
4 Statistics

Phase One (a population census) was conducted between 21 February and 18 March, 2005. It included an initial survey of:

a. The PRIA (State and Federal bodies)

Because the PRIA did not have past years' membership statistics, it was impossible to gauge membership trends. However, national membership of the PRIA (2005) comprises 2560 females (73%) and 967 (27%) males. This reflects almost identically, membership of the WA Branch, which comprises 269 female (74%) and 80 males (26%). As a result of this study, and following private correspondence (March, 2005) with the then national president, the PRIA will now maintain regular membership statistics.

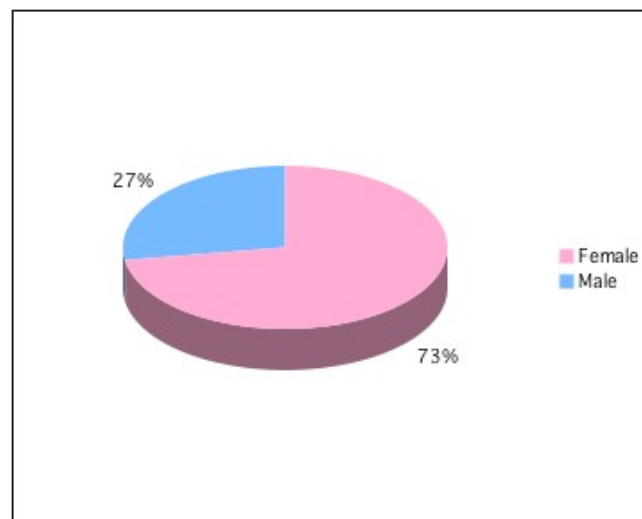


Figure 18: Gender breakdown of national PRIA membership, 2005.

b. National practitioners

A total of 28 practitioners (from 126 e-mailed) responded, giving a response rate of 16 per cent. They were asked to supply the male/female breakdown of fulltime employees, which was 239 female (74%) and 86 males (26%).

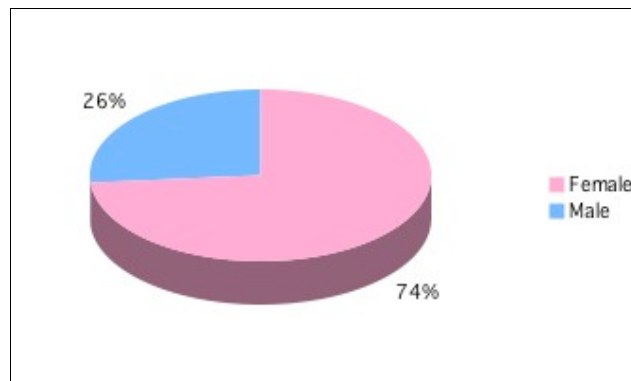


Figure 19: National private PR practice professionals.

c. Perth-based PR practices

A total of 21 (of 47) practices responded, giving a response rate of 69 per cent. Statistics only included those staff directly involved in the PR function. There were 86 females and 30 males involved in private PR practice. The percentages were identical to the national figures.

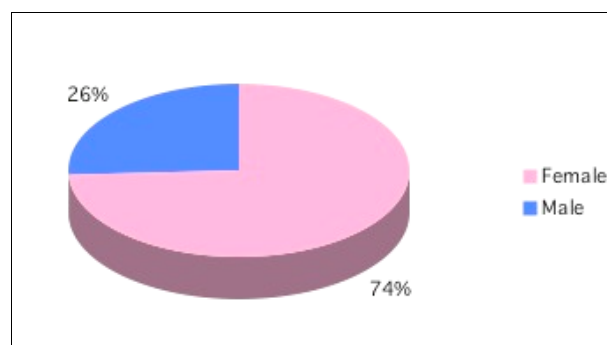


Figure 20: Private practice professionals in Perth.

d. State Government PR Departments

From the census of all 30 WA PR departments, there were a total of 235 PR professionals, with 203 females (74%) and 82 males (26%). Once again, females were measured as 74 per cent of the sub-group.

e. Registered charities (non, or not-for profit)

There are 72 charities listed in the Perth Yellow Pages. Of these, only 16 have fulltime PR practitioners. A phone census of all 16 was conducted, with all 16 providing information, giving a 100 per cent return. There were 21 females (75%) and seven males (25%) working in this PR sector.

f. Perth universities

The four universities all presented their data in different ways. Some differentiate between journalism and PR; others define PR and journalism as “communication”. Of the universities, Murdoch’s figures were the most detailed, with ‘communication’ enrolments for BA PR/journalism, BA Multi Media and Bachelor of Communications (Marketing). For this study, I used the PR/journalism course statistics. However, all three courses at Murdoch showed a distinct predominance of female students.

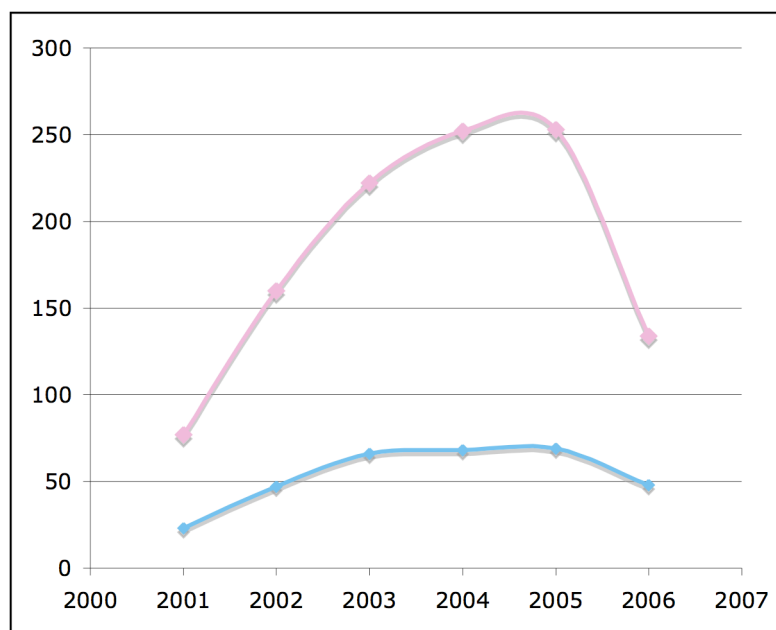


Figure 21: Murdoch University PR/journalism enrolments from 2001–2006.

Murdoch also made it easier (via a comprehensive web site) to obtain enrolment statistics as far back as 2001. One university provided only the current year, while another provided figures dating to 1992. If all years are considered, there have been 2275 females (80%) and only 556 males (20%) studying communications at the four institutions. If only the current year is considered, there are 742 students in their first second and third-year of undergraduate study. This comprises 600 females (80%) and 142 males (20%).

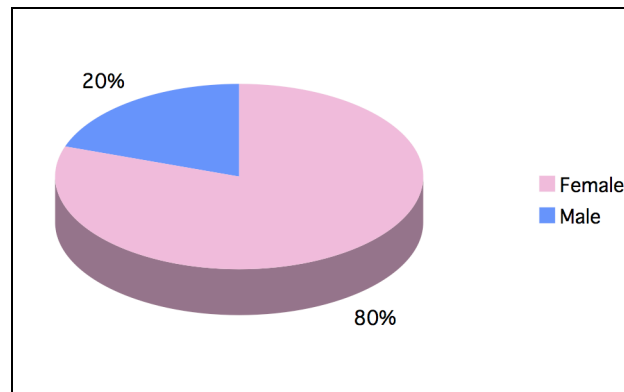


Figure 22: "Communications" (PR/journalism) enrolments at four Perth universities, 1992–2004.

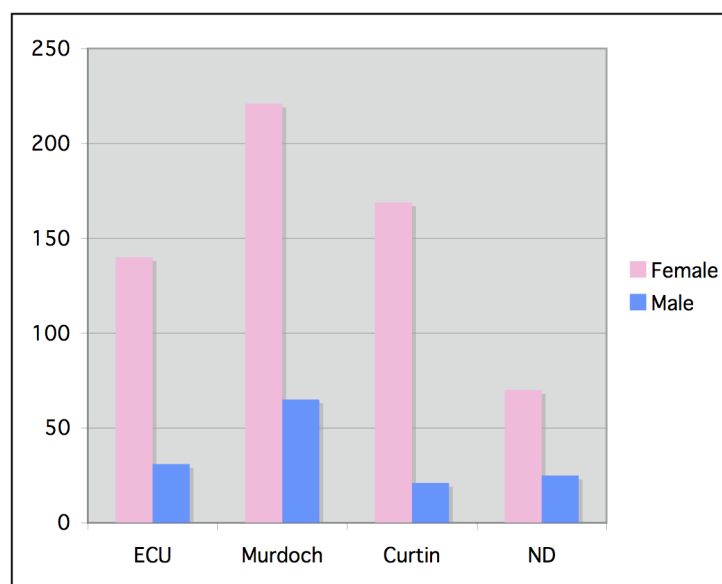


Figure 23: Enrolments in PR courses at Perth universities, 2004.

Due to the PR-specific nature of this study, only Edith Cowan and Curtin Universities have been considered for the final breakdown and analysis of figures, primarily because their statistics can be charted from 2002–2004 (inclusive). In those years there have been 524 female (86%) and 82 male (14%) PR students studying PR. Clearly this demonstrates a predominance of women.

There has been a steady rise in students studying PR at those two universities, as indicated by figure 24 and 25 and table 11. At ECU, the total numbers studying PR increased dramatically from 67 in 2001, to 171 in 2004. The proportion of female students has varied in those years from 82 per cent to 94 per cent, with the average female enrolment at 86 per cent.

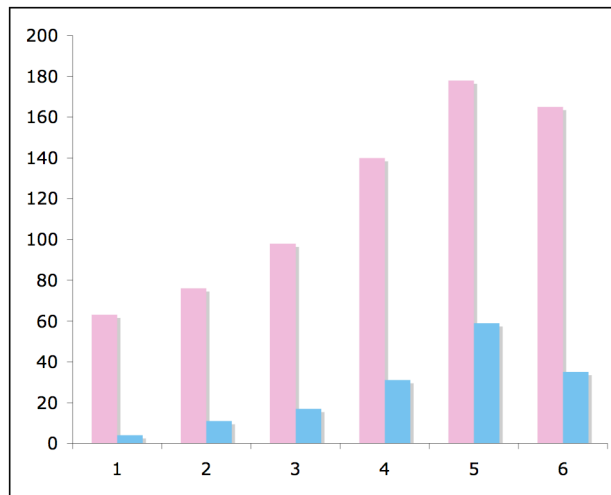


Figure 24: PR enrolments at Edith Cowan University, 2001-2006.

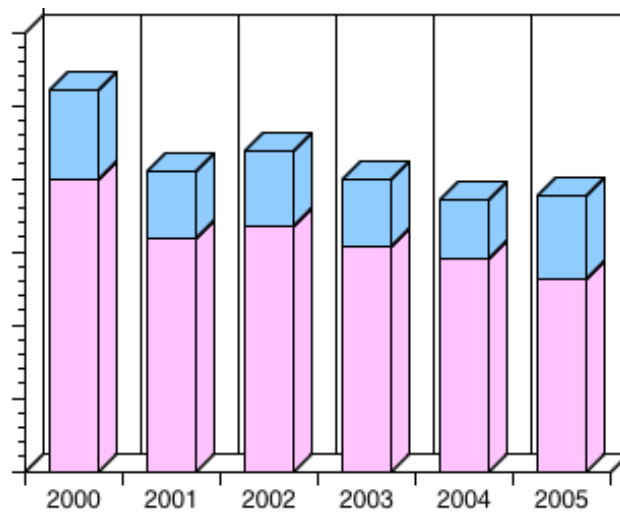


Figure 25: Communication enrolments at Curtin University, 2000-2005.

While women clearly dominate PR enrolments at Curtin University (where women on average comprise 87 per cent of the enrolments) the pattern changed slightly in 2004, with enrolments slightly falling for men and women. This could be a result of declining interest in university study, brought about by higher fees. In fact, correspondence between myself and Dr Trevor Cullen from ECU shows that journalism enrolments there have fallen. Tutorials in the second semester of 2005 were down from 16 to nine. In PR, there were two fewer tutorials in the second semester. When their statistics are combined, the two universities present a clearer indication of the composition of the tertiary PR sector. Overall growth has been high, particularly among women.

	Female	Male	Total
2002	103	14	117
2003	145	23	168
2004	171	35	206
2005	160	57	217
2006	155	42	197

Table 11: Combined PR enrolments at Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities.

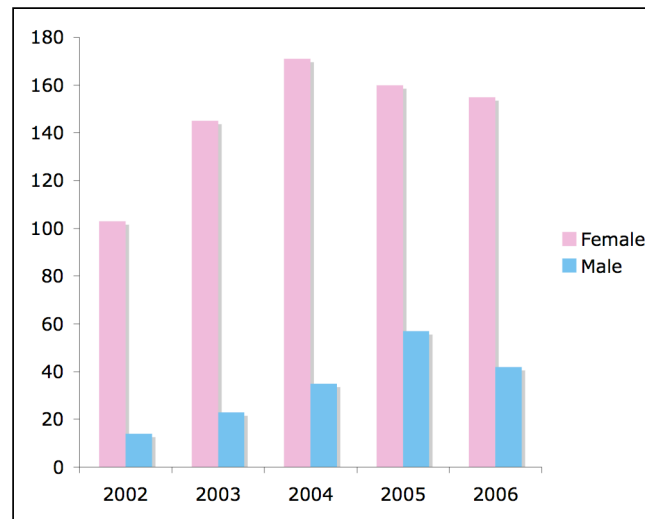


Figure 26: Combined PR enrolments at Curtin and Edith Cowan, 2002–2006.

Looking at a broader picture, combining journalism and PR enrolments, a similar trend is shown (Figure 22). Between 2002 and 2004, the three main universities show similar patterns of women dominating enrolments. Curtin (78 per cent), Murdoch (77 per cent) and ECU (83 per cent).

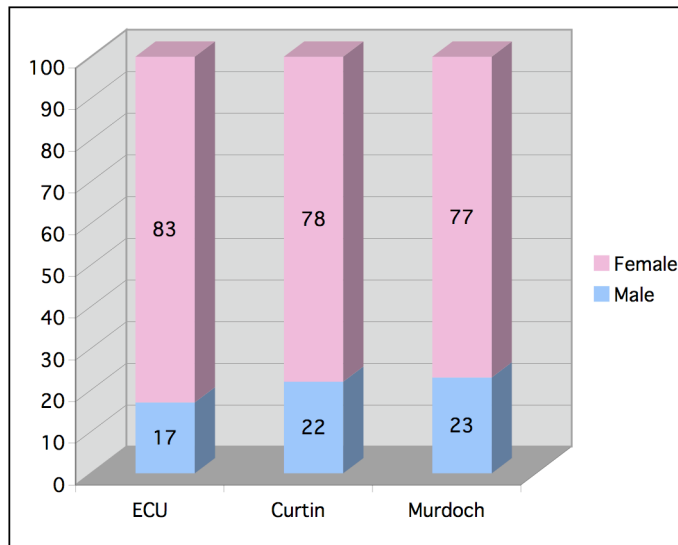


Figure 27: Gender breakdown for Perth university communications enrolments 2001–2004.

g. Summary

The literature review only provided a fragmented amount of data – much of it dated – with most publications citing brief (US) industry and university studies, or anecdotal evidence (in the form of statistics) from educators. This was discussed in Chapter 2.3. US statistics are almost identically replicated in Australia, with this study’s census of the industry in Perth showing, on average, women comprising 75.4 per cent of the PR industry, with the breakdown being:

- ❑ 80 per cent in university courses
- ❑ 77 per cent of PRIA membership
- ❑ 75 per cent in charities
- ❑ 74 per cent in private practice
- ❑ 71 per cent in government.

Statistics from a variety of sources, both industry, universities and government census in the US, UK and Australia show that there is a consistent (growing, and marked) predominance of women in PR, although the rate of increase appears to be slowing. The statistics merely provide

credence to support part of the hypothesis; that there is a predominance of women in PR. What the remainder of this thesis will attempt to present are reasons why this pattern has emerged.

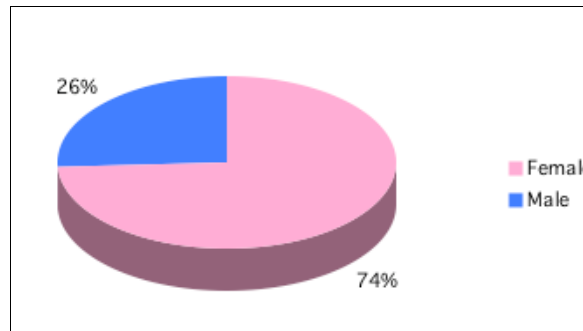


Figure 28: Proportion of PR practitioners (private practitioners, government non-profit in Perth. Source: Author, 2005.

Overall, there was remarkable consistency in the levels of male/female participation in PR (Figure 18). On average, it shows 74 per cent of the population is female. The only slight ‘bump’ in the numbers was in universities, where women comprise 80 per cent of the numbers. This is due to the lumping together by some universities of students only into communications courses.

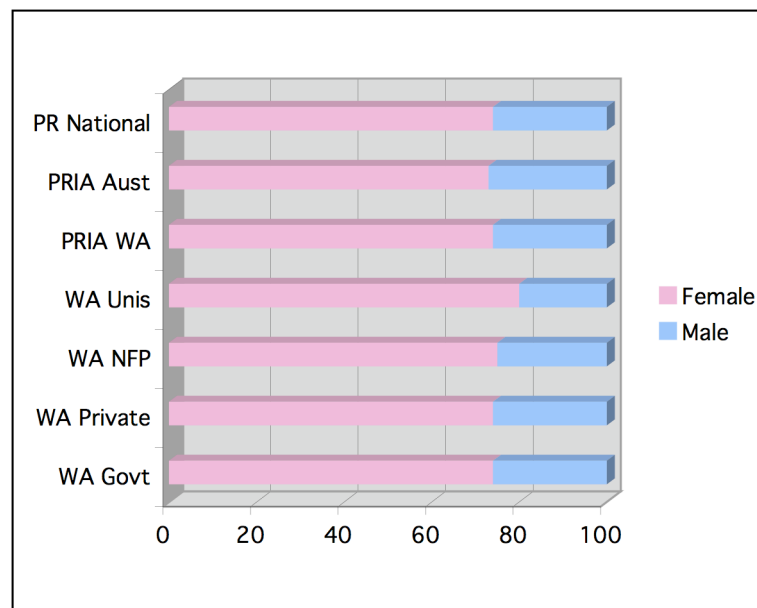


Figure 29: Distribution of males and females across all Australian sub-groups.

Following five separate surveys, there is a consistency in the percentage of women working in PR in Perth, in Australia and in the US, with (Figure 24) best illustrating this phenomenon. The female percentages (Table 12) range from 69–70 per cent.

PRSA (US)	IABC (US)	PRIA (National)	ABS Census	Author survey (Perth)
69	76	73	74	74

Table 12: Percentages of females in PR in the US and Australia



Figure 30: US and Australian employment figures for males and females in PR.

At this point I would like to briefly compare the Perth PR industry figures with those of journalism (previously mentioned). In Perth there are nine major news organisations – *The West Australian*, *Sunday Times*, Community Newspapers, Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 10, ABC Radio and TV and two major radio groups. Between them they employ 247 male (57%) and 183 female (43%) journalists. While this is a gender imbalance, it is way below that of PR. Evidence, both from university enrolments, and anecdotally from lecturers at two universities demonstrate that the trend in journalism is following PR, with fewer males interested in journalism as a career.

Conclusion

Chapter Four outlined the population (professionals and students) surveyed, and results from the initial census. This provided statistical proof of the phenomenon, which was shown to be occurring in three countries – Australia (and Perth in particular), the US and the UK. The chapter also compared the trend of PR's 'near-neighbour', journalism, which was found to be experiencing a similar increase in the number of women at university. The figures in journalism have yet to be filter through to the workforce. However, this should be apparent in the next five to 10 years.

The initial census showed that:

- ❑ The national professional body, the PRIA, did not keep past membership records.
- ❑ Current statistics for the gender breakdown for employment in PR is virtually identical in Australia, in Perth and in the US at 74 per cent predominance of women.
- ❑ The gender breakdown in the Perth PR industry is consistent across each sector (government, private companies and non-profits).
- ❑ University records of communication course enrolments show future trends which have yet to filter through to industry. Enrolments show an average predominance of 80 per cent female, with the figure as high as 86 per cent at one university.