



Australian Industry Group CEO Heather Ridout. AAP

Women in Media

Media coverage analysis of prominent female spokespeople across metropolitan print media

Preface

The following media analysis presents a snapshot of female representation in the Australian media. It has been prepared by The Media Research Group at the request of The Women's Leadership Institute Australia.

The intention of the research is to quantify the level of female commentary used in metropolitan news articles, compared to male commentary and identify any gender bias. In particular, the media analysis focuses on business, finance, government and community news.

The analysis was based on a sample of 81 metropolitan newspapers from across Australia, reflecting a week's worth of print media around the country



Prime Minister Julia Gillard. AAP

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Research design

- Research period commenced on Sunday October 23 and concluded with publications from Saturday October 29.
- Researchers analysed a full week's content from national metropolitan newspapers seeking to identify the presence of direct commentary or quotes attributed to female spokespersons speaking on behalf of an organisation or government body.
- Comments from individuals or citizens offering personal opinions were excluded from the results.
- The same process was applied to commentary from male spokespeople to arrive at a "total" sample of representative commentary and comparison data.

Methodology and approach

- Weekday, weekend and Sunday papers were included in the data sample as were edition changes.
- Researchers scanned all content manually and recorded the results in a central database.
- Publication sections and page volumes were recorded and crosschecked by alternate researchers at the conclusion of each title.
- The resulting data was then tabulated and sorted by gender, publication and date, then compiled to produce the final results.
- All researchers were experienced media researchers and analysts with a thorough knowledge of the Australian media landscape.

Included titles

TITLE	ISSUE
The Australian	6
The Weekend Australian	1
The Australian Financial Review	6
The Age	6
The Sunday Age	1
Herald Sun	6
Sunday Herald Sun	1
The Sydney Morning Herald	6
The Sun Herald	1
The Daily Telegraph	6
The Sunday Telegraph	1
The Courier-Mail	6
Qld Sunday Mail	1
The Advertiser	6
SA Sunday Mail	1
The West Australian	6
WA Sunday Times	1
Northern Territory Times	6
Sunday Territorian	1
The Canberra Times	6
Mercury	6
Sunday Tasmanian	1



Key findings

- Commentary attributed to prominent female spokespeople accounted for 20 per cent of all commentary during the sample period.
- In finance commentary alone, the female share dropped to 10 per cent.
- Results for government spokespeople only delivered an increase of 5 per cent on the overall result with a 25 per cent share noted for female spokespeople, despite having a female prime minister, Queensland premier and governor-general.
- Prime Minister Julia Gillard was the most prominent spokesperson accounting for 7 per cent of the total volume of commentary attributed to female spokespeople.
- Ms Gillard's volume was almost double that of the most prominent male spokesperson Kevin Rudd, who delivered less than 1 per cent of the volume of commentary attributed to male spokespeople.
- Collectively the top three female spokespeople (Julia Gillard, Anna Bligh and Nicola Roxon) accounted for 10 per cent of all female commentary.
- The top three male spokespeople (Kevin Rudd, Wayne Swan and Tony Abbott) contributed just over 2 per cent of the total male sample.
- The top 10 female spokespeople accounted for 15 per cent of the total female spokesperson sample while the top 10 males accounted for just 5 per cent of the total male spokesperson sample.
- Four of the top 10 female spokespeople were politicians while the top 10 male spokespeople included nine politicians.
- When the results are viewed by industry or topic sectors, female spokespeople were most prominent in the not-for-profit or community-engagement sectors where women accounted for 34 per cent of all commentary.

Results by gender by sector against the total sample

Industry sector	Percentage share of all spokespeople for sector	
	Women	Men
Finance/economic	10%	90%
Government	25%	75%
Corporate	14%	86%
NFP or community	34%	66%
Sports	13%	87%
Other	28%	72%
Total	20%	80%

Federal Finance Minister Penny Wong. AAP



Results by leading female spokesperson

	Percentage share of all comments attributed to female spokespeople
Julia Gillard	7%
Anna Bligh	2%
Nicola Roxon	1%
Gina Rinehart	1%
Lara Giddings	1%
Nadine Flood	1%
Sarah Hanson-Young	1%
Helen Zorbas	1%
Tanya Plibersek	1%
Heather Ridout	1%

