



*The*  
**STELLA**  
C O U N T  
2015



[stella.org.au/count](http://stella.org.au/count) →

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

This information was compiled by the Stella Prize, with assistance from researchers at the ANU Gender Institute and with financial support from the Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.

The Stella Prize wishes to thank the following for their help with the Count:

- The Copyright Agency Cultural Fund.
- Ashley Orr and Imogen Mathew, who assisted with the collection of the data as recipients of the ANU Gender Institute/Stella Prize Internships.
- Melinda Harvey (Monash University) and Julieanne Lamond (ANU) for their ongoing interest in and support of the Stella Count.
- Kate Greenwood and the team at Isentia for their assistance with the creation of the pie charts.
- Kate Butler for last-minute data-wrangling
- Connor O'Brien for digital troubleshooting
- All the literary editors who shared information about their publications' reviews with the Stella Prize.

The analysis of the 2015 Stella Count was compiled by Veronica Sullivan, Stella Prize Manager.



[stella.org.au/count](https://stella.org.au/count) →

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## ABOUT THE COUNT

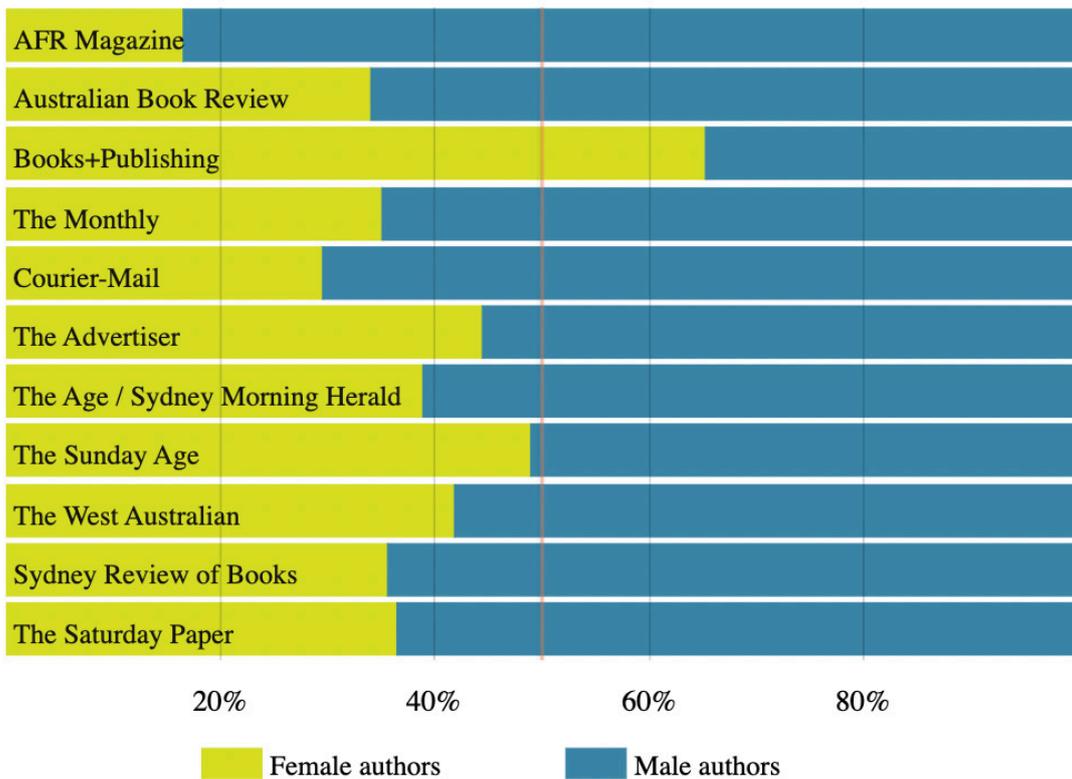
The 2015 Stella Count surveyed a total of 13 publications, including national and state newspapers, review journals and magazines.

The Count assesses the gender of authors reviewed, the gender of reviewers, the size of reviews, and the genre of reviews – and examines the ways these aspects intersect in review coverage.

Read on to learn about the new Stella Count survey, and to view the full results and pie charts for each publication's data below, along with an analysis of notable points of interest from the results.

# Top-level Findings

Authors reviewed by major Australian publications in 2015



## FINDINGS

# Authors

A 2015 study of the Australian Book Industry conducted by Macquarie University found that women make up approximately two-thirds of the author population. In trade publishing – i.e. non-academic publishing – the breakdown was 72% female and 28% male. There is no doubt that female authors are being published widely across all genres in Australia.

Despite this, all publications surveyed by the 2015 Stella Count reviewed more men than women – with the exception of trade publication Books+Publishing, which reviewed 65% female authors and 35% male authors.

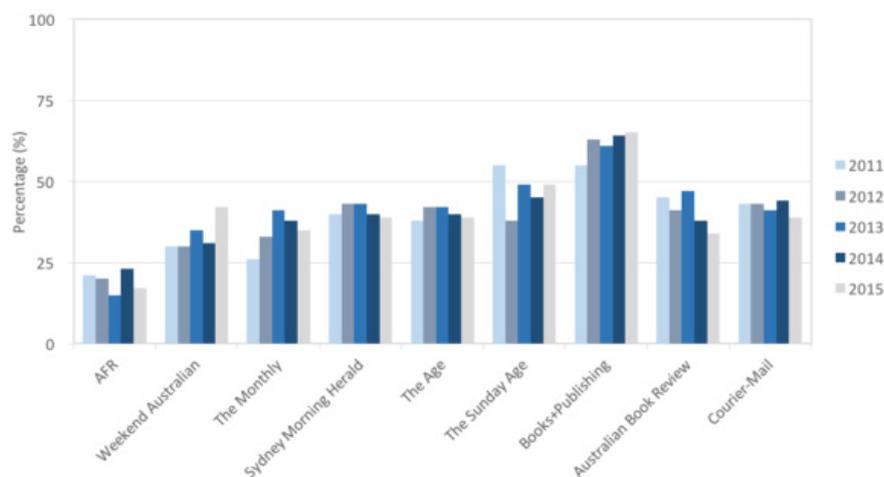
The most marked gender disparity for authors reviewed was found in the pages of the *Australian Financial Review Magazine*, where just 17% of reviews were of books by female authors. Since 2011, *AFR* has reviewed a majority of male authors, giving them

between three to five times more reviews. (77% male authors 2014; 85% male in 2013, 80% male in 2012, and 79% male in 2011.)

The remaining publications all favoured male authors in their review coverage – including the *Australian Book Review* (66% male, 34% female), the *Monthly* (65% male, 35% female), *Weekend Australian* (64% male, 36% female), *Sydney Review of Books* (64% male, 36% female), the *Saturday Paper* (64% male, 36% female), the *Age/Sydney Morning Herald* (61% male, 39% female), *Courier-Mail* (61% male, 39% female), *Mercury* (61% male, 39% female), *West Australian* (58% male, 42% female), *Advertiser* (56% male, 44% female), and the *Sunday Age* (51% male, 49% female).

The below chart shows the total percentage of several notable publications' reviews that were of books by women, tracked over the past five years.

Total percentage of reviews that were of books by women, 2011–2015



## FINDINGS

# Length

The Stella Count data on size of reviews reflected a similar prioritisation of books by male authors. Publications that publish reviews in a range of different lengths tend to include one or two longer reviews – which run over 1000 words and are often the feature piece of criticism – in each week or month's edition. Most publications devoted the majority of these long reviews to books by male authors, rather than books by female authors.

The *Monthly* published six times as many long reviews of books by men as it did of books by women: of its total reviews, 30% were long reviews of books by men but just 5% were long reviews of books by women.

The *Australian Book Review* published more than twice as many long reviews of men than of women: 56% of its total reviews were long reviews of male authors, while just 26% were long reviews of female authors.

The *Weekend Australian's* figures were similar, with 41% of its total reviews devoted to long reviews of books by men, and 22% to long reviews of books by women.

## FINDINGS

# Genre

In the breakdown of genres covered by reviews, men dominated nonfiction reviews across all publications – again with the sole exception of *Books+Publishing*, which reviewed slightly more nonfiction by women (14% of total reviews) than by men (10% of total reviews).

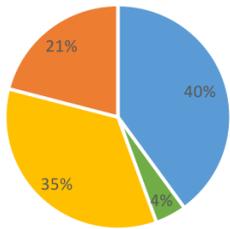
At the *Monthly*, 30% of total reviews were of nonfiction by men, while just 8% was of nonfiction by women. At the *Courier-Mail*, 27% of the total reviews were of nonfiction by men, while just 5% were of nonfiction by women (the fiction breakdown was more even: 33% of the total was fiction by women, 32% fiction by men). The *Advertiser* – which had one of the more even breakdowns of author genders overall – published twice as many reviews of nonfiction books by men than it did of nonfiction by women (22% and 11% of its total reviews respectively). The *Age/Sydney Morning Herald* published more than twice as many reviews of nonfiction by men than of women (36% and 15% of its total reviews respectively).

The *Sunday Age* had overall the most even distribution of reviews, giving roughly equitable coverage to fiction, nonfiction and children's books by authors of both genders. It is notable that the *Sunday Age* has ceased its books coverage in 2016.

The aforementioned Macquarie University study found that 65.3% of creative nonfiction authors and 67.4% of other nonfiction authors were female. The fact that an imbalance in critical coverage persists, despite there being no underlying imbalance in authorship, creates and perpetuates the perception that nonfiction by males is more worthy of critical attention, in that it frequently deals with typically masculine topics such as war, history, economics and so forth.

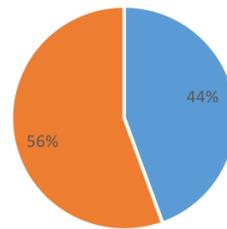
# The Advertiser

Advertiser:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



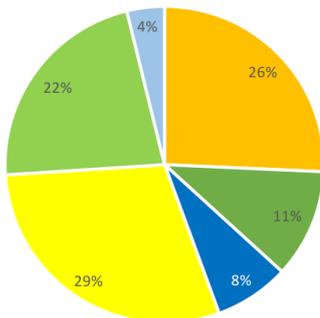
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

Advertiser: authors reviewed



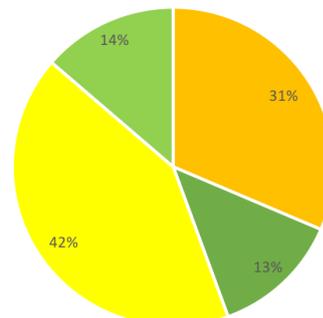
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

Advertiser: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

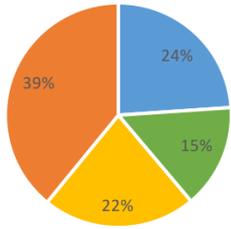
Advertiser: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

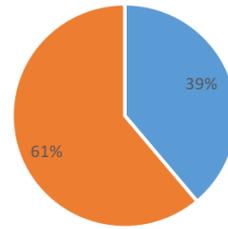
# The Age/Sydney Morning Herald

The Age/SMH:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



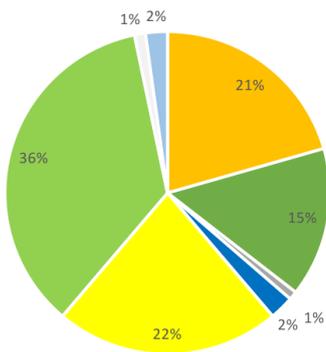
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
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- Males reviewing titles by Males

The Age/SMH: authors reviewed



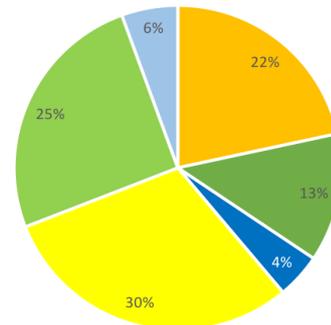
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

The Age/SMH: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

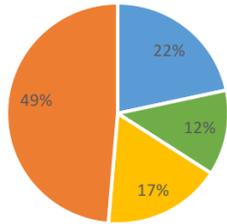
The Age/SMH: Reviews by size



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- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

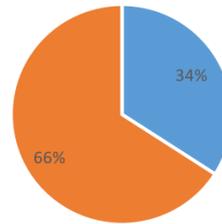
# Australian Book Review

Australian Book Review:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



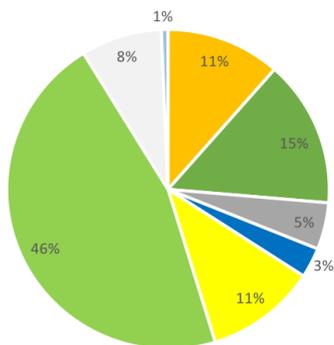
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

Australian Book Review: authors reviewed



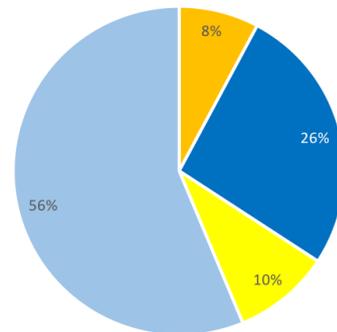
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

Australian Book Review: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Females
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

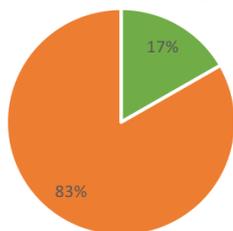
Australian Book Review: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles

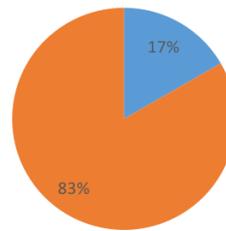
# Australian Financial Review Magazine

AFR Magazine:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



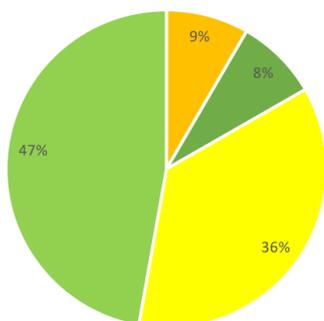
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

AFR Magazine: authors reviewed



- Female (%)
- Male (%)

AFR Magazine: Reviews by genre

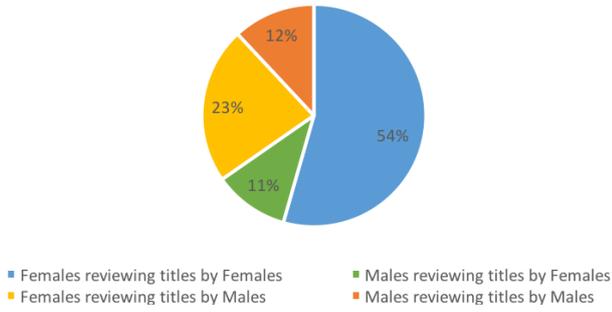


- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

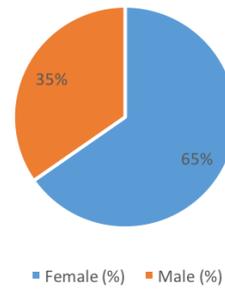
All reviews published by the *Australian Financial Review Magazine* in 2015 were written by Simon Hughes, the publication's then-books writer.

# Books+Publishing

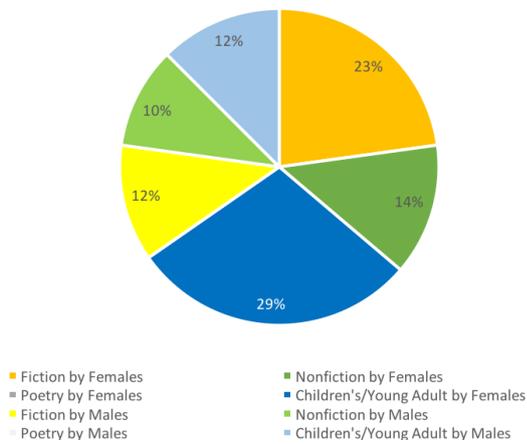
Books+Publishing:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



Books+Publishing: authors reviewed



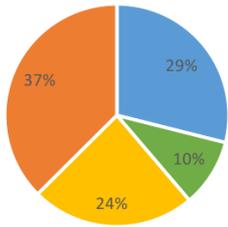
Books+Publishing: Reviews by genre



NB: Data on review size has not been depicted in pie form for *Books+Publishing*, as the publication's reviews are all small.

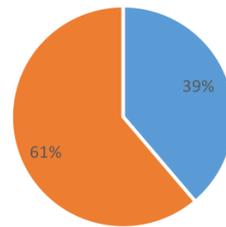
# Courier Mail

Courier-Mail:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



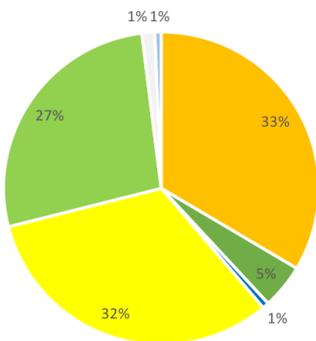
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

Courier-Mail: authors reviewed



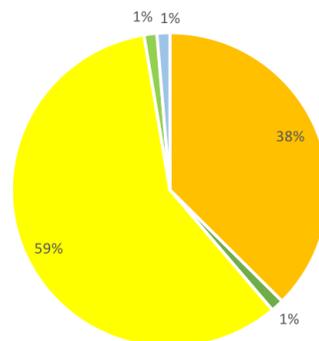
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

Courier-Mail: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

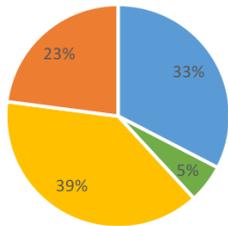
Courier-Mail: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles

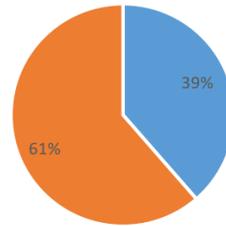
# The Mercury

The Mercury:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



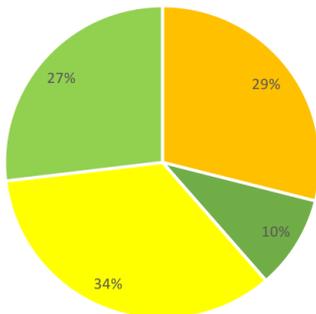
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

The Mercury:  
authors reviewed



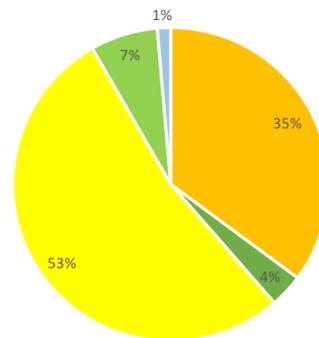
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

The Mercury:  
Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

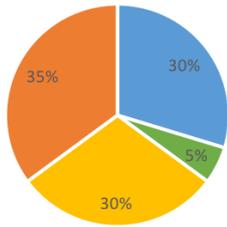
The Mercury: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

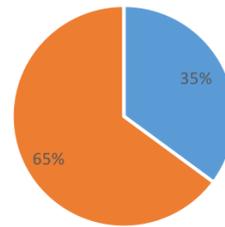
# The Monthly

The Monthly:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



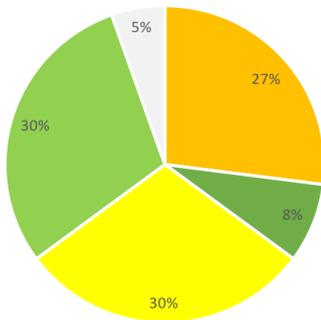
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

The Monthly: authors reviewed



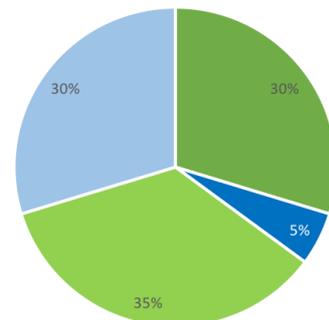
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

The Monthly: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

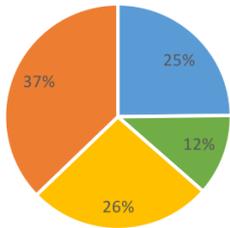
The Monthly: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
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- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles

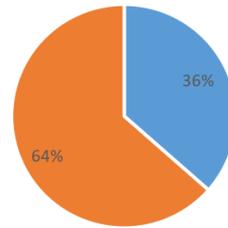
# The Saturday Paper

The Saturday Paper:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



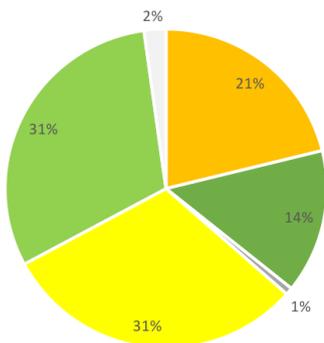
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

The Saturday Paper:  
authors reviewed



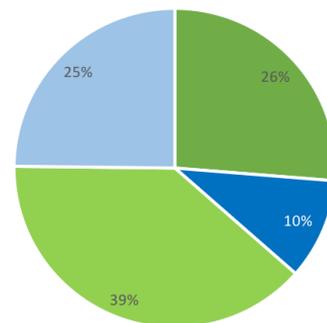
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

The Saturday Paper: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

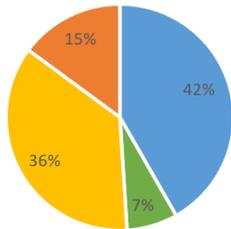
The Saturday Paper: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

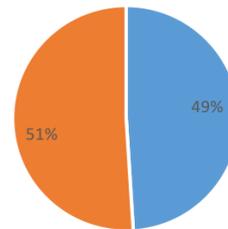
# The Sunday Age

The Sunday Age:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



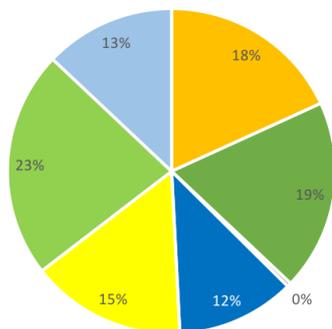
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

The Sunday Age: authors reviewed



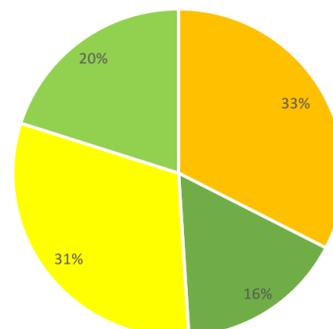
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

The Sunday Age: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

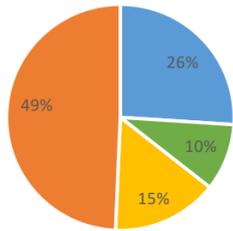
The Sunday Age: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

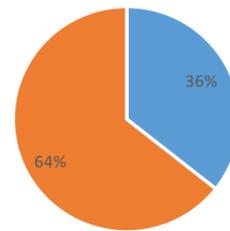
# Sydney Review of Books

Sydney Review of Books:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



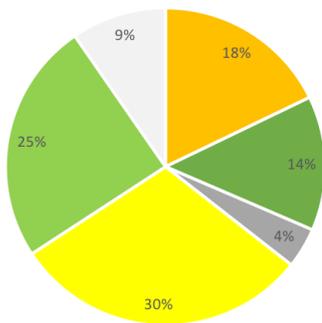
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

Sydney Review of Books:  
authors reviewed



- Female (%)
- Male (%)

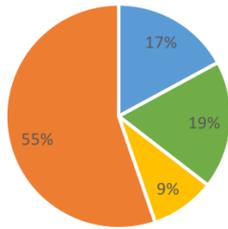
Sydney Review of Books: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

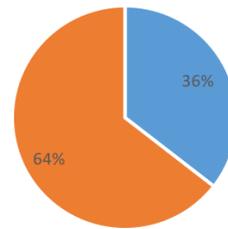
# Weekend Australian

Weekend Australian:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



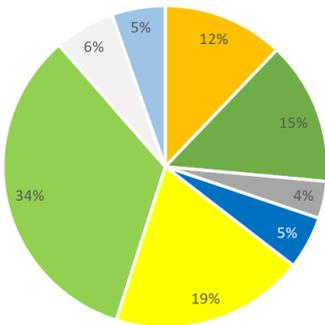
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Males

Weekend Australian: authors reviewed



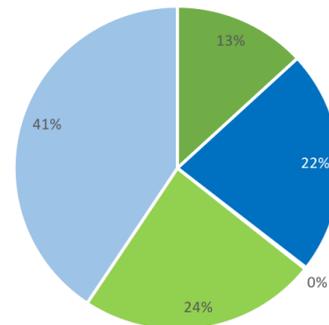
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

Weekend Australian:  
Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
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- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

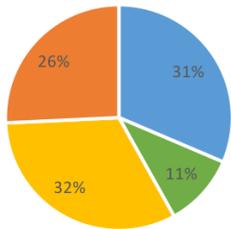
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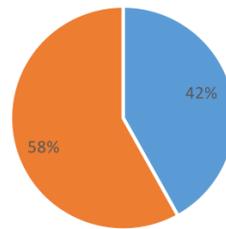
# West Australian

West Australian:  
Reviews by gender, of gender



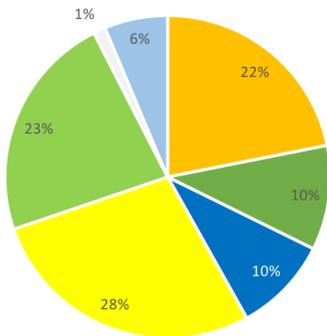
- Females reviewing titles by Females
- Females reviewing titles by Males
- Males reviewing titles by Females
- Males reviewing titles by Males

West Australian: authors reviewed



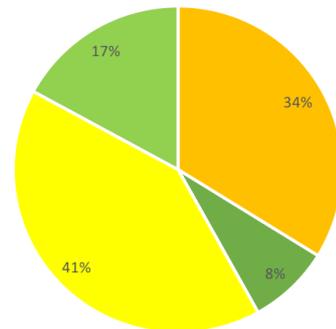
- Female (%)
- Male (%)

West Australian: Reviews by genre



- Fiction by Females
- Poetry by Females
- Fiction by Males
- Poetry by Males
- Nonfiction by Females
- Nonfiction by Males
- Children's/Young Adult by Females
- Children's/Young Adult by Males

West Australian: Reviews by size



- Small Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Female titles
- Small Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Male titles
- Medium Reviews of Female titles
- Large Reviews of Male titles

## Addenda

### Notes on the data

Books with two authors or an author and illustrator of the same gender were included in this Count and logged under their shared gender. Anthologies and other books with both male and female authors or more than two authors were excluded from this Count. In all cases they made up less than 1% of the total data.

Every effort has been made to ensure these statistics are accurate, and any publication for which we were unable to obtain sufficient or reliable data has been excluded from the Count.

We welcome corrections or comment from publications, editors or reviewers. Individuals and organisations who wish to view the raw data of this Count can arrange to do so by emailing [info@stella.org.au](mailto:info@stella.org.au)

