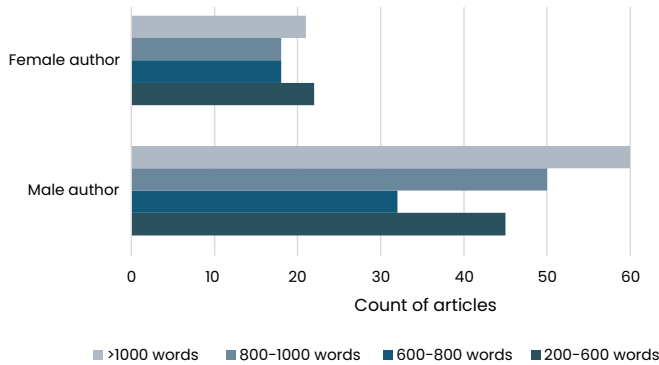
In-house authors were more likely to write both the shortest and longest articles. Articles between 200 to 600-words (55 per cent) and those over 1000 words (40 per cent) followed this pattern. Women’s articles with wordcounts between 600 and 800 were more likely to be external authors (66 per cent), as were those with wordcounts between 800 to 1000 (71 per cent). These longer articles are typically found in broadsheet-styled papers’ opinion sections.

In-house and external opinion authors

A higher proportion of women authors were external compared to men, accounting for more than half of women’s opinion pieces. This was likely influenced by International Women’s Day (IWD) and opinion editors seeking reflection from prominent women on women’s roles in contemporary Australian society. Indeed, articles discussing women’s issues accounted for 22 per cent of the commentary articles published by external women. We also found that current or former women politicians such as Senator Tammy Tyrell (Independent), former Melbourne Lord Mayor Sally Capp, Senator Deborah O’Neill (Australian Labor Party) and former Victorian Attorney-General Jill Hennessy (Australian Labor Party) accounted for one quarter (25 per cent) of unique external authors. In particular, many Tasmanian state politicians were included, which is unsurprising given that the studied week was in the lead up to the Tasmanian state election.

Figure 33:

Opinion article length by author gender

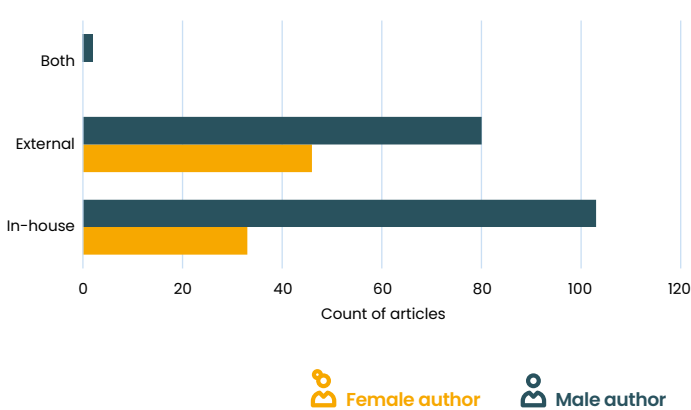


Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, N=260.

The lengths of opinion pieces written by men and women varied substantially and again, as in the findings on front pages, men occupy more space on these premium pages.

Figure 34:

In-house vs external opinion authors by gender.



Source: Authors using Commentary and Opinion dataset built using Factiva data, N=260.

RESULTS: TOP BILLING

Our analysis of the opinion page reveals a complex picture regarding the influence of gender on opinion articles. Men continue to dominate as in-house opinion writers, but there is a notable trend of a higher proportion of external women journalists contributing compared to their in-house counterparts. This is promising, as it suggests that external women are valued for their credibility and expertise. From a gender equality standpoint, it is encouraging to see more women represented in this space.

However, it's important to note that our data might be skewed due to the impact of IWD, which could have led to a higher representation of external women authors than usual. This suggests a need for further investigation into this trend.

Conversely, women journalists employed at their respective mastheads still face challenges accessing these prominent opinion pages compared to their male colleagues. Editors should consider providing more opportunities for their in-house women writers to contribute to these premium agenda-setting sections.

Our analysis of front-page and opinion sections reveals persistent gender disparities in journalism, with men dominating these prestigious spaces.

Top Billing Summary

Our analysis of front-page and opinion sections reveals persistent gender disparities in journalism, with men dominating these prestigious spaces. In response to the report's second research question, **How Are Women Represented as Sources on Premium News Pages Compared to Men?** we find that men not only secure the majority of bylines, exclusive taglines, and opinion pieces, but are also more frequently quoted than women. Furthermore, story topics often reflect entrenched gender biases: while both genders write extensively on politics, men are disproportionately represented in stories about foreign relations and business, whereas women are more likely to cover health, well-being, and lifestyle topics, particularly those requiring a "lived experience" or personal perspective. This trend extends to who is perceived as an expert and quoted, underscoring a long-standing gender difference in media coverage. Despite the influence of International Women's Day coverage in the study, which increased the proportion of women quoted, a significant gender gap was detected on page one and in opinion and commentary sections. These findings reflect a long-held status quo in Australian media coverage and are consistent with past Women for Media reports. It may also reflect author-source relationships, which can become insular by promoting the same voices and reducing pluralism of perspectives in news (Magin and Maurer, 2019)—in this case, diversity of gendered perspectives.



RESULTS

Editor Interviews

Interviews with Australian newsroom leaders offered a revealing snapshot of both the progress made and ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality in the news media sector.

There is no doubt that the modern Australian newsroom is increasingly staffed and led by women. The majority of interviewees said that Australian newsrooms had transformed in the last decade, with staffing numbers now more reflective of gender equity – something we also see in the quantitative data. Most interviewees said that there was an even split of men and women working as journalists, and increasingly that women dominated positions of editorial leadership.

Most suggested there was now little need for recruitment policies to ensure gender parity in newsrooms and that traditionally male dominated reporting roles, such as sport and politics, were increasingly staffed by women. One interviewee even suggested that journalism was an increasingly popular role for younger women, with their latest internship intake being filled by women graduates.

There were two exceptions – the Executive c-suite of most of the mainstream news organisations represented were still largely dominated by men. Secondly, the data reveals a gap between the equal representation of women in mainstream newsrooms and their actual presence across diverse reporting topics. The presence of women in editorial leadership roles appears to have not fully resolved some deeply rooted gendered divisions in various reporting areas revealed in the data – such as foreign affairs, science reporting and sport.

Interviewees' perceptions of the changing newsroom were seen in the consistent refrain that newsrooms are more "flexible", "family friendly" and do things differently than the newsrooms of the past. Many of the women leaders interviewed described starting their careers in newsrooms when overwork was once an expectation of the job, family commitments were to be hidden and "men created the narrative" of the day's news. In contemporary times, most now had family friendly policies in place, and many were committed to ensuring that women at all stages of life did not have to make a choice between work progression and family commitments.

One thing yet to change in Australian newsrooms, as acknowledged by the editor interviewees, was the protection of women and minorities from the effects of online work. Many stated no clear policy directive around social media well-being; while also acknowledging the huge impact it had on journalists, particularly women who were disproportionately targeted by online trolls. Strategies ranged from discouraging journalists from social media use, to directing journalists to organisationally provided counselling for support. The ABC has invested the most in online wellbeing,

One thing yet to change in Australian newsrooms, as acknowledged by the editor interviewees, was the protection of women and minorities from the effects of online work.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

implementing staff training and employing an online wellbeing coordinator, with future collaborations planned with social media researchers.

In terms of gender equality in news coverage, news executives had a realistic sense of the gender balance in the news coverage produced by their newsrooms. Most knew there was room for improvement, especially around representation of women from diverse backgrounds. There was a positive commitment from the executives to “be the conscience” of the newsroom by ensuring equal representation of women as experts and commentators. Only some had backed this commitment with use of analytics to track representation of women in the news, or an established editorial strategy. The *Australian Financial Review* for example, had worked hard both to track and establish long standing strategies to increase number of women commentators.

But challenges remain.

One interesting comment many interviewees made was the need to boost confidence in women to lead editorial decision-making. “Imposter syndrome”, “Women’s guilt”, and questioning whether they were generally “good enough” were consistently forwarded as institutional hurdles to overcome.

Whether these hurdles were social or organisationally created, their impact was lasting. News executives lamented the difficulties of “convincing” women of their suitability for leadership roles, of women seeing opportunities to write expert opinion as just more “mental load” and of the need to have more “mentorship” and “boosting” of women to take on editorial roles traditionally dominated by men.

Importantly, the interviewees showed determination to change long-standing gender norms, mainly from women leaders who had seen the impact on their career of the “everyday misogyny” that had marked Australian newsrooms in the past – sometimes the recent past – and the anger and determination that it not continue into the future.

The interviews conducted this year suggest that future reports will show the impact of almost a decade of women in leadership roles in Australian newsrooms. Previous concerns about gender equity in recruitment and flexible newsroom policies are likely to evolve into more complex questions about which women have a voice in news coverage and the diversity of women within the newsroom and executive leadership.

The following section presents the responses of the nine interviewees (in alphabetical order of surname) in their own words. It is important to note that 22 media executives from the Australian media were invited to participate in the 2024 *Women for Media* study, and we commend the nine who agreed to be interviewed. The Question and Answer format has been abridged for reasons of space.

The interviewees showed determination to change long-standing gender norms, mainly from women leaders who had seen the impact on their career of the “everyday misogyny” that had marked Australian newsrooms in the past.

Gemma Acton

**Director of News Operations,
Seven West Media**



Are there any programmes or policies in place that foster gender balance in the newsroom?

I think we're in quite a fortunate position as both the newsroom and our broader organisation has a really even balance. Across Seven West Media there are 48 per cent women to 52 per cent men. For the national news leadership team, it's five women and seven men. I've been at Seven West for seven years. I think this is the strongest we've seen in terms of female representation at the top.

Is recruitment something that's a focus around fostering gender diversity?

Because we are in a good position where we have equal split of men and women, we don't specifically go out looking for females. You don't want an impression that people just promoted because of their gender, and we have a team in place where everybody has got there on merit. They got there because they can prove they've got a long track record of working incredibly hard. That's so important in a newsroom because you need to act very quickly when news breaks. You just need to know that you've got a great team where you can rely on everyone to do their bit. So to me, it's very important that it's meritocracy. But luckily, it's a meritocracy which reflects a very strong gender balance.

What do you think are some of the difficulties about making change in newsroom culture to make things more equitable for women?

I think certainly the television industry has taken quite a long time to evolve. I think television itself has caught up a lot in the last five years. It's much easier now to recognise and call out unacceptable behaviour. Like many creative industries, there's been a degree of latitude given to creatives by making some connection between extreme behaviour and genius. I think the tolerance for that has shrunk dramatically in recent years, and rightly so.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

GEMMA ACTON

What do women in the newsroom tell you about some of the challenges they face?

Childcare is an issue, but I don't think that's specific to television at all. It relates to newsrooms when news breaks. If a huge story breaks in a different state unfortunately, you might not be able to just drop your child and go, even though you might be the first choice for the story. I think childcare is not a problem unique to our organisation or the industry, but just a general problem in Australia.

How do you see your role in supporting women in the newsroom?

Certainly women need champions. It's not just TV, but women can often lack confidence compared to men. So, knowing you've got the backing of a strong person in a more senior position, whether that's a female or male, is critically important.

How do you think your newsroom is doing in, in terms of representation of women as commentators, as experts, as interviewees?

Often what you see is not the journalist's first choice. Until a couple of months ago, I was the business and finance editor, and before that I was at CNBC, which is business and finance as well. Frequently I would get knocked back by women who were the most obvious choice for commentary. I think this harks back to women having less confidence. I fought really hard to get female economists and you know, female business leaders and female authors and that sort of thing. On the whole, I was disappointed. But certainly we aim and would like to see, at a minimum, an equal representation of women and men. It's just harder. I think often women set a high bar for themselves, in terms of needing to be perfect if they're going to get up there. Between the actual practicalities of running around, the mental load and the confidence aspect, I think unfortunately we get turned down. I think it's about cultivating people over time.

What challenges are specific to women in leadership, based on your experience?

You definitely need to feel respected and supported. I am in a lucky position where I very much feel that. I feel when I say things, I'm backed up. I've never, ever been contradicted in public in my current role. I have worked in other countries where that wasn't the case, it was a way of demonstrating how special and important you were, if you could shoot down a woman in public. So I think it depends on the culture of the organisation and in many cases, the country you're in. But a visible demonstration of support from more senior leaders I think is very helpful in giving authority.

What are the next challenges for women in leadership and women in the newsroom?

I think transparency is really important. I'm a believer in 'sunlight is the best disinfectant'. I think transparency of who is cited in the media, who's shown on television, is really helpful and certainly things are moving that way. We're moving in the right direction, but as much transparency over opportunities as possible will help.

"I'm a believer in 'sunlight is the best disinfectant'. I think transparency of who is cited in the media, who's shown on television, is really helpful and certainly things are moving that way."

Sophie Black

Editor in Chief, *Crikey*



Do you have any programs at Crikey to improve the gender split in the newsroom?

We're definitely aware of the gender split and we have that front of mind when we're hiring. In terms of the management, I'm editor-in-chief and Gina Rushton is our editor. So the two senior editorial roles are occupied by women, and our newest hire – reader's editor Crystal Andrews – has just joined the editorial team. Our deputy editor is male, and the rest of the reporting team of five as it currently stands are male.

Gina and I, as women in leadership positions, are acutely aware of this, as is our deputy editor Jack Callil. We're a small editorial team, and at the moment, as we're not in recruitment mode, the most effective way to turn the dial is when we commission external contributors. We tally up the numbers at the end of each month, so we're constantly keeping tabs on how we're doing with bylines. But it still skews male, definitely. So that's something that we're aware of and constantly trying to counteract by commissioning regular female writers and going after new voices but it takes a week-by-week concerted effort.

Are you instigating any policies in terms of recruitment, like quotas?

At a company level there's been a strategic focus to build and nurture a diverse workforce – and there's a 50% quota in all recruitment final shortlists for DEI candidates. Across the company, female or they/them representation in management has increased from 36% to 60%, female representation in senior leadership has increased from 25% to 44%. Our workforce working in a part-time or wholly remote hovers at around 37%. Female or they/them representation for the whole workforce remained consistent at 56% – 57%.

Do you think quotas work?

Yes, in that it's important to be consistently aware of the numbers, to push people to think creatively and proactively about hiring differently, and chasing down bylines. We aim to ensure representation from diverse voices makes up a certain percentage of

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

SOPHIE BLACK

our contributor budget for the year, we see it as a key part of our roles, but even then, it's something we constantly have to constantly revisit, and aggressively go after, and we're definitely not there yet. In terms of employees, the most effective incentive that our company Private Media offers is part-time work and hybrid work, as well as decent parental leave. I think that produces the best results in terms of getting those numbers up in terms of employees and management positions.

What is it that women tell you about that needs to change in the newsroom to make their working life more equitable?

Offering management roles that are part-time absolutely is a game changer and flexibility around coming into the office. For people with young families, especially women with young families, that's absolutely a priority.

Not just for women, but making it a front and centre concern for men as well. The company offers a decent parental leave package and are very explicit about making it a real selling point in terms of culture. One target is that fathers take all (or more) of their 12-week paternity leave entitlement.

In terms of everyday culture, we're very open about people dipping out for the school run for 15 minutes, and very often you'll see a Zoom editorial meeting with at least two babies sitting on people's laps while we're having a news meeting. That's not the done thing every day, but everyone is incredibly supportive of that. There's no resentment. It's very encouraging. As is the attitude towards flexible work and caring duties.

We're also a hybrid newsroom, spread across cities, with a mix of work from home and office time. There's also no impediment to a management position if you can't necessarily work full-time. I work part-time, and I'm editor-in-chief, so that says a lot. And it's important to say that that support doesn't just come from management, it's actually encouraged amongst the whole editorial team, younger staff members, people without kids, that acknowledgement that people have lives outside of work, other duties and concerns and interests, is very much front of mind for everyone. There's no suggestion that to say you need flexibility means you don't work hard or aren't committed enough, which I think is a really positive development over the last few years.

How do you feel Crikey performs in regard to representation of women as experts or providing commentary?

Crikey primarily focuses on the subjects of politics, media and business. These areas are still, incredibly, dominated by men, both as commentators and experts. But we also don't want to relegate female journalists and commentators purely into the 'women's issue' space. Finding female economists to regularly write for us, for example, is a constant challenge. Mostly because they are rarer and the good ones are in demand. We've had more luck in the tech space of late. And we have columnists like Rachel Withers who are straight up political columnists. We have semi-regular columnists, like the academic Wanning Sun who writes primarily on China/Australia relations. But we're constantly trying to beef up that political commentary and that deep bench of female political commentary, and the only way to really consistently do that is to create regular slots for women, rather than just relying on pitches. We have a weekly debate segment, and we explicitly try to ensure that one side is represented by a female writer each week, but we don't always succeed.

"There's also no impediment to a management position [at Crikey] if you can't necessarily work full-time. I work part-time, and I'm Editor in Chief, so that says a lot."

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SOPHIE BLACK

Looking from the present day into the future, what do you think of the next challenges for Crikey around making journalism a sustainable career for women?

It is an industry that is just in such strife at the moment and it's harder and harder work. Job cuts mean there's more to do with less. And given it's deadline driven work, traditionally you needed to be a physical presence in that newsroom and it was very anti-family and very anti-flexibility.

I think one of the most meaningful things that media companies can offer now and into the future is the opportunity to work in some sort of hybrid form so that you're offering that flexibility. And making sure that it doesn't prohibit you from a management role in a senior leadership role as well. That you're not penalised or overlooked for promotion, that flexibility doesn't need to stand in the way of making your way up through the company. That's the thing that's going to keep women in this business. It's not always the easy option, it takes commitment from management, but it absolutely creates more opportunities for women and opportunities for companies to attract really good talent.

What do you think makes the media industry difficult in particular for women?

I think it's changed radically in the newsroom that I am in now. I think starting out, it was just much more uncompromising. You worked away on personal stuff in the background and you just didn't tell anybody about it. Building family friendly work into a news culture just didn't seem possible a decade ago.

But there's still so much more to do. Any female journalism student only has to read the headlines about the bigger players in this industry over the last year to question whether it's for them. We've done a lot of reporting on those issues and it's dispiriting to say the least.

What role does leadership or management have in creating that culture?

At a management level, the focus should be about offering flexibility and opportunity and encouraging women to put their hands up for leadership positions. The more women are visible as leaders, the more embedded it becomes. At a grassroots level, it's about supporting journalists to build the confidence to own their byline, back their ideas. Mentoring matters, speaking candidly about your own experience can also really help. Modelling boundaries is also important – flexibility and hybrid work can come hand in hand with being perpetually online, and that's not sustainable either. I'm still learning this. With news, it's so easy to be completely immersed in it 24/7, and we're always talking about ways to be more explicit about being offline.

As a woman in leadership at your organisation, what challenges have you experienced?

Partly it's about changing people's minds around what women are interested in reading, and not ring-fencing things into 'women's issues' or 'women's interests'. Crikey has typically been a very male readership, but that has changed significantly over the years. But there's still work to be done to constantly interrogate what makes a Crikey story and what Crikey readers are interested in – changing those assumptions around what is simply a story for women, and what's a story for a Crikey reader.

"I think one of the most meaningful things that media companies can offer now and into the future is the opportunity to work in some sort of hybrid form so that you're offering that flexibility. And making sure that it doesn't prohibit you from a management role in a senior leadership role as well."

Fiona Dear

Director News and Current Affairs, Nine



You're new to the Director of News and Current Affairs role. What are your priorities for fostering gender equity in your newsrooms?

I've taken over at a difficult time, not just for Nine, but for commercial media in general. I think my priorities have changed, because of the time I have come in. My first priority with this team is to try and get the trust back. A lot of the trust, particularly with women in the newsroom, has been eroded. So, my first priority is to unite us, to get the trust back. And to get the respect back. That may not have been my priority if I had taken this role 12 months ago, but I think it's like any job when you walk in, you've got to meet the situation head on.

What do you think your first strategy to make this change is going to be? Is it going to be something really formal like recruitment strategy or is it more about changing something in the culture?

The first strategy is listening. I think it's really important. People want to have a voice and they want to be heard. That is my very first priority, it's to give them back their voice because a lot of people here feel like they may have lost their voice over time.

Twenty years ago, there were men in all the key seats. They controlled the narrative about what we presented to the audience every night. That has changed. There's a female EP in the 6.00pm news tonight. There's a female EP in the afternoon news. I know in my direct leadership team there are some very strong women in those positions. So I feel like I don't have to strategise to even the equation and hire more women. I don't think I need to actively recruit.

I need to better the process when positions come up so all women, regardless of their circumstances, feel like, 'I can do that job.' When Nine spoke to me about taking this job, my instant reaction was, 'Am I good enough? Can I do it?' I still think that we all suffer incredibly from self-doubt. We have to get rid of that guilt. Make our teams realise that it's not like we're being bad leaders. It's that we are being actually responsible leaders and showing the team that you can do both. You just do it to be differently.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

FIONA DEAR

How did you feel coming into that kind of environment knowing that women in the newsroom were really angry?

I was angry myself. I worked in the newsroom in that period. I was angry. I was angry as a woman who worked in that environment at that time. I was angry that I was given this opportunity and had to clean up someone else's shit. This sounds selfish, but I was angry. I have worked really, really hard in my career. And I was angry that the time that I get a dream job, there was no time for me to step back and say: 'Wow, you got that. You achieved that, that's a pretty significant thing that you just achieved'. There was no time for me to mark that moment.

I'm angry at certain people that I feel a bit cheated of that experience.

It feels selfish and maybe that's part of that whole guilt thing that women go through. But then I also felt an incredible responsibility, it is now my time to give back and to make lasting change. So that this newsroom that I adore never has to go through that again. I feel terrified, excited and great responsibility.

It's also an organisational responsibility. How do you also advocate upwards for change?

I know that my first priority is to change the culture and to change it within this newsroom, but to also change it up. I want this newsroom to be the poster child for the business. This is how you do it. And let the rest of the business follow our lead. Now we're going to show you the way of how as a business, as an organisation, this is the way you do it. They are very receptive to listening as well. The rest of the business knows we have got to listen. I think there was incredible shock at what they have learned. They want to say "now is the time to change". And, us as an organisation, we've shone the spotlight on ourselves. Now, let's lead the charge. It's going to be a slow process, but we have to change it. Simple as that. We've got no choice.

"I know that my first priority is to change the culture and to change it within this newsroom, but to also change it up. I want this newsroom to be the poster child for the business... It's going to be a slow process, but we have to change it. Simple as that. We've got no choice."

Kerri Elstub

Director, Nine Digital



In the last report, you said your priorities were gender diversity in the newsroom. Have you seen any impacts of that prioritisation?

Since we last spoke, I have become the co-chair of the Nine Gender community, so I lead a lot there, whether it's event planning, taking part in policy discussions or as an advocate. So I would say my personal interest is only increasing.

There are definitely more women in the newsroom. There are now three women in our sports team. Three years ago, we didn't have any. That's happened both through opportunity, the right people putting their hands up, and our fabulous internship programme. Our last four interns were all young women.

In the last report, you said that you felt that there was an overrepresentation of women in rounds like lifestyle.

That would still be true. Our lifestyle department is all women. Our news team is pretty evenly split, and sport has seen a great increase in the number of women there. There's a lot of opportunities for women, and they're seizing them. And I love that.

Does this occur through any formal strategies like recruitment strategies or do you feel like this is something that happens with time?

I would probably advocate for awareness over any kind of quota system. I think you have to be that kind of boss. It's something that is in the forefront of my mind, and I'm fortunate enough to work with incredible women who would get their jobs any day of the week on merit alone.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

KERRI ELSTUB

You mentioned in the last report a mentoring programme that you were implementing. Do you still feel like that's needed?

100 per cent, we're just supercharged! Since we last spoke, we were doing mentoring just specifically in my part of the business. Juniors would be matched up with seniors specifically in our part of the business. We got some feedback from people that they wanted a bit more exposure to the business. So now we've expanded it that our juniors are then paired up with seniors from other parts of the business. So some people have newspaper mentors in radio or broadcast, or legal or finance. I find that serves two purposes. It gets you networking in a different way, not just in your department. And it allows you to troubleshoot and learn from someone who will have a completely different set of skills and completely different ideas to yours.

It seems to be going so well. I not only mentor, but I am a mentee as well, you know. And I have women in my life who are great counsel. I'm a massive believer in mentorship, in networking and how important it is. I can only hope that it will keep getting bigger and bigger in my part of the business.

What do you feel needs to change more broadly in newsroom culture to foster gender equity?

In the world I grew up in, you always went in. I went to work the day after my hen's day. I would never have asked for a day off. So I love that now women put themselves first. They're hard workers and dedicated, but they also know when it's time to draw the line which I really admire, because that's something I still struggle with.

What do you think is left to change in newsroom culture?

I've got to say in my little part of the world here, I think, thanks to the great leadership team that we've got, I think we're doing things pretty right. I've been here to personally witness a lot of change. Back when I was a young producer, all the bosses were men and now I see the women that I grew up with. Now we are all the bosses. I actually just had a really great conversation with a journalist who said 'I've only ever had female bosses' and I just thought that is an amazing moment.

How has your experience as a leader given you insight into the challenges that still exist for women in leadership roles?

I think the things that work for me are forging really strong female networks. I am such a believer in women helping other women get to wherever they need to be. Someone gave me a chance way back, and you just never know when's there going to be a job that opens up, or a connection that will help.

How will you leave this role for the next woman leader?

The number one thing that experts say you need for a high performing team is psychological safety. So, I would put lead by example and be a nice person. Put your team first.

"Back when I was a young producer, all the bosses were men and now I see the women that I grew up with. Now we are all the bosses. I actually just had a really great conversation with a journalist who said 'I've only ever had female bosses' and I just thought that is an amazing moment."

Felicity Hetherington

Editor, *The Daily Mail*



What is the gender split in the Daily Mail's Australian newsroom?

The gender split is 47 male, 41 female. We have many women in leadership positions at Daily Mail Australia including entertainment editor, lifestyle editor, social media editor and picture editor.

Is achieving gender equity or diversity in the newsroom currently a priority for you as an Editor?

My priority as an editor is to have a newsroom that produces quality content that our readers enjoy. We hire staff based on experience, qualifications and individual strengths, not gender.

Both genders are fairly represented in the newsroom so we don't feel the need for any official programs to improve gender equity. We would only consider gender in our recruitment processes if we felt there was a significant imbalance in the newsroom.

What do you think are some of the difficulties that come with making changes in regard to achieving gender equity?

A newsroom is like any other industry – if it's male heavy at the top then it's going to be more difficult for women to gain leadership positions.

Things only change when the power imbalance is disrupted. Newsroom cultures only change when there is an equal balance of men and women in the top leadership positions.

What do women journalists and other employees tell you as a senior leader about the difficulties they are facing in and outside of the newsroom?

The main difficulty is juggling work and life pressures and that is something that is faced by both men and women. If a staff member is struggling, I consider their entire situation.

Many female journalists still find it difficult to advocate for themselves in terms of promotions and pay rises. Women who work in the media, or are thinking of entering the profession, should recognise that they will need to constantly back themselves or they will struggle. The reputation of the media industry and how it treats women has recently been under the spotlight which is a good thing because if it doesn't improve, we'll see fewer young women entering the profession.

Gosima Marriner

Editor, *The Australian Financial Review*



The previous *Australian Financial Review* Managing Editor Joanne Grey said in the last Women in Leadership Review that work was beginning to create gender balance in the newsroom. How is that going?

There are a couple of different elements to that. One is our leadership team. We have 11 people on our leadership team and seven of them are women. We have gender pay parity across our newsroom, which is also excellent. The other element to that is making sure we have women in senior reporting roles. So our North Asia correspondent is a woman, and previously all three of our international correspondents were men. Then we have a couple of female senior writers, like Primrose Riordan, who joined us about a year ago. Our Street Talk team is now helmed by women. So that's all great.

Where we still need to do a little bit more work is increasing the number of female columnists for the Financial Review and that's a project we're focused on this year.

There's also succession planning for some of our key roles like the political correspondents and economics correspondents, because we have men in those roles and we need to start thinking about how we can develop some women to be candidates down the track.

Were these changes achieved through particular programmes or recruitment policy?

No. I joined two years ago now and it was a pretty big priority for me in this role to make the Financial Review appeal equally to women as well as to men. We're doing a project at the moment in conjunction with the Financial Times, which is all about growing our female audience. Part of that is what we do in a content sense, but also the kind of people we have working in our newsroom. That's got me focused on succession planning for some key roles.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

COSIMA MARRINER

The research that we did around commentary definitely shows women are trusted to do news reporting, but when it comes to numbers around commentary and expertise, men are still outstripping women.

There are a couple of things that contribute to that. Historically Financial Review subjects like finance, business, economics, and politics have been dominated by men. So therefore, you have men writing about them. That's obviously changing, which is great. I think there is also an element of it being a lot harder to get women to put their hands up to be columnists. It requires a lot more development of relationships and development of talent. That means, from my perspective, making it top of mind. Every time there's a discussion about opinion content, we need to ask 'Who's our female columnist today?'

We partnered with WLIA earlier in the year, trying to encourage more women to write for us. We ran a seminar for women who would be interested and we had over 100 attendees. It was really great, but that hasn't resulted in a huge surge of submissions. I feel like we've got a lot of the backroom stuff right, and now we've really got to fix this, and that's a real priority for this year.

We are tracking how many female versus male columnist we are publishing every month.

What are women are telling you the challenge is around contributing more to opinion and commentary?

I'm one step removed because I'm not the opinion editor obviously, but I think there are a couple of things. Women are really busy. I hate to gender stereotype, but women are not just working important jobs. They're also looking after kids, managing the mental load of the entire family. It is hard to find the time to do this [opinion writing] when it is not intrinsic to your day-to-day job or your personal life. That's a really key consideration when writing opinion takes time and is a skill that you have to develop.

I think also women are cautious or reluctant because they are worried about a pile on. We try and reassure them that we've got a hard pay wall, so you'd have to be pretty motivated to want to do a pile on because you got to pay a fairly high amount to see the article to start with. We also at this stage don't have comments on our articles and most of our audience is using the Fin for their work. You're not finding many trolls amongst them. So it's about putting people's minds at rest about what they're going to be exposed to. Only one woman needs to have a bad experience for it to be to go backwards at a rate of knots.

Now, I don't think any of the women that we've got to write for us this year have had a bad experience, but I know there is some sort of legacy concern about what could happen.

One thing that we are doing – and this also takes time – is trying to build up a stable of regular female columnists, so it's not every day starting from scratch trying to find that female voice for today.

"One thing that we are doing - and this also takes time - is trying to build up a stable of regular female columnists, so it's not every day starting from scratch trying to find that female voice for today."

Does the *Financial Review*'s subject matter, like economics, finance and politics, make it difficult to attract women writers?

I don't think it does now. I think there are enough women with expertise in these subjects. One thing I should say, we relaunched our Women in Leadership awards and Danielle Wood, who is the Chair of the Productivity Commission, won a major award. In her acceptance speech, she talked about trying to encourage more girls and women into economics. So again, when you're looking for women to write those economics commentary pieces, you're drawing from a small field. I think most of the banks and financial services firms have done a good job of getting a lot more women in those jobs. But the pool is small.

I don't think that's an excuse though. I just think we have to work harder to get them and also think a bit more broadly about what Financial Review commentary is. Maybe it doesn't fit in those narrow frames and we could broaden that out a bit to get to better voices.

I'm also interested in what you see as the kind of unique challenges for you as a leader making those changes.

I think gender balance in opinion is a big challenge. I really think it requires extreme focus to make it happen. It is one of my biggest challenges because it's so visible, it gets brought up by everyone and I see it every day when I look on our website.

We've just done a staff survey as part of this female audience growth project and I think overwhelmingly our newsroom is on board and they want to be part of it.

The message for the newsroom about why this is important and fundamentally it comes down to the Financial Review's growth. We need to be equally as attractive to female readers as to male readers. And the split isn't that bad. But there's a lot of potential for growth for the Financial Review and particularly how we reflect society. More women are in very senior roles in society, whether it's economics, business, politics. We should be reflecting that and showcasing those voices and those people. So for me as a leader, I feel that my challenges are to maintain gender pay parity. To maintain equal female and male leadership in the newsroom and to do succession planning for key visible reporting roles. And to get opinion to at least 40 per cent women every day.

What came out of the staff survey for you as the kind of key difficulty for women journalists in the newsroom? What did they tell you about what might need to change?

There was a little bit about those sort of key roles at the paper – the public facing roles. There was a lot of acknowledgement of senior female leadership in the newsroom and that they could see things changing. But opinion was definitely something that was talked about, and thinking more broadly about what stories we should do, that might attract more women.

"I think gender balance in opinion is a big challenge. I really think it requires extreme focus to make it happen. It is one of my biggest challenges because it's so visible, it gets brought up by everyone and I see it every day when I look on our website."

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

COSIMA MARRINER

One really interesting thing was the number of comments that they don't think women necessarily want content that is that different to men. They may want it presented in a different way because they're time poor. Or when we write about economics we could overlay it with a social lens or a behavioural lens. So it's still economics, but it might speak more to women than the very dry way that it can be reported. I think this would equally appeal to men

The audience survey was also interesting. Basically, women were saying that they like what we do. Women are also bigger users of the app than men are, which is interesting to us. The app is a real growth element for us. They're into newsletters and they said we could definitely do more lifestyle. One thing we have already been doing this year is Wellness, which the Financial Review never did before. We had a men's health column, but we've not done Wellness as a kind of subject area. So we've been doing a lot of that and that really resonates with readers.

The one thing that we, the editorial leadership, is very conscious of is we don't want to start saying this is 'ladies content'. We don't want to exclude our male readers and we don't want to patronise our female readers. So it's about journalism that speaks equally to men and women. Different readers will come to us for different things or value different things. You know, some women might like this, some men might like that but it's not about being tokenistic or excluding or being patronising, it's just making sure we have a product that equally speaks to both genders.

What about the challenge for women leaders in the newsroom? How difficult is it for women to not just get those positions, but also to keep them?

I think the challenge for female leaders is about having people who champion them. It's not about mentors, it's about being championed to get the next job. I think women need champions to advocate for you for the next role.

I think pay is still an issue. I still think men get paid more than women generally. I think men are often negotiating with another man who is more likely to give a man the better pay rise than the woman. Men tend to be more aggressive negotiators as well.

The out of hours stuff you have to do as a leader can be hard for women to manage. People who don't have other demands on their time, that can be very attractive to some leaders because they know they'll always be there, not saying, 'oh sorry my kid's sick' or 'I can't do that this weekend'. At the Financial Review we are very focused on providing flexibility for our leaders so they can manage caring responsibilities. We have a number of senior editors who work 4 days a week for example.

"We don't want to exclude our male readers and we don't want to patronise our female readers. So it's about journalism that speaks equally to men and women."

Justin Stevens

Director of News, ABC



Your predecessor Gavin Fang was talking about the 50/50 project that the ABC was embarking on in 2019 to achieve equal representation between male and female interviewees and commentators. The target was achieved in 2021; is that target still being achieved?

We are still tracking the representation of women in our news coverage, and that's quite a big allocation of time and resources and energy for teams to do it, but we're of the view that it's still important. Not least of which to hold teams accountable, just to make sure they're doing what they ought to anyway to make sure we reflect Australia back to itself.

Gavin and the team have done a terrific job initiating that based on the BBC model.

Broadly speaking, there's two big pieces on this. One is in terms of how gender equality relates to our journalism and news. There's an outward facing piece around our content and our journalism reflecting accurately the diversity of our country and ensuring that women have an equal voice in our coverage.

Making sure we're hearing from all parts of society and that it's not about tokenistically hearing from a group of people on issues directly relating to them. That we're factoring in the impacts for all people.

There's also an inward facing piece, which has probably been a bigger focus for us over the past couple of years, is around whether we have the right structures and culture in place at an organisational level and cultural level. In that sense, we've been having a really important conversation about gender equality in the workplace, improving the culture for women in the workplace, because that is just as important as our outward facing work – to ensure that we've got a culture that enables people to succeed irrespective of their gender.

Where do you think you might need to improve based on based on your tracking?

I think the ongoing tracking reveals that there's no 'mission accomplished' moment here. It varies month to month, but the April to June average was just over 46 per cent female talent representation across all teams. Some teams consistently track well over 50% and some track under. We need to continue to drive change in that space. Even when we get close to, or have achieved that 50/50 target, we can't assume that it's not something that is sustained without an ongoing conversation. So the data holds you to account. It lets you understand whether you are driving change in that functional sense. But it's after the fact, and it's only capturing a moment in time. So there's as much work going into the front end of that conversation, as it is after the fact.

What are you hearing from women on staff in newsrooms about what might need to change to have a more inclusive workforce?

A lot, actually. We're fortunate to have courageous, smart, incredibly talented women to help drive that conversation and hold men like me to account. Really, it's thanks to courageous women telling me that we needed to confront this head on, rather than me initiating it. I listened and acted, but absolutely, women should be credited for driving the change.

About two years ago, Juanita Phillips had a conversation with me coming towards the end of what she thought would be her tenure at the ABC. At this point in her career, she felt a responsibility to speak on behalf of women that she works with, and based on her own experiences over a long period of time. She thought the ABC had a long way to go in terms of gender equality and the treatment of women in the workplace. I think the societal and employment backdrop to this is, we have to accept, that the news industry in Australia has been a boys' club for decades. For a long period of time that fostered a culture that was not friendly, inclusive or safe to women. Clearly, even today in 2024, there are residual dynamics that are still there from that long history.

So, off the back of the conversation with Juanita, we held a number of forums with women in newsrooms around the country. Juanita was quite clear. She wanted a review to really tackle this, there needed to be the ability for women to speak to their perceptions of what it's like working at the ABC.

I committed to ask women in my executive to lead conversations and confidential forums with women across all of news. So over the course of the next three to six months, they held about 26 forums around the country, which is the first time we've done anything like that at the ABC. Over 400 women took part in those forums and at the end of that we were able to collate a series of recurring themes and questions.

There were some themes that were emerging from that initial conversation around career progression after maternity leave. They were recurring themes around lack of opportunity for women where managers were making incorrect assumptions about availability or interest in opportunity. Women who are not being provided those further opportunities – that can have flow on effects to things like pay equality or just getting the big stories that male colleagues are.

These conversations are obviously driving change.

"We need to continue to drive change in that space. Even when we get close to, or have achieved that 50/50 target, we can't assume that it's not something that is sustained without an ongoing conversation. So the data holds you to account. It lets you understand whether you are driving change in that functional sense."

Is this supported through policy or is it about cultural change through leadership?

I think we're really trying to tackle so many historic societal issues around gender, around cultural diversity and safety, around fostering a better workplace for people with a disability. The overarching piece there is: What are our expectations when people walk through the door by way of the values, principles, and opportunities that should be enabled for everyone? And how do we show up – all of us – in terms of driving that change? So I suppose we've been tackling a lot of these things individually, for good reason, but I think that's all building to a bigger conversation and an important conversation around the culture at large.

Do you have any specific gender targets?

Women currently comprise 55.4% of the ABC workforce. The key targets around gender are 50 per cent of executive roles filled by women (currently at 55.4) and 25% of technologist roles filled by women (currently at 24.2%).

I think there's a few things on my mind about this. One is if there's any downside of targets, it's that, sadly, where there's toxic culture, people have unfortunately used targets to diminish the opportunities people have been given. I think the sooner all workplaces are not talking about targets, the better.

When I inherited the news executive role there was only one woman on the executive and five to six men, including myself. Over two years I've made various structural changes to my executive. There are two men on the news executive now, and then we've got, I think it's five or six women heads of department. All of those women got those jobs because they're much smarter than me and their ascendancy was overdue.

You've changed your executive team to be more gender diverse. What have you learnt from them about the kinds of challenges that women in leadership face?

A lot of my senior female colleagues have reflected on "impostor syndrome." Some of the smartest, most capable incredible leaders amongst that cohort are women. Because of the culture in the industry, there's a residual sense of impostor syndrome and that plays out in ways that male leaders ought to be alert to. Making sure that women's observations and perspectives have equal weight in discussion and debate. Making sure that you're reminding them of the fact that they're there because they deserve it, and instilling a sense of appropriate confidence so that decisions are not second guessed. I think women are much more sophisticated at deliberation and decision making and we need to foster that as much as possible. I think it's just making sure the environment fosters all of those strengths, and is alert to making sure they've got what they need to succeed.

"If there's any downside of targets, it's that, sadly, where there's toxic culture, people have unfortunately used targets to diminish the opportunities people have been given. I think the sooner all workplaces are not talking about targets, the better."

Lenore Taylor

Editor, *The Guardian*



You said in the last report that you felt that *The Guardian* was really on top of gender diversity of staff. Have you got priorities around gender diversity now?

Since the last interview, the gender balance at the top of the organisation has skewed further towards women. The new MD, who I run the business with, is also a woman, so there's two women at the top of the organisation. I restructured the newsroom and now on the editorial side, 8 out of 10 of the senior leadership team are women. Our last report showed that the gender pay gap is minus 3.5. So, really, there are women in a lot of the senior positions in the company. I don't actually see a lot of inclusion issues for women here, to be honest.

In the last report you mentioned you were having difficulty recruiting culturally and linguistically diverse journalists and editors. Has that improved or have there been programmes to try and improve that?

It's a slow process, but it's improving. We're still hitting our diversity targets that we set for ourselves, but I would still like to see more cultural and linguistic diversity, at the upper levels of the organisation. We get many diverse applicants for certain types of roles and none at all for other roles, and we now have a lot of strategies in place to try to improve that, which are working to an extent.

What kinds of strategies?

Where you advertise, how you advertise, and how long you leave ads up for. How prescriptive you are in terms of prerequisites for a role. Making sure we have diverse staff on interview panels. Making sure that we put diverse candidates, if possible, through to the second round just to make sure people get the very best possible chance.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

LENORE TAYLOR

Research shows women are saying issues like burnout, lack of work-life balance, and incompatibility with family life make them consider leaving journalism. Is there anything in place to make journalism a more sustainable career for women?

I don't actually see those issues as just female issues. I feel if we frame it that way, we're actually perpetuating the things that make women burn out, because we're perpetuating the idea that family duties fall primarily on women.

We have a lot of things in place across genders to try and stop burnout. We have a fairly strict overtime policy. We have a generous parental leave policy that is not gendered. We're quite amenable when people have issues at home, things they have to deal with, things they have to deal with their kids, for all parents. I think we're fairly family friendly workplace, but I don't see that as just 'women's thing'.

One thing that the research shows is really gendered is the kinds of abuse and harassment and trolling that suffered especially online. It's significantly suffered more by women and by minorities. Are there strategies that you have in place to protect women and minorities in that arena?

We've had people who have had a really difficult time because of that sort of thing. No one is required to be online and, in fact, we say it's not part of your job. You don't have to do that. You do not have to be on Twitter. You do not have to engage with people. In fact, it's increasingly not valuable to journalism to be on Twitter. It might be useful to kind of watch for information. But in terms of engagement, it's not useful. If people are, for whatever reason, getting piled upon, we offer support. When people have reported on something traumatic for them and there's been a lot of that lately, we have trauma counselling for staff.

How do you think the newsroom has changed and what do you think of the challenges ahead for fostering diversity in the newsroom?

I don't. *The Guardian* culture is pretty set. I don't know that it's changed materially and I wouldn't want it to change, in that it is a respectful, collegiate culture. I do not tolerate yelling or rudeness or unpleasantness. The sort of behaviour that happened in many of the newsrooms I've worked in would not be tolerated here. Above all else, you are respectful to your colleagues.

Is there anything that *The Guardian* does to ensure that there's equal representation of women as experts or as commentators or as interviewees?

Diversity in who we quote is something that editors have in mind all the time. Both gender diversity and cultural diversity, and who we commission to write opinion pieces. We haven't got set quotas. But I wouldn't be happy if I looked at the site at the opinion section and it was all white blokes. That's something that we have to bear in mind.

"I don't actually see those issues [burnout, lack of work-life balance, and incompatibility with family life] as just female issues. I feel if we frame it that way, we're actually perpetuating the things that make women burn out, because we're perpetuating the idea that family duties fall primarily on women."

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

LENORE TAYLOR

Has your experience of working in leadership given you any insight into challenges that still exist for women in leadership roles?

You aren't necessarily acknowledged or credited in the same way as male executives are. People still talk over you; it doesn't matter if you're the boss. Not here at *The Guardian*, but in external fora.

What do you think will be the experience of the woman who takes your place when you eventually decide to go and do other things?

I will have built a bigger, more robust and more fully functioning organisation so she won't have the struggles that I had early on with very little support and really having to do many functions myself. I hope I have built a healthy functioning organisation for her.

"We're still hitting our diversity targets that we set for ourselves, but I would still like to see more cultural and linguistic diversity, at the upper levels of the organisation."

Kerry Warren

Editor, News.com.au



Your predecessor Lisa Muxworthy said that the newsroom is quite female dominated at news.com.au. Three years later, is that still the case?

It's still very much the case, if anything more so than three years ago. At the moment, my deputy is a woman, the social media editor, the news editor, the homepage editor, the commissioning editor, the sections editor – most of our news desk is female. Below that, the actual reporters are a bit more evenly split, but it is still more women than men.

Is there a quota or a recruitment policy?

No, we don't have a quota. We don't have much turnover at news.com.au, we hang on to people for a very long time. I think part of that is that we make it very easy to work and have kids. Obviously being a working mother is not easy, and journalism is very 24/7. That doesn't easily mesh with having a family outside of work. But we, as far as anywhere I've worked, do that really well and it makes people stay with us for longer.

Is flexibility a priority over strategies like recruitment quotas?

Absolutely. That's something I've always been really passionate about. When I'm leaving to go to the school athletics carnival or a swimming thing, I don't slink out and pretend like I'm going to a meeting. I don't block time out in my diary. I say: 'I'm going to be offline for a couple of hours because I'm going to the athletics carnival.' Just being loud and vocal about that kind of stuff. The entire team do that, and whenever we do have new people join the team, that's one thing that they remark on. That's the culture we've always had. You're always going to put in more hours than work is paying you for. So we are just absolutely unapologetic about those times when you've got something more important to do.

EDITOR INTERVIEWS

KERRY WARREN

In the last report, Lisa suggested there wasn't any particular policy around how many women are commentators or opinion writers? And is that still the case?

It's something we have had to focus on, and we have had that focus for the last year or two. It's a difficult thing because we find anecdotally that not many women put their hands up saying that they are the expert. It just doesn't seem to happen anywhere near as much as it happens with men. But we are actually working on this. It's been an ongoing project for 18 months to two years now, of building up a bit of a database of more diverse contacts of women experts and people from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds, just to address a bit of that middle-aged white man imbalance. It's working quite well for us, but it's definitely something we could focus more on.

Obviously it depends on the kind of stories. When it's something that is in the news and you need immediate turn around, we do still find that sometimes we just have to go to whoever we can find, because we need to file something in an hour and it's just whoever's available. But it's definitely a live list that we're adding to all the time with new talent and new voices that we can platform.

What do other women in the newsroom tell you about the hurdles they face in doing everyday work as reporters, as well as in trying to pursue leadership roles?

I think it mostly is the 24-hour nature of the news and the need to work on weekends or in the evenings, that kind of stuff is a real challenge. It's something we hear again and again from women in our team and there is only so much you can do about that 24 hour a day operation. But we are very open to any sort of flexible work arrangements. The one really great thing is that I don't have a lot of people saying to me that they don't feel like they can progress or take on a leadership role because of their families, which is wonderful.

How has your role given you insight into some of the challenges that women face in leadership?

I think one of the most interesting things with my role is that in all of the meetings that I'm in at news.com.au, there is lucky to be one man in a lot of those senior meetings. It's the complete opposite once you go to that next level in the company. At that senior executive level, I'm the only woman and certainly the only woman under 40. It's a big difference. I think the insight that I've got having seen that the next level up is that it's still very old and male dominated.

It does make you wonder what the barriers are to entry for that level because at my level and just below it, there are so many brilliant women doing a phenomenal job every single day in our business and yet that's not reflected on the next level up. So it makes me wonder what we need to do as an organisation to break through that barrier a bit.

"There are so many brilliant women doing a phenomenal job every single day in our business and yet that's not reflected on the next level up. So it makes me wonder what we need to do as an organisation to break through that barrier a bit."

Editor Interviews: Summary

The interviews provide a comprehensive picture of how newsroom leaders are tackling women's representation in their newsrooms and in their news coverage. In answering our final research question, ***What are News Editors' Views on Promoting Gender Equality?*** we find that news editors take seriously their roles in advancing gender equality. They have taken several actions to removed structural obstacles to women's professional advancement in their journalism careers, such as more flexible work conditions and mentoring support for leadership roles. More women are in leadership positions than in the past. More broadly, hiring practices have seen similar numbers of men and women in newsrooms. However, challenges persist in protecting women and minorities from online harassment and tackling the lack of diversity within newsroom leadership. Several leaders suggest women require more leadership mentoring and training to overcome confidence issues. At present, policy and programmatic development to address intersectional disparities and online safety is underdone.

In terms of news coverage, there is recognition that some topic areas are not well represented by women's voices. Leadership responses to this are mixed, as is the degree of the problem across newsrooms. Leaders' observations that women are not forthcoming as experts to be quoted in stories contradicts recent studies that find women were as agreeable to an interview request as men (Shine et al., 2023). But we do find women-authored opinion pieces are less than previous *Women for Media* reports and may be indicative of the online incivility women face compared to men when engaging in public discourse. In any case, these findings reinforce the need for newsroom policies and practices address the underrepresentation of women, both in bylines and as quoted sources.

Senior positions in Australian newsrooms: gender breakdown





























As noted in the 2021 *Women for Media* report, there has been an influx of women into senior editorial positions across Australian newsrooms in recent decades. We reviewed who currently holds these leadership roles across print and online news sources and, in line with the results from previous reports, we found that women are well-represented in these positions (Table 5).

There are differences between organisations and, therefore, the titles and roles of senior staff across news outlets, but women were present in the leadership teams of most Australian newsrooms at the time of writing. However, as indicated by our analysis of stories, the presence of women in editorial positions has not changed persistent gender divides in the story topics associated with women.

Table 5:

Senior positions in Australian newsrooms: Gender breakdown as of 13 September 2024.

Note: The management staff of news organisations may have changed.

News Outlet	Editor/News Director	Deputy Editor/Deputy News Director	Managing Editor
9 News national	 Fiona Dear: Director of News and Current Affairs		
9news.com.au	 Marc Dodd: Editor	 Tim Rose: Deputy Editor	
10 News national	 Martin White: Head of Broadcast News	 Rashell Habib: Head of digital news and strategy	
AAP	 Andrew Drummond: Editor	No one in deputy role at time of research. Next most senior role:	 Holly Nott: Director of Editorial Partnerships
		 Peter Bodkin: Chief-of-Staff	
		 Lloyd Jones: Chief-of-Staff	
ABC & abc.net.au/news	 Justin Stevens: Director News		
	 Gavin Fang: Editorial Director		
adelaidenow.com.au	 Jo Schulz: Digital Editor	 Kara Jung: Deputy Digital Editor	
The Advertiser	 Gemma Jones: Editor		
The Age & theage.com.au	 Patrick Elligett: Editor	 Orietta Guerrero: Deputy Editor	
		 Mathew Duncley: Deputy Editor	
The Australian	 Michelle Gunn: Editor-in-chief	 Petra Rees: Deputy Editor	 Darren Davidson: Managing Editor
	 Kelvin Healey: Editor	 Georgina Windsor: Deputy Editor	
theaustralian.com.au	 Christine Kellett: Digital Director		
The Australian Financial Review & afr.com	 James Chessell: Editor-in-chief	 Jessica Gardner: Deputy Editor (News)	
	 Cosima Marriner: Editor	 Kylar Loussikian: Deputy Editor (Business)	
brisbanetimes.com.au	 Sean Parnell: Editor		























































 Women



 Men

Table 5 (continued):

Senior positions in Australian newsrooms: Gender breakdown as of 13 September 2024.

Note: The management staff of news organisations may have changed.

News Outlet	Editor/News Director	Deputy Editor/Deputy News Director	Managing Editor
The Canberra Times		 Scott Hannaford: Deputy Editor	 John Paul Moloney: Managing Editor
canberratimes.com.au	 David McLennan: Digital Editor		 John-Paul Moloney: Managing Editor
crikey.com.au	 Sophie Black: Editor-in-Chief	 Jack Callil: Deputy Editor	
	 Gina Rushton: Editor		
The Courier-Mail and The Sunday Mail	 Chris Jones: Editor	 Tim Hilferty: Deputy Editor	
	 Paul Ashenden: Sunday Mail Editor		
	 Melanie Pilling: Weekend Editor		
couriermail.com.au	 Tanya French: Digital Editor		
dailymail.co.uk/auhome	 Felicity Hetherington: Editor	 Daniel Piotrowski: Deputy Editor	
The Daily Telegraph	 Ben English: Editor	 Anna Caldwell: Deputy Editor	 Greg Thomson: Managing Editor
		 Nick Hansen: Deputy Editor	
dailytelegraph.com.au	 Debbie Schipp: Digital News Director		
theguardian.com/au	 Lenore Taylor: Editor	 Gabrielle Jackson: Deputy Editor	 Alison Rourke: Managing Editor
		 Patrick Keneally: Deputy Editor	
The Herald Sun	 Sam Weir: Editor	 Genevieve Alison: Chief of Staff	 Andrew Rule: Associate Editor
		 Ashleigh Gleeson: Chief of Staff	
heraldsun.com.au	 Joel Cresswell: Digital Editor		
	 Jordy Atkinson: Online News Director		
The Mercury	 Jenna Cairney: Editor	 Philip Young: Deputy Editor	
themercury.com.au	 Molly Appleton: Digital Editor		
thenewdaily.com.au	 Neil Frankland: Editor	 Carley Olley: Deputy Editor	
news.com.au	 Kerry Warren: Editor	 Liz Burke: Deputy Editor	 Stephanie Raethel: Managing Editor
		 Rohan Smith: Acting Deputy Editor	
The NT News & ntnews.com.au	 Melanie Plane: Editor		
Prime7	 Jeff Cole: News Director	 Garrett Doblewski: Assistant News Director	
The Saturday Paper	Erik Jensen: Editor-in-Chief	 Cindy MacDonald: Deputy Editor	 Emily Barrett: Managing Editor
SBS	 Mandi Wicks: Director of News and Current Affairs		
The Sydney Morning Herald + smh.com.au	 Bevan Shields: Editor	 Liam Phelan: Deputy Editor	 Kathryn Wicks: Associate Editor
	 Daile Cross: Editor	 Heather McNeill: Deputy Editor	
The West Australian	 Christopher Dore: Editor-in-Chief	 Mark Mallabone: Deputy Editor	
	 Sarah-Jane Tasker: Editor		
thewest.com.au	 David Johns: Online Editor		
WIN News	 Stella Lauri: News Director		

 Women  Men

CONCLUSION

By combining qualitative and quantitative data and using a combination of manual coding, computer learning, and large language models for topic analysis, the 2024 *Women for Media* report provides a comprehensive understanding of gender representation in the Australian news media. It finds that, on one hand, almost equal numbers of women are working in Australian newsrooms compared to men, and many are in senior editorial and executive roles.

The gender mix of the editor interviews in this report is one clear indication of women gravitating to powerful positions in the sector. However, on the other hand, the visibility of women's bylines and women as quoted expert sources within the premium pages of mastheads reveals a more complicated story, where women do not get top billing and thus equal representation and status are still lacking in some areas. This appears to be topic-sensitive and varies by masthead. It is more prevalent in reporting areas that have traditionally been male dominated, such as sport and business. It is also gendered, as women are more likely to quote women than men are.

On the brighter side, women have made gains in the high-status area of political reporting. Newsroom leaders are cognisant of the gender inequalities that persist in workplace practices and are focused on improving family-friendly practices. In terms of women's representation in news coverage—both bylines and as quoted sources—a long shadow of gender bias exists within certain topic areas, such as business and economic reporting, and more work is needed in newsrooms, and society more broadly, to raise women's profiles in these traditionally male-dominated domains.

As editors like J. D. Pringle have shown in a past era – along with editors of pioneering mastheads like the *National Times* with its support of women investigative journalists – newsroom culture change is possible. They strove to create more gender neutral reportage and newsroom norms. In the modern era, cultural change should address male journalists' penchant for quoting men at the expense of women in their stories.

But, financial realities matter too in helping to create and sustain this gender equal environment. Australian journalism has faced tough economic headwinds as advertising revenues have migrated to online competitors. While this report was being written, for

example, major newsrooms have undergone further rounds of editorial redundancies. Government needs to consider further policy incentives to support public interest journalism to enable newsrooms to support gender equitable workplaces and produce sustainable gender equitable journalism that represents the whole of society.

Other future challenges for newsrooms, as identified in the editor interviews, will be to avoid a chilling effect on women's participation in the media engendered by the threat of online incivility, harassment, and trolling that disproportionately targets women. This will require greater efforts to develop robust policies and practices to ensure online safety for all, but critically for women and vulnerable groups.

Women's voices in news coverage have been directly linked to women audiences' engagement with news. The identifiable trend of "news avoidance", especially by women, is a warning to editors about the economic consequences, among other important reasons, for not excluding women's voices across news topics and commentary.

Finally, the rapid advancement of generative AI, particularly its ability to produce realistic deep fakes of women journalists and sources (notably women politicians), presents a growing challenge that must be addressed to ensure women can participate freely and equally in society, including in news coverage. The use of AI in news production will also be an area to watch in future reports to understand if it introduces implicit and explicit gender biases.

While there are formidable challenges ahead, the depth of talented women leaders leading newsrooms offers inspiration to address this unfinished story of gender bias in Australian newsrooms.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A1

A table of the news outlets examined in the Big Picture analysis using data from the global Meltwater social and media listening tool. The outlets reflect choices from past Women for Media reports in order to maintain some compatibility between reports over time.

NEWS OUTLET	OWNER
1) 7news	Seven West Media
2) Perth Now	Seven West Media
3) The West Australian/Sunday Times	Seven West Media
4) Australian Financial Review (AFR)	Nine Entertainment Co
5) Brisbane Times	Nine Entertainment Co
6) Nine News	Nine Entertainment Co
7) The Age	Nine Entertainment Co
8) WA Today	Nine Entertainment Co
9) The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH)	Nine Entertainment Co
10) Wide World of Sports	Nine Entertainment Co*
11) Adelaide Now (The Advertiser)	News Corp Australia
12) Herald Sun	News Corp Australia
13) News.com.au	News Corp Australia
14) NT News	News Corp Australia
15) The Advertiser	News Corp Australia
16) The Courier Mail	News Corp Australia
17) The Daily Advertiser	News Corp Australia
18) The Australian	News Corp Australia
19) The Mercury	News Corp Australia
20) Sky News Australia	News Corp Australia*
21) The Weekly Times	News Corp Australia*
22) ABC News	Public Broadcaster
23) Crikey	Private Media Pty. Ltd.
24) Guardian Australia	Guardian Media Group
25) The Canberra Times	Australian Community Media (ACM)
26) The Daily Advertiser	Australian Community Media (ACM)
27) The Daily Mail	Daily Mail and General Trust#
28) The New Daily	Industry Super Holdings
29) The Saturday Paper	Schwartz Publishing
30) Australian Associated Press (AAP)	Australian Associated Press (AAP)*
31) The Conversation	The Conversation*

Source: Authors using Meltwater data. Notes: N=185,734 news items; #included in the 2021 sample but not 2024; *included in the 2024 sample, but not 2021.

APPENDICES

Appendix A2

Sample of classified articles

Random ten articles and how AI and computational methods were used for coding them into 10 different story classifications.

TAG	VALUE
lab: 32278 business and the economy	
content_title	HEADFIRST GROUP AND IMPELLAM GROUP JOIN FORCES TO BECOME A GLOBAL LEADER IN STEM, DIGITAL AND IT TALENT, MANAGED SERVICES AND HR TECH
hit_sentence	... enabled and differentiated solutions to our customers across the world." Experienced team driving growth agenda Leading the ...
lab: 13886 business and the economy	
content_title	Just how much of a pay rise can you expect this year?
lab: 2106 sports	
content_title	Mum's heartwarming final text from late motocross star son Jayden "Jayo" Archer
lab: 25958 business and the economy	
content_title	Jan Cameron fails in bid to delay sentence for misleading ASX while she appeals in Supreme Court
hit_sentence	... , Janet Heather Cameron, 71, was found guilty in the Hobart Magistrates Court of failing to disclose the fact she controlled 14 million ...
lab: 6988 arts, entertainment and celebrities	
content_title	Johnny Depp accused of berating actress on-set: 'You f**king idiot'
lab: 14772 health, well-being and lifestyle	
content_title	March 8th marks International Women's Day
lab: 49805 politics	
content_title	Geraldton's Champion Bay Senior High School student Lilly Moses named WA runner-up in 2024 Simpson Prize
lab: 12752 crime	
content_title	Queensland family's battle over \$1m lotto winnings heads to Appeals Court
hit_sentence	On Thursday, his daughter, Mrs Vourlides, lost her bid to have the court order her father provide security for the costs of the appeal ...
lab: 76015 science and technology	
content_title	New insights from Omdia Conference Unveils Surge in Display Polarizer Capacity and Emerging Technologies Propelling Growth in 2024 Display Market
content_opening_text	LONDON , March 28, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- New data from Omdia has revealed 8% year-over-year growth in display polarizer demand is expected ...
matched_hit_sentence	em>The two-day conference served as a forum for senior industry professionals, where Omdia's displays analysts delivered comprehensive ...
hit_sentence	em>The two-day conference served as a forum for senior industry professionals, where Omdia's displays analysts delivered comprehensive ...
keyphrases	actionable insights empower organizations, capacity, conference, consumers, display polarizer demand, display sector, display technologies, flexible displays, future, growth
lab: 38195 health, well-being and lifestyle	
content_title	Double-jointed people are at a higher risk of long Covid
hit_sentence	... from long Covid. A new study in the UK suggests that individuals who are double-jointed are at a 30 per cent raised risk of persistent ...

APPENDICES

Appendix A3

Coding Front Pages (Using computational techniques)

From 12,358 articles collected from the news repository, Factiva, from 30 April 2023 to March 31, 2024, we developed a computational model to extract bylines from PDF files. We then leveraged the findings of the “Big Picture” Meltwater dataset in combination with Open AI and R package *Gender: Predict Gender from Names Using Historical Data* (Gordon, 2024) to identify bylines by gender. After several iterative steps in the process, including manual checks, this yielded 7,782 articles with a byline. Some articles, particularly front-page blurbs, do not attach a byline (4,577 articles).

Figure 7 shows the gender mix of the total number of front-page bylines by publication. However, in interpreting this data, it is important to note that 37 per cent of stories did not have an identifiable author. Further, Figure 7 includes multi-author stories as well as single author stories and make no distinction between first author or last author. However, the proportion of front-page joint bylines was small overall. Finally, Factiva does not necessarily distinguish page one stories on the masthead’s front page from those that lead various sections of that newspaper such as the page one section of business or sports and so on. Although this is not ideal, it poses an ongoing challenge for media scholars as they navigate authoritative media data sources that are regularly updating their field definitions; licensing agreements with media companies and categorisation systems.

Coding Front Pages (manually)

The initial data collection was completed using Factiva, using a broad search for articles that Factiva either denoted as ‘Front Page’ or listed as being published on page 1. A random sample of articles from both sources was checked against images of the front pages as they were published to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the dataset.

Of the total articles in our Front-Page Quoted Sources dataset 2024, 16.5 percent (n=33) did not include an author by-line on the front page. This was rectified by finding the story ‘spill’ onto subsequent pages containing the author’s name. Front-page articles were then manually coded by two researchers using a predetermined codebook (see Figure A3.1 below for an excerpt). Both coders reviewed difficult cases to ensure inter-coder reliability and consistency. A second set of data was added from Newsbank, as the Factiva data no longer included the West Australian following the 19th of February 2024. Following the review of front-page images, The Canberra Times was found to have a small number of missing articles, and so it was supplemented with data from Newsbank. The front-page articles sourced from Newsbank were manually coded using the same codebook as the data sourced from Factiva.

Figure A3.1

Excerpt of the Front-Page Coding Frame

	Date (4-9th Marc	Masthead	How many bylines by WOMEN on	How many bylines by MEN on this day?	Broad Subject women	Broad Subject MEN	Author (name) and in order
13	8 March 20...	The Age	3+	2	Crime	Crime	David Estcourt, Erin Pearson, Alex Crowe, Mar
14	8 March 20...	The Age	1	1	Business and the econ...	Business and the econ...	Rachel Eddie, Kieran Rooney
15	9 March 20...	The Age	0	2		Foreign relations and in...	Nick McKenzie, Michael Bachelard
16	9 March 20...	The Age	3+	1	Crime	Crime	David Estcourt, Marta Pascual Juanola, Alex C
17	4 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Politics	Matthew Denholm
18	4 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Politics	Greg Brown
19	4 March 20...	The Aust...	1	2	Energy and Environment	Energy and Environment	Simon Benson, Sarah Ison, Joe Kelly
20	5 March 20...	The Aust...	1	1	Politics	Politics	MICHAEL McKENNA, LYDIA LYNCH
21	5 March 20...	The Aust...	1	0	Politics		Ellie Dudley
22	6 March 20...	The Aust...	1	0	Politics	Politics	Rosie Lewis
23	6 March 20...	The Aust...	1	2	Politics	Politics	JESS MALCOLM, PATRICK COMMINS, DAVI
24	6 March 20...	The Aust...	1	1	Politics	Politics	JOE KELLY, SARAH ISON
25	7 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Politics	Bernard Salt
26	7 March 20...	The Aust...	1	1	Politics	Politics	Sarah Eiks, Michael McKenna
27	7 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Foreign relations and in...	CAMERON STEWART
28	7 March 20...	The Aust...	1	0	Energy and Environment		Angelica Snowden
29	8 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Business and the econ...	Patrick Commis
30	8 March 20...	The Aust...	0	1		Energy and Environment	COLIN PACKHAM
31	8 March 20...	The Aust...	0	2		Arts, Entertainment, Ce...	DAMON JOHNSTON, ANGUS MCINTYRE

Source: Authors: Full dataset available on request

Coding Opinion and Commentary Pages (manually)

Using a Factiva metadata keyword searches such as “OpEd”, “Comment”, “Opinion”, “Commentary” for the week of March 4 – 9 2024, an initial data set was compiled. This process was repeated for all publications, with a review of a random sample of 20 for publications to ensure no missing data.

The *Saturday Paper* was added to the dataset manually from the publications’ website as it is not in the Factiva database. Articles published in the *West Australian* were added manually from the Newsbank database because Factiva no longer archives this masthead.

This process yielded 260 articles that were coded across 17 fields, including gender, in-house/ external author, article topic, source’s quoted, source’s profession and so on, (see sample below).

Two researchers completed this work. To ensure intercoder reliability difficult cases were discussed and coded together. Analyses was conducted using Excel. Although there are some methodological differences from past *Women for Media* reports, the analysis addresses the same prominent story topics and is broadly comparable, allowing us to make cautious comparisons over time.

Figure A3.2

Except of the Opinion and Commentary Section Coding Frame

	K	L	M	N	O	P
1	Women ALSO quoted in story?	Women quoted/cited what topic	Man quoted what topic	Name of woman quoted	Name of man quoted	story title
2	No					Talking point: WFH is bad for your health
3	No		Business and the eco...			Don't believe the hustle: 'ASX Wolf' says he's actually miserable
4	No		Politics		Matt Keogh, Basil Zempilas	Rear Window
5	No					The stealth compo of Santos CEO Kevin Gallagher
6	No					End school's gender segregation
7	Yes	Business and the economy	Foreign relations and	Nicola Yeomans	Andrew Hudson, Jokowi	Two Billion Reasons to Live in Hope
8	No					Call out China's maritime aggression by its real name
9	No		Business and the eco...		Adam Grant	Ten work hacks from the guru
10	No		Arts, Entertainment, ...		Bob Dylan	Deranged by the Donald? Try these techniques to restore calm
11	No					It's all a family affair at National Storage
12	No		Arts, Entertainment, ...		Ben Fordham	Peter Dutton's obscene business-class loop: Rear Window
13	No		Business and the eco...		Cliff Asness	Spat exposes private capital problem
14	No		Business and the eco...		Milton Friedman	Why Australia needs an institute for applied ethics
15	No					Cettire should learn from its reality check
16	No		Business and the eco...		George Tharenou	Silver lining despite lower GDP growth
17	No				quotes a 'friend'	Our housing crisis won't be fixed by pretend policies
18	No					More even distribution of work key to closing gender pay ga
19	No		Politics		Peter Costello, Kevin Rudd, Jim Chalm	Labor's third budget something for Arthur and Martha
20	No		Business and the eco...		Shane Quinn	Office property's bravest investor
21	Yes	Business and the economy	Business and the eco...	Sally Auld; Kathy So; Peter Downes; Jonathan Kearns		Why the Cost-of-Living 'Crisis' Is Not So Bad
22	No					If we don't take advantage of ASEAN's rewards, others will step in
23	No		Politics		Winston Churchill	Why dire state of US politics is fuelling the AI boom
24	No					Comprehensive upgrade puts Australia in Vietnam's top tie
25	Yes	Foreign relations and international security	Foreign relations and	Natalie Sambhi	Anwar Ibrahim, Ferdinand Marcos jr,	Walking A Fine Line at Asean

Source: Authors: Full dataset available on request

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