

# WOMEN SEVERELY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN AUSTRALIAN MEDIA



*Embargoed until 13 February 2023*

Men continue to dominate the Australian media, from the newsroom to the boardroom, according to a new study showing women are severely under-represented in terms of media coverage.

The **Women in Media Gender Scorecard** released today reports on the portrayal of women featured in the news and used as both sources and experts in their field. It finds that men account for 70% of quoted sources, with a similarly high figure included as experts.

Published by Women in Media, a 6000-member organisation for women working in all facets of the media – the *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* identifies core areas in media analytics (bylines, sources, experts) to monitor change and positive or negative shifts towards achieving parity for women. Research partner Isentia analysed 18,346 press, radio and TV news reports over a 14-day period, 18-31 July 2022, in compiling the research.

The *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* defines male-female parity as '100' with any number under 100 showing an under-representation of women in the media.

Isentia's Insights Director, Ngaire Crawford noted, "This research highlights the 14-point gap that exists today between male and female representation. Having an industry measure like the *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* provides tangible data and transparency on the issue of gender representation in the media".

While the latest *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* of 86 out of 100 is up 8 points on the 2016 ranking, true parity with men remains a distant goal, according to Women in Media Strategic Advisor, Petra Buchanan.

"This report proves that a gender divide still exists," said Ms Buchanan. "The research shows that the inclusion, portrayal, and projection of women in Australian media has a way to go.

"Based on its current trajectory, the *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* will not achieve media gender parity until 2034. That is far too long to wait for equal representation of women as authors, sources and experts in the media. Steps need to be taken now to speed up change.

"Action in key sectors including retail, sport, health, social issues and education will drive us towards achieving that objective sooner."

Key findings of the **Women in Media Gender Scorecard** include:

- Males dominate as byline authors, sources and experts in most prolific sections of the media: sport (82% male authors, only 18% women), politics (59% male authors, only 41% women) and finance (63% male authors, only 37% women).

- Even when adjusting for share of employment (using ABS data) females remain highly under-represented as sources and experts in media coverage.
- Several industries, such as retail and sport, recorded a 40% under-representation of female sources given their high share of female employment.
- Sport has an outsized effect in the media, accounting for almost one-quarter of all bylined stories. With only 18% of sport stories written by women it brings female bylines down to 43% overall. If sports coverage was to be removed from the data, women's bylines for the reference period would exceed parity at 51%.
- Efforts to achieve gender parity among media organisations have had positive results, with an upswing of more than 10% towards women since 2016. However the *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* projects it will take more than a decade to achieve parity unless proactive campaigns are implemented to effect change.

## MORE WOMEN'S VOICES

Women in Media wants to ensure that women are seen and heard in media, and are called on for their leadership and expertise, commenting on issues and sharing their opinions, contributions and reactions as a fair representation of Australian society.

Ms Buchanan said: "For women to achieve parity in voice and representation we need the media to ensure more female journalists are writing, producing, fronting and being technically involved in all aspects. Women must be empowered as sources and experts in news and storytelling.

"Imposing a gender lens on the media is an important way to monitor progress and identify where effort, investment and action can be taken to address female under-representation."

## CALL TO ACTION

Women in Media concludes that industry, organisations and the media can make quicker advances to achieving gender parity in four specific areas.

- ***Industry and organisations to develop female sources and experts*** as media representatives. Review and assess levels of female representation, invest in training and development for spokeswomen, and commit to monitor change. Greatest impact could begin in retail, sport, and finance - fields with the smallest proportion of females as sources.
- ***Media to commit to increase female bylines*** equal to gender percentages of the population (50/50).
- ***Media to address gender imbalance in most prolific areas of coverage***: sport, finance, health, and politics.

- **Media to focus on gender balance in news and reporting** through inclusion and diversity in content development by ensuring workplaces support and provide visibility for women and pathways to leadership positions.

## **ABOUT WOMEN IN MEDIA GENDER SCORECARD**

The *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* identifies core areas in media analytics (bylines, sources, experts) to monitor change over time and positive or negative shifts towards achieving parity for women in Australian media. Isentia analysis included 18,346 reports from Australian press, radio and TV news coverage over a 14-day period, 18-31 July 2022. This research picks up on data collected in 2016 by Isentia and Women in Media. The *Women in Media Gender Scorecard* defines male-female parity as '100' with any number under 100 showing an under-representation of women in the media. Share of female bylines as well as use of sources and experts in media reporting are considered in this data.

## **ABOUT WOMEN IN MEDIA**

Women in Media is a not-for-profit organisation that exists to help women in media excel, learn, contribute, and connect. With over 6000 members nationwide and branches in each state and territory, members work in all facets of the media including journalism, communications, production, public relations, publishing, and digital media. For more information visit [womeninmedia.com.au](http://womeninmedia.com.au).

Available for interview:

Petra Buchanan, Women in Media Strategic Advisor

Ngaire Crawford, Isentia Insights Director

Media Contact: eckfactor 0438 532569