



The Tokyo Effect

A CASE STUDY FROM THE SPORT NZ – ISENTIA STUDY OF GENDER BALANCE IN SPORTS COVERAGE AND SPORTS REPORTING



About this Study

This case study compares New Zealand media coverage of the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, including gender balance, contribution to overall sports coverage, coverage per medalist and story narratives.

It forms part of the broader [Sport NZ – Isentia study](#) of gender balance in sports coverage and sports reporting but, in this case, extends beyond analysis based purely on gender to explore other aspects of how Tokyo Olympians and Paralympians were reported on by New Zealand media.

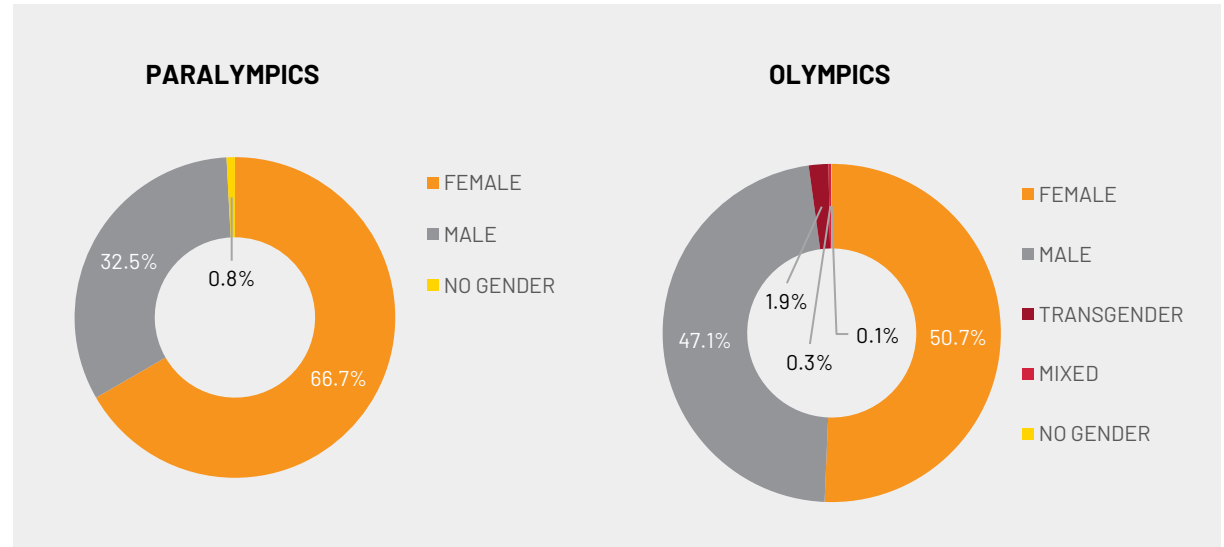
The Sport NZ-Isentia study involves analysis of one-third of all New Zealand sports coverage, selected randomly each day. This excludes match broadcast and live blogging of sports fixtures. As a result, Spark Sport and Sky are not included in this case study.



Coverage

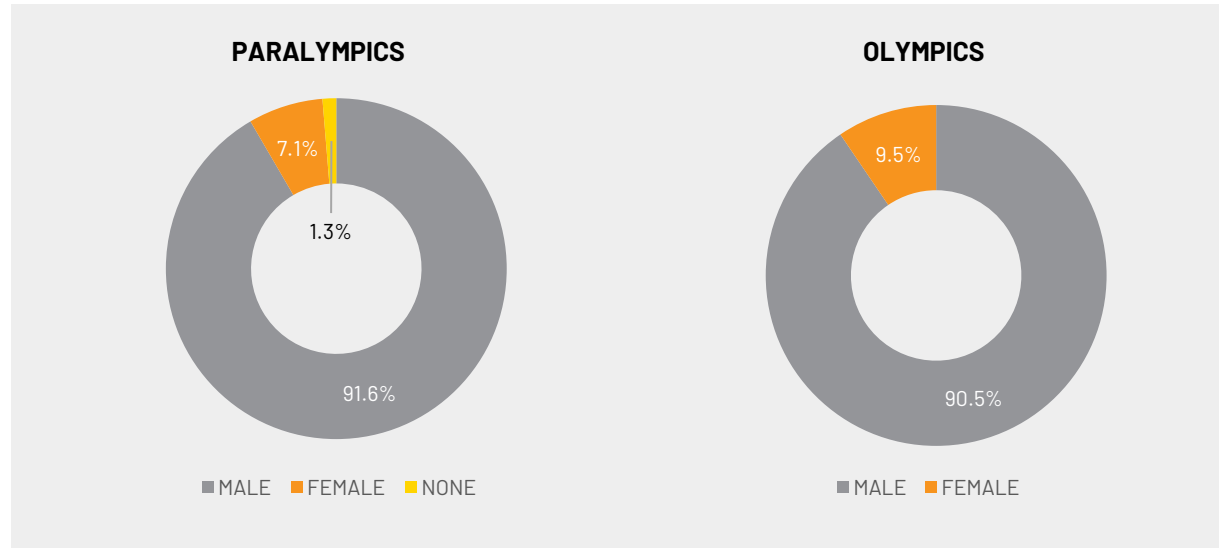
Both games generated a much higher percentage of female coverage than all sports coverage as represented in our earlier report for the period 1 January to 20 June (17%).

This reflects the gender balance of the respective teams, and of Olympic and Paralympic medalists.



Bylines

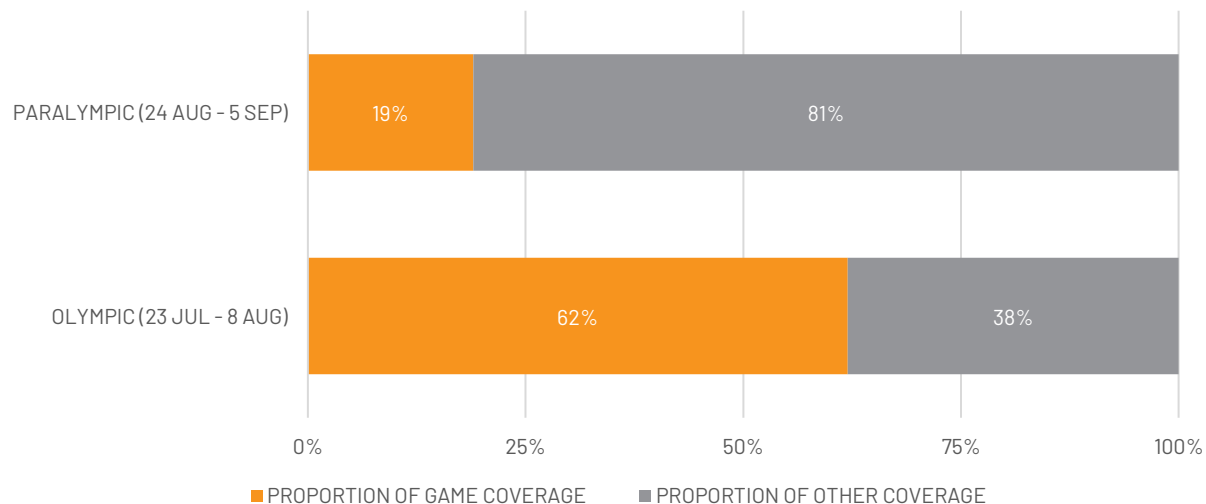
Female journalists were strongly underrepresented in Olympic and Paralympic bylines – particularly when compared with all sports coverage (24% for the first half of 2021).



Proportion of All Coverage

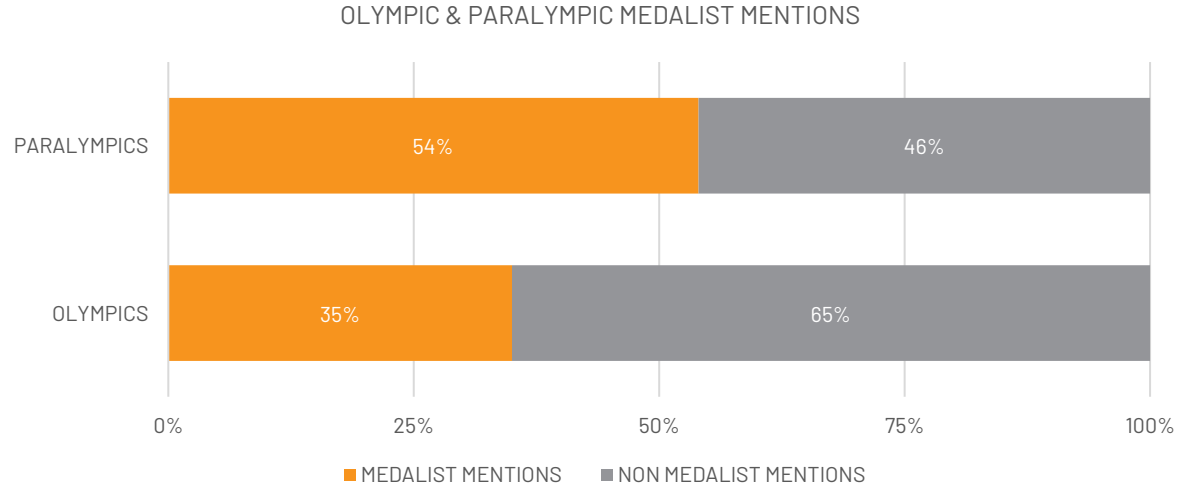
The profile of the Olympic Games and performance of the NZ Team meant it commanded 62% of all sports coverage during its games period.

The Paralympic Games generated less than a third as much of all sports coverage, however the team was roughly a tenth the size of the Olympic team.



Impact of Medals

Medalists were far more prominent in Paralympic coverage, while non medaling New Zealand athletes were 1.4 times more likely to receive media coverage at the Olympic Games.



THE TOKYO EFFECT

ANALYSING GENDER BALANCE OF NEW ZEALAND SPORTS COVERAGE DURING THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES SHOWS THE POWER OF MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS TO IMPROVE THE GENDER BALANCE OF ALL SPORTS COVERAGE

WOMEN'S SPORT AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL SPORTS COVERAGE

17%

BASELINE (1 JAN TO 30 JUN)

29%

DURING PARALYMPIC GAMES

42%

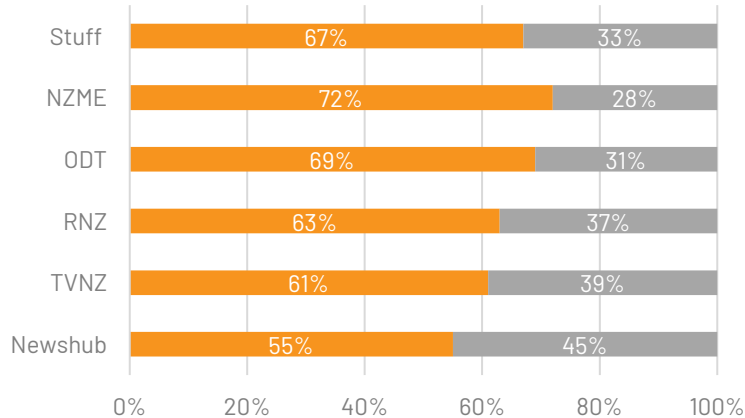
DURING OLYMPIC GAMES



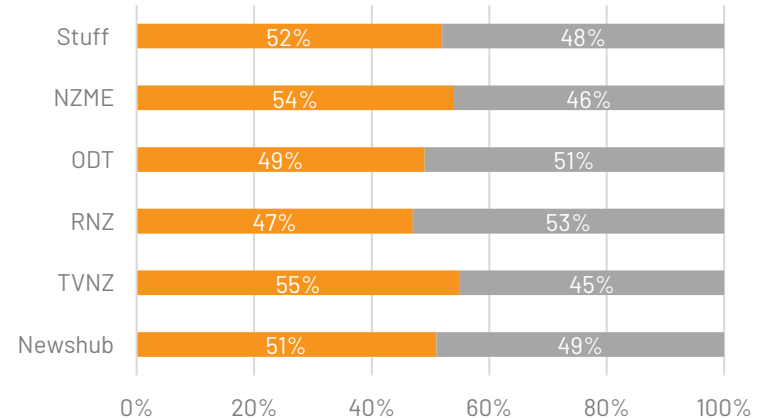
Gender Balance by Media Outlet

NZME and the ODT both exceeded the average proportion of female coverage at both the Paralympic and Olympic Games. TVNZ and Newshub both outperformed the average at the Olympics, while being below average at the Paralympics.

PARALYMPIC COVERAGE



OLYMPIC COVERAGE

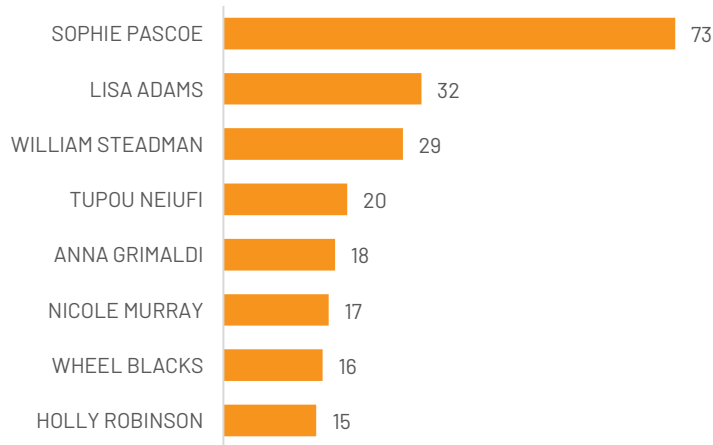


Female
Male

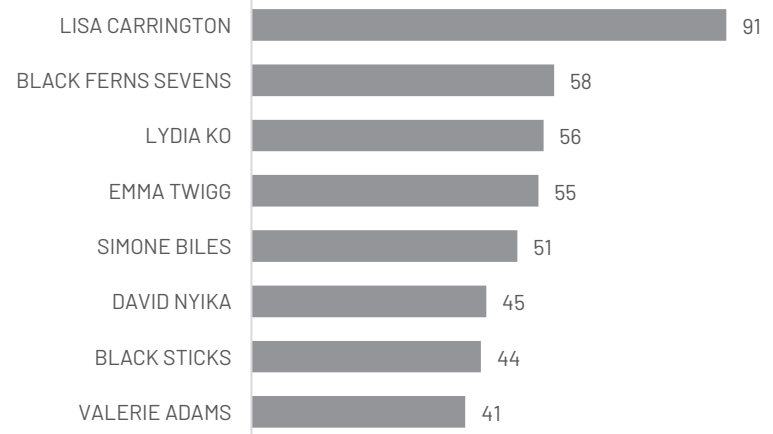
Leading Athletes

These volumes are based on our sample, which is based on around a third of New Zealand sports coverage (randomly selected daily). They show lower levels of coverage for Paralympic medals, whether that's multi-medalists (Sophie Pascoe v. Lisa Carrington) or single medalists (e.g. Tupou Neiufi v. Emma Twigg).

PARALYMIC COVERAGE (No. Stories)



OLYMPIC COVERAGE (No. Stories)



Leading Narratives

Tokyo coverage was far more likely to focus on athletes as quiet achievers, while Paralympians are more likely to be portrayed by media as punching above their weight. Paralympians are also less likely to be portrayed as talented. In this case study we did not observe any coverage that framed female athletes in a problematic or misogynistic way.

PARALYMPICS
Quiet Achiever
Punching Above Weight
Hard Worker
Talented
High Performance Expected

OLYMPICS
Quiet Achiever
Talented
Hard Worker
Punching Above Weight
High Performance Expected

ALL SPORTS COVERAGE
High Performance Expected
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