

Women's Leadership Institute Australia

2019 Women for Media Report: 'You can't be what you can't see'

REPORT BY

Jenna Price with Anne Maree Payne

Commissioned by:



Funded by:



Research by:



Acknowledgements by Jenna Price

Many thanks to the Women's Leadership Institute of Australia (WLIA) and the Trawalla Foundation. Their grant made this snapshot of Australian media possible.

In particular, I'd like to thank Carol Schwartz, Chair of WLIA, whose boundless concentration on gender equality helps me believe it is still possible, although possibly not in my lifetime. I'd also like to thank Sarah Buckley of Trawalla Foundation for being an anchor; and also Lara Richardson of Trawalla, for helping make this report happen.

Their lives are as busy as mine.

Anne Maree Payne is a wonderful co-author of this report with complementary skills. She crunched all the numbers and gave me great direction.

Jane Nicholls who completed all the interviews with the editors.

Daniel O'Neill who did the data collection for the opeds.

Frances Shaw who looked at management data.

I'd also like to acknowledge the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney, in particular Keely Duffy and Daphne Freeder.

A wonderful supportive team.

Overview of Women's Leadership Institute of Australia (WLIA)

The WLIA exists to catalyse, inspire and affect systemic solutions to achieve gender equality in Australia – to provide women with an equal voice, equal opportunity and equal recognition.



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 includes 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.

WLIA also established the Panel Pledge, in collaboration with Australian Male Champions for Change and Chief Executive Women. The pledge is a commitment by senior leaders and organisations to ensure voices of women are included in the conversation via a simple promise of gender balance as a condition of participation on or sponsorship of any panel.

Contents

A brief guide to what we found

How do we know?	4
What we found	5
What we wanted to know	8

The results in more detail

Representation of female sources	9
Journalist's gender and sources	11
Gender and story topic	14
Summary	15
Government and politics	17
Law, crime and justice	18
Business and finance	19
Celebrities/royals	20
Media/arts/entertainment	21
Science	22
Sport	23
Disasters and accidents	24
All other	24
Journalist's gender and opinion pieces	25
Photojournalism and gender	27

What do we know already?

How far have we come?	30
What's the fix? Here's a few ideas you might like to try and see how they work...	33

Appendices

Appendix 1: Transcripts from interviews with media organisations	37
Appendix 2: Selected Literature Review, Media Gender Analysis Project 2019	46

A brief guide to what we found

Women are missing, still missing.

We are not missing from real life, of course. We work in hospitals and schools, in laboratories and in construction and we make up 50.7 per cent of the population; but the stories which appear in the media do not reflect that reality.

Instead, the media reality is that women are not experts, not sources. As those sources, we are missing from news stories and from feature stories, we are missing from photos both as photographers and as subjects; and we are missing in that very influential place in the Australian media landscape, our voices are missing from opinion pieces and columns.

Some organisations are trying to change that dynamic (but you will have to read to the end to see what they are doing).

How do we know?

Researchers from the University of Technology Sydney, supported by the Trawalla Foundation, took a snapshot of Australia's most influential news sites on four consecutive Thursdays in October 2018. We chose Thursdays because that's a high traffic day with big audiences, between 12 noon and 2pm; and we selected the top five stories on each site from their position on the homepage. In February 2019, we analysed the top five opinion pieces on each site across Tuesday to Saturday in one week. Again, we looked at what was on offer between 12 noon and 2pm. For both these data sets, we asked two ordinary readers of news sites to identify what they considered to be the top stories at that time.

This is just a glimpse, a very small sample of a bigger picture but it gives us an idea of what's going on.

What publications did we choose and why? We wanted east coast and west coast and we also wanted sites which were 'fed' by television content. This report has seven of the 10 sites which Nielsen says rank highest for traffic for digital content. As we were looking at news media, we used 9news in place of nine.com.au and Yahoo!7 in place of Yahoo. We also added *The Australian*, *the Financial Review*, *The Courier Mail*, *the Herald Sun*, *The West Australian* and *BuzzFeed* for a range of reasons, including audience and geographical variation.

 9NEWS

 news.com.au

 The Guardian

 ABC
Australian Broadcasting Corporation

 THE AGE

 Herald Sun

 BuzzFeed

 THE AUSTRALIAN

 The Sydney Morning Herald

 The Courier Mail

 The Daily Telegraph

 The West Australian

 Daily Mail Australia

 FINANCIAL REVIEW

 YAHOO!7

¹ [Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australian Government, 2016](#)

What we found

What do we read when we enter the top space of those websites? We read stories about men, by men. Our snapshot showed men were quoted far more often than women and that the stories by male journalists were positioned slightly more often in the top spots on the home pages of these websites. Women write about royals and men write about political leaders. Men write about sport, women write about media, the arts and entertainment.

Women are also absent from the photos which accompany those top stories. Our data collection coincided with the royal visit; if photographs of Meghan Markle and female crime victims were omitted from our data set, the representation of female subjects would have been even lower. If we want those websites to reflect Australia, we urgently need more women as subjects in photographs. It might help to have more women behind the camera – just under 80 per cent of the bylines on photographs belong to men.

Women journalists occupy that important top space just under half the time but here's what the figures show: men's voices as sources are louder and prouder. Across our data set from all of the sites analysed, the average representation of female sources was just over one-third. Only the stories on one news site quoted more women than men; and that was *Buzzfeed Australia*. Of the rest, the next best was 9News with women representing 45 per cent of the sources quoted. At the other end sits the *Australian Financial Review*, where women made up only 14 per cent of sources.

Finally, if you read an opinion piece from the two national publications, *The Australian* and the *Financial Review*, know that they will nearly always be written by men.

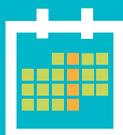
2019 Women for Media - Insights:

Research undertaken:



15

of Australia's most influential news sites



4

consecutive Thursdays, top 5 stories on each site



50.7

per cent of the population

Journalistic representation:



approx

50%

of the sites achieved gender parity on the representation of male & female journalists



Herald Sun

has the **LOWEST** % of female journalists at:

14%



BuzzFeed

has the **HIGHEST** % of female journalists at:

70%

Representation of female sources:



Women account for

34%

of direct sources quoted

and

24%

of indirect sources (sources named but not directly quoted)



FINANCIAL REVIEW

has the **LOWEST** % of female sources:

14%



BuzzFeed

has the **HIGHEST** % of female sources:

59%

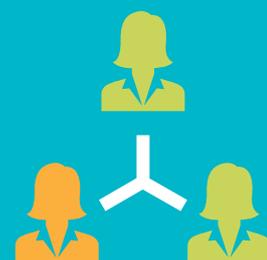
Journalist's gender and sources:

Female journalists are significantly

more likely to

use **FEMALE** sources (**40%**)

than **MALE** journalists (**24%**)



Gender and story topic:

FEMALE JOURNALISTS WROTE:



Celebrity
and Royals:

76%



Government, politics, business,
finance, law, crime and justice:

approx

40%



Sport:

12%

FEMALE SOURCES QUOTED:

Celebrity
and Royals:

59%

Law, crime
& justice:

21%

Business
& finance:

18%

Sport:

5%

Opinion Pieces:



282

opinion pieces
collected
across 1 week
in February



Female
journalists:

38%



FINANCIAL
REVIEW

has the
LOWEST %
of female
journalists:

10%



9
NEWS

has the
HIGHEST %
of female
journalists:

73%



Women
wrote

16%

of opinion
pieces about
government
and politics

Photojournalism:



**Female
photographers:**

22%



**Women as subjects
of photographs:**

36%

What we wanted to know

Here's what we looked for.

The data provide a snapshot indicating the gender representation across a number of indicators for each news site analysed.

- ▶ What was the gender of the journalist/s for each story in the data set?
- ▶ What was the gender of all sources either directly or indirectly cited in each story in the data set?
- ▶ What was the gender of the photographer for any photos accompanying the stories in the data set?
- ▶ What was the gender of the subject/s of all photos included in the data set?
- ▶ What was the representation of gender across a range of indicators (journalists / sources / photographers / subjects of photos) for each news site?
- ▶ Did the topic of the news story impact on gender representation?
- ▶ Did the gender of the journalist impact on the gender of the sources used?

The results in more detail

From here on, you'll find a number of tables to provide more detail.

Representation of female sources

The table below, Representation of female (direct) sources by news site, provides an overview of the representation of female sources quoted in the top five stories on each of the nominated sites on the days on which data were collected.

The representation of female sources who were directly quoted is on average 34 per cent and ranged from a high of 59 per cent (BuzzFeed) to a low of 14 per cent (the Australian Financial Review).

Buzzfeed, which claims to be targeting “a new generation of news consumers looking for something new”², is a frontrunner in terms of gender equity in news reporting. It has the highest representation of both female journalists and inclusion of female sources across all of the news sites analysed. However, an analysis of its stories shows that nearly half are related to celebrity, royals, media, arts and entertainment, the stories which are more likely to be written by women and quote women as sources.

Representation of female (direct) sources by news site

NEWS SITE	SOURCES QUOTED		
	MALE	FEMALE	N/S
Financial Review	38 (86%)	6 (14%)	4
The West Australian	17 (85%)	3 (15%)	3
Herald Sun	33 (80%)	8 (20%)	10
ABC	45 (75%)	15 (25%)	9
Daily Telegraph	23 (74%)	8 (26%)	3
SMH	28 (72%)	11 (28%)	10
The Australian	42 (69%)	18 (31%)	4
The Guardian	47 (68%)	22 (32%)	12
Courier Mail	26 (67%)	13 (33%)	4
Yahoo!7	17 (65%)	9 (35%)	16
News.com.au	43 (64%)	24 (36%)	20
Daily Mail Australia	24 (60%)	16 (40%)	10
The Age	25 (57%)	19 (43%)	5
9news	18 (55%)	15 (45%)	5
Buzzfeed	23 (41%)	33 (59%)	17
TOTAL	416 (66%)	212 (34%)	122

² <https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/buzzfeednews/about-buzzfeed-news>

Kate de Brito, Editor-in-chief, News.com.au

I definitely want gender diversity in our newsroom, I definitely want it in my organisation. I definitely want to see it in society, but whether we make that connection in our journalism, I'm not sure. It's not something I could claim that we think about story by story. We might say, 'Hey there's too many male faces' on the page, but it'd be less about trying to create 'gender diversity' on our homepage and more about the look of it... 'Why have we got all these men on a page?' But sure, we want women, we want men, we want people of colour, we want all that but I'd be lying if I said we come up in the morning and say 'Let's make sure the page is gender diverse'.

We like women on the home page. Sometimes those men are all ugly old men. I shouldn't say that! We're not the sort of site anyway where all men would appeal anyway. Maybe it's different for the Financial Review, maybe that's what appeals to their audience. But we have a very even skew of male and female readers. It goes between 51/49, 49/51 and it swaps around, it's very even. I don't think for our audience it would work for them to see a bunch of men in suits. It's definitely not where we are.

Journalist's gender and sources

Does the gender of the writer matter?

Yes, it does if you want to read more women's voices. Women quote more women than men do – but they still quote a lot of men. Here's how the gender of the reporters breaks down.

Gender of journalist by news site

NEWS SITE:	BYLINES:		N/S
	MALE	FEMALE	
Herald Sun	19 (86%)	3 (14%)	1
9news	9 (69%)	4 (31%)	8
Courier Mail	18 (67%)	9 (33%)	0
The Age	13 (65%)	7 (35%)	0
Daily Telegraph	12 (60%)	8 (40%)	1
The West Australian	6 (55%)	5 (45%)	10
News.com.au	11 (52%)	10 (48%)	2
The Australian	12 (52%)	11 (48%)	1
ABC 67	11 (50%)	11 (50%)	3
Fin Review	13 (50%)	13 (50%)	0
Yahoo!7 ³	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	18
SMH	11 (48%)	12 (52%)	1
The Guardian	10 (48%)	11 (52%)	1
Daily Mail Australia	8 (35%)	15 (65%)	0
Buzzfeed	6 (30%)	14 (70%)	0
TOTAL	141 (52%)	131 (48%)	45

The representation of female journalists credited as authors across our news data set ranged from a low of 14 per cent at The Herald Sun to a high of 70 per cent on BuzzFeed. Women occupy nearly half the real-estate of the top stories on the home page of our leading news sites.

Around half of the sites analysed had achieved or were close to achieving gender parity in the representation of male and female journalists, and across all sites analysed the overall representation of male to female journalists was 52 per cent to 48 per cent.

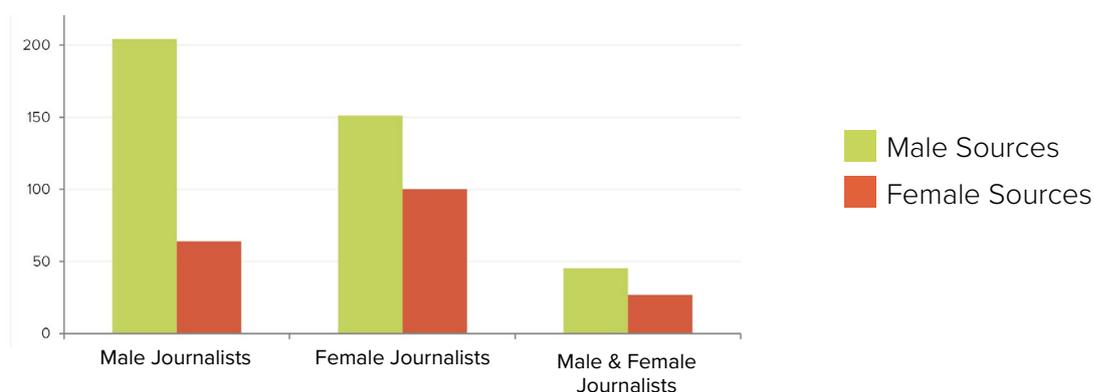
³ Only two stories of the 20 stories collected from the Yahoo site were attributed to identified journalists.

So, if we are nearly at 50/50 in terms of bylines, why does gender matter?

Our figures suggest that female journalists are significantly more likely to use female sources (40 per cent) than male journalists (24 per cent).

Articles co-authored by male and female journalists are also significantly more likely to use female sources (37 per cent) than articles written solely by male journalists (24 per cent). In other words, if you want more diverse sources, a good tip is to have more diverse writers. These figures show women are a good influence on gender diversity. This could easily be generalisable to other diverse groups.

Relationship between gender of journalist and gender of sources quoted



Male sources

The use of male sources by male journalists ranged from 93 per cent at the Australian Financial Review to 62 per cent on BuzzFeed.

Female journalists on *Buzzfeed* were the most likely to use female sources (65 per cent), closely followed by 9news (63 per cent). Female journalists approached gender parity in the sources they cited at *The Age* (53 per cent) and *The Guardian* (47 per cent). Consciously or not, those women assiduously quote as many women as they do men.

The education editor at *The Age*, Henrietta Cook, says she definitely considers gender diversity in her sources.

“It is something at the back of my mind, but my round also has a lot of women academics. Most of the principals’ associations are headed up by women and I often feel that it’s mothers who are much more likely to contact me about issues at schools than fathers,” she said.

Relationship between gender of journalist and gender of sources directly quoted

	No. of Male Sources Quoted	No. of Female Sources Quoted
Male Journalist/s	204 (76%)	64 (34%)
Female Journalist/s	151 (60%)	100 (40%)
Male & Female Co-Authors	45 (63%)	27 (37%)

At the other end of the spectrum in our sample, 100 per cent of the sources cited by female journalists at *The Herald Sun* were male, and female journalists also used a high proportion of male sources at the *Financial Review* (82 per cent), the ABC (78 per cent), and *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Courier Mail* and *The West Australian* (each at 75 per cent). These figures suggest that the gender of the journalist alone is not a reliable predictor of the likelihood of female sources being cited.

Here’s one more thing you should know about who gets quoted in news stories.

News stories are constructed in a whole range of ways. Sometimes journalists might need to use information from someone where that person is not quoted but use information provided by that person. An example might be when journalists are writing about a new medical discovery and may want to use extra material from another scientist or doctor. In this research, we decided that if someone wasn’t directly quoted but their name appeared, we would cite them as an indirect source.

The table below provides an overview of the representation of female indirect sources in the top five stories on each of the nominated sites on the days on which data were collected. An indirect source was identified where a source was named within a story but not directly quoted.

Women were even less likely to be used as indirect sources than they were to be direct sources for news stories: females constituted 24 per cent of indirect sources compared to 34 per cent of direct sources.

Indirect sources were often “experts” within a field who may have been approached by journalists to provide supplementary evidence for a story. The low representation of women in this category reflects that men are more likely to be represented in the types of roles that are likely to be called upon to comment or provide an “expert opinion” on news stories; suggesting that ambient expertise is perceived to be male. As a wise US political scientist once said, women also know stuff (see page 34 for further detail).

Representation of female (indirect) sources by news site

NEWS SITE	SOURCES QUOTED		N/S
	MALE	FEMALE	
9news	2 (100%)	0	2
SMH	10 (100%)	0	2
The Age 67	4 (100%)	0	2
Daily Telegraph	6 (86%)	1 (14%)	0
Fin Review	8 (80%)	2 (20%)	8
Yahoo!7	4 (80%)	1 (20%)	0
The Guardian	7 (78%)	2 (22%)	3
Buzzfeed Total	3 (75%)	1 (25%)	2
News.com	21 (75%)	7 (25%)	5
ABC	5 (71%)	2 (29%)	7
Herald Sun	19 (70%)	8 (30%)	4
Daily Mail Australia	4 (67%)	2 (33%)	1
Courier Mail	2 (50%)	2 (50%)	0
The Australian	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	3
The West Australian	1 (50%)	1 (50%)	2
TOTAL	81 (76%)	25 (24%)	37

Gender and story topic

Do women and men write about the same things? Not by a long shot.

What women write about is gendered

When the royals visited Australia in 2018, we counted stories about them in the celebrity category (and that was dominated by Meghan Markle). More than three-quarters of celebrity stories were written by women. At the other end, in sport, men wrote nearly 90 per cent of the stories (this is a reminder that although there are now many women sports reporters they may not always get that top placement on the website. They certainly didn't in our sample).

Across government, politics, business, finance, law, crime and justice, about 60 per cent of those stories are written by men.

Gender profile by story topic

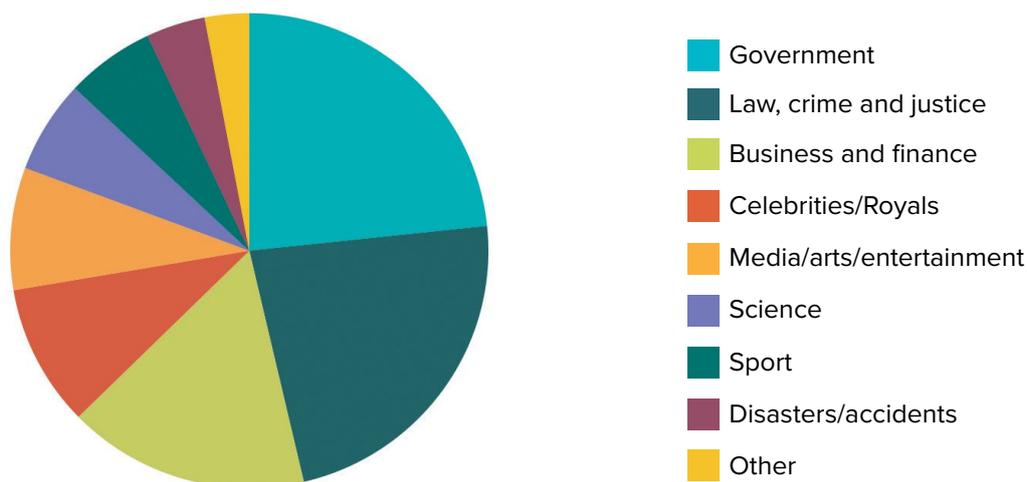
Categorising the stories by topic enabled us to identify whether female journalists were more likely to be covering particular categories of stories, and whether female sources were more or less likely to be quoted (either directly or indirectly) depending on the topic of the news item. **The answer is a resounding yes.**

We analysed 300 news stories across four separate data collection dates and we then categorised them into one of nine separate topic codes, as follow:

- ▶ Government and politics
- ▶ Law, crime and justice
- ▶ Business and finance
- ▶ Science (defined broadly to include a range of scientific fields encompassing areas as diverse as meteorology, climate change and medicine / health sciences)
- ▶ Disasters and accidents (including 'near misses')
- ▶ Media/arts/entertainment
- ▶ Celebrities/royals
- ▶ Sport
- ▶ All other (which includes the weird and the wonderful, the odd and unusual)

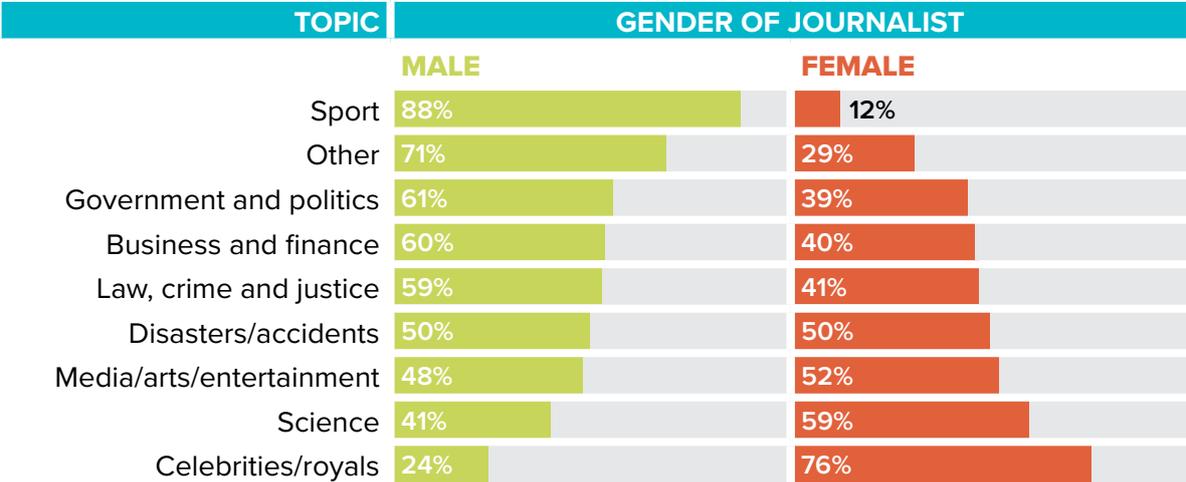
This shows nearly a quarter of stories were about government and politics; and a similar percentage about crime.

News stories by topic

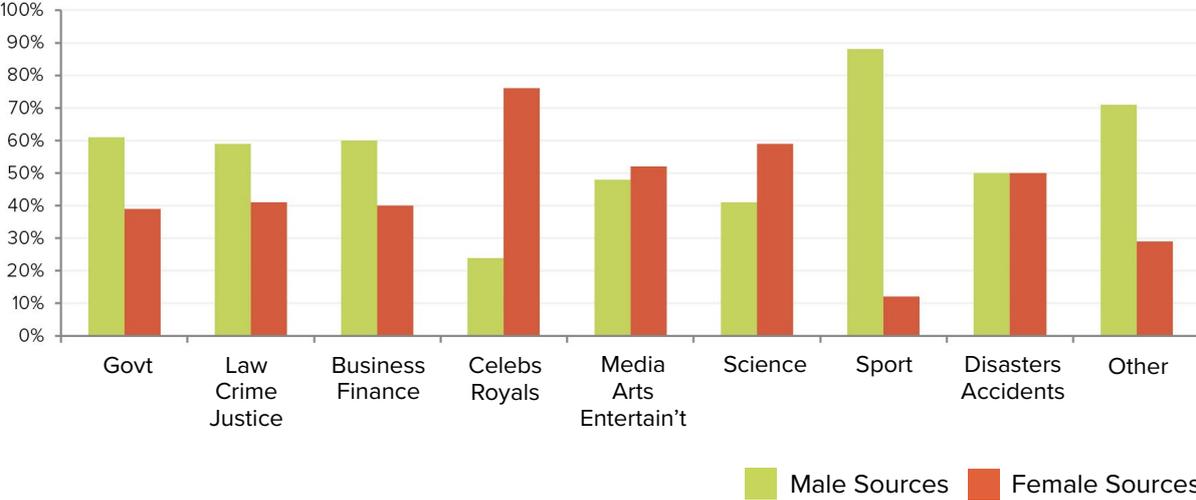


This is a general overview of all our sites. It's a clear picture of what gets a good run on our news sites at the top of the home page. Adding together politics, crime and the odd and unusual makes up half the content. But most women journalists get their bylines for stories which are not in those categories.

Gender of journalist by story code



Gender of journalist by story code



Men made up the majority of both direct and indirect sources across all story topics with the single exception of stories relating to Celebrities/Royals.

Men constituted 95 per cent of direct sources in sports-related stories, 82 per cent in business and finance stories, 79 per cent in law, crime and justice stories, dropping to a low of 41 per cent in stories relating to celebrities/royals.⁴ The representation of male indirect sources (sources mentioned in the story but not directly quoted) was even higher in most story topic categories.

Gender of sources quoted (direct and indirect) by story code

TOPIC	DIRECT SOURCES		INDIRECT SOURCES	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Government and politics	159 (68%)	76 (32%)	46 (72%)	18 (38%)
Law, crime and justice	73 (79%)	29 (21%)	22 (76%)	7 (24%)
Business and finance	80 (82%)	18 (18%)	17 (89%)	2 (11%)
Celebrities/royals	31 (41%)	45 (59%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)
Media/arts/entertain't	32 (62%)	24 (38%)	4 (57%)	3 (43%)
Science	35 (67%)	17 (33%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Sport	18 (95%)	1 (5%)	8 (89%)	1 (11%)
Disasters/accidents	14 (70%)	6 (30%)	1 (100%)	0 (0%)
Other	5 (63%)	3 (37%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)

⁴ A number of these sources were royal fans, primarily women, who were interviewed during the visit by Prince Harry and Meghan Markle to Australia in October.

Government and politics

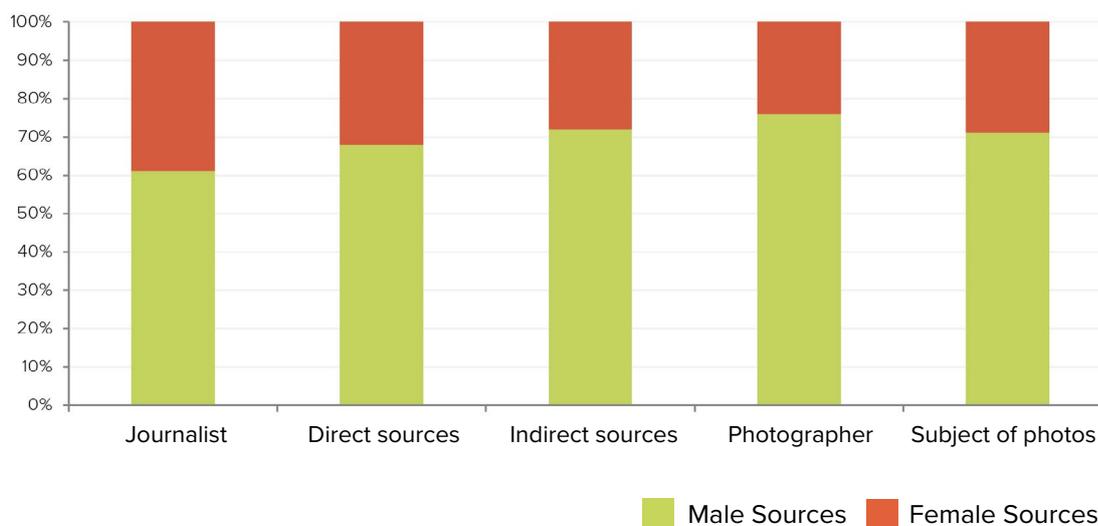
The largest single category of news stories in our data set related to government and politics. 23 per cent (70 stories) of stories analysed were on this topic. This category was dominated by male writers, sources both direct and indirect, photographers and subjects of photos.

Joanne Gray, Managing Editor, the Australian Financial Review

“One issue that we have at the moment is that we have no women in our Canberra bureau. That’s not by design and it’s not how it was in the past and it’s something we’re trying to address. It feels like fewer reporters want to go to Canberra now. When I was younger, everyone wanted to go to Canberra, that was the exciting place to be.

“What we would love to do is constantly track how many articles we have about women, quoting women. We do pay attention to the pictures of women. But quoting women directly and indirectly, I don’t think we’ve been getting the data on that. So, I’m wondering if we can get our product people to come up with a tracker for us, I think that would be really useful.”

A gender snapshot of #auspol coverage



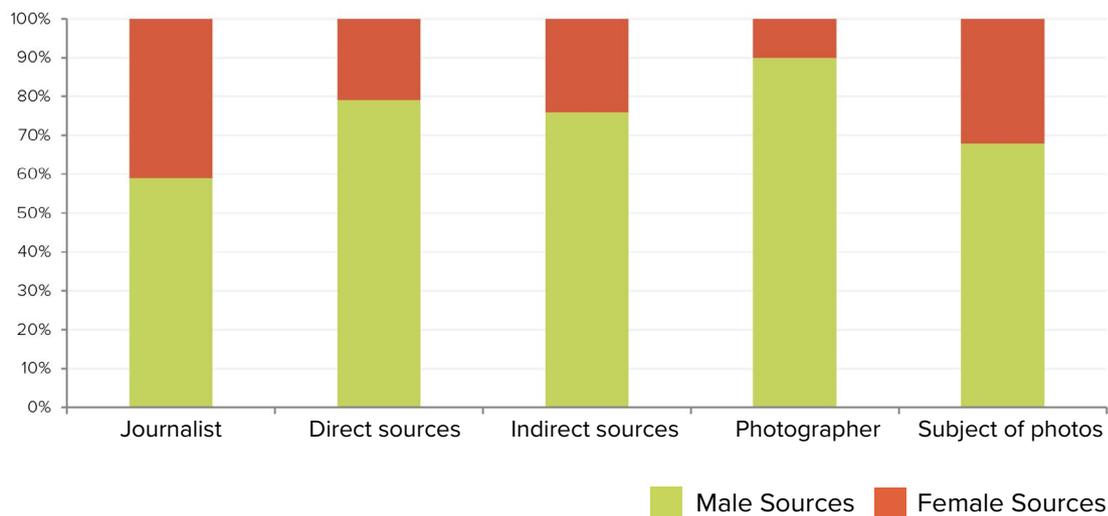
Female journalists counted for 39 per cent of the authors of government and politics stories in our data set; and 32 per cent of direct sources quoted in these stories were women, which undoubtedly reflects the under-representation of women in politics; 28 per cent of indirect sources were women.

Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of the photographers in this category were female, and women made up 29 per cent of the subjects of photos accompanying government and politics stories. Some political stories – such as those on the campaign to decriminalise abortion in Queensland or the sexual harassment allegations made by Dr Christine Blasey Ford against Trump Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh – had a much higher representation of female sources than others.

Law, crime and justice

Stories relating to law, crime and justice were the second largest category in our data set, comprising 23 per cent (69 stories) of stories analysed.

A snapshot of law crime and justice coverage

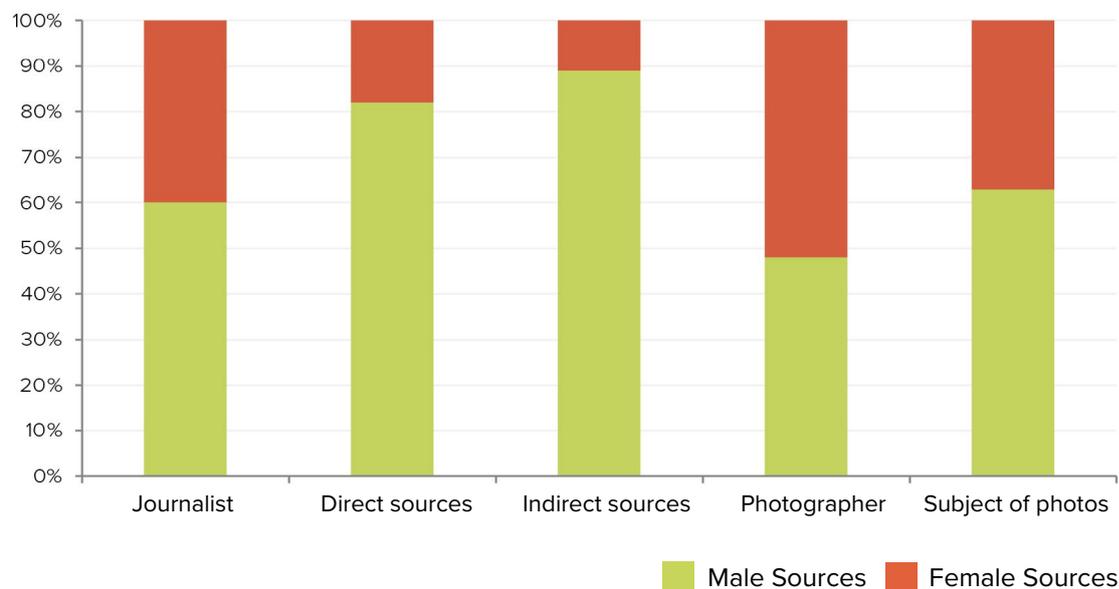


Female journalists made up 41 per cent of the authors of law, crime and justice stories; 21 per cent of direct sources and 24 per cent of indirect sources were female. Only 10 per cent of attributed photographers in this category were female, and women made up 32 per cent of the subjects of photos – they were primarily of the female victims of crime.

Business and finance

16 per cent of stories (49 stories) were categorised as business and finance. This was a broad topic area which included stories ranging from consumer affairs to stock market performance.

Snapshot of business and finance coverage



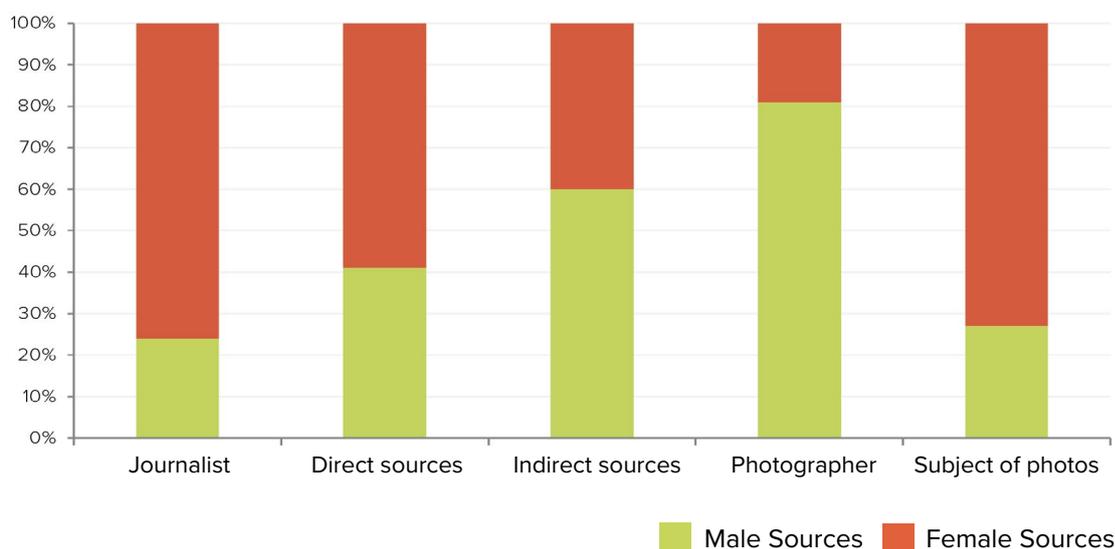
40 per cent of business and finance stories were written by female journalists, however only 18 per cent of direct sources and 11 per cent of indirect sources were female, reflecting the low representation of women in the senior corporate roles likely to be drawn upon as sources.

The relatively high proportion of female photographers in this story category (52 per cent) was influenced by the inclusion of a number of social media-sourced photos taken by a mother who was campaigning to improve food product packaging following the death of her daughter.

Celebrities/royals

Our dataset shows that if you want to read stories by women about women, celebrities and royals are as good as it gets. 10 per cent of stories (29 stories) related to celebrities and royals, a fairly self-explanatory category.

Snapshot of celebrities/royals coverage



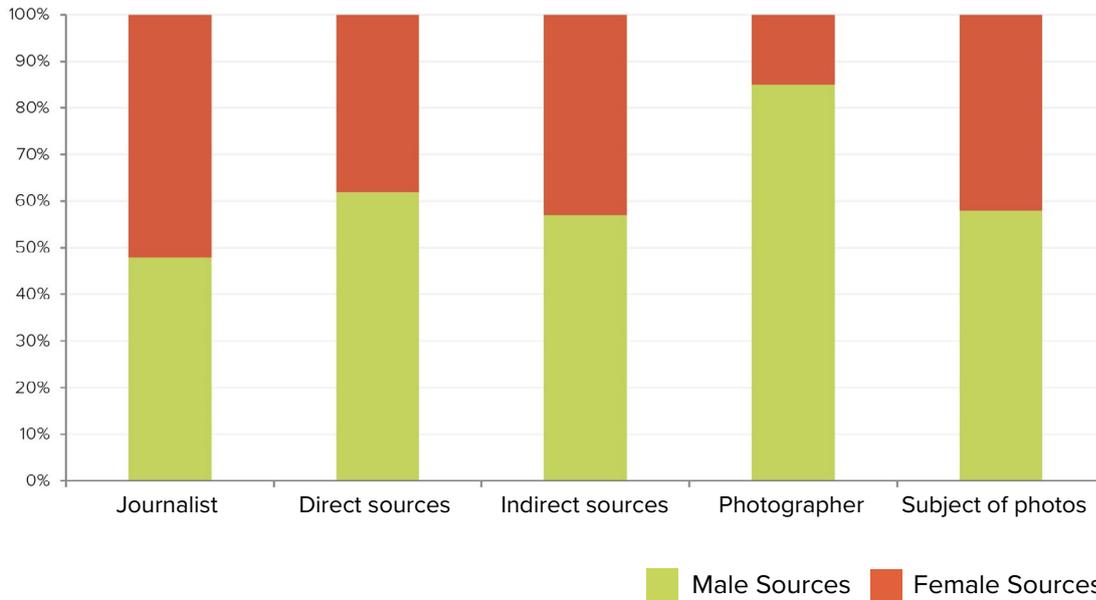
Female journalists wrote 76 per cent of the stories in our data set relating to celebrities and/or royals. The data collection for this project coincided with a royal visit to Australia, undoubtedly increasing the proportion of stories within this category. Meghan Markle, who is both a celebrity in her own right and a royal, featured strongly within this category. Women were the majority of direct sources for stories relating to celebrities/royals (59 per cent); these sources were often quotes from fans waiting to see the royal couple.

Members of the paparazzi are mainly men, with 81 per cent of the photos in this story topic taken by male photographers; the majority of the photos attributed to female photographers were taken by female journalists, and were not of the celebrities or royals themselves but were of “local colour”, e.g. street shots of fans. Females constituted 73 per cent of the subject of photos in this story topic; many of these were of Meghan Markle (and many more, featuring both Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, were not able to be categorised as predominantly “male” or “female” and so have not been included in this analysis).

Media/Arts/Entertainment

Stories categorised within the broad topic “Media/Arts/Entertainment” formed 8 per cent of our data set and ranged from ratings reports to articles about the sacking of the former Managing Director of the ABC, Michelle Guthrie.

Snapshot of media/arts/entertainment coverage

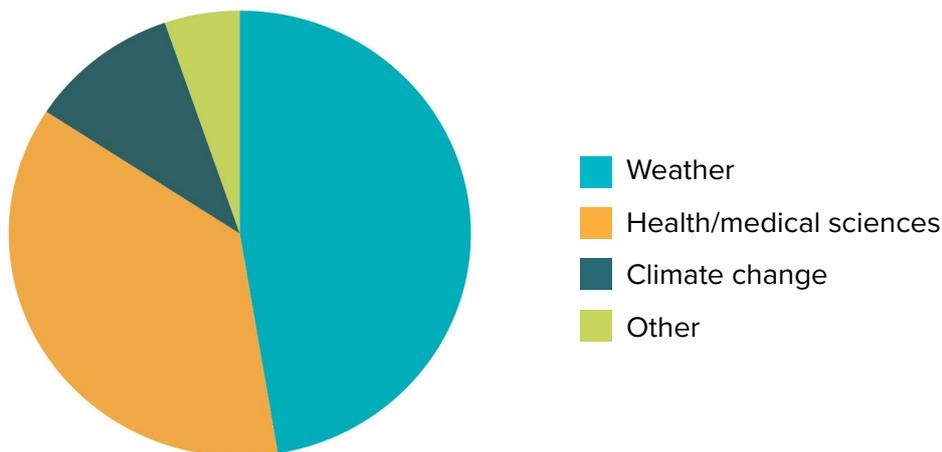


This category of story featured close to gender parity of journalists, with 52 per cent of stories authored by female journalists. Women made up 38 per cent of direct sources and 43 per cent of indirect sources. Only 15 per cent of photographers were female and women made up 42 per cent of the subjects of photos.

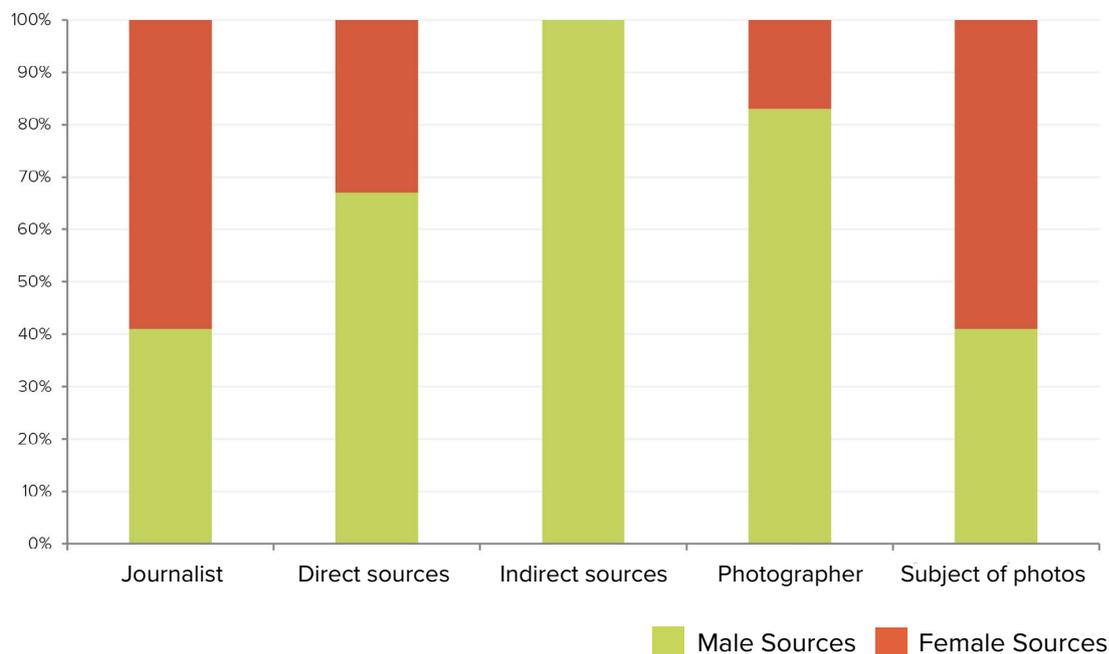
Science

Science stories constituted 6 per cent of our data set (19 stories). This was another broad category, and included stories ranging from weather (meteorology) to climate change and the health sciences. Climate change is a hot topic, but only two stories in our data set directly addressed it, although there were a number of stories about “wild weather”.

Science stories by type



Snapshot of science coverage

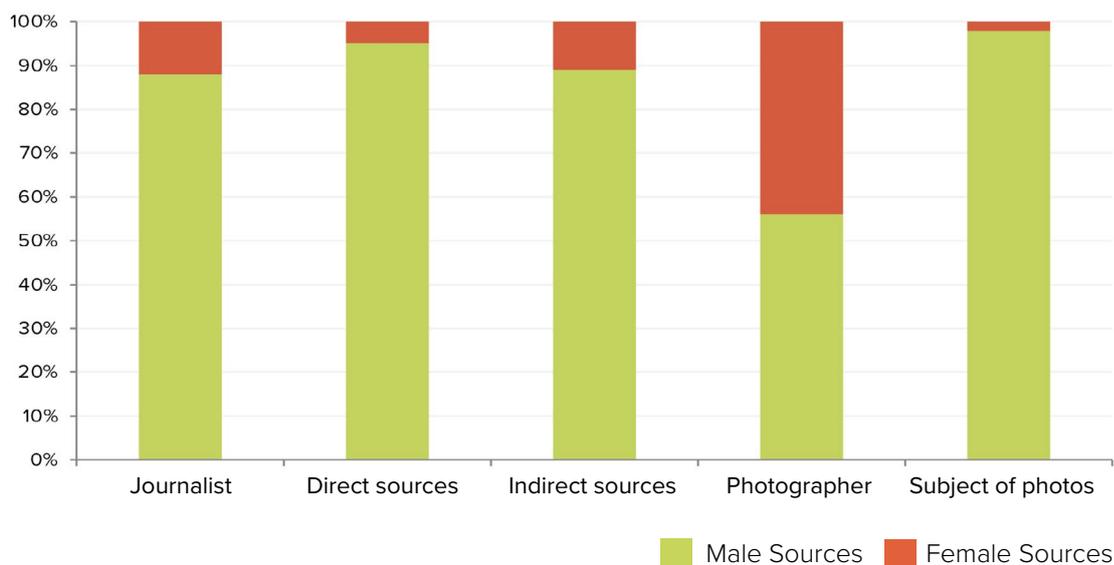


Female journalists wrote 59 per cent of the science-related stories; however, science remains a male-dominated field, and only 33 per cent of direct sources and no indirect sources for science-related stories in our data set were female. While women made up 59 per cent of photo subjects relating to this topic, a number of these were photographs of bikini-clad young women accompanying weather-related stories.

Sport

6 per cent of stories (18 stories) were sport-related. The rise and success of women’s professional sport in Australia could be described as one of the big developments in Australian sport over recent times – however this was not reflected in the sports stories analysed in our data set, which were overwhelmingly male in their focus.

Snapshot of sport coverage

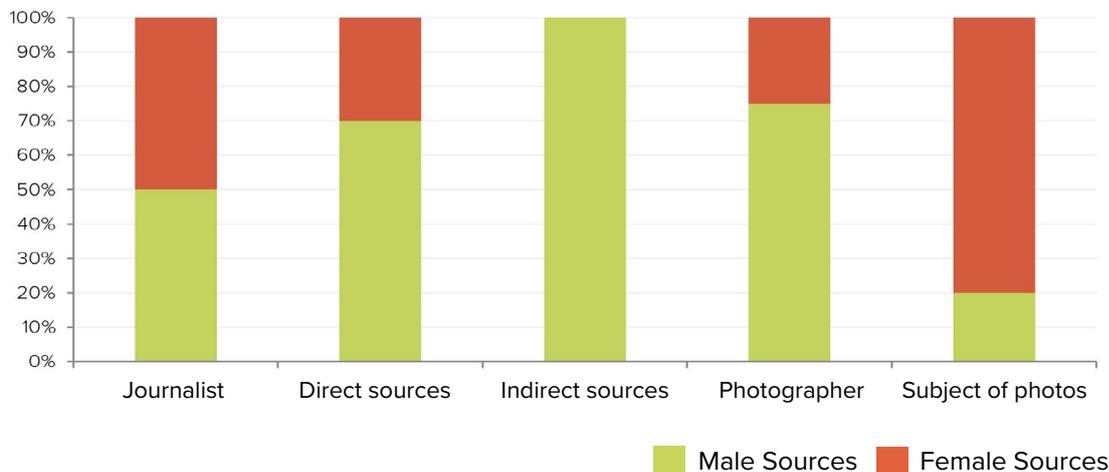


Female journalists authored only 12 per cent of the sports stories featured in our data set. 95 per cent of the direct sources and 89 per cent of the indirect sources for these stories were male. Two women photographers account for the relatively high proportion of female photo credits: a series of “crowd shots” taken by a female journalist who authored one sports-related story, and photos of AFL players taken by one female sports photographer from *The Herald Sun*. The one sports-related photograph of a female subject was of the family member of an Invictus games competitor, not of an actual sportswoman.

Disasters and accidents

4 per cent of stories in our data set (12 stories) were categorised as relating to disasters and accidents.

Snapshot of disaster and accidents coverage

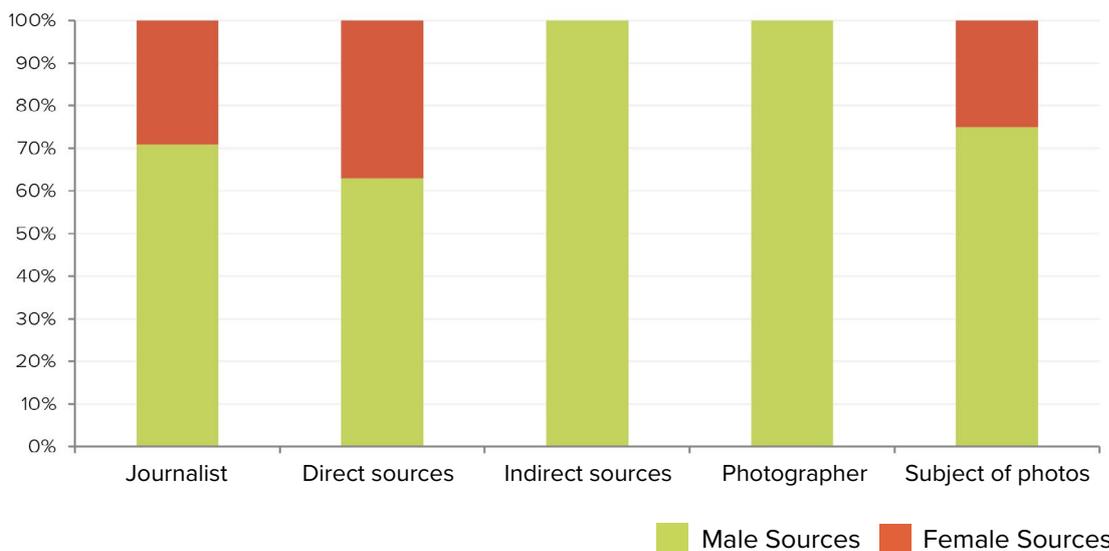


This story topic had equal representation of male and female journalists. However, direct and indirect sources were primarily male (70 per cent and 100 per cent respectively). 75 per cent of photographers in this category were male, although 80 per cent of the subjects of photos were females; again comprised primarily of photos of the victims of natural disasters or accidents.

All other

Stories that did not fall into any of the above topics were categorised as “All other”, comprising 3 per cent of our data set (9 stories). 29 per cent of these stories were written by female journalists.

Snapshot of all other coverage



Journalist's gender and opinion pieces

What of the opinion pieces?

Of the 282 pieces in our opinion data set, collected across one week in February, 62 per cent were by men. In the *Australian Financial Review*, of the 25 opinion pieces we collected, 18 were by men, two by women and a further five had no byline, in keeping with style for the publication's editorials.

Across our entire data set, a higher proportion of opinion pieces on the topics of government and politics and business and finance were written by men compared to news stories on these topics. So, you could say that while women were trusted to report the information, they were not trusted to interpret it.

In comparison, while 88 per cent of news stories on the topic of sport were written by men, 57 per cent of opinion pieces on sports-related issues were written by women.

Leigh Tonkin was formerly the opinion editor of *The Sydney Morning Herald* and is now editor of features and context at the ABC. There is a 60/40 skew towards women on the ABC site, although many more men than women pitch pieces to her. She says that the struggle for traditional mastheads is that “they have had a lot of men who have been writing for them for a long time”.

“60/40 is the ABC's usual split and one of the reasons is that we have a new team, which started in 2017. Also, three of our best political analysts are women: Laura Tingle, Patricia Karvelas and Annabel Crabb.

“We look for balance, but I also try to counteract the tendency for there to be more men writing opinion.”

While the *Australian Financial Review* had gender parity in the representation of male and female journalists on the top five new stories, 90 per cent of opinion pieces in our data set from the *Australian Financial Review* were written by men. Similarly, *The Australian* had close to gender parity (52 per cent male, 48 per cent female) in the representation of journalists who wrote the top five stories on its news site, but 84 per cent of opinion pieces were authored by males. 9news and the ABC had the highest number of opinion pieces authored by females, at 73 per cent and 60 per cent respectively.

Gender of journalist by news site

NEWS SITE	BYLINES ON OPINION PIECES		N/S
	MALE	FEMALE	
AFR	18 (90%)	2 (10%)	5
The Australian	21 (84%)	4 (16%)	0
Courier Mail	17 (74%)	6 (26%)	3
The Age	20 (74%)	7 (26%)	0
Herald Sun	17 (71%)	7 (29%)	0
SMH	18 (69%)	8 (31%)	2
Daily Telegraph	14 (64%)	8 (36%)	3
The West Australian	11 (46%)	13 (54%)	0
The Guardian	10 (42%)	14 (58%)	1
ABC	12 (40%)	18 (60%)	0
9news	6 (27%)	16 (73%)	0
Buzzfeed	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0
Daily Mail Australia	0	0	0
Yahoo!7	0	0	0
TOTAL	165 (62%)	103 (38%)	14

Got a view? Men sure do.

There were some interesting gender differences observed comparing the attributed journalists of the top five news stories on each site (see table page 11) with the authors of opinion pieces.

Gender of journalists by opinion piece code

TOPIC (no. of opinion pieces)	GENDER OF JOURNALIST	
	MALE	FEMALE
Business and finance (47)	18 (90%)	2 (10%)
Government and politics (103)	21 (84%)	4 (16%)
Science (8)	17 (74%)	6 (26%)
Sport (8)	20 (74%)	7 (26%)
All other (33)	17 (71%)	7 (29%)
Law, crime and justice (8)	18 (69%)	8 (31%)
TOTAL	165 (62%)	103 (38%)

And what do women have opinions about?

A higher proportion of opinion pieces on the topics of government and politics and business and finance were written by males than news stories on these topics. Interestingly, while 88 per cent of news stories on the topic of sport were written by males, 57 per cent of opinion pieces on sports-related issues were written by women.

Photojournalism and gender

So, we know who writes the stories and who is quoted in those stories.

But who’s in the picture? Who takes the pictures?

Based on analysis of the photo data obtained from the top five news story on a range of news sites, photojournalism appears to remain a very male-dominated field – or that’s who gets the bylines in the top real estate.

Across all of the news sites analysed, 78 per cent of the attributed photographers were male.

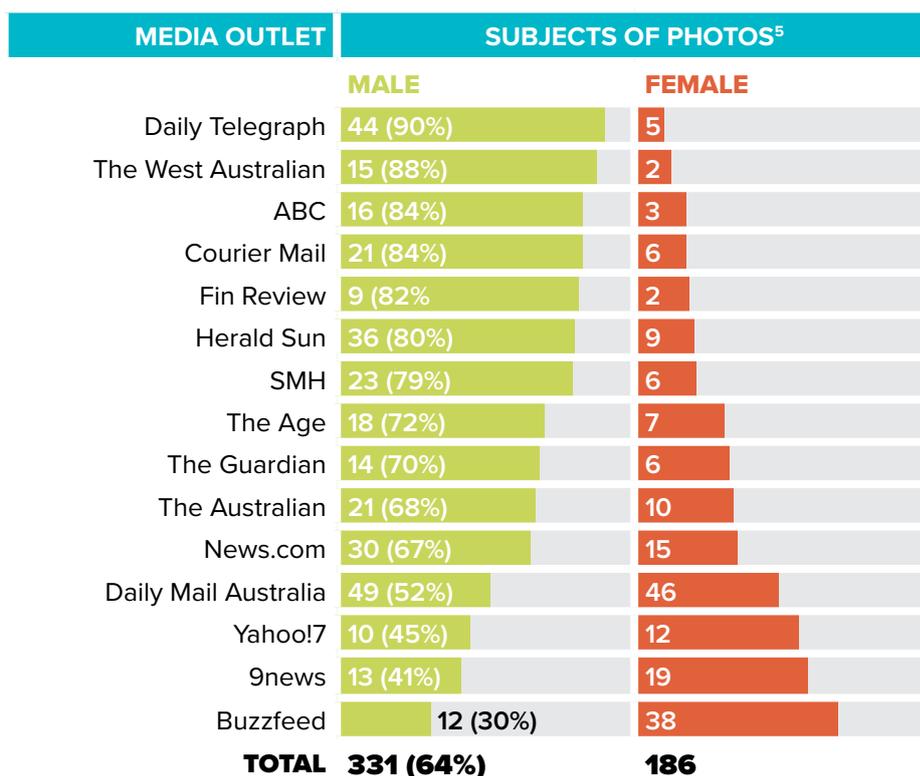
It should be noted that the two sites in which female photographers made up the majority of photographers, 9news and the Yahoo!7, featured a very low number of attributed photos (five and two photos respectively); these news sites are strongly linked to television news content on their associated television networks and primarily featured video footage rather than photos.

Representation of female photographers by news site

MEDIA OUTLET	PHOTOGRAPHER	
	MALE	FEMALE
The West Australian	10 (100%)	0 (0%)
Daily Mail Australia	39 (98%)	3 (2%)
The Guardian	34 (92%)	3 (8%)
Daily Telegraph	20 (87%)	3 (13%)
Fin Review	13 (87%)	2 (13%)
Buzzfeed Total	14 (82%)	3 (18%)
Herald Sun	20 (80%)	5 (20%)
The Australian	20 (77%)	6 (23%)
The Age	22 (76%)	7 (24%)
SMH	14 (74%)	5 (26%)
Courier Mail	19 (73%)	7 (27%)
ABC	22 (69%)	10 (31%)
News.com	22 (58%)	16 (42%)
Yahoo!7	1 (20%)	4 (80%)
9news	0	2 (100%)
TOTAL	270 (78%)	76 (22%)

It’s also useful to know that many of the photographs in our data set were sourced from agencies and often individual photographers were not identified. Interestingly, a number of the photographs attributed to female photographers were sourced from social media (such as Twitter or Facebook); or involved the journalist who wrote the article also providing the accompanying photographs.

Gender of photosubject by news site



Photographs with male subjects predominate in leading news stories, making up 64 per cent of all photographs analysed within the data set. *Buzzfeed* featured the highest photographic representation of female subjects at 70 per cent; the representation of female subjects in photographs fell to a low of just 10 per cent at *The Daily Telegraph*. If photographs of Meghan Markle and female crime victims were omitted from the data set, the representation of female subjects would have been even lower.

Who is actually employed?

We can't tell you exactly the gender split in the newsrooms which produced these news stories. The MEAA's Katelin McInerney says data collected during enterprise bargaining shows there at least 6100 ongoing salaried journalists employed in newsrooms on collective agreements nationally in major media outlets in Australia, but these figures do not tell the whole story. They do not capture numbers in smaller and digital newsrooms for instance.

Further MEAA confirms that despite all of these companies reporting to WGEA on their overall workforce gender breakdowns, these companies, with the exception of Fairfax, have universally refused to split that data into gender breakdowns in newsrooms for their employees when requested by MEAA.

McInerney says: "This would give management and union members much better visibility of the gender gap that exists, and identify where we need more women to be employed

⁵ Photographs were categorised as having male or female subject/s, including both males and females, or having no gendered subjects; where a photograph featured both males and females or no gendered subjects it has not been included within this table.

to even out newsrooms that skew male, as well as to identify where real pay action is needed to close the huge 21.8 per cent pay gap we know exists between female and male salaries in the information, media and communications sectors. Further, a brief review of the management structures of salaried newsrooms shows women remain severely under-represented in the decision-making levels, and that career paths up the ranks can be difficult to see for women – and this in turn has a knock-on effect for hiring women and working actively to provide opportunities for women coming up the ladder. This gap in pay and opportunity persists despite female university graduates outnumbering their male counterparts for many years.”

If you want to read the work of men with what is clearly a raised gender consciousness, meet the men of 9news. Although 9news had many more stories which were written by men, those same men quoted nearly as many women as did BuzzFeed’s reporters.

I asked Helen McCabe why she thought this was (see box below).

Helen McCabe, Digital Content Director, Nine Entertainment:

“I’ve never really been in a newsroom where the senior figures are all women. I’m the digital content director and the editorial director is Kerri Elstub, so naturally we’ve hired a team that is comfortable with that, very comfortable with that. I would suggest that we have a softer newsroom environment because of it, having worked in lots of different newsrooms. The men who work on the news side of the digital equation are incredibly good and they are competitive, strong characters, but they are not as blokey – and I’m generalising - as I’ve come across in the past in the news space.”

What do we know already?

Here is a quick summary of some relevant research (you will find some more relevant literature at the back of this report – it’s by no means a comprehensive review but you might find it interesting).

How far have we come?

Six years after Wendy Bacon’s 2013 overview, where she found that only 31 per cent of newspaper bylines were female, we’ve come a bit of a way since then.

The Global Media Monitoring Project (2015) found women made up only 25 per cent of the people quoted in internet news stories.⁶ This report found that women made up a higher proportion of reporters in online media than in more traditional news mediums; but the impact of gender difference in source selection of female subjects and sources was more apparent, with women making up 33 per cent of the sources in online news stories by female reporters compared to 23 per cent by male reporters.⁷

In 2016, the most recent [Women in Media report](#), commissioned by the Women’s Leadership Institute of Australia, found that across a range of mainstream newspapers, women accounted for 21 per cent of sources directly quoted in news articles. Women were much more likely to be quoted in stories about health, education, social issues, arts and entertainment – but not even in those traditionally female-dominated areas were women quoted 50 per cent of the time. Across all publications surveyed in that data set, women journalists quoted women in greater numbers than men did, which is what we found this time as well. However, in our data, where women and men worked together, more female sources appeared; this is in contrast to the 2016 data, 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”. There was also a big improvement in the current sample for gender diversity in opinion pieces. In 2016 only 28 per cent of opinion pieces were written by women, now it’s 38 per cent.

The [Global Institute for Women’s Leadership 2018 Report](#) identified that 77 per cent of people quoted as experts⁸ in online news articles across eight types of news coverage by the major UK news outlets were male.⁹ The report notes that the gender inequity is in part a reflection of gender imbalances in many fields, “with women underrepresented at the top of many professions”. The report highlights the need for news outlets to be more proactive in seeking women experts, “to ensure a range of voices are heard”. The BBC have committed to achieving a 50/50 gender split in expert contributors by April 2019.

Perhaps there is a need to recognize the institutional work environment which contributes to unequal reporting rather than attributing the underrepresentation of women to the individual choices made by journalists.¹⁰ This would certainly explain the figures from the *Australian Financial Review*.

⁶ [GMMP 2015, p3](#)

⁷ [GMMP 2015, p3](#)

⁸ This study defined an ‘expert’ source as “someone who had provided a quote based on their knowledge, job role or other position or influence”.

⁹ This is across selected categories of news coverage, not across the board. The types of news coverage analysed were business/finance, technology, domestic politics, foreign news, foreign politics, social policy, science/health and nature/environment

¹⁰ Humprecht & Frank 2017.

Country level predictors such as the proportion of female parliamentarians or CEOs may be more relevant to explaining the use of female sources than the number of women employed in leading editorial positions or the number of female journalists; as one report noted, “the persistence of gender gaps in media coverage is closely linked to real-world glass ceilings”.¹¹

The annual report on the status of women in the US media highlights that despite massive change in the media industry, “the role of women is significantly smaller than that of men in every part of news, entertainment and digital media”.¹²

Here’s a worry

Interestingly, there was declining interest within industry to participate in monitoring gender diversity, with the report noting that only 17.3% of newsrooms responded to the annual survey, an historic low over the 40-year period that data have been collected.¹³ The report found that 60% of online news content was written by men, compared to 40% written by women; across all media platforms men received 63% of bylines and credits compared to 37% attributed to women.¹⁴ In terms of story topics covered, men dominated coverage of sport while women were more likely to report on “lifestyle and leisure”; 90% of sports articles were written by men, whereas women accounted for 58% of health coverage and 52% of lifestyle/leisure.¹⁵

I hear you ask, why does that matter?

Why does it matter if women aren’t quoted as experts in news stories?

There’s the saying that we can’t be what we can’t see – but there is more to it than that. Research on role models¹⁶ tells us that we need role models because they represent the possible, they are inspirational, they tell us how to behave. And of course, it’s not just good for women to have women role models, it’s also good for boys and men. We know well-managed diversity matters, from board room to classroom and beyond.¹⁷

Mike Ticher, news editor of The Guardian Australia, says:

“What we put at the top of our website is primarily what we think are the most newsworthy stories at any given moment according to our editorial judgment. But we also highlight features, opinion and long-term projects or investigative work that we think deserve extended promotion - for example, our recent series The Killing Fields on Indigenous massacres. We do pay attention to metrics that show which stories are most popular with our readers, but that is never the sole factor that determines their placement. National politics is a huge component of our coverage, so that is likely to influence the gender spread of those quoted in stories. We think about gender balance a lot in terms of picture placement, but again this is determined to a large extent by the nature of the stories we cover.”

I asked him about our data set which shows that of the photographs in our sample, 70 per cent are of men.

“Disappointing but not surprising,” he says.

¹¹ Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 440

¹² WMC 2019, p. 9

¹³ WMC 2019, p. 11

¹⁴ WMC 2019, p. 13

¹⁵ WMC 2019, p. 14

¹⁶ Morgenroth 2015

¹⁷ Maruyama 2000, Ng 2007, Herring 2009, Rhode 2014

Kathryn Wicks, managing editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, says:

“The more women we have in public life, the more likely we are to have stories and photos with women as the subjects.”

“Determining what is chosen for the top spots on the site comes down to a few things:

“Newsworthiness - is it news the reader needs to know right now; is it important; is it news that impact their lives; is it holding people to account. This is always the primary criterion.

“After that, we look for balance - if the top two stories are fedpol, for example, we might look for the best local story we have, then maybe a sport news story, or an entertainment news story.

“Our readers are interested in a variety of issues, so we are always looking to give them that variety without diminishing the importance of the sharper, more impactful news stories.”

Like Guardian Australia, the Herald’s photos in those top spots are mostly dominated by men in the picture, 23 (79 per cent), to six with women as the subject, but as Wicks says, this will change as society changes.

Men still top of boards

We can see what’s happening with sources and with journalists but what’s happening at the top? Most boards don’t have anything like gender parity. Diversity in governance matters too.

Boards oversee management. There are seven boards which oversee the management of these websites. Of these websites, a number are based internationally. In our sample, Australian companies have more gender diverse boards.

The ABC (Australian) at time of writing had three men and six women (66 per cent).

Nine (Australian) has four men and three women (42 per cent).

Only Seven West remains intransigent: nine men and two women.

News Corporation (based in the US) also has eleven members – eight men and three women (27 per cent).

The board of the Guardian Media Group has eleven members of whom four are women (36 per cent).

The Board of the Daily Mail and General Trust plc (based in the UK) has 12 members of whom three are women (25 per cent).

Buzzfeed (a private company based in the US) which has the best gender diversity in its news coverage based on our snapshot has five men on its board. No women (0 per cent).

What's the fix? Here's a few ideas you might like to try and see how they work...

There appear to be three key ways individuals and organisations are currently tackling the issue:

1. **ACCOUNTABILITY** - within organisations via tracking data and commitments, and externally via advocacy
2. **ELEVATION** - Supporting women to build their media capacity and profile
3. **STRUCTURAL BALANCE** - Increasing female leadership and journalists

Some examples of these approaches in Australia and internationally are included here. Many of these initiatives are relatively new and yet to be proven, but it appears an increasing number of organisations recognise they need to test new ways of working.

Gender Avengers

Gina Glantz is on a roll. She's the cofounder of [GenderAvengers](#), a not-for-profit based in the US. Its sole purpose is to ensure women are part of the public dialogue. Glantz has been a political organiser since 1974 and has worked on campaigns, specialising in grassroots organizing and communications strategies.

GenderAvenger has a number of programs to improve gender balance – not just in the news but also on panels. The group even asks men to sign a pledge agreeing not to appear on any panels where there are no women, which is similar to the Panel Pledge instituted in Australia in 2012.

She says it's a tough gig trying to get gender representation right.

"I think it very hard to break habits and relationships, men are accustomed to being the lead voice and turning to their friends, and their network which would be predominantly male.

"There are a couple of ways I think to go about it. One is typical GenderAvenger approach which is to expose gender imbalance and coverage and I think that in today's world that can become an embarrassment. It can also reach some people who don't think of themselves as insensitive to the issues and when it's pointed out to them, discover it, and do try to, and after they've made a number of excuses, do try to be more sensitive."

But she says it's also important to bring men along.

"We purposely did this in order to include men and we ask men to sign a pledge which says they will not appear on a panel where there are no women."

Of course, as Glantz points out, the success of that depends on the leadership of organisations.

She points to the work of the BBC in its 50:50 challenge. The BBC's director-general has announced **a target of 50:50 across all of the BBC's programmes and sites by April 2019.**

As Amanda Ruggeri reported for the BBC earlier this year: "The difficulty with this, of course – and the reason why it's called a "challenge" – is that often the most established, media-facing experts are more likely to be male. And in many beats that we cover, the more established journalists often are male, too."

The BBC has been in touch with Glantz about its 50:50 challenge and in the last 18 months, 400 BBC teams have participated in trying to get to 50:50.

She says: “A large percentage of teams have achieved gender balance amongst their guests. That required leadership which created peer pressure.”

The GenderAvengers know how to create pressure. In 2017, it created a furore around the world’s biggest tech conference, the Consumer Electronics Show. For two years in a row, CES offered all-male keynote speakers. Under pressure, it added two women. This year, it’s a different story. Four of the nine keynotes are women. GenderAvenger sent the organisers a cookie – or at least a note of congratulations and a Gold award.

It began with a single GenderAvenger tweet which was shared and reshared across platforms, says Glantz. It helped the cause that the organisers of CES didn’t quite know how to respond.

“They responded so pathetically, which was wonderful for us, because they had so many excuses that were so ridiculous it stayed in the press for weeks. One of their excuses was that no woman met their criteria, which is ridiculous.”

Her advice is to target advertisers, join a campaign, call on the organisations to change the balance of voices on air or voices in print. “Somebody’s going to pay attention.”

Women Also Know Stuff, which began as a Twitter community.

Melissa Michelson, professor of political science at Menlo University in California and Samara Klar, an assistant professor from Arizona, saw a story on Vox about what was then the upcoming 2016 US presidential election.¹⁸ It was exactly in their area of expertise but every single person, all worthy scholars, selected for the story was white and male. They developed a Twitter community called #WomenAlsoKnowStuff, which now lives online. When I interviewed her in 2016, she wondered whether the site would have any impact beyond getting coverage at the time.

This year she says:

“We are seeing increased engagement with our site. Just last week, our International Women’s Day campaign reached over 400,000 people. We also continue to get emails and tweets from journalists and scholars noting the value of our site and how they are using it to find women experts. For example, we got a message from *The Atlantic* magazine in January about how they are using WomenAlsoKnowStuff to help with the gender imbalance they found in a self-audit of the experts they quote.”

She said, he said at the Financial Times

In November last year, the Financial Times announced the launch of ‘She said He said’, a newsroom bot designed to provide information about the diversity of sources within FT stories. It also uses the Janetbot, which detects photos of men and women in order to ensure there are photos of women on the FT homepage.¹⁹

In an announcement last year: “Our hypothesis is that female readers might engage more if there are visible reflections of themselves on the page.”

¹⁸ <https://www.vox.com/2016/2/5/10923304/bernie-sanders-general-election>

¹⁹ <https://labs.ft.com/product/2018/11/07/janetbot.html>

New Voices at Bloomberg

Last year, Bloomberg launched New Voices²⁰, what it described as a definitive global database of women newsmakers in business and finance.

Laura Zelenko, Bloomberg Senior Executive Editor of Talent, Diversity, Training and Standards announced Bloomberg would also provide media training for women and other diverse executives to broaden representation on Bloomberg TV. That program will be launched in Australia this year.

A couple more things, not strictly women in the media but certainly women in the public eye

In 1986, Canadian journalist Jack Kapica in *The Globe and Mail* was the first to use the phrase all-male panel, according to news database Factiva, in the way we use it today. He quoted a participant attending the 48th International PEN Congress, Ellen Lustman, who said: “Not another all-male panel.”

It was, he said, a reasonable criticism. “By its third day, the PEN Congress has presented eight panel discussions and numerous press conferences, and only 14 of the 118 panellists are women.”

That was 1986 and there are still too many all-male panels despite a number of projects designed to dismantle them. We’ve even got a name for them now: manels.

The panel pledge,²¹ championed by the Women’s Leadership Institute of Australia, has had hundreds of Australian organisations sign up, including the University of Sydney, which says it has now had over 230 staff in academic and professional roles signing on to address the underrepresentation or absence of women at public forums. That’s just one small and recent example of their work.

From the point of view of disruption and consciousness-raising, Finnish academic Saara Särämä did an excellent job when she created “Congrats, you have an all-male panel!” which allowed those who identified all-male panels at their conferences to superimpose images of David Hasselhoff. She says that she has now published over 2000 panels. Särämä was delighted to hear that the European International Studies Association has banned all-male panels and is adding other forms of diversity.

“People still talk about [her tumblr] when they are organising panels,” she said.

And Australian academic Deb Verhoeven’s explosive presentation at the International Digital Humanities conference in 2015 (seven minutes of rage after a day of male speakers) transformed the approach of the association to gender equality.

So, what else are we doing in Australia?

A few things: this report once again makes visible what’s happening with women’s voices in 2019 (building on earlier WLIA work in 2013 and 2016) and the ABC has just joined forces with the BBC in the 50/50 Challenge to make a change.

²⁰ <https://www.bloomberg.com/company/announcements/newvoicesinitiative/>

²¹ <https://www.wlia.org.au/initiatives>

Two great databases deserve a mention. Women for Media is a database of over 200 female leaders in business, finance, government, academia and the not-for-profit sector.

It provides journalists with the direct contacts of senior female leaders for interview or comment - which makes it slightly easier. The trick is to get journalists to look there in the first place.²²

And Here She is, compiled by the Victorian Women's Trust. It's not strictly a resource for journalists but it's a list of terrific women across a whole range of specialties - and it's an excellent prompt for those looking for women for panels.²³

Gaven Morris, the ABC's Director News, Analysis & Investigations, says it became clear that the public broadcaster had to take action.

"A couple of years ago we did some tracking of our content, measuring who we were putting in our stories and who we were choosing to interview. The statistics were pretty shocking to us: we were way out of proportion on the gender balance issue. We had a real wake-up call because, although we have had gender diversity front of mind, we still weren't doing very well with it. Even though it was front of mind, and even though we all knew it was something that as a publicly funded media organisation we needed to be doing.

"At that point we said, we've got to get a lot more organised around this, what are some concrete initiatives we need to do? It's about assigning people to this and making it the focus of their job, making sure we've got clear initiatives around who we're hiring, clear goals around who we're talking to, and then measuring whether we're achieving what we say we are trying to achieve."

What we should know next

Women aren't a minority - so this and previous research is about getting a much-needed balance. But the representation of minorities in Australia in the media as either sources or journalists is woeful. That kind of research is time-consuming - you can't just look at bylines because a name like Price tells you nothing about someone's ethnicity, race or religion. Photos don't work either, as anyone who has ever made claims about someone based on their skin colour can tell you. And you'd also have to assume that mainstream journalists in Australia would want to reveal those aspects of their lives. So much more to do for a diverse Australia.

²² <https://womenformedia.com.au/>

²³ <https://www.vwt.org.au/projects/here-she-is/>

Appendix 1: Transcripts from interviews with media organisations

- ▶ Gaven Morris, Director News, Analysis and Investigations, ABC
- ▶ Joanne Gray, Managing Editor, Australian Financial Review
- ▶ Kate de Brito, Editor-in-chief, news.com.au
- ▶ Helen McCabe, Digital Content Director, Nine

Gaven Morris, Director News, Analysis and Investigations, ABC

I absolutely believe gender diversity is crucial to the success of media companies. This is a great thing to do, but I'm also greedy for bigger audience – about the ability to increase our audience by making sure the content that we're creating genuinely reflects the interests of the population we're serving. If we can do anything to be more relevant to a broader group of Australians, then the ABC is doing its job well.

A couple of years ago we did some tracking of our content, measuring who we were putting in our stories and who we were choosing to interview. The statistics were pretty shocking to us: we were way out of proportion on the gender balance issue. We had a real wake-up call because, although we have had gender diversity front of mind, we still weren't doing very well with it. Even though it was front of mind, and even though we all knew it was something that as a publicly funded media organisation we needed to be doing.

At that point we said, we've got to get a lot more organised around this, what are some concrete initiatives we need to do? It's about assigning people to this and making it the focus of their job, making sure we've got clear initiatives around who we're hiring, clear goals around who we're talking to, and then measuring whether we're achieving what we say we are trying to achieve.

ON INTERNAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT THE ABC

An interesting thing that became very apparent to me when I came into this role was that while a lot of our very prominent on-air people in some of the most key roles across the ABC are women, and that has been the case for a long time, and we were doing OK at things like Executive Producers and some of the key team leadership roles, we weren't doing nearly as well the further you got up the food chain towards the executive roles.

So, what was it about the roles where women were excelling that wasn't happening in some of the key leadership roles? In some cases, it was a generational thing. We had a cohort of executives and very senior people who were men who had been around the ABC for a long time. And attrition in management and leadership roles was lower, so the executive and management roles hadn't turned over nearly as much as some of the on-air roles.

When we strove to bring younger, emerging leaders into the mix, often we found they were women. When we decided to go for both a cultural change and a generational change, we found we quite naturally had a gender change. It was about the establishment of who the leaders were. If you've been a leader at the ABC for 20 years you're more likely to be a male. If you're part of a more contemporary generation at the ABC, you're much more likely to be a woman.

It's a great sign for the future that the more you get into contemporary generations, the more women are absolutely excelling. Getting a little bit of movement – making sure you're regenerating your leadership and bringing younger, talented people through the mix faster – has had a profound impact on bringing more women into those senior roles.

ON RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES/PANELS

We ensure there are always men and women represented on recruitment panels. If there are three people, we'll ensure there's a woman and a man, and if it's a bigger panel we'll try to get a balance. But there are no rules other than to have gender diversity on the panel.

ON GENDER AND BEATS/TOPICS

Again, this is a generational thing, and starts with the culture of those areas. The more the cultures change in areas such as the business and finance sector, or politics, or sport, I think the more interesting and diverse the coverage of those areas will be, and the more interesting and diverse the journalists who want to work on those stories will be. If it's seen as a bit of a boys' club – because the people who work in the area are predominantly men – it's not a particularly welcoming place for women to be.

Sport is a great example. The rise of women's sport as a mainstream, prominent area of interest for all Australians in the past five years has been extraordinary. It isn't just netball anymore, it's football and other sports that forever we've seen as being male domains. The more we see the prominence of women's sport rise, and the broader the issues have been, then the more diverse the journalists who are interested in covering it has become, and the better the coverage has been.

ON APPLICATIONS TO THE SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS DATABASE

We had no idea we would get a response like that. We thought if we put a call out and could just modestly increase the number of female experts, and women who have a primary source point of view on a story or an issue, that would be a great initiative. We had no idea we would get 3000 people respond, within days and without a lot of publicity.

There's been this idea that women had a barrier around appearing in the media. I've heard it explained so many different ways. That appearing on interview programs is difficult because women have to be at home with their families in the evenings. Or, they've already got very busy lives and they just can't fit this stuff in, but men can.

Well, until we asked! When we asked, suddenly 3000 women put their hand up and said, when do you want me to start? Of all the things we've done recently this was the most surprising and exciting thing that has emerged: that simply by asking people whether they had an expertise and were willing to contribute to the media, literally thousands of women have said, "I would like to contribute, I've got an expertise, and I'd love to be invited to share it".

ON Q&A PANELS

In 2015 Ray Martin and Shaun Brown did an editorial review of Q&A and one of their findings was that the panels were way too male-skewed. To the team's credit they said, OK, we're going to change that today, and every week we're going to publish the gender diversity figures in relation to panellists, and we're going to strive to have at least 50 per cent of the panellists on Q&A be women. They got to work on it, and they fixed it pretty quickly.

Then you had The Drum come along. More than 60 per cent of the panellists on The Drum are women now. Simply by having it as something they were measuring and keeping track of, they easily achieved more than 60 per cent of their panellists being women. And, obviously, it's got two female hosts.

That has been the really encouraging thing: as soon as you put some focus on this, and you make it a conscious choice, things improve. And it's not that hard once you try.

ON AUDIENCE

One thing we can track very easily are our digital numbers. And when we consciously think about what is a good mix of stories, issues and topics on our online platforms that will suit the broadest possible audience, or in some cases particularly a female audience, the dial moves immediately. Many of the top stories with our female audience are ones we consciously chose to report on because we thought they would appeal to a female audience.

There was a great story we did recently about the nutrition of school lunch boxes which massively over-skewed in terms of the female audience. It wasn't a "women's story", it was just a great story that did really well in terms of overall audience and especially women. I like stories like that: stories about nutrition, health, science, personal finance, housing affordability, that particularly resonate with women. Stories that aren't "women's stories" but that women have an interest in and are under-served with. There's a hunger from women to read about all sorts of topics if only they are stories they can relate to. They're being under-served, in many cases, and simply by thinking about that, and how we can be a bit clever about broadening the mix of the stories we're doing, we're seeing results.

ON THE GENDER SPLIT OF THE ONLINE READERSHIP

Readership of politics stories is often male dominated, but it depends what the issue is. A story about border security or a hard economic story can often be male skewed. Women are a lot more attracted to stories about health care, aged care, personal finance or housing affordability – issues you can relate to the real world, even though they are still economics or financial or political stories.

If we can get the proportion of our audiences generally up to at least 50 per cent women, we're going to be much more successful in terms of our overall audience numbers. So that brings me back to my selfishness in wanting to pursue this, apart from the fact that it's what we should be doing as public media.

ON THE 50:50 PROJECT

What's great about the 50:50 Project is that it isn't something where I went to our teams and said, I want you to do this. We had been measuring the statistics (on gender representation) and said, look, whatever we're doing, it's not working. And then a group of women in the newsroom organised themselves around this and said, "You know what, we are really passionate about this, this is something we should do something about, we can fix this. We'll provide some suggestions for solutions." And they just got on and did it. A big organisation like the ABC can often be very top down. This was completely from the ground up. And I can't think of another example where that has happened in quite that way.

They came back to us and said it would be great to dedicate someone to this. We started looking at what was going on in other places and came across the BBC's 50:50 Project. Our Planning Editor Rhiannon Hobbins took on the full-time 50:50 Project Lead role for a three-month trial. As soon as she got to work on it we immediately saw the value. We're keeping that role going, putting more resources towards it and formalising some of the things we're doing, such as joining the international consortium on the BBC's 50:50 Project.

ON THREE-MONTH PILOT OF DATA COLLECTION FROM MARCH

Now we've got organised and know what we'd like to do, with Rhiannon in her role, having put a bunch of small initiatives in place, and with some specific content initiatives already unfolding, we now have a three-month pilot to see what it produces and what we learn. We've had great success in News in the last two years doing pilot projects like this, it's changed the behaviour and performance for us in a range of things.

This three-month trial is very much intended to say, "Look, we've got an idea, let's put some resources behind it, see what it produces, take out of that some practical learnings, and then see where we go from there."

Joanne Gray Managing Editor AFR

We've obviously been aware of this issue for quite some time. We are reflecting the business world, which has been notoriously glacial in its efforts to promote women into leadership positions.

As an organisation, there are a couple of things that we've already done to address that. We've been running the Women of Influence awards for six years now. That's an opportunity to surface women who can become role models and spokeswomen on all sorts of issues.

And we have made a conscious effort in the newsroom. We've got this expression in the newsroom, 'man face', as in "there's too much man face". But then you can't change the pictures if you haven't got people quoted, so we're trying hard to change that.

Our former CEO was a Male Champion of Change for several years, but Fairfax didn't have many women in the top executive leadership team. However, at the Financial Review we have a lot of senior editorial positions filled by women - News Director, Companies Editor, Markets editor, Audience engagement editor, co-editor of Street Talk, BOSS editor. These are senior powerful positions.

We have had an initial go at analysing any pay gap. And the Fin Review is not too bad. We've got just over 40 percent women and we've done quite a lot of analysis of pay, and we're looking pretty good. And areas that we saw needed attention, we are fixing.

We have a strategy to address content and it's part of our business strategy, because we want to appeal more to women, and we want to appeal more to younger women, and we want to appeal more to younger people. So, it all comes together through various editorial initiatives that we're undertaking but also in more active things like new events that we're considering.

Before I continue with this point, I want to go back and say, as you know, we've been just been taken over by Nine. So, we had some plans that are now things we can go ahead with. Other things that we were trying to build that would require more resources, we can push ahead with.

I'm very happy to have your numbers [UTS media data analysis stats] to show that somehow the female journalists are able to find female sources that the men don't. It's great to have that data and to put that to the newsroom and say, there it is. You have to try harder, all of you, to find the women. To that end, we're building a much more sophisticated sort of database of women.

Women are more risk averse in engaging with journalists, because they've often worked harder to get where they are, and they're more modest about their capabilities and their knowledge, and they prefer to have 100 percent certainty that they know what they're talking about. But notwithstanding that, we want the newsroom to be aware that this is an issue, we want senior editors to be aware of that it's an issue and we want them to be paying attention to it. And when it becomes not just a nice thing to do, but a thing that's important for our masthead and our brand and for our business, then it will get done.

BREAKDOWN OF READERSHIP

Female readership is rising. There are more women in the business world, in finance, in the professions, in the bureaucracy and in management and they are in more senior positions and the Financial Review is a resource. They need it to be successful in their jobs. So, it's reflecting the rise of women as leaders in our economy and in business. Our strongest growing cohort of readers and subscribers is in the 30 to 44 age bracket and that's a more gender balanced group.

There is growth in female readership, and we want to make it go faster. It's reflecting that women are taking on more powerful, influential positions slowly but surely across the economy.

In politics we do have that problem that the majority of politicians, particularly in the Coalition are male. Very obviously, the Coalition has gone backwards with respect to women, and they've got a real issue to deal with.

We've got to go and find those most-likely-to-succeed women and talk to them – if they will talk. You don't want to start quoting people and turning people into subjects of stories that don't necessarily have the clout or influence. They're not making the news, but on the other hand, probably more of them could be if they were given the licence to do so.

RECRUITMENT AND HIRING PRACTICES

Recently, we really wanted to get a woman for certain job, and we found someone and she didn't want to move. It was just really hard to find a woman for the role, which was really a pity.

But we've just taken on seven trainees, which is the most exciting thing that's happened in our newsroom for a few years. Three of them are women, four are men, one in Brisbane, one in Melbourne, and five in Sydney. And that's been fantastic.

We are actively looking at career paths for the younger people and trying to help guide them: this is what you could do, this is how you get to this position, have you thought about extending yourself into this area. We are definitely doing that very actively with women, because there's a tendency not to put their hand up.

I was made managing editor a year ago. My job is to help grow the business and also be really focused on performance and careers. And making sure that people know what they're supposed to be doing and know how to get there.

WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES AT THE FIN

We've had some real successes in promoting great women. The news director, that's the most senior job in terms of the news in digital and print platforms. The companies editor, the news

director, the markets editor, the editor of Boss - all are woman. Our national affairs columnist is a woman, the co-editor of Street Talk is a woman. We've got a lot of the senior positions filled by women. I'd have to do the numbers on the breakdown of senior roles, but they are key roles. Companies and markets editor - that's the guts of the newspaper.

I think at the moment we're doing reasonably well, in terms of putting women in senior leadership positions in the paper.

With our recruiting, we're making sure that we've got representation both on the shortlist and also on the interview panel. We obviously do more than one interview for everyone. I feel like we're doing quite a lot, but we've still got tonnes more to do.

When we were recruiting the trainees, the first take was equal split, male, female, that was just a one on one. They only got five minutes each, speed dating. But we had hundreds of applicants to talk to! And then the follow-up interviews, we had men and women recruiting in a group of three for those interviews, maybe some writing and general knowledge tasks in the middle. The trainees had to jump through a lot of hoops.

We were very conscious when we were recruiting that we didn't want to present the AFR as all male, because we're not. It was easy to find senior people. We are very legitimately able to have senior women on that recruiting panel as interviewers, because that's who we are.

THINGS TO FIX

One issue that we have at the moment is that we have no women in our Canberra bureau. That's not by design and it's not how it was in the past and it's something we're trying to address. It feels like fewer reporters want to go to Canberra now. When I was younger, everyone wanted to go to Canberra, that was the exciting place to be.

What we would love to do is constantly track how many articles we have about women, quoting women? We do pay attention to the pictures of women. But quoting women directly and indirectly, I don't think we've been getting the data on that. So I'm wondering if we can get our product people to come up with you a tracker for us, I think that would be really useful.

Kate de Brito, Editor-in-chief, News.com.au

I definitely want gender diversity in our newsroom, I definitely want it in my organisation. I definitely want to see it in society, but whether we make that connection in our journalism, I'm not sure. It's not something I could claim that we think about story by story. We might say, 'Hey there's too many male faces' on the page, but it'd be less about trying to create 'gender diversity' on our homepage and more about the look of it ... 'Why have we got all these men on a page?' But sure, we want women, we want men, we want people of colour, we want all that but I'd be lying if I said we come up in the morning and say, 'Let's make sure the page is gender diverse'.

We like women on the home page. Sometimes those men are all ugly old men. I shouldn't say that! We're not the sort of site anyway where all men would appeal anyway. Maybe it's different for the Financial Review, maybe that's what appeals to their audience. But we have a very even skew of male and female readers. It goes between 51/49, 49/51 and it swaps around, it's very even. I don't think for our audience it would work for them to see a bunch of men in suits. It's definitely not where we are.

ON THE NEWSROOM AND HIRING

I hire on talent. So, if I like a bloke and I think he's right for the job, I'll hire him. I won't think, 'Oh the last three people I've hired are men', and I think it works out pretty well. I actually couldn't tell you what the gender divide is in our newsroom, but I can tell you that I'm the editor-in-chief, and I'm a female. The editor is a woman, the features editor is a woman, so there are women in senior positions, there are probably fewer men in senior positions. We have a deputy who's a male, we have two news editors, a man and a woman, two page editors, a man and a woman. But we didn't do that intentionally - out of a quota system. We're probably equal in our gender makeup, but not by design.

DOES IT CHANGE THE NEWSROOM HAVING ALL THOSE WOMEN IN SENIOR ROLES?

Yes, I think it's relevant. I think if you have a room full of men, you will get different decision making and a different outcome than if you have a room that is split, men and women. Similarly, perhaps if you have a room full of women. Now, how does that work? Do the women on our team chase the soft, cuddly stories? No, of course not. You know that's not the case in journalism. Some of the toughest journalists covering the toughest subjects are women.

It's not about sensitivity or all those things we tend to label women with, but I do think that we will look at situations differently and bring a different outlook to the way we look at news, or the way we look at business.

I think it's a no brainer that if you had no women [in senior roles], you would definitely have a different newsroom.

ON HOW IT'S CHANGED OVER THE YEARS

There have always been a lot of women here. I started as a copy girl at News Corp. And there have always been lots of women on the news floor, but there weren't often senior women in senior roles, and that is changing. It is a different vibe and I think the change that it brings is ... I hesitate around terms like 'boys' club'. I think it's more about status quo.

I think when you have a group of men who have been doing their jobs in these senior roles and they're used to talking with each other, and have a way of talking to each other, a shorthand with each other, the way they will be able to congregate quite quickly before or after meetings around their social interests ... it's very easy for that to feel comfortable for men. It's very easy for them to like the way that system runs. When you introduce women into it, it's not that women can't have those conversations, it's just that it's now a different environment. Maybe if you brought one woman into the meeting room and everyone was off talking about racing or horses or whatever, they'd suddenly have to say, well maybe we can't do that, because we've now got a woman standing by herself on the other side of the room.

So that's a very obvious thing. But I also think we all need to be challenged about the way we go about things, about the status quo. That's something the #MeToo movement did, separate to the stuff around sexual assault. I think one of the things it did was say to men and women alike: maybe we need to look at the way we've been behaving. Even if we're not talking about inappropriate behaviour, we're just talking about where we're comfortable. Is your comfort level the right way forward? I think it changes the temperature, it's not necessarily that it turns up the heat on men, but I think it asks people to question the way that they've been doing things by having women in a room, where previously there had only been men. It says, is there a different way that we could look at this situation ... it just changes things and I think that's a good thing.

ON WHETHER PEOPLE GRAVITATE TO BEATS ALONG GENDER LINES

Yes, probably they do. It's not as much that was at News.com.au, but I think generally, yes there probably is an inclination. Men in finance, men in sport, women around celebrity and lifestyle. I think politics is a bit more evenly spread: We've got a lot of women reporting on politics across print, digital and on TV, but yes maybe in the in the business arena. I don't really know why. It would be silly to say women find business or finance boring, maybe they find it more of a struggle because a lot of finance and business is still dominated by men, so maybe it is more of a struggle for women to find that headway in reporting on it.

Maybe there are certain areas that do attract men and women. I mean I like reading about makeup, sometimes I like reading about fashion, definitely more than my husband does. Whether that's a female thing ... I think there are certain things in the lifestyle area that are aimed at women. A lifestyle section is a female-focused area, you'd call it a female section, so it makes sense that you'd have more women wanting to write in those areas, I guess, because they're writing about the sorts of things that women find more interesting. Women love sport, but it is probably something that men are a little bit more focused on in Australia. So I guess it makes sense that more men are reporting on that too - but it is changing.

ON ASKING REPORTERS TO FIND FEMALE SOURCES AS SUBJECT-MATTER EXPERTS

I don't think we ever specifically do that. I can't imagine myself ever saying, 'Can we get a woman to talk about this?' over a man unless it was a story that required that. I feel like if I saw a story with several men quoted as experts and I was editing or subbing it, I probably wouldn't say, 'We need to go back and get a female voice.' Maybe it might cross my mind, 'God, there's a lot of men in this industry.' Having said that, if we were going out to do a story and there was a bunch of experts from the dairy industry, and there was one female and five men, then 100 percent I would say, 'Can we chat to that woman?' But that's an innate judgement. That's just journalism I suspect - wanting a different voice rather than requiring it for diversity reasons. Pictorially we like to make sure we've got women as well as men. But again, I'm not doing it for gender diversity reasons. I'm doing it because it's nice to have women in the section.

Growing up in a print world, as a print journalist, often they wanted a photo of a woman. A woman can be a better picture than an ugly bloke. I don't think you would avoid an expert who was a woman because you thought a man would know more. That would be weird. But I wouldn't go back and ask a reporter to get a female voice unless that was part of the story. If it was a story about climate change, and there happened to be three men in the story, I wouldn't think 'Oh, we need a female expert on climate change.' That to me appears sexist in its own way. It's like, 'Why do I need a female? Why don't I trust these male voices? Why am I including a woman just for the sake of it?' But again, if they were men and women available, we definitely would try to speak to both.

This is fascinating to me - I've not thought about it this way before. And I do think that innately I make those decisions, and I think that probably other people in our newsroom do, too. If I had a list of climate change experts, I definitely would pick a woman as well as a man. But on the other hand, if I read a story and it had three men in it, I wouldn't be calling out 'Where's the woman's voice in this?' I wouldn't go at it from that perspective.

I'm saying that it happens organically in our newsroom anyway. We are used to listening for women's voices, we are not averse to it. I think that we know instinctively that women's voices can bring a different light to things. So I think that we would seek them out where possible, but I can't imagine us getting to a place where I would say to a reporter, 'Go out and do the story about the CSIRO and make sure that one of the experts is a woman.' I wouldn't do that. I can't imagine telling a reporter that they had to do that, that they had to have a balance of male and female voices if it was about a subject matter that was unrelated to gender diversity. If it was about the fact that we don't have enough female scientists, of course we'd have women's voices in there!

Helen McCabe, Digital Content Director, Nine

ON THE RESULTS

I've never really been in a newsroom where the senior figures are all women. I'm the digital content director and the editorial director is Kerri Elstub, so naturally we've hired a team that is comfortable with that, very comfortable with that. I would suggest that we have a softer newsroom environment because of it, having worked in lots of different newsrooms. The men who work on the news side of the digital equation are incredibly good and they are competitive, strong characters, but they are not as blokey - and I'm generalising - as I've come across in the past in the news space.

That's my gut feeling, but I did look at the staff numbers because this newsroom is divided into news, sport and lifestyle, and the revenue model is skewed to the lifestyle divisions. As a result, we have a lot of women reporting into Honey, but they are all in the one newsroom. Which means we have a lot of women, about 54% of our staff, not including Kerri and I, which probably pushes it up to more like 60%.

So that to me explains the environment... I mean, this is one of the great conversations we've all had in our careers around what a lot of women in the room would do to the reporting environment. What kind of stories would bubble to the top? This data has actually forced me

to think about it. Whereas I don't really think about it, I just hire really good young people. But these results speak for themselves in a tangible way about what a newsroom of more women than men might mean for the product, the journalism and the audience.

I think you get a situation where there are stories that are more likely to appeal to both sexes in the mix. And in my experience, and again, I'm generalising, the news environment has always skewed pretty male in Australia. What we're seeing here is a bit more of a 50/50 divide in the sorts of lifestyle and news stories that sit on Nine.com.au and 9news.com.au. A lot of 9news.com.au content is sourced and delivered by the TV newsroom. I would have to check with [Director of News for Nine News] Simon Hobbs, but I have spoken to him informally about this and, again looking at it, there are a lot of women in that TV newsroom. Again, unusually so from when I was in television newsrooms, which is a long time ago now.

The fact that Nine News sent Amelia Adams, the mother of two small children, to London to be the Europe correspondent for me was startling given that it would never have happened in my day. And the TV newsroom is pretty proud of that. Both Simon Hobbs and Darren Wick [National Director of News & Current Affairs, 9 Network Australia] talk quite passionately and with some pride in the number of women they have, the ability for women to come and go according to their family situation and whatever stage of life they're in. So, it's probably a combination of the TV newsroom also having a pretty strong contingent of young female reporters. That's such a massive shift. I worked alongside Nine in my magazine days and I worked at Seven as a young TV reporter, so I understood the climate of the networks, but Nine is a very different business and has been for a little while. It has a lot of women in very senior ranks and quite a different culture.

And there are senior women at all ranks of Nine News (TV). Kirsty Thompson & Fiona Dear head 60 Minutes and ACA for example. And of course, two female hosts of the Today Show and they are also challenging the idea of what age women can be on TV. I thought I was too old at 30 (at one point anyway). It's quite a culture shift, top to bottom. Simon Hobbs says it is partly about the volume of women coming out of journalism degrees.

This [the data analysis] is a really good tangible sign of that shift. It's heartening because I think it is about numbers or volume and leadership. Because that's we've always thought and now we're actually seeing it. And it's very much about driving commercial results. Nine.com.au is increasingly cemented its position as the number two commercial news site in the country, and three years ago, that was not the case. And it's a very competitive landscape and we are pretty driven to close the gap between us and news.com.au.

But truthfully, I've never thought for a second about it in the context of gender. I've only ever thought about putting the best people in the job, and in this business model.

One of the things that I find intriguing is that if I hire a young female reporter, they can do news and lifestyle. If I hire a young male reporter, they can (mostly) only do news. In this newsroom young male reporters are not as versatile. It's true!

So, because the business model is tighter than in the past that's a real consideration. Can I move reporters around? I've got a mid-career journalist on lifestyle who came to us from the TV business. She really wants to be on lifestyle, and we look at her and go you are so good, can we shift you into the news space for a bit to fill a gap. But she doesn't want to do it. I don't make reporters do what they don't want to do because it never works out very well! But there's a really good example of a talent who can easily transfer across, whereas I just can't say that about some of our male reporters – they couldn't easily transfer from news across to lifestyle. Although I have tried we did experiment in the early days of Honey.

And I'm not unique in thinking that. Simon King, the editor Nine.com.au, lives and dies by the metrics of a digital site. He has to juggle the rosters in an environment that's 24 hours a day seven days a week and it's not lost on him that the female journos are extremely versatile.

[HELEN WILL HAVE BEEN THERE THREE YEARS THIS AUGUST, DURING WHICH TIME SHE AND KERRI HAVE HIRED MOST OF THE REPORTERS ON STAFF TODAY]

Kerri and I have a pretty good feel for what we want and we both are very similar world view, which is you want nice people because the teamwork is so important. We do hire pretty quickly and last year we did at one point think we probably needed another bloke around. But we wouldn't hire a bloke for the sake of having a bloke, ever.

ON WHETHER MEN/WOMEN GRAVITATE TO PARTICULAR BEATS

I think that is an opportunity for people like me at this stage of my career to encourage young women to take an interest in business and politics. I'm talking here about my own experience. I think there's some opportunity for strong female leaders in the market to encourage good young female journos to think about their careers outside of writing royal stories. Because I think it's easier for them when they're juggling kids and stuff but they're perfectly capable of doing the finance pages – and it's potentially so much more interesting and importantly lucrative.

I was giving a talk to a bunch of PR girls the other week and I said, get across your numbers, read the business pages, I promise you it will make all the difference in your career. Because then you can't be sidelined. So, I think this is this is a serious opportunity.

But by moving to digital I am training a whole bunch of new voices and it really does surprise me how good these girls are. For example, on the Future Women team, the young journalists are incredible. They are so capable with a spreadsheet and they are across the business model and understanding the drivers on a subscription business. This means they can get pigeonholed. They will have more opportunities. I'm still figuring this bit out for myself, but hopefully I can give a few of those young women who are working much more closely with me on Future Women, the benefit of thinking about that and see a shift, so they are in the mix on politics and business.

I've always been a political junkie, it doesn't make me smarter than anyone else in the room, but I've taken an interest which makes me look like I know what I'm doing. I really did shift for a period of time away from politics to reading the business pages. But I tell the team politics is like a sporting match!

The bit about my career that I'm enjoying now is opening up those opportunities for the right staff who are hungry for it, and you can see that they will get it and if you just give them a bit of a push. I love that bit, it's fun. Taking them on the ride, every day we talk about it.

Advertising clients want to be around lifestyle content. So, one of the challenges in digital is how to fund journalism in an ad-funded journalism environment because a lot of clients don't want to be around news. Now, they are through programmatic ad buying and especially when they want to scale, but there is a brand safety issue and there are brands that are very self-conscious about where their ads are positioned. Because we know women hold the purse-strings, they're the major spenders, clients are pretty clear that they want to be in safe lifestyle environments. And so that is a bit of a driver for me. Honey is really important, so it has the bigger spend in terms of personnel on the digital front for now, anyway. Although we get a lot of support from the TV newsroom. But in the room that I sit in right now the Honey team is bigger than the news team and that is about the revenue drivers of the digital business. So, there's a number of pressure points coming to bear.

My broader point is that the market dictates a little bit around the kind of content that you're creating and the brands that you're creating, and that is leading to lots of female brands. As you know it's a crowded market, there are a lot of people in the Honey space, and the reason for that is there's a really good fight for those advertising dollars. And in a fight for those advertising dollars and for traffic, therefore you hire talented women into the Honey space, and they benefit from a breaking news story. We have an enormous audience that comes into the space for a breaking news story, then they move into the lifestyle space and that's where the clients are. That's the flow. Which is why I made the point around a lot of young women in the TV news brand as well. So, I think that's why the results that you've uncovered are consistent across nine.com.au and 9news.com.au.

Appendix 2: Selected Literature Review, Media Gender Analysis project 2019

Bacon, Wendy 2013, 'Have we achieved Gender Equality in the Media?', *Women in the Media* No. 8, 5 December 2013, <http://www.wendybacon.com/2013/have-we-achieved-gender-equality-in-the-media/>, accessed 4 March 2019.

Bacon highlights that although women dominated the 2013 Walkley Awards, and that the majority of media workers are female, "deep systemic discrimination" remains a feature of the media industry. Significant and ongoing gender issues for women in the media identified in this article include pay inequities, sexism and sexual harassment, and stereotyping in the representation of women. Bacon reports on the findings of a report into gender in current affairs TV undertaken in 2013. There was a significantly higher representation of female presenters (74%) than in the associated gender newspaper study where only 31% of bylines were female. Although there were more female presenters, men still made up the majority of current affairs reporters (56%). Men also made up the majority of interviewees (sources) constituting 58% of interviewees. Interestingly, this study found that story topic made little difference to the gender of the reporter in this particular medium (current affairs TV).

Foreign Policy Interrupted 2019, 'Changing the ration / amplifying female voices', <http://www.fpinterrupted.com>, accessed 4 March 2019.

This site is designed to promoting female expertise in foreign policy, with the intention of ensuring that more female experts are "miked and bylined". The site is intended as a platform to enable journalists to more readily identify women with foreign policy expertise. FPI also provides media and skills development training to assist women to contribute to foreign policy discussions, in response to media stakeholder arguments that women are under-represented in opinion pieces and primetime expert roundtables because "Women don't raise their hands!". FPI has a weekly newsletter which highlights opinion pieces and research by women; they also track data on the gender divide in foreign policy and national security in the media.

Global Media Monitoring Project, 2015, 'Highlights of Findings', *World Association for Christian Communication*, http://cdn.agilitycms.com/who-makes-the-news/Imported/reports_2015/highlights/highlights_en.pdf, accessed 5 March 2019.

The GMMP 2015 report found that women made up only 25% of the people in internet news stories (GMMP 2015, p. 3). This report found that women made up a higher proportion of reporters in online media than in more traditional news mediums; however, the gender difference in source selection of female subjects and sources was more apparent, with women making up 33% of the sources in online news stories by female reporters compared to 23% by male reporters (GMMP 2015, p. 3).

Humprecht, Edda & Esser, Frank, 2017, 'A glass ceiling in the online age? Explaining the underrepresentation of women in online political news', *European Journal of Communication*, 32:5, pp. 439-456.

This article analysed three main reasons why female sources are used in news media: the style, format and topic of a news story ("story level"); editorial policy towards 'soft' news items (which they categorise as "media organisation level"); and the role of women in society ("country level") (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 441).

Their research found that "female actors are most frequently covered by popular news outlets and are more likely to be depicted in a photograph" (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 439). Coverage of female actors also increased in countries where gender equality was progressing (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 439).

Unequal reporting has been described as 'symbolic annihilation' (the marginalization of less powerful groups by more powerful groups) and plays an important role in maintaining existing

gendered power relations (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 440). There is a need to recognize the institutional work environment which contributes to unequal reporting rather than attributing the underrepresentation of women to the individual choices made by journalists. Country level predictors such as the proportion of female parliamentarians or CEOs are more relevant to explaining the use of female sources than the number of women employed in leading editorial positions or the number of female journalists, leading the authors of a number of studies to conclude that “the persistence of gender gaps in media coverage is closely linked to real-world glass ceilings” (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 440).

The argument that females are under-represented in news stories because journalists focus on elite positions is undermined by the finding that “even influential women have been trivialized and under-represented in news content” (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 441). There is an ongoing association of women with certain news topics – health, family matters, education, culture and social policy (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 441). Gender gaps are also rooted in commercial interests – the physical appearance of female actors triggers more media coverage and public interest than that of males, a trend which has been fuelled by the social media age (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 442). “The media operate as an amplifier of gender stereotypes, and, thus, reinforce stereotypes among their audiences” (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 444). “Women and men appear in different types of stories and women are likely to find themselves in an opinion-heavy item” (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 451). “...the underrepresentation of women in the news is embedded in organizational and societal structures” (Humprecht & Esser 2017, p. 444).

Jia, Sen, Landsall-Welfare, Thomas, Sudhahar, Saatviga, Carter, Cynthia and Cristianini, Nello, 2016, ‘Women are Seen More than Heard in Online Newspapers’, PLoS ONE, 11:2, <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0148434>, accessed 5 March 2019.

Over time, research has demonstrated a “persistent pattern of underrepresentation of women in relation to men in the world’s news media.” This is a large data study of gender representation in online English language news media, which examined more than 2 million articles from over 950 websites over a six-month period. The analysis found that “males were represented more often than females in both images and text, but in proportions that changed across topics, news outlets and mode”. Overall, 77% of people mentioned in text were male, while 69.6% of face images were male. Women were more likely to be present in stories about fashion and entertainment, while males were more associated with business and politics. Interestingly, “women were more likely to be represented visually than they were mentioned as a news actor or a source”. Their findings suggest a traditional association in the West “linking women to bodies and the private sphere, and men to mind and the public sphere”.

Linabary, Jasmine R. 2013, ‘Byline Report: Who writes the news online? (6 months)’, *The Gender Report*, <https://genderreport.com/category/byline-report/>, accessed 5 March 2019.

This US study focused specifically on online news sites. Six sites were monitored over a six-month period to assess the gender representation of the bylines provided on each site. Aggregated data are not provided but men had a greater proportion of bylines than women at four of the six sites analysed.

Mannila, Saga, 2017, *Women and Men in the News. Report on Gender Representation in Nordic News Content and the Nordic Media Industry*, Nordic Council of Ministers, <https://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1092200/FULLTEXT01.pdf>, accessed 5 March 2019.

In contrast to the argument made by Humprecht & Esser that the media representation of women is linked to a country’s performance on gender equity, this Nordic report argues that “media portrayals in the Nordic region are no less gender stereotypical and women are also underrepresented in the Nordic news” (Mannila 2017, p. 11).

Media Matters for America 2017, ‘Study: Women’s Voices Marginalized in 2016 News Coverage of Foreign Affairs and National Security’, <https://www.mediamatters.org/research/2017/03/08/study-women-s-voices-marginalized-2016-news-coverage-foreign-affairs-and-national-security/215584>, accessed 4 March 2019.

This report identified that foreign affairs and national security conversations were overwhelmingly male-dominated, with women making up just under one quarter (24%) of foreign affairs and national security guests featured during 2016 news coverage of foreign affairs and national security by the leading US prime-time political talk shows. This low representation of female expertise was actually an improvement from women's representation over the previous two years.

Ross, Karen, Boyle, Karen, Carter, Cynthia & Ging, Debbie, 2018, 'Women, Men and News. It's life, Jim, but not as we know it', *Journalism Studies*, 19:6, pp 824-845.

"what passes for news is mostly defined and produced by men and is mostly about men and men's actions; where women do intervene in the news agenda is in their roles as wives, mothers and victims, and occasionally as politicians and professionals" (Ross et al 2018, p. 824)

The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) maps the portrayal of women in the world's news media, and is the largest, longest-running longitudinal study of gender and news. While there have been some improvements in the representation of women over the past 20 years, globally women now make up only 24% of people who feature in the news. This article notes that "Women are thus doubly marginalised, both in volume terms and in news category segregation, featuring more frequently in stories which are seen as less important or prestigious in news value terms" (Ross et al 2018, p. 826). The representation of women is impacted upon by main topic type across media formats, with women most likely to be included as sources in the broad categories of science/health and crime/violence (Ross et al 2018, p. 829). The article describes a "troubling narrowing of the news agenda and what passes for newsworthy stories, so that the experiences and voices of women are simply given less attention" (Ross et al 2018, p. 829). This article classified sources by occupation [an interesting idea] and noted the media's tendency to use "official" sources, a strategy which reinforces women's marginalization; "Women are significantly under-represented in the authoritative, professional and elite occupational categories and, conversely, are significantly over-represented as voices of the general public (homemaker, parent, student, child) and in occupational groups most associated with 'women's work' such as health, social and childcare workers, as teachers, activists and office workers than men" (Ross et al 2018, p. 830). The article noted that women were most likely to be called upon to provide popular opinion or personal experience, suggesting "that women's voices are used to provide personal testimony and anecdote rather than authoritative or expert perspectives, thus reinforcing professional-domestic and public-private dichotomies" (Ross et al 2018, p. 831). Women in the news media are confined to the sphere of the "private, emotional and subjective, with men continuing to dominate the sphere of the public, rational and objective" (Ross et al 2018, p. 832). Sex, age and visibility also intersect in the use of sources, "so that as a woman's age increases, her visibility in the news decreases" (Ross et al 2018, p. 832).

In terms of the journalism profession, research has noted the "intersection of gender, age and family responsibilities", with older women in particular finding it difficult to retain a place in journalism (Ross et al 2018, p. 825). While the shift to digital media has opened up new employment opportunities for women, it has come at a cost, with female and ethnic minority male journalists receiving the most online abuse (Ross et al 2018, p. 825). Women reporters were however nearly twice as likely to write stories with a central female focus and more likely to feature women sources (Ross et al 2018, p. 839).

"male-defined news selection criteria favours topics which privilege male voices and reach out to sources whose status position also favours men" (Ross et al 2018, p. 826).

An interesting piece of research about photojournalism was also noted in this article – a UK study undertaken in 2016 found that "women made up fewer than 10 per cent of the people pictured" in seven major news outlets over a four-day period (Ross et al 2018, p. 826).

The Global Institute for Women's Leadership 2018, 'Men nearly four times more likely to be quoted in UK media as an expert source', Kings College London, 17 July 2018, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/news/news-Article?id=8295e1d9-166b-4bcc-96d2-6705a7763e48>, accessed 4 March 2019.

This research identified that 77% of people quoted as experts in online news articles across eight types of news coverage by the major UK news outlets were male (nb. This is across

selected categories of news coverage, not across the board). The types of news coverage analysed were Business/finance, Tech, domestic politics, foreign news, foreign politics, social policy, science/health and nature/environment. This study defined an 'expert' source as "someone who had provided a quote based on their knowledge, job role or other position or influence". The report notes that the gender inequity is in part a reflection of gender imbalances in many fields, "with women underrepresented at the top of many professions". The report notes the need for news outlets to be more proactive in seeking women experts, "to ensure a range of voices are heard". The BBC have committed to achieving a 50/50 gender split in expert contributors by April 2019.

Women's Media Center, *The Status of Women in the U.S. Media 2019*,
<https://tools.womensmediacenter.com/page/-/WMCStatusofWomeninUSMedia2019.pdf>,
accessed 28 February 2019.

This annual report on the status of women in the US media highlights that despite massive change in the media industry, "the role of women is significantly smaller than that of men in every part of news, entertainment and digital media" (WMC 2019, 9). Interestingly, there was declining interest within industry to participate in monitoring gender diversity, with the report noting that only 17.3% of newsrooms responded to the annual survey, an historic low over the 40-year period that data have been collected (WMC 2019, 11). The report found that 60% of online news content was written by men, compared to 40% written by women; across all media platforms men received 63% of bylines and credits compared to 37% attributed to women (WMC 2019, 13). In terms of story topics covered, men dominated coverage of sport while women were more likely to report on "lifestyle and leisure"; 90% of sports articles were written by men, whereas women accounted for 58% of health coverage and 52% of lifestyle/leisure (WMC 2019, 14).

Skillpad Australia 2013, *2013 Women in Media Report. Media Analysis of Female spokespeople across Australian metropolitan print media*,
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ee1ce5_b38d426363b64211a039b3eb4a6ef266.pdf,
accessed 15 March 2019.

This study presented an overview of the share of female representation in Australian print media in comparison to male representation, based on snapshot data collected over a one-week period in May 2013. Females accounted for 20% of all relevant commentary identified during the sample period. Female spokespeople were least represented in the fields of Finance and Economics (4%), Sports (13%) and Business (14%). The highest representation of female spokespeople was in Health (45%) and Entertainment (45%).

Women's Leadership Institute Australia 2016, *Women for Media Report. An analysis of the gender balance of sources and experts across Australian metropolitan print media*,
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/ee1ce5_eeff63af2a2848478ddd7c2ce89f5555.pdf,
accessed 15 March 2019.

This report is based on analysis of the gender balance of sources and experts quoted in Australian print media over a three-week period in February 2016, and involved the analysis of over 6,000 articles. The overall source analysis found a 21% representation of directly quoted female sources. Women were most likely to be quoted as direct sources in stories relating to Health (41%), social issues (39%) and education (39%), and least likely to be quoted in stories relating to Business (13%) and Finance (14%). In line with the findings of our study, there was considerable gender disparity between the representation of women in various story categories (Women for Media 2016, p. 8). Of concern, the story categories which were most commented upon – business, finance and politics – had the lowest representation of female sources (Women for Media 2016, p. 9); whereas female sources featured most prominently in stories relating to family, foreign affairs and violent crime (Women for Media 2016, p. 11). Male authors were more likely to quote male sources (83%) than female authors (73%); articles authored by "multiple authors of mixed gender" showed no difference in the gender representation of sources to those authored by males alone (83%) (Women for Media 2016, p. 10). This study also investigated the gender of sources in relation to the role the source held; females comprised 34% of spokespeople, 14% of CEOs, 10% of chairpeople, and 9% of analysts (Women for Media 2016, p. 13). 28% of the authors of opinion pieces were female (Women for Media 2016, p. 17).