



Women for Media Report

An analysis of the gender balance of sources and experts
across Australian metropolitan print media

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Preface

The Women's Leadership Institute Australia (WLIA) was founded in 2010 by Carol Schwartz AM, prominent business leader and philanthropist. The WLIA established the Women for Media initiative in 2012 to increase the visibility of female leaders in the media speaking about their professional areas of expertise.

Women for Media is an online database and network of Australia's top female leaders in business, finance, the not-for-profit sector and government. It provides journalists and conference organisers with direct access to the contacts of leaders available to speak, in order to reduce barriers to achieving gender diversity of sources and experts.

Through the Women for Media initiative, the WLIA promotes and accelerates gender balance in thought leadership at public forums, conferences, on panels and across the media landscape.

In 2013, the WLIA initiated the Panel Pledge in Australia, calling on influential male and female leaders to query the gender balance of panels and/or conferences they are requested to participate in or sponsor. This initiative was immediately adopted by the Male Champions of Change movement under the leadership of former Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick AO. A simple question and insistence upon gender balance has been a catalyst for significant improvements in this sphere.

Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of:

Kaye Mullins – Lead Researcher
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Amy Mullins – Executive Director, WLIA
Carol Schwartz AM – Founding Chair, WLIA
Members of the WLIA board

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Women for Media Report 2016

The *Women for Media Report 2016* is an extensive analysis of the gender balance of sources and experts quoted in the Australian print media over a three-week period, from 1 February 2016 to 21 February 2016. The 'opinion' sections of the same publications were analysed over the full month of February 2016.

This report follows prior research commissioned by the WLIA; the *Women in Media* reports of 2012 and 2013, which analysed female and male sources quoted in the Australian print media over a one-week period.

The *Women for Media Report 2016* is unique in its breadth and depth of gender analysis for both news and opinion articles in the Australian newsprint media.

For contextual purposes, both federal and state parliaments were sitting during February. Common topics in February included results from the half-yearly company reporting season, tax reform proposals (including changes to the GST and negative gearing), asylum seekers and offshore detention, and a major government-led inquiry into institutional responses to child sexual abuse.

Methodology

Over 6000 articles were analysed across six major Australian newsprint publications from February 2016 – The Australian Financial Review, The Australian, The Age, The Sydney Morning Herald, The Herald Sun, and The Daily Telegraph.

The research encompasses all articles from the general news, business and related news, finance news, and 'opinion' sections of each newspaper. This *excludes* designated arts, lifestyle, entertainment, sport, and world sections, as well as magazines and lift-outs.

Articles in the designated 'opinion' section of each newspaper were analysed independently. Additionally, when opinion-style articles were situated outside the designated 'opinion' section, they were considered a 'commentary' article in this report (see pages 15 and 16), and have also been examined separately.

Surveyed Titles

Part I

Articles from the general news, business and related news, and finance news sections
1 February 2016 to 21 February 2016

Publication Title	Publication Days	Number of Issues
The Australian Financial Review	Monday - Saturday	18
The Australian	Monday - Saturday	18
The Age	Monday - Sunday	21
The Sydney Morning Herald	Monday - Sunday	21
The Herald Sun	Monday - Sunday	21
The Daily Telegraph	Monday - Sunday	21

Part II

Opinion editorials in the designated 'opinion' section of each publication
1 February 2016 to 29 February 2016

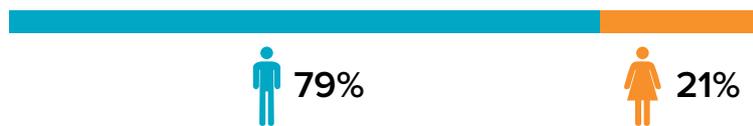
Publication Title	Publication Days	Number of Issues
The Australian Financial Review	Monday - Saturday	25
The Australian	Monday - Saturday	25
The Age	Monday - Sunday	29
The Sydney Morning Herald	Monday - Sunday	29
The Herald Sun	Monday - Sunday	29
The Daily Telegraph	Monday - Sunday	29

Part I

Articles from the general news, business and related news, and finance news sections
1 February 2016 to 21 February 2016

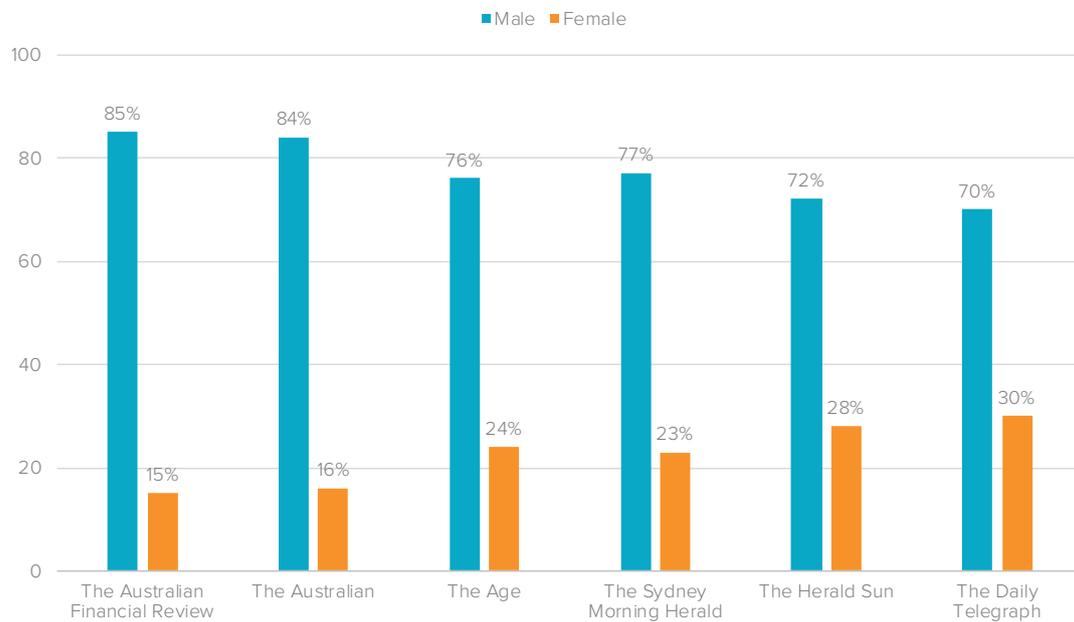
Overall Source Analysis by Gender

Gender breakdown of sources across all newspapers



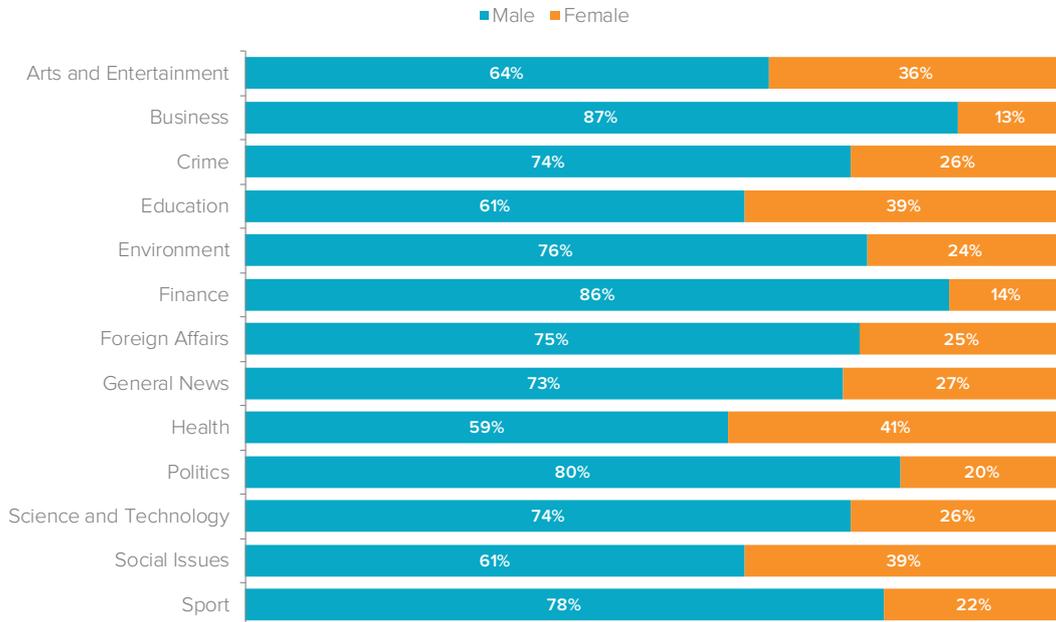
Women accounted for 21 per cent of sources directly quoted in news articles over the surveyed period. When examined by publication, the results also revealed a lack of gender balance, with the prevalence of women quoted ranging from 15 per cent, to a maximum of 30 per cent.

Gender breakdown of sources by publication



Overall Source Analysis by Category

Gender breakdown of sources by category



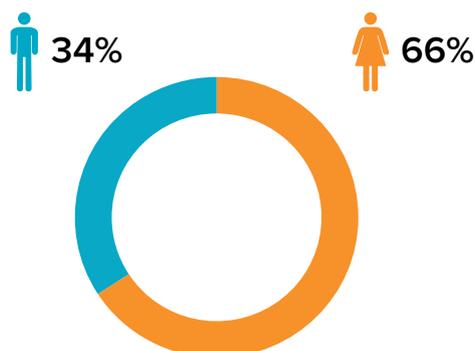
For the purposes of this analysis, articles were classified as belonging to one of thirteen possible categories on the basis of their primary content. The data indicates a considerable gender disparity between the number of men and women quoted in each category.

The largest differences were evident in the business, finance, politics, and sport categories, while the greatest gender balance in sources was seen in the arts and entertainment, education, health, and social issues categories.

Of interest, was the higher prevalence of women than men quoted on topics relating to stereotypically “female” issues and concerns, such as – parenting, childcare, paid parental leave, gender discrimination, family violence, relationships, and women in the workforce.

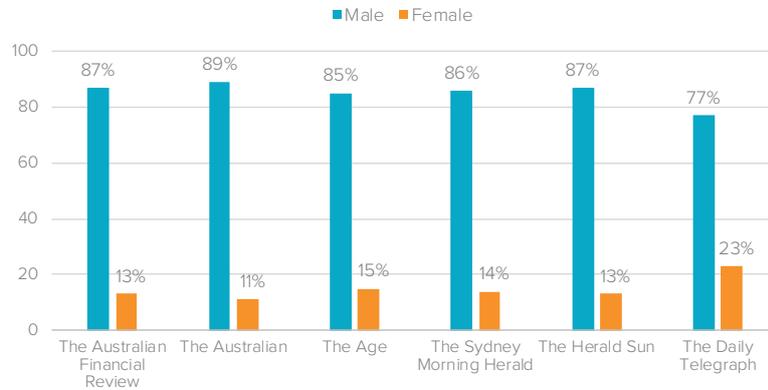
It is important to note that while these issues are commonly stereotyped as “female”, they are not solely women’s issues, but societal issues.

Gender breakdown of sources quoted on stereotypically “female” issues and concerns

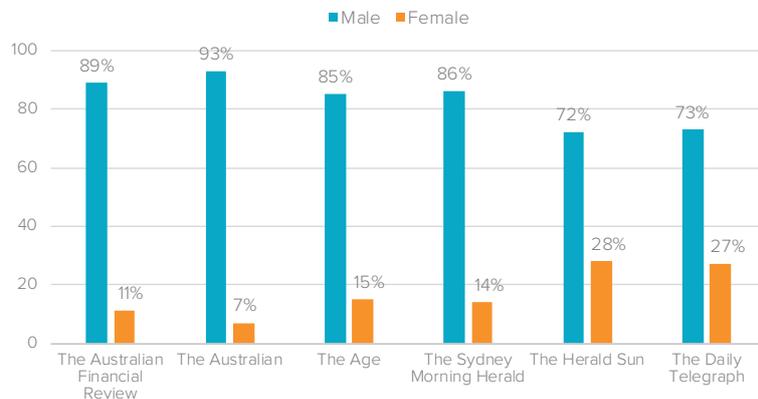


Select Category Analysis by Source Gender and Publication

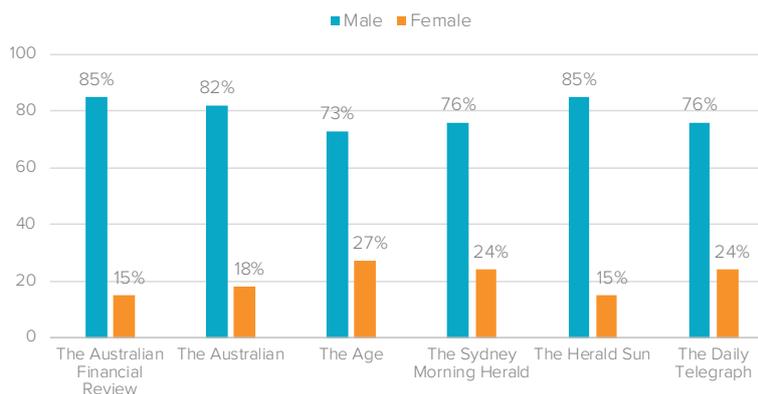
Gender breakdown of business sources by publication



Gender breakdown of finance sources by publication



Gender breakdown of politics sources by publication



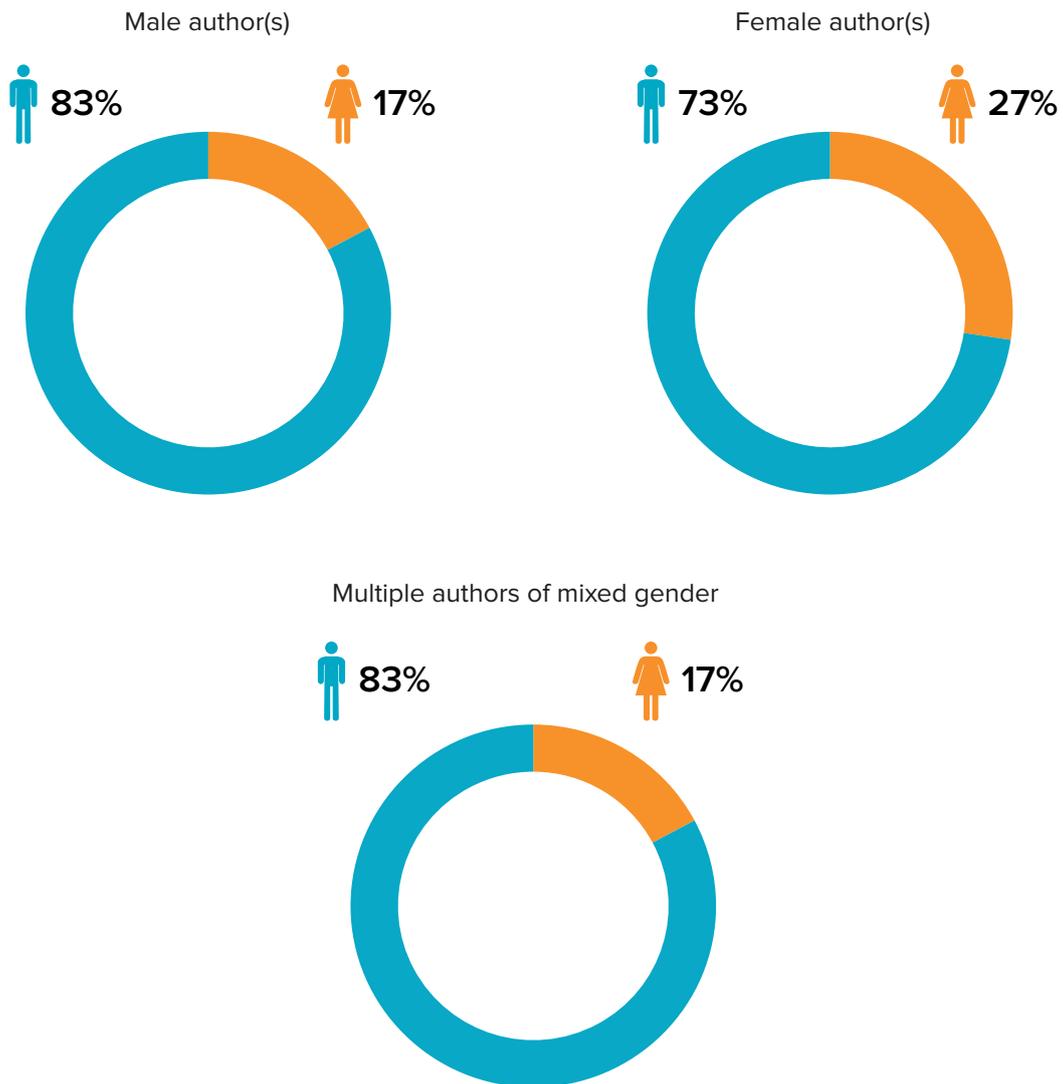
The most prominently commented upon categories across the surveyed period included business, finance, and politics. News articles belonging to these categories demonstrated a higher gender disparity in sources quoted than those quoted in articles of other categories.

The figures above highlight the differing proportions of male and female sources quoted in articles from business, finance, and politics news, sorted by publication.

Overall Source Analysis by Article Author

In this section, the authors of news articles are journalists employed by their respective publications.

Across all publications surveyed, female authors quoted female sources in greater numbers than their male counterparts. The instances where articles were authored by both men and women together, showed no difference in the gender representation of sources in comparison to articles authored by men alone.



Overall Topic Analysis by Gender

Each article in the dataset was assigned three topics based on its primary content.

The five most frequently covered topics across all surveyed articles are listed below, along with the gender breakdown of sources quoted in articles classified under those topics.

These results suggest that thought leadership in the most popular news topics during February was dominated by male sources and experts.

Topic	Male	Female
Profits	91%	9%
ASX	93%	7%
China	84%	16%
Tax Reform	92%	8%
Global Markets	92%	8%

What Men and Women Speak About the Most

The most frequently discussed topics by male sources, and female sources, were also analysed.

Male sources were most frequently quoted in articles with topics relating to business, politics, and finance, whilst female sources featured most predominantly in articles with topics relating to family, foreign affairs, and violent crime.

Male	Female
ASX	Children
Profits	China
China	Foreign Policy
Tax Reform	Murder
Investors	Nauru

Overall Source Analysis by Position

Positions were recorded for all sources quoted in news articles during the surveyed period. The five most common positions held, by gender, are listed.

This list demonstrates that both male and female sources quoted are most often in positions of leadership.

However, of the female sources analysed, a higher proportion were referred to in a familial role than their male counterparts.

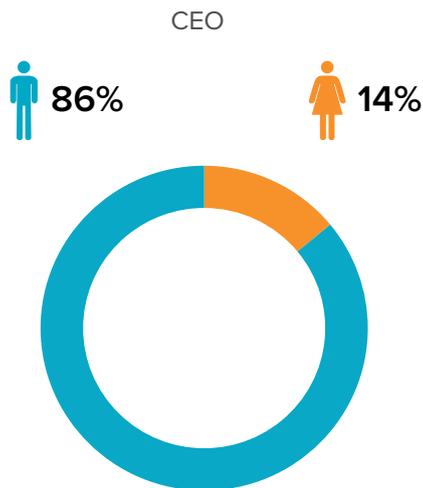
Male	Female
CEO	CEO
Analyst	Spokeswoman
Managing Director	Senator
Spokesman	Mother
Chairman	President



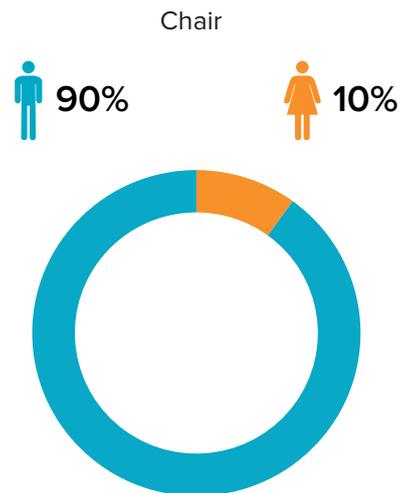
Overall Source Analysis by Position

Four frequently encountered positions attributed to sources were analysed to highlight the proportion of men and women quoted in these roles.

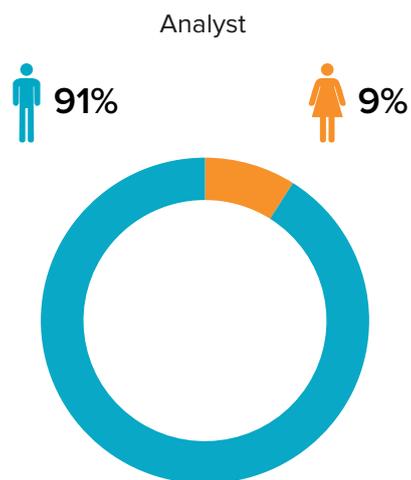
The greatest disparity was found in the positions of 'Analyst', 'Chair' and 'CEO', thus indicating that positions of influence and leadership in news coverage remain male dominated.



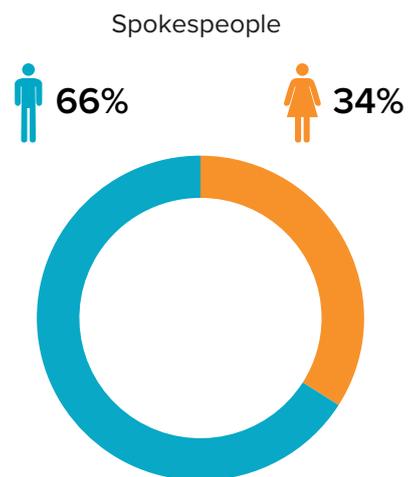
Percentage of male or female sources quoted where their position contains the words 'CEO', 'Founder', 'Executive Director', or 'Managing Director' in their title



Percentage of male or female sources quoted where their position contains the words 'Chair', 'Chairman', or 'Chairwoman' in their title



Percentage of male or female sources quoted where their position contains the words 'Analyst', 'Economist', or 'Strategist' in their title



Percentage of male or female sources quoted where their position contains the words 'Spokesman', 'Spokeswoman', or 'Spokesperson' in their title

Overall Source Analysis by Name and Organisation

The following is a list of the top five names of sources quoted, organised by gender and in order of decreasing frequency. Both male and female politicians proved to be the most consistently quoted individuals throughout the surveyed period.

It is noteworthy that individuals from the business, community, and other sectors did not feature in this list, rather, unnamed spokespeople more frequently commented on behalf of their organisations.

Most quoted male sources	Most quoted female sources
Spokesman	Spokeswoman
Malcolm Turnbull	Julie Bishop
Scott Morrison	Michaelia Cash
Bill Shorten	Sussan Ley
Glenn Stevens	Jill Hennessy

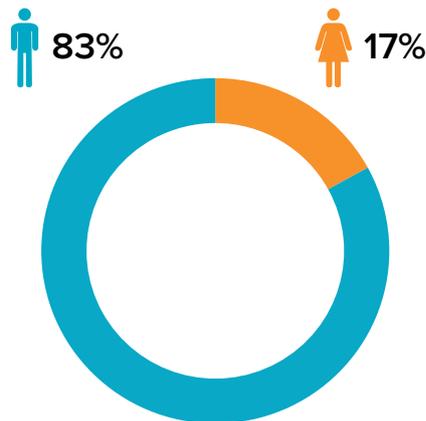
The following is a list of the top ten organisations attributed to all sources quoted, organised by gender and in order of decreasing frequency. The most prevalent organisations associated with both male and female sources were the federal and state governments, along with the Australian Labor Party, highlighting the centrality of political and policy discourse in Australia's newsprint media.

Most common organisations for male sources	Most common organisations for female sources
Federal Government	Federal Government
Australian Labor Party	Australian Labor Party
NSW Government	Victorian Government
Victorian Government	NSW Government
National Australia Bank	Victoria Police
ANZ	ICAC
Reserve Bank of Australia	Morgans
Victoria Police	Mirvac
UBS	QLD Government
Goldman Sachs	BK Asset Management

Overall 'Commentary' Article Analysis by Author

'Commentary' articles are opinion-style pieces situated outside the designated 'opinion' section

Gender breakdown of 'commentary' article authors



Opinion-based articles were considered a 'commentary' article in this report when they were situated outside the designated 'opinion' section, and are examined here. 'Commentary' articles appeared throughout the general news, business, and finance sections of each publication.

Most commonly, these articles were written by 'columnists' – often journalists who are employed by their respective publication. Less frequently, 'commentary' articles were written by a 'guest' – authors with clearly indicated external affiliations.

Just 17 per cent of all 'commentary' articles situated outside the designated 'opinion' section were written by female authors. This indicates a lack of gender diverse thought leadership across public policy debates throughout the surveyed publications during February 2016 – a time when federal policy issues of taxation and immigration were a particular point of contestation.

Overall 'Commentary' Article Analysis by Gender, Author-Type and Publication

'Commentary' Articles

Situated outside the designated 'opinion' section

Gender breakdown by author-type and publication

Publication	Male	Female
The Australian Financial Review		
Overall	84%	16%
Columnists	80%	20%
Guests	100%	0%
The Australian		
Overall	86%	14%
Columnists	87%	13%
Guests	84%	16%
The Age		
Overall	88%	12%
Columnists	88%	12%
Guests*	100%	0%
The Sydney Morning Herald		
Overall	83%	17%
Columnists	83%	17%
Guests*	67%	33%
The Herald Sun		
Overall	83%	17%
Columnists	89%	11%
Guests*	50%	50%
The Daily Telegraph		
Overall	60%	40%
Columnists	58%	42%
Guests*	75%	25%

*Number of guests < 10

NOTE: 'Commentary' articles with multiple authors of mixed gender writing together were excluded for the purpose of this analysis, and numbered only 1 in total.

Five of the six publications surveyed displayed a pronounced gender disparity in 'commentary' articles authored by columnists. This is evidence of an underrepresentation of female journalists writing in a format beyond news and feature articles. It is noteworthy that one publication achieved relative gender balance in their columnist-authored 'commentary' articles over the surveyed period.

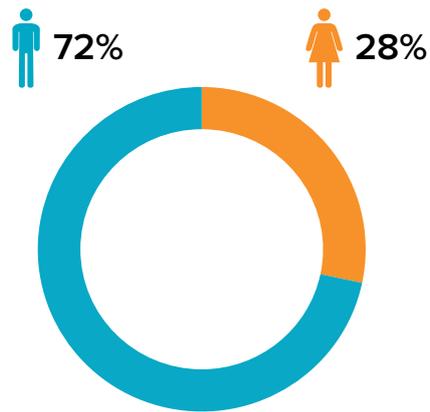
Across all publications there were fewer guests than columnists as authors of 'commentary' articles situated outside the designated 'opinion' section. However, those guest authors that were featured, were predominantly male.

Part II

Opinion editorials in the designated 'opinion' section of each publication
1 February 2016 to 29 February 2016

Gender Analysis of Opinion Editorials

Gender breakdown of opinion editorial authors



The 'opinion' section of a newspaper represents a curated selection of thought leaders writing on current and newsworthy topics. Opinion editorials in the designated 'opinion' section across the six surveyed Australian newsprint publications, gathered over the full month of February, are analysed here.

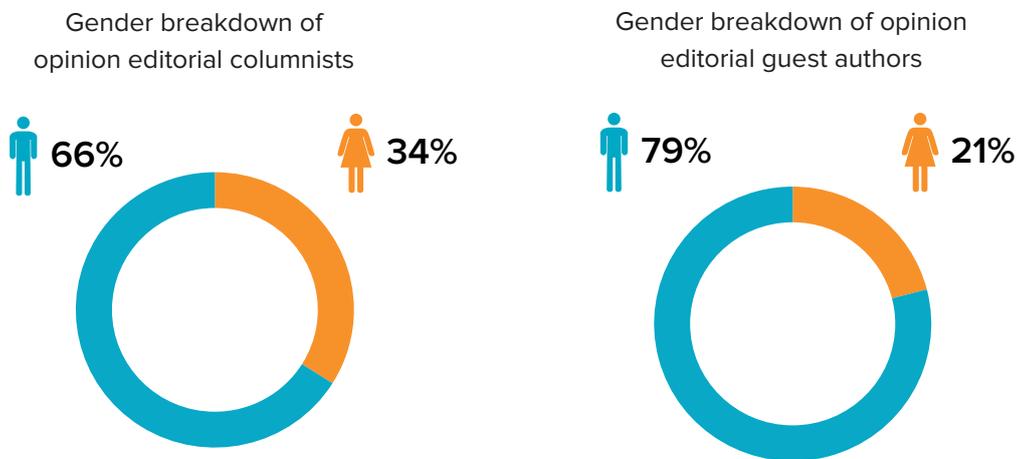
The proportion of female authors to male authors sourced to provide opinion editorials heavily favoured male commentators.

Of the 562 articles featured in the designated 'opinion' section across all publications, just 162, or 28 per cent, were written by women.

Gender Analysis of Opinion Editorials by Author-Type

When authors are differentiated into ‘columnists’ – those employed regularly by a publication, and ‘guests’ – those sourced for singular or irregular instances, there existed a marked gender difference. The data indicates a large gender disparity between male and female columnists, and male and female guests, providing expertise on a variety of subject matter.

Furthermore, there was a higher percentage of female columnists authoring opinion editorials, in contrast to female guest authors.



Guest authors can be commissioned to write an opinion editorial, as well as can pitch their ideas to an opinion editor. Therefore any gender imbalance in the representation of guest authors can be attributed to ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ factors, which vary in extent with each publication.

Gender Analysis of Opinion Editorials by Author-Type and Publication

'Opinion' Section

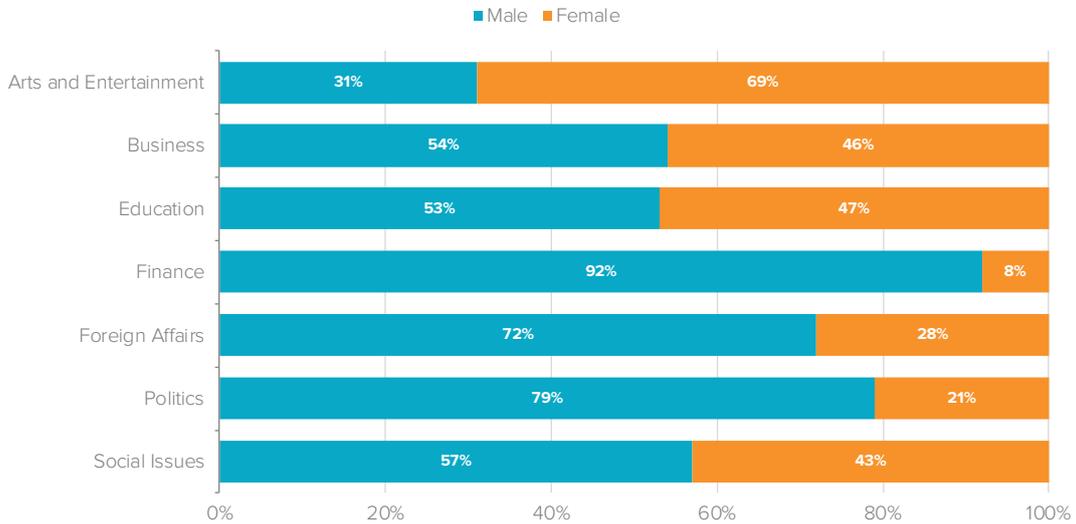
Gender breakdown by author-type and publication

Publication	Male	Female
The Australian Financial Review		
Overall	88%	12%
Columnists	85%	15%
Guests	89%	11%
The Australian		
Overall	74%	26%
Columnists	65%	35%
Guests	88%	12%
The Age		
Overall	79%	21%
Columnists	79%	21%
Guests	79%	21%
The Sydney Morning Herald		
Overall	70%	30%
Columnists	68%	32%
Guests	72%	28%
The Herald Sun		
Overall	59%	41%
Columnists	52%	48%
Guests	71%	29%
The Daily Telegraph		
Overall	62%	38%
Columnists	57%	43%
Guests	69%	31%

NOTE: 'Opinion' articles with multiple authors of mixed gender writing together were excluded for the purpose of this analysis, and numbered less than 5 in total.

Gender Analysis of Opinion Editorials by Category

Most frequently published categories of opinion editorials by gender



Opinion editorials were categorised according to their primary content, with the seven most common areas displayed above.

In the opinion section, articles categorised as arts and entertainment, business, finance and education, were small in number. These topics were usually featured elsewhere in the publications and published as individual 'commentary' articles.

Articles categorised under politics, social issues and foreign affairs, were much greater in number, dominating 'opinion' sections during February 2016.

The category with the highest overall number of articles – politics – exhibited a striking gender disparity, with only 21 per cent of political opinion editorials written by female authors. Of this 21 per cent, just five per cent were written by female guest authors.

Gender Analysis of Opinion Editorials by Topic

Top 5 most frequently covered topics in opinion editorials by author gender

Male	Female
Tax Reform	Tax Reform
Malcolm Turnbull	GST
GST	US Election
Negative Gearing	Federal Election
US Election	Superannuation

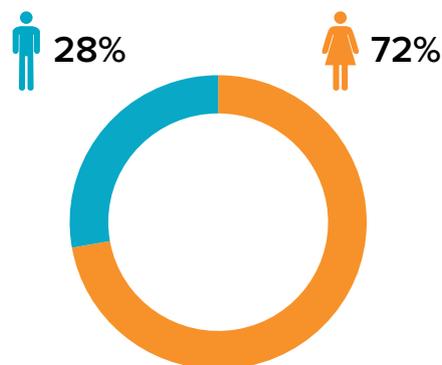
In order of decreasing frequency

Proportional data for most common shared opinion editorial topics

	Male	Female
Tax Reform	83%	17%
GST	76%	24%
US Election	67%	33%

Three of the five most frequently covered topics in ‘opinion’ sections were shared by both male and female authors. While men and women wrote on similar issues, the gender proportion of authors writing on these shared topics was unbalanced.

Gender breakdown of opinion editorial authors writing on stereotypically “female” issues and concerns



In ‘opinion’ sections, the data exhibited a higher prevalence of women than men writing on topics relating to stereotypically “female” issues and concerns, such as – parenting, gender discrimination, family violence, relationships, and women in the workforce.

It is important to note that while these issues are commonly stereotyped as “female”, they are not solely women’s issues, but societal issues.

Improving the Gender Balance of Sources and Experts in the Media

Achieving gender balance in experts and sources quoted and interviewed in the media is important, not only because diversity of thought is more interesting, but because it leads to the best possible discussions and outcomes.

Even more significantly, when stereotypical representations of women and other gender norms are challenged or disrupted, our perception of men and women's role in society changes.

Women may not have reached equal representation at the highest levels of leadership, but there is an abundance of impressive and highly-qualified women leaders and experts who are able to speak across the various topics covered in the media.

To best reflect reality and the consumers of media, we must draw on the full talent and potential of the Australian community.

The effect of a greater representation of women speaking in the media on their areas of expertise is the creation of more visible role models in Australia for women and men to look to.

The WLIA seeks to break down barriers to gender diversity in thought leadership across the media landscape through the Women for Media initiative. We have worked with various news teams and producers to assist in their goals to achieve gender balance and have recently seen promising signs of progress, however there is much more to be done.

Here are some tips and strategies for achieving gender balance in media sources and interviewees.

7 Steps to Achieve Gender Balance

1. Get buy-in from your team in order to work together on this goal, or create change individually
2. Set a target for gender balance. Sometimes this may involve setting smaller interim targets to help work towards 50/50
3. Put strategies in place to achieve the target
4. Measure your progress towards this target at regular intervals
5. Report your progress to a colleague or informal advisor
6. Review your strategies and their effectiveness in achieving gender balance
7. When you reach gender balance, share your successes with others and as always continue to be mindful of the breadth and depth of diverse "talent" available

Strategies to Consider

- ✓ Review your contact list to identify any gender gaps in experts across the topics you cover so that new contacts may be identified and added
- ✓ Set up informal meetings with potential sources to establish trusted working relationships and a direct line of communication
- ✓ Broaden your and your team's networks by asking good media "talent" for other potential "talent" they recommend
- ✓ Set-up a newsroom or studio database of male and female experts that can be contacted by all
- ✓ Utilise the Women for Media database to access the direct contacts of female leaders in Australia
- ✓ Look to best practice from a range of media outlets and individuals, in Australia and overseas, who have created change in this space:
 - *Examples include Matthew Winkler's [gender balance directive](#) at Bloomberg, and the Mornings With Jon Faine team on ABC 774 Melbourne who began a project to [achieve gender balance](#) in the show's interviewees*

Resources

[Women for Media](#) is an online database for journalists, editors, and producers which is free to utilise and provides direct contacts for women leaders across all sectors who are available to be interviewed and comment.

Contact the Women for Media Team



www.womenformedia.com.au



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[@WomenForMedia](https://twitter.com/WomenForMedia)



Women's Leadership
Institute Australia

www.wlia.org.au