ITALY in the AUSTRALIAN News Media, 2005 – 2012

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Preface

The period of this study of Italy in the Australian news media – 2005-2012 – was a lively one in Italian politics. There were elections in 2006 and 2008 and, in 2011, the forced resignation of the incumbent Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, in favour of an appointed leader, Mario Monti, whose role was to steady the Italian economy. It was also a period of growing concern about finance in Europe – the so-called Eurozone financial crisis – which reached its height in 2011.

During this period, there was more than usual interest in Italian political developments in Australia, both because of their inherent newsworthiness and because of the direct involvement of Italian-Australians in the 2006 and 2008 elections. In the early 2000s constitutional changes in Italy created overseas electorates enabling Italian citizens residing outside of Italy to elect their representatives in the Italian parliament. In 2006 and 2008 Italian-Australians, voting in their electorate of ‘Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica’, elected Marco Fedi to the Italian Chamber of Deputies and Nino Randazzo to the Senate. Both parliamentarians reside in Melbourne.

These developments towards the ‘globalisation’ of Italian citizenship and political representation prompted the idea of a study on news coverage of Italian issues in the Australian news media. Information on this was scarce and based largely on anecdotal evidence. It was felt that a systematic study, which extended over a significant time period, would be informative and useful.

The initial interest was in coverage of Italian politics, but it was subsequently decided that a more comprehensive study of Italy in the Australian news would be undertaken. It was also decided to position this particular case study within existing research literature on international news flow. The outcome is, as far as the authors are aware, the largest study of the representation of Italy in the news media of a foreign country ever undertaken. The study also advances general academic understanding of the factors that determine patterns of international news flow.

The project has been undertaken by the University of Canberra’s News and Media Research Centre (N&MRC) in association with On. Marco Fedi who originally commissioned work in this research area. The project also uses some methodologies and materials developed in the course of the Australian Research Council funded project ‘Shaping the national outlook: International news in the Australian press, 1901-1950’ of which Peter Putnis was Chief Investigator. The authors would like to acknowledge the significant contributions of Alexandra Walton, Kynan O’Brien and Megan Deas who have been research assistants on this project.

Professor Peter Putnis,
Director, N&MRC.
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Executive Summary

Overview and methodology

The study presents a systematic analysis of the coverage of Italian matters in the Australian news media in the period 2005-2012. As far as the authors are aware it is largest study of the representation of Italy in the news media of a foreign country ever undertaken.

The study was undertaken by the University of Canberra's News and Media Research Centre (N&MRC) in association with the On. Marco Fedi, who commissioned research on coverage of Italian politics in selected Australian newspapers.

During the period covered by the study there was more than usual interest in Italian political developments in Australia, both because of their inherent newsworthiness and because of the newly-acquired right of direct participation of expatriate Italians in Australia in the 2006 and 2008 Italian general elections.

To obtain as wide a view of Italy in the Australian news as practicable both the press and television were included in the study.

Three well-known and respected newspapers, namely The Australian, the major national newspaper, The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) published in Sydney and The Age published in Melbourne were selected for the study. All editorial matter in all issues of these newspapers for the years 2005-2012 was searched using ‘Factiva’ – a business information and research tool owned by Dow Jones & Company. The initial search for relevant news in the press generated a very large number of items (around 10,000) which were then assessed individually for relevance and eligibility for inclusion in the analysis. This process generated a data set of 5325 news items.

The television data set was derived from analysis of the content of the main news and current affairs programs broadcast by public service and commercial free-to-air television obtained by searching the Informit database ‘TV News’ available through RMIT Publishing, Melbourne. As this database began collecting Australian television news and current affairs from late 2007, the period of analysis for television coverage is 2008-2012. The synopsis of items provided by the database was used as the primary selection criterion augmented, in cases of uncertain eligibility, by actual viewing of the video clip. A total of 932 stories were selected on this basis.

To be included in either of the two data bases a news item or feature needed to have a significant contemporary connection with Italy. Thus stories exclusively about people of Italian origin in Australia, or general stories about Italian culture/food/restaurants and so on in Australia were not included in the data set. Stories primarily about Vatican or Catholic Church matters were also generally excluded unless they had an explicit link with Italian matters.
The study sought to document both the extent and nature of Italian matter in the Australian news media including the topic areas covered by the news, the relative weight given to various topics, and any trends in this regard that may have occurred over the study period.

**Factors influencing foreign news coverage**

Factors influencing a country’s ‘world view’ as presented in international news coverage in the mainstream media have attracted considerable interest by academic researchers. Some of the more significant influences include economic, political and cultural prominence on the world stage, cultural proximity between countries, major scale events including conflicts and natural and other disasters, and major international sporting events.

Although the prominence of Italy in Australian news coverage relative to other countries was not a major focus of the study, the research endeavoured to provide some comparative data for contextual purposes. Using the ‘region’ search feature of the Factiva engine to identify stories about individual countries, the study produced a comparison of the number of stories about Germany, France, Italy and Spain (the four largest economies in the EU excluding the U.K.) published in the selected newspapers in each year of the study period.

In the comparison, France is ranked first each year except 2006 when displaced by Germany aided in part by its hosting of the World Cup. Interestingly, the level of coverage of Italy surpassed that of Germany each year in the second half (starting in 2009) of the period covered by the research. This unexpected result, given Germany’s status as the largest economy in the Eurozone, can be attributed to the inherent newsworthiness of Italian politics in this period and to editorial decisions made in Australia about the degree of attention Italian politics warranted.

**Coverage of Italian news**

The study identified a substantial and regular presence of Italian stories in the Australian news media in each year in the period 2005-2012. The 5325 stories published by the selected newspapers correspond to an annual average of 665 stories – actual annual numbers ranged from a low of 484 in 2008 to a high of 875 in 2011.

Out of trend spikes in story numbers are evident in 2006 (819 stories) and 2011 (875 stories). The spikes are associated with significant events: 2006 was the year the Winter Olympics were held in Turin and Italy won the football world cup held in Germany; in 2011 Italy bore the full brunt of the Eurozone financial crisis which flowed also into its political arena leading to the appointment of a technocratic government led by Mario Monti to replace the incumbent Berlusconi government.
The most notable trend in story numbers over the period of the study was a marked resurgence in the number of Italian stories in all three newspapers in the period 2008-2011. Politics was the main contributing topic category to this increased interest.

Overall, the trends in the number of stories published in the SMH and in the Age show an increasing level of interest in a broad range of Italian matters by those papers over the period covered by study. In 2005, the first year in the period covered by the study, the two papers together contributed 39.9% of stories in our data base; in 2012 the two papers contributed 56.9% of the stories.

Italian coverage in television news and current affairs programs reinforces the importance of SBS World News Australia in providing reasonably regular surveillance of Italian affairs. SBS accounted for almost 43% of all Italian stories across the ten news and current affairs programs that were analysed.

The 5,325 stories in the newspaper data set were classified according to eight topic areas: Politics/government; Business, industry and trade; International affairs; Sport; Fashion/design; Travel/tourism; the Arts; and Other. The ‘other’ category was intended as a catch-all for stories not elsewhere classified and included natural disasters and accidents such as the sinking of the Costa Concordia which attracted significant coverage in the news.

This content analysis demonstrated that Italy’s ‘topic profile’ in Australian newspapers is a broad one which ranges across many spheres of human activity. This is an indicator of the considerable breadth of Australian-Italian relations and of Australian interest in Italy.

All the main topic areas that routinely make news in the Australian, the SMH and the Age are substantially represented. Sport with 29.2% of the total had the largest number of stories. It should be noted, however, that it is in the nature of sports coverage to have large numbers of quite brief stories which report on and update results of tournaments and other major sporting events.

The proportion of stories in other substantial topic areas ranged from 7.3% (Business/industry) to 12.1% (Politics). The Arts accounted for 9.4% of stories. The largest sub-category here was film, though many other areas, most notably classical music and art, received coverage.

Italy’s topic profile is marked by high numbers of stories in the fashion/design category (8.8% overall). The majority of these stories relate to Italian-designed clothing. Also prominent are stories about design aspects of Italian high performance cars. Italy’s iconic brands – Armani, Versace, Ferrari, Maserati and Bulgari amongst them – are no strangers to the news media.

The topic profile in television news and current affairs is narrower than that in the press. In television, just three categories – Politics, Sport and ‘Other’ – account for over 85% of stories. This does not, however, suggest a narrow interest in Italian affairs. Rather, it reflects the nature of the programs selected for analysis and the fact that television and current affairs formats severely limit story numbers.
Reporting of Italian politics

In contrast with anecdotal observations suggesting a low level of interest, the findings of this study point to a consistent and growing attention to Italian political affairs by Australian media.

The period 2005-2012 was a lively one in Italian politics with general elections in 2006 and 2008 and the replacement of the Berlusconi government by an appointed technocratic government headed by Mario Monti in 2011. In terms of the number of stories published, politics ranked second overall, after sport, as a topic of coverage in the selected media (although strictly speaking stories classified as 'Other' were more numerous, that category was a catch-all agglomeration of heterogeneous topics). The level of coverage differed among the selected media.

The Australian's coverage of Italian politics throughout the period was consistently substantial. In 2006 it carried 35 stories related to the Italian elections which allowed direct representation of expatriate Italians in the Italian Parliament. There was also substantial Australian television coverage of Melbourne-based Marco Fedi and Nino Randazzo as significant public figures that stood for and were elected as expatriate representatives respectively in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate.

Although the SMH and the Age paid little regular attention to Italian politics between 2005 and 2008, they did carry quite substantial stories when occasion arose. For example, the 2006 elections generated ten stories in each of the SMH and the Age, many of them on expatriate voting. In the SMH there was an extended profile of Marco Fedi.

Starting in 2009, the Australian press increased its involvement in Italian politics through commentary on the Berlusconi government.

The Australian, in particular, focussed on the personality and actions of Silvio Berlusconi. In 2009, a non-election year, there were 76 stories in the Australian in which the name 'Berlusconi' featured in the opening paragraph. The number and tenor of the stories about Berlusconi, many of them taken from the London Times, appears consistent with the idea that Murdoch papers were conducting a campaign against him, which included ridicule as a weapon.

In 2009, the SMH carried an editorial highly critical of the Italian government. In 2011 both the Age and the Australian editorialised around the theme that 'Berlusconi must go'. This level of involvement in the affairs of another democratic country is unusual for the Australian press and might reasonably be linked to the presence in Australia of a substantial Italian community which carried voting rights in Italian elections.
Chapter 1: Overview of the Project
1.1: Background

The Italian community is the largest non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic group resident in Australia. In the 2011 Census almost a million people (4.25% of the population) claimed Italian ancestry with almost 600,000 having at least one parent who was born in Italy. More than 100,000 have Italian or dual Italian-Australian citizenship and thus have the right to vote in Italian national elections.

In 2002 Australian citizenship laws were amended to make it easier for Australians to exercise dual citizenship. Two years prior to this the Australian government decided that it had no objection to Australians with dual citizenship voting in Italian elections in Australia or standing for the Italian parliament (Mascitelli, Steele & Battison 2010: 29).

Italian constitutional and legislative changes, which took place between 2000 and 2003, have created an overseas electorate enabling Italian citizens residing outside the national territory to elect their own representatives in the Italian Parliament. In total, 12 Deputies and six Senators represent the overseas electorate in the Italian Parliament. The overseas electorate is subdivided into four territorial constituencies (Europe; South America; North America; and Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica) which elect their own representatives in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate. Australia is part of the Africa, Asia, Oceania and Antarctica constituency which elects one Deputy and one Senator to the Parliament.

The first Italian general elections which included overseas electorates took place in 2006. Battison and Mascitelli note that overseas voters played a crucial role in these elections: 'In the tightest vote in the history of post-war Italy, the 2006 elections would depend heavily on the overseas vote to provide the centre-left coalition a majority in the Senate' (2008: 265). In the lead up to the election there was a widespread belief that the overseas vote would favour the Italian centre-right. However, at both the first (9-10 April 2006) and second (13–14 April 2008) election after the establishment of the overseas electorate, centre-left candidates, Marco Fedi (Chamber of Deputies) and Nino Randazzo (Senate), both of whom reside in Melbourne, were elected as local representatives. New elections to the Italian Parliament were held in 2013 and again the centre-left candidates were successful with the re-election of Marco Fedi to the Chamber of Deputies and the election of Francesco Giacobbe to the Senate in place of Nino Randazzo who did not contest the election.

The significant presence and impact of the Italian community on Australian lifestyle and interests might be expected to influence the extent to which Italian issues are covered by Australian media. However, information on news coverage of Italian issues in the Australian news media is scarce and the subject has so far attracted little attention from academic research and other systematic analysis. Similarly, there is little information available on media interest in the election of two Australian-based representatives in the
Italian Parliament and on any impact that may have had on Australian media coverage of Italian issues. Mascitelli and Battison’s 2008 volume on the Italian expatriate vote in Australia includes only brief discussion of media coverage of the elections and of Italian politics more generally.

The aim of this project is to conduct a methodical analysis of the extent of coverage of Italian matter in the Australian news media in the past eight years (2005-2012) and identify any trends that may have occurred in both the extent of coverage (number of stories) and the range of issues covered. The period of analysis spans both the 2006 and 2008 national elections in Italy and thus it may also be possible to identify changes in the coverage of Italian issues likely to have been influenced by local parliamentary representation.

1.2: Media selection

In order to obtain as wide a view of Italy in the Australian news as practicable both the press and television were included in the study. While the analysis of newspaper stories covers the full period, the analysis of television only covers the period 2008-2012. This is because the television news database used for this study only commenced collecting Australian news and current affairs from late 2007.

For logistical reasons it was not possible to include radio in this study. It is recognised that, as well as excluding regular news from the data set, this excludes important current affairs programs such as James Panichi’s 2008 ABC radio feature on the Italian elections in Australia (‘Italian job’ 2008) and Geraldine Doogue’s 2010 ABC radio panel discussion on Italian politics (‘Interview: Berlusconi’s Italy’ 2010) which featured Professor Anna Centobull, Professor of Italian History and Politics at the University of Bath, Guy Dinmore, Rome Correspondent of the Financial Times and James Panichi of the ABC’s Radio National. Such items have, however, been a source of useful background material for this study.

Three newspapers were chosen for detailed analysis. The Australian, owned by News Limited, is the major national newspaper and is published six times per week. In 2005, the year in which the study commences, its average Monday-Friday circulation was about 134,000 while its Saturday circulation was about 290,000. The Sydney Morning Herald (SMH), owned by Fairfax Media, is the most important Sydney daily for international news coverage. Its average Monday-Friday circulation in 2005 was about 210,000 while its Saturday circulation was about 360,000. The Age, also owned by Fairfax Media, is the most important Melbourne daily for international news coverage. Its average Monday-Friday circulation in 2005 was 193,000 while its Saturday circulation was about 300,000. Since 2005, the circulation of the print editions of these newspapers has steadily declined. However, over the period, digital subscription has emerged as a new form of newspaper circulation. Relevant circulation figures are presented in full in Table 1.1:
Table 1.1: Circulation figures of selected publications for 2005 and 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Sydney Morning Herald</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon - Fri</td>
<td>210,085</td>
<td>157,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>360,323</td>
<td>272,849</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon - Fri</td>
<td>193,000</td>
<td>157,480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>297,500</td>
<td>227,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Australian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon - Fri</td>
<td>133,841</td>
<td>122,428</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>291,752</td>
<td>266,696</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NB: 2012 circulation figures are provided exclusive of digital subscriptions. The Sydney Morning Herald’s digital subscriptions of 58,532 for its Mon-Fri editions gave the paper average net masthead sales of 186,000. For its Saturday edition, inclusive of digital subscriptions of 62,431, the paper’s masthead sales averaged 292,989. The Age’s digital subscriptions of 37,162 for its weekday editions brings the average net masthead sales to 174,079, while its Saturday digital subscriptions of 40,011 makes the average masthead sales 237,450. Digital sales of The Australian’s weekday editions, totaling 39,539 in 2012, give the paper average net masthead sales of 158,325. Its sales of Saturday print editions were supplemented by digital subscriptions of 39,671, providing average sales figures of 296,434.

These three newspapers cannot be taken to represent the Australian press as a whole since all three are at the more serious end of journalism. This is partly because all three have specific international news sections as well as substantial international coverage in other sections such as business and sport. These papers are amongst the most authoritative in Australia and therefore carry an influence beyond their immediate circulations. This is especially the case in relation to international affairs.

A large number of television news and current affairs programs, both from public service and commercial television, were analysed for their Italian news content. The following are included in this study:

News:

- ABC News (ABC Melbourne)
- Lateline (ABC Melbourne)
- Seven Nightly News (SEVEN Melbourne)
- National Nine News (NINE Melbourne)
- TEN 5pm News (TEN Melbourne)
- SBS World News Australia

Current Affairs:

- 7:30 Report (ABC)

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1 2005 Figures released by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) and cited in The Press Council’s State of The News Print Media 2008. 2012 Figures released by the ABC for the Quarter ending December 2012 and cited on the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers’ Association website. In an article for The Age dated February 19th 2007, reporter Matthew Ricketson states that newspaper circulation figures ‘for the last quarter of 2006 cannot be compared to 2005 because, as of mid-2006, auditing is done quarterly instead of half-yearly’ (Ricketson 2007).
Four Corners (ABC)  
Today Tonight (SEVEN Melbourne)  
A Current Affair (NINE Melbourne)

Taken as a whole, these programs provide a good, though obviously incomplete, representation of Australian news and current affairs. They include news from the three free-to-air Australian commercial networks as well as from Australia’s two public broadcasters. Two current affairs programs broadcast on commercial television and two current affairs programs broadcast on the ABC have been included. All the above programs included some Italian stories except A Current Affair.

Nevertheless, caution should be exercised in making interpretive statements across the six news programs and four current affairs programs. For example, ABC News is not a national program and newsworthy local and international events constrain the space available for general international news. ABC’s Lateline program has more focus on international events but commonly one story will dominate the program. Coverage of this event will often include a lengthy interview with a key informant. The commercial free-to-air newscasts, National Nine News and Seven Nightly News, are 30 minutes long compared to the hour-long TEN 5pm News.

Among the four current affairs programs analysed, the ABC’s 7:30 Report and Four Corners are generally considered to portray more comprehensive and in-depth journalism compared to the more popularly oriented commercial counterparts, A Current Affair and Today Tonight.

SBS World News Australia is a nightly 60 minute bulletin which reflects the broadcasters remit of providing a multicultural service to Australians. Predictably, SBS World News broadcasts should contain more news about Italy than other Australian programs.

1.3: Defining ‘Italian news’

In this study we have taken a broad view of what constitutes ‘Italian news’ as our aim was to provide as complete an account as possible while at the same time maintaining a focus on contemporary news links between Italy and Australia. Hence we have covered all subjects, including sport. We have also not restricted the study to news actually sourced from Italy itself. We have included news about the activities of Italians abroad, including Australia, as long as there is a contemporary connection with Italy, as is the case, for example, with Italian soldiers fighting in Afghanistan, an Italian tennis player winning the Australian open, or a famous Italian football player, like Del Piero, signing up with an Australian football club. We have also included stories about Italian fashion and products even if they are set in Australia. Such stories may not be from Italy but they are nevertheless about Italy. However, we have not included stories exclusively about people of Italian origin in Australia (Italian Australians), or general stories about Italian culture/food/restaurants and so on in Australia. The general rule has been that the news item or feature must include a significant current connection with Italy.
1.4: The scope of news reviewed

Most studies of international news flow adopt a sampling method choosing, say, 12 issues of a newspaper distributed over a given year (a ‘constructed fortnight’) to represent the paper’s output for that year. This is done to limit the amount of data that is generated so as to make projects manageable. Because this project deals with news of only one country it is viable to consider all stories in the chosen media over the selected time frame rather than just a sample of them. The other crucial factor that makes this possible is the availability of digitised versions of newspapers as well as digitised collections of television news programs which are fully searchable using key terms such as ‘Italy’, ‘Italian’ and ‘Rome’.

All editorial matter in the three selected newspapers for all issues for the years 2005-2012 were searched using ‘Factiva’. Factiva is a business information and research tool owned by Dow Jones & Company. Factiva aggregates transcripts of news items from various mainstream media including newspapers, magazines, television and radio. It includes comprehensive coverage from over 35,000 publications in 26 languages, and is continuously updated. Its coverage extends back 35 years and is stored and able to be searched by subscribers to Factiva. Using a free text search function, subscribers are able to search for key words appearing either in the headline and lead paragraph of news articles, or in the full text of news articles. The free text search can be constructed using Boolean operator terms (and, or, and not); otherwise any text entered will be searched for as an exact phrase. Key terms used in this study were ‘Italy’ or ‘Italian’ or ‘Rome’. There are other search options that can be used to refine a free text search, including selecting a range of dates to search within, selecting particular news sources to search, and choosing specific exclusions like republished news.

The initial search for relevant news in the press generated a very large number of items (around 10,000). It was recognised that this initial data set would include many items in which Italy was fairly incidental to the story. It would also include many items in which there was no current news connection to Italy, such as stories about Italian food recipes. It was decided, however, that it was better to start with this large body of stories and then exclude ones that didn’t fit the criteria for inclusion rather than attempt to devise a narrower search strategy which would carry greater danger of failing to identify relevant material.

Each of the articles in the pool of potential newspaper articles was assessed individually for relevance and eligibility for inclusion in the analysis. To be eligible for inclusion in the analysis, an article had to contain substantial content and not merely a passing reference to an Italian issue. Listings of share market prices, sporting results and similar information with no accompanying commentary were excluded from the analysis. Approximately 50% of the initial pool of stories was selected for inclusion, resulting in a data set of 5325 news items.

The dataset for Italian television news was obtained by searching the Informit database ‘TV News’ available through RMIT Publishing, Melbourne. This database began collecting Australian television news and current affairs from late 2007. The database covers all
major Australian television news programs as well as a large selection of current affairs programs. It provides a one paragraph synopsis of each story and descriptive details on such matters as story length, broadcast date and time, and names of contributors. It also provides a link to a digital video of each news and current affairs item.

For the current study, each of the years 2008 to 2012 inclusive was selected and analysed using the search terms ‘Italy’ or ‘Italian’ or ‘Rome’ for the programs listed above. The selection of items was based primarily on the synopsis provided by the database for each item but where the reference to Italy was not clearly evident the actual video clip was viewed to determine whether or not the item warranted inclusion in this study. This procedure resulted in a data set of 932 stories. Further detailed information of the methodology used in this study is available in the Appendix.

1.5: What was the news about?

As well as examining the extent of coverage of Italian matter in the Australian news media in the past eight years, this study aimed to document the nature of the coverage, in particular the topic areas covered by the news, the relative weight given to various topics, and any trends in this regard that may have occurred over the study period. As noted earlier, we took a broad view about what constitutes ‘Italian news’. Hence our data set includes both ‘hard’ news (e.g. politics, disasters, crime) and ‘soft’ news (e.g. tourism, fashion). After an initial review of the data, it was decided that stories would be classified by ‘main topic’ according to eight categories as follows:

- **Politics/government:** this is an inclusive category encompassing all activities of the government, government policies and administration, parliament, political parties, and elections. All stories referring to Italian prime ministers were included in this category.
- **Business, industry and trade:** includes all stories about production and other activities of all primary secondary and tertiary industries, business, trade, finance and commerce. Excludes stories about national budget issues and stories where the main emphasis is on fashion or Italian design qualities and displays. It also excludes travel/tourism.
- **International affairs:** includes stories on relations between two or more countries and international forums involving many countries. This category includes stories about the Eurozone as a political/financial entity.
- **Sports:** includes all stories about sport activities generally and institutions, organisation and administration of sporting events.
- **Fashion/design** includes stories relating to fashion and stories about other Italian products, including cars, furniture and glass ware where it is the design aspect that is emphasised.
- **Travel/tourism** includes stories about travel destinations in Italy written from a tourism perspective, personal tourism experiences, and the organisation and administration of tourism.
• *The Arts* includes stories about art events taking place in Italy, or Italian art organisations or people working in the arts industry.

• *Other:* stories not reasonably or approximately classifiable to the preceding categories. This includes stories on celebrities, disasters, natural calamities and accidents, crime and justice.

### 1.6: Analysing the news

The data set of 5325 newspaper stories, coded by main topic, was uploaded into a database using Microsoft Access database software. For each story the following were noted: name of newspaper, year of publication, main topic, and length of story (number of words). The data set of 932 television items, coded by main topic, was recorded using SPSS. For each story the following were noted: name of program, main topic, date of broadcast, and length in seconds.

This enabled subsequent analysis, both on a year-by-year basis, and for each data set as a whole, of the number and distribution of 'Italian stories' in and amongst the three newspapers and the television programs. It also enabled analysis of the number and distribution of stories by topic area.

In addition to this broad quantitative analysis, a more fine-grained analysis of the content of newspaper and television stories in the data sets for each year was undertaken. The 'text files' of the stories for each year, as generated through Factiva and TV News, were examined. This enabled an interpretative discussion of the coverage of major news events and news sources for each year.
Chapter 2: Studying International News
Chapter 2: Studying International News

2.1: Factors which influence foreign news coverage

Each country’s ‘world view’, as presented in the international news coverage of its mainstream daily news media, is different. It is true that there are factors which tend towards commonality of news coverage across countries. For example, the United States is prominent in the international news of most countries, a phenomenon which reflects the preeminent status of the U.S. on the world stage (Wu 2000: 126). As well, highly significant events, such as disasters, wars, and globally significant sporting events are likely to influence the media agenda world-wide and therefore attract almost universal media attention to the country or region where they are taking place. Other factors, however, tend to differentiate the image of the world (i.e., which countries are most prominent and which are least prominent and how the various countries are represented) provided as mainstream news to audiences in different countries. For example, news flow between countries which have historical colonial connections tends to be greater than that between countries where such connections do not exist.

There has been a great deal of academic research on this issue of what factors determine the amount and nature of coverage one country receives in another country’s news media. In an influential early study, Norwegian researchers Galtung and Ruge (1965) noted, amongst other matters, that events which concerned elite nations or elite persons and were ‘personalised’ had more chance of becoming news than other kinds of events. They also suggested that ‘the more negative the event has in its consequences, the more probable that it will become a news item’ (1965: 68). ‘Cultural proximity’ was another important factor. As they put it, ‘the event scanner [imagined here as the determiner of what is worthy of becoming news] will pay particular attention to the familiar, to the culturally similar, and the culturally distant will be passed by more easily and not noticed’ (1965: 67).

They also noted the influence of what they termed ‘consonance’ on the selection of news. Events and high profile individuals that are already in the news will, more likely than not, get further coverage. More generally, the more in-keeping a potential news items is with pre-existing images or stereotypes the more likely it is to be selected (1965: 65). Thus, the selection and presentation of foreign news items can tend to reinforce stereotypical perceptions of other countries and peoples.

In their account of the structure of foreign news Galtung and Ruge emphasised the factors which explained why some world events were newsworthy in a particular news market (or nation) while others were not. Later research focussed less on ‘events’ than on larger-scale political, cultural and economic factors. Foreign news tends to be dominated by large, powerful, developed nations. These nations also tend to be the ones with the best developed media systems, including the prominent presence of international news agencies such as Reuters and Associated Press and international news retailers such as CNN.
Wu’s study (2000), based on an analysis of a 1995 two-week sample of international news coverage in the news media of 38 countries, confirmed that ‘the U.S. is dominant in almost every country’s foreign news.’ In that study ‘the U.S. captured roughly 18% of the entire world’s media space devoted to foreign countries’ during the two week sample period. The top ten countries were: ‘the U.S., France, the U.K, Russia, Bosnia, China, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain.’ The list clearly demonstrated that political and economic ‘clout’ was a major factor in determining global news prominence. It is also noteworthy, however, that particular newsworthy events that took place during the sample period influenced the composition and rank order of this list. Bosnia’s presence is accounted for by war in the region and NATO military actions and peace negotiations taking place at the time of the sample period. France was more prominent than it would have been in the normal course of events because France was undertaking nuclear tests in the Pacific at the time and there were ensuing demonstrations and protests.

Wu’s study is one of many undertaken since the 1960s which demonstrated the perhaps obvious point that national prominence in ‘world news’ reflects the distribution of global economic and political power and is therefore, from a geographical or population perspective, ‘unbalanced’. The developed world is much more prominent in day-to-day news than the developing world. Europe is much more prominent than Africa. Developing and small countries generally only gain prominence in circumstances of disaster.

This ‘imbalanced’ pattern of global news flow was a major political issue in international forums such as UNESCO in the 1970s and 1980s. ‘Third World’ countries argued that they were unfairly represented (if at all) on the ‘world news stage’. As Boyd-Barrett (1997) has noted, ‘critics within the non-aligned movement bitterly criticised Western-based global [news] agencies as they believed these agencies tended to undermine the ‘national image’ of developing countries, with economic and political consequences. These critics called for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The issue of ‘balance’ in international news flow remains an important one. However, new developments in communication technology, especially the internet, and the growth of new 24 hours television news channels, such as Al Jazeera, have, arguably, vastly increased and diversified the overall availability of international news, thus lessening the problem.

Geographical proximity is also often cited as a factor that structures international news coverage. A study of foreign news in the media of 29 countries during a two-week period in 1979 found that nearly every country ‘reported more news from within its own geographical sphere than from any other region ... Thus the main focus was on regional events; only secondarily was attention given to news breaking in other parts of the world’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi et. al. 1985: 39). Amongst the six Western European countries that were part of the study, between 41% and 52% of foreign news featured another Western European country. Only between 4% and 10% of foreign news featured an Asian country (a designation which, in this study, included Australia). Within Asian countries, other than Australia, between 40% and 63% of foreign stories featured another Asian country while between 11% and 17% featured a Western European country.

In Australia, the ‘regional effect’, while present, was less pronounced. It was noted that ‘Australia seemed to fit least into its geographical region; its strong concern with Western
Europe and North America reflected its Anglophone heritage and its tendency to identify primarily with Western industrialised nations’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi et. al. 1985: 39). More recent studies of television news have confirmed regionalism as the most universal feature in foreign news selection (e.g. Wilke, Heimprecht & Cohen 2012: 309).

In examining news flow between specific countries on a bilateral basis, Rosengren (1974) demonstrated that the extent of trade between countries was a good predictor of mutual news attention. This was also confirmed in the study by Wu noted above. In Wu's study the hypothesis that, 'The greater the trade volume between a guest [foreign] country and its host [home] country, the more media news coverage the guest country will receive in the host country' was 'overwhelmingly supported' (Wu 2000: 117-124).

Other studies have highlighted the influence of 'cultural proximity'. For example, in a study of coverage of Mexico in various U.S. newspapers, Johnson (1997) found that the amount of Mexican coverage was influenced by the 'cultural proximity factor', defined in this study as the population figure of a given ethnicity (in this case Mexican) in the newspapers' community. 'Cultural proximity', while often related to geographical proximity, is certainly not identical with it. This is very obvious is the case of Australia and Britain but is also evident in other situations arising from 'far flung’ migration. 

Wu has usefully organised the systemic factors that are likely to influence the degree of news coverage a particular country receives in other countries into three broad categories: ‘(a) the traits of the country (population, degree of press freedom, geographic size, economic power; (b) interactions and relatedness between host [foreign] and guest [home] countries (geographic distance, shared language, volume of trade, past colonial ties); and (c) logistics of news gathering (presence of international news agencies)' (2000: 116). One should add that, in looking at news over a specific period, one would also expect news volumes to be affected by the occurrence or non-occurrence of major news events such as disasters or political crises.

Most of the research into international news flow has focussed on the prominence of nations on the world news stage at a particular point in time. Jones, Van Aelst & Vliegenthart (2011: 417-418) note that, 'given the difficulty of gathering longitudinal data, relatively little news flow research has systematically examined whether and to what extent foreign nation visibility and the factors that influence it have changed over time.' Their study is an exception to this as it examines foreign nation visibility in U.S. news coverage in the period 1950-2006. This study confirms that systemic factors such as those noted by Wu are a fairly constant influence on the news prominence of various nations in the New York Times over the period studied. At the same time, however, the U.S. news media’s ‘window on the world’ had ebbed and flowed over the period studied reflecting changing patterns of U.S. military involvement abroad (2011: 426).

**2.2: Recent trends in news**

Since the advent of the internet and new mobile communication technologies conditions for the global creation, distribution and reception of news have changed dramatically. It is
often said that we live in an age of ‘information abundance’. This is certainly true if we consider the whole range of available news. It is now possible to monitor constant real-time up-dates of major news events as they unfold on television and on the internet. Beckett (2011) has noted a number of recent trends in news:

1. News is more global, ‘partly because we live in a more interconnected world and partly because international reporting is easier.’
2. News is much faster: ‘The news agenda is now entirely driven by the 24 hour news channels. The Internet means everything is reported instantly – often by citizens – and that feeds a whirling cycle of continuous news.’
3. News is more participatory: ‘People help create news. They also create their own news on social media which can entirely bypass but usually feeds off mainstream news.’
4. News has become the story: ‘Phone-hacking is the best example of this ... Social media encourages this constant discussion of how as well as what we [journalists] report.’
5. It depends where you are watching and who you are: ‘There is now a kind of global news – again driven by the many new news channels. Every country now has at least one.’

While the total volume of news that is available via 24 hour news channels and the internet has grown exponentially, the jury is still out on whether this has led to a genuine increase in the diversity of news, particularly in relation to country representation. While news from all parts of the world may be available to those who search for it, there is still a tendency (arguably an increasing tendency) for major news organisation, particularly in television, to imitate each other and to focus on the same one or two big international news stories of the day, usually ones that are visually dramatic.

While the total world of available news has changed dramatically over the last twenty years, there has been much less change in the formats and content of the traditional mainstream news media – printed newspapers and the half-hour or one-hour evening free-to-air television news bulletins. In theory, at least, the ‘menus’ of international news from which these media select news items have grown much larger. In practice, however, these media generally use a relatively small number of well-established news sources – the large international news agencies such as Reuters, Associated Press and Agence France Press (AFP) and their television counterparts, as well as their own correspondents where available. Importantly, the limited amount of space or time available for international news items (the ‘news hole’) in these news formats has not changed greatly over the last twenty years.

The traditional mainstream news media remain the most used regular news source for the vast majority of the population in Australia. Importantly, they prioritise the news for their audiences, indicating to them what is important, by including some items but not others, and by the ordering and prominence they give to the ‘diet of news’ they provide. They continue to play a major role in shaping public opinion about the state of their immediate communities and of the world at large.
2.3: Systemic factors applied to Italy and Australia

2.3.1: Italy in the world

Italy is the eighth largest economy in the world and the third largest economy in the Eurozone, after Germany and France. Italy is a significant market for Australian exports. In 2012 it was Australia’s sixth-largest export market in the European Union (EU) and the third-largest source of EU imports after Germany and the United Kingdom. Overall, Italy was Australia’s 14th largest merchandise trading partner with two-way merchandise trade in 2011-12 of $A6.4 billion (De Martino 2013).

In the world community, Italy is an active member of the G8 and G20 groups of nations. It is a founding member of the European Union, a member of NATO and major contributor to the United Nations peace-keeping efforts.

Italy is widely regarded as the cradle of Western Civilization and makes an immense contribution to the world’s cultural heritage. It ranks first in the world in terms of the number of its sites listed in UNESCO's register of World Heritage Sites (UNESCO 2013). It is also the home of a large proportion of the world’s great art treasures.

Italy is one of the world’s great sporting nations. In terms of its historical performance in the Olympic Games (summer and winter) it is ranked in fourth place in the aggregate medals table for all Olympic Games. It is one of the powerhouses of football (soccer). It has won the World Cup on four different occasions, a record surpassed only by Brazil which won the World Cup five times. It also excels in cycling (in which it ranks second after Belgium in winning the World Cycling Championship) and motor sports. Other popular sports include Rugby Union (competes in the Six Nations Rugby Union Championship and the Rugby World Cup), Basketball, Volleyball and Boxing.

2.3.2: Italian-Australian relations

Italians have always played an important role in Australia’s history (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, undated) Although historically significant, the Italian role was limited until the middle of the 20th century. The greatest influence of Italians on Australia’s population and way of life is largely due to an extensive wave of Italian migrants settling in Australia starting in the late 1940s and lasting until the early 1970s. As a result, Australia’s Italy-born population rose from 33,632 in 1947 to 289,476 in 1971. They and their descendants today constitute the largest non-Anglo-Celtic component of Australia’s population.

The 2011 Census recorded 185,402 Italy-born people in Australia. More importantly, in terms of influence on Australia’s way of life, the Census recorded 916,121 responses indicating an Italian ancestry in the form of at least one Italian-born grandparent. The data indicate that over 4% of Australia’s population has a deep-rooted cultural connection to Italy.

These community ties underpin a much wider and long-standing deep interest in Italy and Italian issues. More than 300,000 primary and secondary school students are currently
enrolled in Italian language courses. Adult courses are also popular. The overwhelming majority of learners of Italian do not have an Italian ancestry.

There were more than 150,000 short-term departures from Australia to Italy in each of 2011 and 2012 (ABS 2013) and according to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2013), 'at least 30,000 Australians are estimated to live in Italy and in 2011 767,000 Australians were recorded travelling into Italy'. The two countries have established strong ties including an extensive range of bilateral agreements covering culture, double taxation, air services, economic and commercial cooperation, reciprocal social security and health care benefits, and film co-production, as well as memoranda of understanding (MOUs) covering science and technology cooperation, defence materiel, defence industry, motor vehicle safety certification, sports cooperation, game meat exports and trade cooperation. Many state governments have also signed MOUs with Italian regional governments to promote cooperative activities and exchanges.

2.3.3: Events

Major world class regular events held in Italy that attract international media attention include:

- The Giro d’Italia cycling race held in May each year (one of the three Grand Tours of cycling)
- The Italian Formula One Grand Prix
- The Venice Biennale
- Milan Fashion week.

Other events of significant international media interest in the period of analysis for this study include:

- Winter Olympics, Turin, 2006
- Football World Cup 2006 won by Italy
- Italian national elections 2006 and 2008
- L’Aquila, Abruzzo earthquake 2009
- Appointment of technocrat Monti Government 2011
- Emilia-Romagna earthquake 2012
- Costa Concordia disaster 2012.

2.3.4: Logistics of news gathering and distribution

Both Italy and Australia have highly developed internal and international communication systems. There are no technological impediments to news-flow between Italy and Australia. Nor are there any political or legal restrictions to the flow of news. Australian foreign correspondents can work freely in Italy and vice-versa. There is also an abundance of regular news, relating to Italy, available via international news agencies to which Australian newspapers subscribe such as Agence France Press (AFP) and Associated Press (AP).
It should be noted, however, that newspapers and free-to-air broadcasters in Australia have been under considerable financial pressure over the past decade. Newspapers, in particular, have seen advertising revenues decline sharply as competition from internet-based providers of classified advertising has burgeoned. This has led to a reduced capacity amongst newspapers to maintain their own foreign correspondents and an increased dependence on syndicated materials, drawn from overseas newspapers such as the *Times* and the *New York Times*, and news agency stories for overseas coverage (Schauble 1999). This is consistent with a decline over the past decade of on-the-ground foreign reporting in the British press, which has been largely attributed to economic constraints (Willmott 2010).

At the same time, new technologies have generated some economies, particularly in television reporting. In April 2013, Australia’s multicultural broadcaster SBS announced that it had appointed its first international correspondent, who would be based in London. SBS’s director of news and current affairs, Paul Cutler, said that the rise of video journalists who could report on, film and edit a story – and technology that had made it cheaper to do so from international locations – had made the move possible (Sinclair 2013). The ABC has maintained a European correspondent in London for many decades.

Melbourne’s *Age* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* are both owned by Fairfax Media. Hence some economies of scale are achieved through the sharing of foreign correspondents and of reporters sent overseas to cover special events such as the 2008 Winter Olympics. The *Australian* achieved economies in its international reporting through syndication within papers owned by Murdoch’s News International.

In relation to organisational issues, it is relevant to note that this research engages with the domains of two of the world’s most significant media proprietors, Silvio Berlusconi and Rupert Murdoch. Berlusconi’s family owns the largest broadcasting company in Italy, Mediaset, through which he controls Italy’s top three national television channels. During his terms as Prime Minister he also maintained a tight grip on the public service national broadcaster, Radiotelevisione Italiana (RAI), and, arguably, instigated an ‘unprecedented level of political control over the media’ (Ardizzoni & Ferrari 2010: xiii). It has also been suggested that Berlusconi’s wide influence had a broader ‘chilling effect’ on coverage of politics in Italy in media that he did not control (Pavli 2010).

Rupert Murdoch’s global media empire includes major newspaper interests in Britain and Australia. In Australia his company, News Limited, owns approximately 65% of the Australian press as measured by newspaper circulation. This includes ownership of Australia’s national newspaper, the *Australian*. In Britain his newspaper ownership includes the *Times* and the *Sunday Times*. Given this organisational connection, it is not surprising that the *Times* and the *Sunday Times* are major sources of international news for the *Australian*.

Silvio Berlusconi and Rupert Murdoch are both significant players in the Italian television market. In the early 2000s Berlusconi encouraged Murdoch to invest in Italy’s satellite television sector. However, after Murdoch emerged as a major competitor through his company Sky-Italia, the relationship turned sour. Murdoch enjoyed an effective satellite
pay-television monopoly in Italy. In December 2008, the Berlusconi government decided to double the rate of VAT (tax) on satellite television. This was seen by Sky-Italia as a calculated attack on its business. Murdoch retaliated by ordering advertising spots on Sky channels lambasting the Berlusconi government (Day & Popham 2009). Subsequently, when Murdoch’s London papers attacked Berlusconi over his political and private life, Berlusconi retaliated by accusing Murdoch of conducting a vendetta against him as a payback for his Government’s increase in the VAT payable by Sky Italia. Berlusconi was able to use one of his own television stations as a platform for this attack. As one commentator noted, ‘When Rupert Murdoch and Silvio Berlusconi clash, it is no surprise that the dispute plays out across multiple platforms’ (Pfanner 2009). The issue was again revived in September 2009 when Murdoch launched legal proceedings against two of Berlusconi’s companies.

This dispute is highly relevant to the Australian context because of the organisational links between the *Australian*, the *Times* and the *Sunday Times*.

Global studies of international news flow demonstrate that international news coverage reflects the power structure amongst nations. However, as Wilke, Heimprecht & Cohen remind us, ‘the crafting of media messages, including those focussed on international events, is also subject to local influences. Such influences include organisational factors, the local community’s power structure and corporate characteristics’ (2012: 304). We have noted a range of these influences, as they operate at a general level, in the above discussion. Also noteworthy is the fact that there are a significant number of journalists in Australia who have Italian backgrounds and who have taken on roles which have involved reporting on Italian affairs.

We should add that the editorial policies and priorities of individual newspapers and television stations are also important factors. For newspapers, editorial priorities are likely to be reflected in the editorial structure. To take two examples of particular relevance to this study: Does the newspaper have a full-time Fashion Editor? If so, are resources made available for that individual to provide first hand coverage of major fashion shows in centres such as Milan and Paris? How is coverage of travel and tourism organised and financed?

Analysis of the ‘editorial economics’ of particular areas of coverage such as fashion, tourism, and sport is beyond the scope of this study. Nevertheless, as one considers coverage in detail, the extent to which coverage of particular events, locations and even countries is dependent on information subsidies, either from directly related advertising or sponsorship, is an issue that inevitably arises.

**2.3.5: Italian-language news media**

This study is concerned with mainstream news in the Australian media published or presented in English. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that there is wide availability in Australia of Italian language news. Italian language news publications catering to small but sizable concentrations of Italians in Sydney and Melbourne began appearing in Australia before Federation (Tosco 2005). The founding of the main Italian
newspapers, however, followed the mass migration of Italians after the Second World War. Sydney’s *La Fiamma* and Melbourne’s *Il Globo* began as independent newspapers in 1947 and 1959 respectively and continue to be published today under the common ownership of Italian Media Corporation (IMC). For many years they were published daily (Monday-Friday) but the publication frequency of both was recently reduced to twice per week. Their circulation is thought to be less than 20,000 copies each per edition. IMC also operates *Rete Italia* an Italian language radio network of 30 stations in metropolitan and regional centres.

In addition to the home grown Italian-language media, the Italian national broadcaster produces an international television service (*Rai Italia*), a version of which is available free via satellite. The standard version is available as a pay-TV channel on Foxtel. There is also an Italian Euronews channel available on Transact in the ACT, and other Italian television services are available as satellite pay-TV channels from specialist providers.

In theory, the Italian-language press and Italian television news channels could function as a source of news for the mainstream Australian media. However, this rarely happens. Understandably, the mainstream Australian media generally rely on English-language sources for their news.

With ageing of the Italian-born migrants who came to Australia in the two decades to 1970, the future of the local Italian-language media is not rosy. Most of those who arrived in Australia as children and the children and descendants of the migrant settlers who make-up the vast majority of Italian-Australians are more likely to follow the main English-language media and consequently could be expected to exert some influence on the range of news stories covered by them.

### 2.4: Previous international news flow studies

#### 2.4.1: Italy in world news

As noted earlier, Wu’s study (2000), based on an analysis of a 1995 two-week sample of international news coverage in the news media of 38 countries, found that the top ten countries in the world’s news for that period were the U.S., France, the U.K, Russia, Bosnia, China, Germany, Italy, Japan and Spain. The U.S. captured roughly 18% of the entire world’s media space devoted to foreign countries during the two week sample period. Germany, placed seventh, occupied 3.63%; Italy, placed eighth, occupied 3.11% while Australia, placed fifteenth, occupied 1.16%.

The global distribution of news about Italy is greatly influenced by the regionalism factor noted earlier. This can be seen in the results of a recent study of foreign news on television in 17 countries from across the globe. Amongst these 17 countries (which did not include Australia), news about Italy featured most prominently in Germany, Switzerland and least prominently (i.e., outside of the top ten) in Asian countries (Wilke, Heimprecht & Cohen 2012).
This result is consistent with a 1995 comparison of the prominence of mainland European news in the Australian and British press. That study found that news about Germany in the two-week sample period was 3.37 times more prominent in Britain than in Australia while news about Italy was 2.3 times more prominent (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke 2000: 9).

2.4.2: Overseas news in the Australian news media

Prior to the Second World War, overseas news which appeared in the mainstream Australian press was overwhelmingly news from the United Kingdom. This reflected the British links of the majority of its people and the operation of what Potter has called an ‘Imperial Press System’ which had London as its centre (Potter 2003: 1). In the 1930s Melbourne political scientist William McMahon Ball argued that Australian coverage of international events was marred by a lack of news from the Pacific region, including Asia and the U.S., and was overly dominated by British perspectives (Osborne 1997). The Second World War and its aftermath generated a much broader attention to international events by the Australian press. In particular, there was substantially increased attention to the U.S. and some increased attention to Asia. A study of international news-flow to Australia in the mid-1990s showed that the U.S. was by far the most newsworthy country in Australia, having more than twice the ‘news prominence’ of Australia’s traditionally dominant news source, the U.K. (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke 2000: 1-19). Europe and the Asian/Pacific region also loomed large in Australia’s international news map each with more than 25% of total foreign stories while Latin America and Africa each had less than 5% (2000: 11). Also worthy of note is that there was a significant difference in the ‘topic profile’ of stories about Europe when compared to ones about Asia. The European story set scored more than average in the topic areas of culture, entertainment, human interest and sport while the Asian story set was heavily weighted towards business and economic issues (2000: 13).

Recently collected data on international news in the Australian press in 1950 confirms the news dominance of the U.K. and the U.S. in the post-World War 2 period. The former was noted as the ‘first country’ (excluding Australia) in 33% of overseas stories while the latter was the ‘first country’ in 26%. Italy and France were each ‘first country’ in 2.7% of stories which was higher than Russia and South Africa, equal to New Zealand but lower than Japan and Korea.

2.4.3: Implications of international news flow factors and previous studies

General studies of factors affecting international news flow, as well as specific studies relating to Italy and Australia, send a rather mixed message about what one might expect regarding the prominence and nature of stories about Italy in Australia’s mainstream news media. The ‘news hole’, whether in a newspaper or a television news bulletin, is of limited

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ii This is unpublished data derived from the Australian Research Council-funded project ‘Shaping the National Outlook: International News in the Australian Press, 1901-1950’. The project included the creation of a database of a sample of overseas news in the Australian press for the years 1905, 1920, 1935 and 1950. The project is located in the News and Media Research Centre, University of Canberra.
size and there are many potential stories vying for recognition. Each day many highly newsworthy stories are ‘crowded out’ by stronger candidates.

Some of the factors we have noted, such as geographical proximity and cultural and language links, clearly favour countries other than Italy. Other factors, such as world class events, Italy’s prominence in the Eurozone, and the involvement of Italian-Australians in Italian politics, suggest that Italian matters should be relatively prominent in the news. As well, one might argue that geographical distance is no longer as significant a factor as it once was. In an era of globalised business and finance, events in distant parts of the world can have immediate ramifications in local communities, thus making them newsworthy.

2.4.4: Measuring relative prominence

The focus of this study is on developments in the news presence of Italy in the Australian media over the period 2005-2012. We have not focussed on the prominence of Italy in the news relative to other countries. We know, of course, that the U.S. and the U.K. are historically the most prominent overseas countries in the news in Australia because of the systemic and special cultural factors outlined earlier in the chapter.

One measure was, however, taken with a view to placing Italy’s news statistics within a broader, but appropriate, international context. Using Factiva’s facility to search stories via ‘region’ a comparison of newspaper story numbers was conducted over the period of this study for Germany, France, Italy and Spain, the four largest economies in the EU excluding the U.K. Searching stories through Factiva via ‘region’ allows specific country searches. The search elicits stories which Factiva has indexed as being ‘about this country’. It should be noted that this search mechanism, taken alone, provides less comprehensive data than the search mechanism using for the main body of this study as it may not capture stories about Italians abroad. Hence, the story totals for Italy in the comparative tables below are less than those in the main study. This search mechanism can, however, adequately serve as a means for comparing the relative prominence of these four countries.

Table 2.1 presents the aggregate number of stories relating to each of the four countries for the full period of our review published by each of the newspapers in our sample. The aggregate data are broadly consistent with expectations from considerations of the factors likely to influence foreign news coverage discussed above. As noted in the preceding discussion, political and economic influences are major determinants of news flows. Although France’s economy is not as large as Germany’s, it tends to have a wide-ranging engagement in international issues. According to the French foreign ministry, its network of diplomatic missions is second only to that of the U.S. (Ministère des Affaires étrangères 2013). It also has territorial and ex-colonial interests in the South Pacific region within Australia’s zone of influence. The French international news agency, AFP, is a significant source of news for Australian newspapers. Thus the greater attention given to France-related stories in Australian newspapers is both understandable and consistent with findings of other studies cited earlier. The level of coverage in each of the newspapers follows a similar pattern in terms of country ranking. It is interesting, however, that the Sydney Morning Herald ranked Italy ahead of Germany in its relative coverage of stories.
Table 2.1: Aggregate news coverage in selected media, 2005-12: country comparison

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spain</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1421</td>
<td>3689</td>
<td>2521</td>
<td>2241</td>
<td>9872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
<td>589</td>
<td>2342</td>
<td>1357</td>
<td>1407</td>
<td>5695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Age</strong></td>
<td>756</td>
<td>1613</td>
<td>1482</td>
<td>1345</td>
<td>5196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2766</td>
<td>7644</td>
<td>5360</td>
<td>4993</td>
<td>20763</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 2.1** presents details of annual variations in the combined coverage accorded to the four countries by the three newspapers in our sample. France is ranked first each year except 2006, when an unusually large number of Germany-related stories were published. Although other factors are also likely to have been at play, the staging of the World Cup in Germany in 2006 would have been a significant contributing factor. An interesting factor emerging from the annual coverage data is that the level of coverage of Italy related issues surpassed that of Germany each year in the second half (starting in 2009) of the period covered by our research. Factors likely to have influenced this outcome will be explored in some detail chapters 3 and 4 of this volume.
Chapter 3: Year by Year Analysis
Chapter 3: Year by Year Analysis

3.1: Aggregated data, 2005-2012

Our search for ‘Italian stories’ published in the *Australian*, the *SMH*, or the *Age* over the eight-year period 2005-2012 yielded 5,325 items ranging in length from just 20 words to almost 2000 words.

*Table 3.1* shows the distribution of stories by topic for the period as a whole for all three newspapers. The data are presented both by number of stories and percentage of stories by topic.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>no of stories</td>
<td>502</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>466</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>644</td>
<td>1555</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>791</td>
<td>5325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>per cent</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>8.8</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One can observe that all the topic categories have substantial story numbers. This indicates that Italy’s ‘topic profile’ is a broad one which ranges across many spheres of human activity. This is an indicator of the breadth of Australian-Italian relations and of Australian interest in Italy. The largest category, with 29.2% of stories, is sport. In interpreting this, however, one should note that it is in the nature of sports coverage to have large numbers of quite brief stories which report on results. Progress in long events, such as major cycling races, is often reported on a daily basis.

The ‘other’ category, with 14.9% is quite large. It should be remembered, however, that this includes stories reporting disasters, such as earthquakes and accidents, which are inherently newsworthy.

Our search for ‘Italian stories’ broadcast by *ABC News, Lateline* (ABC), *SBS World News Australia*, the three commercial newscasts (*National Nine News, Seven Nightly News* and *Ten 5pm News*) and the current affairs programs *7:30 Report* (ABC), *Four Corners* (ABC), *A Current Affair* (NINE) and *Today Tonight* (SEVEN) for the period 2008 to 2012 identified 932 stories ranging in length from short items (primarily sport) to longer in-depth analyses of current events.

*Table 3.2* shows the distribution of television news and current affairs stories by topic for the period 2008–2012, taken as a whole for all television programs analysed. The data are presented both by number of stories and percentage of stories by topic. This table indicates that television presents a narrower spectrum of stories than the press. In television, just three categories – politics, sport and ‘other’ – account for more than 85% of stories. Sport is marginally more dominant in television than in the press. Television news and current affairs formats severely limit story numbers. A standard 30 minute news
bulletin might have space for just one or two international stories. Television news is mostly event-based and there is little room for general stories on fashion/design, arts or tourism. Television seeks stories which have dramatic visuals. This accounts for the large percentage of stories in the 'other' category.

The ‘other’ category comprised stories on a variety of specific topics. The most prominent involved the grounding of the vessel *Costa Concordia*, a child custody conflict between an Australian mother and her Italian husband involving their children, the 2009 L’Aquila earthquake and its aftermath, and the plight of refugees fleeing Tunisia and Libya and seeking asylum in Italy.

In interpreting the data, one should note the differences in format, style and length of the various television news and current affairs programs (see appendix on methodology).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Story Content</th>
<th>number of stories</th>
<th>per cent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Industry</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fashion/Design</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Affairs</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sport</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>34.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism/Travel</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>34.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>932</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3.2: The year 2005

#### 3.2.1: Events in the news

The major news event in Italy for the year was the death of Pope John Paul II. While stories exclusively about the Vatican affairs of the Catholic Church, or about Roman Catholicism as such, were not included in this study, a significant number of stories related to this event needed to be included because they dealt with its wider impact in Rome and Italy. There were six such stories in the *SMH*, nine in the *Age* and 15 in the *Australian*.

The most prominent international affairs event was the bungled rescue of an Italian hostage in Baghdad in March, which involved a rescuer being killed by U.S. troops. In the *Australian*, this generated ten stories between 7 and 14 March and an additional six follow-up stories following investigations into the matter. It generated three stories in the *Age* but, surprisingly, was not covered in the *SMH*.

The major business story of the year was the fall-out from the financial collapse of the Italian beverages company Parmalat which had a financial interest in the Australian dairy industry. It generated four stories in the *Australian*, three in the *SMH* and three in the *Age*. 
In sport, the Italian rugby union team played the Australian Wallabies in Melbourne in June.

3.2.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.3 and 3.4 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2005 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.3 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.4 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian</strong></td>
<td>31</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Stories</strong></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>599</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of tables 3.3 and 3.4 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian* (360 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have very similar story numbers (114 and 125 respectively). This is in part a reflection of the *Australian’s* greater commitment to international news coverage generally. (We may note, in this regard, that the *Australian* also had more substantial coverage of Spain, France and Germany than the other two papers (see table 2.1)). However, as we will see later in this report, there is also evidence that the *Australian* was better positioned to cover specifically Italian stories than the other two papers by virtue of its editorial arrangements and its relationship with the London *Times*.

The three papers gave almost equal coverage in story numbers to travel/tourism. When expressed in percentage terms, this meant that the *Australian* devoted 5.8% of its stories to this topic area while the *SMH* and the *Age* devoted 15.8% and 13.6% respectively.
In percentage terms, the three newspapers gave almost equal priority to fashion/design – between 11% and 12% of stories. However, expressed in story numbers, the *Australian’s* coverage was considerably more extensive than that of the other two papers.

The most noteworthy difference in coverage (and therefore, one infers, in editorial priority) was in the coverage of international affairs and politics. While the *Australian* had 39 stories on politics for the year, the *SMH* and the *Age* had just two each. For the *SMH* and the *Age* Italian politics was simply not on the editorial radar in 2005. While the *Australian* had 77 stories on international affairs, the *SMH* had eight and the *Age* had 10.

**Figure 3.1** presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. Sport accounted for 21% of stories in 2005 while it accounted for 29.2% in the total (2005-2012) data set (see Table 3.1). This reflected the fact that 2005 saw fewer major international sports events involving Italy than a number of later years. Politics is also substantially lower for 2005 (7%) than for the data set as a whole (12.1%). In 2005 Italian fashion/design clearly outranked Italian politics as a source of news.

### 3.2.3: Sources and coverage

During 2005 all three newspapers had their own correspondents in Italy for some period. Most notably, the *Australian* had a staff correspondent, Natasha Bita, in Italy for most of the year (presumably full-time). She wrote or contributed almost 80 stories published in the *Australian* in that year. Twenty-five of these related to fashion, 21 to international affairs, nine to Italian politics with the rest ranging mostly across religion and social issues. Another important source for the *Australian* was the London *Times*, which, like the *Australian* is owned by News International. Twenty-one stories were taken from the *Times*
and were attributed to its Rome correspondent, Richard Owen. Other sources used include the international news agencies Agence France Press (AFP), Associated Press (AP) and Reuters.

During 2005 Desmond O’Grady was part-time correspondent for the SMH and the Age in Rome. He wrote or contributed to 15 substantial articles for the SMH and 12 for the Age, covering topics relating to business, culture, tourism, religion, politics and crime. Desmond O’Grady is an Australian journalist, writer, and playwright who has resided and worked in Rome since 1962 and has made a major contribution to the better understanding of Italian affairs in Australia. ‘I still call Australia home’, he wrote in 2005, ‘But I have another home in Italy’ (O’Grady 2005). In the aftermath of the death of Pope John Paul II, O’Grady’s reports were complemented by those of the London-based European correspondent of the SMH and the Age, James Button, and those of their religion reporter, Barney Zwartz, who had been sent to Rome.

Maggie Alderson covered fashion shows held in Milan in late February (five stories in the SMH). Alderson is a prominent London-born Australian author, magazine editor and fashion journalist. She was a senior writer and columnist for the SMH, specialising in fashion, between 2005 and 2010. The fashion show in Milan in September was covered by another SMH staff arts writer, Valerie Lawson (four stories).

The Australian offered a more comprehensive coverage of Italian affairs than either of the other two papers. For example, the Australian’s January coverage included stories on the assault on Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, which occurred on New Year’s Eve, 2004 and a rail crash which killed 17 people. Neither story was covered in either the SMH or the Age. Italian politics featured regularly in the Australian. There were 29 stories in the Australian which named Berlusconi in the lead paragraph. Fifteen of these stories fore-grounded Berlusconi’s actions as Prime Minister in the contexts of Italian politics and international affairs. Fourteen stories fore-grounded Berlusconi as a controversial celebrity in roles such as ‘media mogul’, alleged tax evader, and ‘socialite’. By contrast, Italian politics and Berlusconi received almost no coverage in the Age and the SMH in 2005.

### 3.3: The year 2006

#### 3.3.1: Events in the news

The number of Italian stories in 2006 was greatly boosted by the Turin Winter Olympics held in February. For example, almost 40 of the 299 stories in the data set for the SMH were about the Olympic Games, with most written from Turin by SMH staff sports writer (also representing the Age in Turin), Jaquelin Magnay. There were 29 stories on this topic in the Australian while, surprisingly, only eleven in the Age. Story numbers were also boosted by reporting on matches involving Italy in the Football World Cup held in July in Germany, including a match between Italy and Australia which ended in a controversial (particularly from an Australian viewpoint) one-nil win to Italy via a penalty given in extra time. There were almost 60 stories, which involved Italy, about the World Cup in the SMH, 42 in the Age and 34 in the Australian. Still on sport, there was also a Rugby Union test between Italy and Australia in Rome in November which generated nine stories in the SMH.
but only two in the *Age*, reflecting the relative popularity of the code in Sydney and in Melbourne. The *Australian* carried seven stories.

Italian elections, in which Prime Minister Berlusconi was narrowly defeated by a centre-left coalition led by Romano Prodi, were held in May. These generated ten stories in each of the *SMH* and the *Age*, and an extraordinary 35 in the *Australian*. A feature of these elections was that for the first time Italians living overseas were able to vote for their own representatives. Seven of the stories in the *SMH* and eight in the *Australian* dealt with this issue in relation to Italian-Australians. There were five such stories in the *Age*. These stories included reports on the election of Melbourne-based Senator Nino Randazzo and Melbourne-based member of the Chamber of Deputies Marco Fedi and the role they played (particularly Senator Randazzo) in determining the complexion of the post-election government. In the *SMH* there was an extended profile of Melbourne-based member of the Chamber of Deputies Marco Fedi (‘Enter the World Citizen’, 28 October).

### 3.3.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.5 and 3.6 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2006 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.5 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.6 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

#### Table 3.5: Stories in each medium, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Stories</strong></td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>344</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table 3.6: Stories in each medium, 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australian</strong></td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of tables 3.5 and 3.6 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian* (403 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have very similar story numbers (235 and 181 respectively). However, the gap between the *Australian* and the other two papers narrowed considerably. In sport coverage, the *SMH* matched the *Australian* in large part because of its extensive coverage of the Winter Olympics. The three papers gave comparable coverage in story numbers to the arts and to
business/industry. The *Australian* led the way in fashion/design. Political coverage increased significantly in the *SMH* and the *Age* but this was coming from a very low base.

**Figure 3.2** presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. In 2006 sport was the dominant topic in Italian news. It accounted for 42% of total story numbers, much more than the average for the total data set (29.2%). The second largest substantive category was politics with 13%. This was only just above the average for the total data set (12.1%) even though 2006 was an election year. Nevertheless, in contrast to 2005, Italian politics clearly outranked Italian fashion/design as a source of news.

![Figure 3.2: Distribution of stories by topic, 2006](image)

### 3.3.3: Sources and coverage

As in 2005, the *Australian* offered a more comprehensive coverage of Italian affairs than either of the other two papers. The *Australian’s* staff correspondent in Italy, Natasha Bita, wrote or contributed to 68 stories published in the *Australian* in 2006. Reversing 2005 priorities, doubtless due to the election, she wrote thirty-three stories about politics and 17 about fashion. The others ranged across all subjects. Another important source for the *Australian* remained the London *Times*, which, like the *Australian*, was owned by News Limited. Thirty-two stories were sourced to the *Times*’ Rome correspondent, Richard Owen. These stories ranged across all subject areas.

There were 42 stories in the *Australian* which named Silvio Berlusconi in the lead paragraph. Given that it was an election year, it was difficult to distinguish between stories which fore-grounded Berlusconi’s actions as Prime Minister in the contexts of Italian politics and international affairs, and stories which fore-grounded Berlusconi as a controversial celebrity in roles such as ‘media mogul’, alleged tax evader, and ‘socialite’ (a distinction that was drawn for the 2005 sample). The majority of stories were framed by
the idea of Berlusconi as a ‘controversial personality’. The *Australian* gave a great deal more prominence to this frame than the other two papers. For example, the *Australian* devoted two stories to Berlusconi’s alleged offensive comments about Chinese treatment of babies while the matter did not rate a mention in the *SMH* or the *Age*.

It should also be noted that the *Australian* carried substantially more ‘hard news’ about Italian affairs than the other two papers. For example, the *Australian* reported in April that a bomb blast had killed three Italian soldiers in Iraq. There was no coverage of this story in the other two papers.

Desmond O’Grady continued as the *SMH*’s and the *Age*’s part-time Rome correspondent writing or contributing to 16 stories, across the whole range of topic areas, for the *SMH* and 14 for the *Age*. The *SMH* also sent staff writer, Patty Huntington, to cover the fashion shows in Milan in May (four stories) and in September (four stories).

All three newspapers had their own correspondents in Italy for the Winter Olympics and the Australian Rugby tour. The *Australian*’s Olympic coverage was led by Nicole Jeffrey while, as noted above, coverage for the *SMH* and the *Age*, was led by Jaquelin Magnay. Sport writer, Greg Growden, covered the Italy-Australia rugby union test for both the *SMH* and the *Age* while Rugby Union editor Wayne Smith covered it for the *Australian*.

### 3.3.4: A note on television

A systematic analysis of Italian stories on Australian television in 2006 is outside the scope of this study. As indicated earlier, the television data is analysed from 2008. However, it should be noted that the election of two Melbourne-based Italians to the Italian parliament in 2006 was given substantial coverage in Australia, particularly in current affairs programs on the ABC. The main early evening current affairs program on the ABC, *The 7:30 Report*, carried the item ‘New Italian MPs to represent expat Australian’ on 14 April, 2006. The item introduced Nino Randazzo and Marco Fedi to viewers as ‘two men who’ve just been elected to represent the biggest electorate on earth.’ On 30 April the ABC program *Foreign Correspondent* ran a segment covering the parliamentarian’s first days in Rome. This included coverage of their initial meeting with the new Italian Prime Minister, Romano Prodi. At that meeting Prodi commented that he wasn’t surprised by the positive results for the Centre-Left parties abroad as the electorate abroad didn’t get the same ‘media bombardment’ [from Berlusconi] as was the case in Italy (‘Italy – The Italian Connection’ 2006).

### 3.4: The year 2007

#### 3.4.1: Events in the news

During 2007 there were no news events in Italy on the scale of the 2006 Winter Olympics and the 2006 elections. In late February there was a brief political crisis involving the resignation and subsequent reappointment of Prime Minister Romano Prodi, which was reported on extensively in the *Australian* but not reported in the *Age*, and only reported in passing by the *SMH* (one story). There were also a number of stories relating to the
conduct of the 2006 elections amongst Italians in Australia mainly around allegations of electoral fraud (two in each of the *Australian* and the *SMH*, and three in the *Age*). The appointment of Australia’s former Minister for Immigration in the Liberal/National Coalition Government, Amanda Vanstone, as Australian ambassador to Italy generated seven stories in the *SMH*, five in the *Australian*, and two in the *Age*.

The most significant business story of the year, from an Australian perspective, was the sale by the Australian company, Macquarie Airports, of its interests in Rome’s airports at a considerable profit (four stories in the *SMH* and three in each of the *Australian* and the *Age*).

Renowned opera singer Luciano Pavarotti died in September. His death, and a controversy about his will which followed, generated eight stories in the *Australian*. The *SMH* and the *Age*, which only covered his death, had two stories and one story respectively.

### 3.4.2: Story numbers and topics

**Tables 3.7 and 3.8** present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2007 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.7 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.8 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

#### Table 3.7: Stories in each medium, 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
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<td>23</td>
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<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Stories</strong></td>
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<td>42</td>
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<td>102</td>
<td>57</td>
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#### Table 3.8: Stories in each medium, 2007

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<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
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<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
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<td>5.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of tables 3.7 and 3.8 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian* (320 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have similar story numbers (122 and 96 respectively). The gap between the *Australian* and the other two papers expanded considerably over that in 2006. The *Age* is notable for its low story numbers in politics and fashion/design. The *Australian* has far more extensive coverage of sport involving Italy than the other papers.
Figure 3.3 presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. The proportion of stories dealing with politics and international affairs was somewhat lower in 2007 than for the data set as a whole. In other respects, however, 2007 might be described as a fairly average news year for Italy as the story distribution for 2007 broadly matches that for the data set as a whole. In 2007 Italian fashion/design clearly outranked Italian politics as a source of news.

3.4.3: Sources and coverage

The lack of major world events in which Italy was prominent, such as the Winter Olympics and the Football World Cup, and the fact that 2007 was not an Italian election year meant that there were many fewer 'Italian stories' in 2007 than in 2006. This also dramatically brought to light the contrast between the relatively comprehensive coverage of Italian affairs provided by the Australian and the much more limited coverage provided by the SMH and the Age. As the focus moved away from politics, the Australian broadened the subjects of its coverage while in the SMH and the Age coverage just fell away. The Australian also maintained very substantial coverage of sporting events involving Italian teams or individuals even if Australia was not directly involved. This was especially apparent in coverage of football (soccer) where the Australian reported regularly on European club football and European events such as the UEFA Cup.

The differences in the extent of the coverage also reflect the fact that the Australian maintained a staff reporter, Natasha Bita, in Italy for most of the year who continued to file stories at regular intervals. The SMH and the Age relied on freelance and part-time correspondents. The Australian also continued to make extensive use of reports taken from the London Times.
As indicated earlier, all three papers covered allegations of electoral fraud in Australia during the 2006 Italian elections. The story originated in the Italian press, most notably in *La Repubblica*. It was subsequently picked up by Australian correspondents in Italy and published in Australia. It was seen by Marco Fedi and Nino Randazzo as part of a campaign in Italy which was attempting to discredit both the Italian voting system and the Italian representatives from abroad ("The Italian Connection‘ 2008).

Newsworthy events and subjects which occurred in Italy in 2007 and were covered by the *Australian* but were not covered by the *SMH* and the *Age* included:

- The murder in Italy of a British student, Meredith Kercher (seven stories)
- Controversy over the Italian government’s payment of a ransom to the Taliban to free an Italian hostage (six stories)
- Debate in Italy over the legal treatment of gay couples and abortion (five stories)
- A ferry crash in Sicily which killed four crew members (one story)
- An Australian arrested in Rome following a drug bust (one story).

The *Australian’s* staff correspondent in Rome, Natasha Bita, published 35 stories with the largest subject categories being fashion (15), politics (10), and international affairs (five). Fifty-one stories by Richard Owen, Italy correspondent for the London *Times*, were published. These covered a large range of subjects with the largest topic areas being crime (16 stories), politics (five) and social issues (five). There were five stories in the *Australian* in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph. One concerned his political role and four his private life.

It is also noteworthy that the *Weekend Australian’s* gardening columnist and author of many books about gardening, Holly Kerr Forsyth, toured Italy in 2007. She wrote five articles for the *Australian* on gardens in Italy.

Desmond O’Grady continued as part-time correspondent for the *SMH* and the *Age* with a reduced number of contributions – seven stories for the *Age* and only two in the *SMH*. Both papers also published contributions from Australian freelance journalist based in Rome, Jo McKenna – three in each of the *SMH* and the *Age*. The *SMH* sent its Fashion Editor, Kellie Rush, to cover the February fashion show in Milan (five stories).

### 3.5: The year 2008

#### 3.5.1: Events in the news

National elections were held in Italy in April following the resignation of Prime Minister, Romano Prodi, in the face of a parliamentary no-confidence motion. As in 2006 Italian-Australians were able to vote for their representatives in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. The sitting Australian members, Marco Fedi and Senator Randazzo, were returned. However, the Prodi government lost and Silvio Berlusconi returned to the Prime Ministership.
The *Australian* covered the developments via 20 stories dealing with the lead up to the elections, the elections themselves and subsequent political developments. Two of these dealt specifically with voting in Australia. The *Age* and the *SMH* carried far fewer stories on the elections – just four stories each, two of them in each case related to voting in Australia.

Another noteworthy ‘political’ story, at least as far as the *Australian* was concerned, was French President Sarkozy’s relationship with Italian super model, Carla Bruni. The *Australian* carried seven stories related to this.

In business, the most prominent story of the year was the financial woes of Italian airline Alitalia and its possible privatisation. This generated ten stories in the *Australian*. In sport, the most prominent story was the Wallaby’s Rugby Union test against Italy in November in Padova. The rivalry between Italian motorcycle racer, Valentino Rossi, and Australian racer, Casey Stoner, also rated significant coverage. The most significant natural disaster was major flooding in Venice towards the end of the year.

### 3.5.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.9 and 3.10 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2008 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.9 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.10 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>230</td>
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<td><strong>SMH</strong></td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All Stories</strong></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>97</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
</tr>
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<td>23.9</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>11.5</td>
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<td>4.9</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>14.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An examination of tables 3.9 and 3.10 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian* (230 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have very similar story numbers (132 and 122 respectively). The gap between the *Australian* and
the other two papers lessened considerably over that in 2007. The *Age* is notable for its low story numbers in politics though numbers for fashion/design increased considerably over the previous year.

**Figure 3.4** presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. In 2008 Italian fashion/design and Italian politics rated almost equally as sources of news. The proportion of stories covering politics (12%) was almost identical to that for the story set as a whole (12.1%). Sport at 25% was just a little less than the average (29.2%) while travel/tourism at 7% was almost right on average (7.8%).

![Figure 3.4: Distribution of stories by topic, 2008](image)

### 3.5.3: Sources and coverage

Towards the end of 2007 the *Australian* abolished the position of staff correspondent based in Rome, which had been held for many years by Natasha Bita. She subsequently returned to Brisbane from where she continued to work for the *Australian*. The paper continued the position of European Correspondent, held by Peter Wilson. This position, based in London, had a very wide remit and could have only a very limited impact on coverage of Italian affairs. Wilson had only two Italian stories for the year, both on politics.

The *Australian* relied on the *Times*, the *Sunday Times* and news-agencies for most of its Italian coverage thus sacrificing any specific Australian perspective on events. For longer, interpretative articles it relied almost entirely on the *Times*. Thus it tied itself to that paper’s perspectives, and continued a tradition in the Australian press of presenting European affairs through ‘British eyes’.
The exception in this regard was Rugby Union. The Wallabies tour, which included a test against Italy in November in Padua, was covered by the Australian’s Rugby Union Editor, Wayne Smith (14 stories).

The largest sources of non-sporting Italian news in the Australian were the London Times (32 stories, 27 of which were by the Times’ Rome correspondent, Richard Owen), the Sunday Times (11 stories of which nine were by its Rome correspondent, John Follain), Agence France Press (AFP – prime source for 25 stories) and Associated Press (prime source for nine stories). Richard Owen’s stories covered all topic areas including crime (seven stories) and politics (six). AFP was the prime source for basic news about the elections (eight stories).

After a hiatus in 2007, Silvio Berlusconi was again the dominant Italian personality in the news. He featured in the lead paragraph of 24 stories in the Australian and two in each of the SMH and the Age.

The loss of Natasha Bita led to a sharp decline in the number of stories about Italian fashion in the Australian. Coverage of Milan fashion shows was largely left to London-based freelancer, Jane de Teliga (four stories).

It is noteworthy that in 2008 the Australian carried an editorial specifically on Italian affairs. This was a critique of lawlessness in Italy and, specifically, the ‘deployment of soldiers to fight crime in the streets of Italy’s main cities’ (‘Editorial Comment’, 9 August).

The SMH and Age European correspondent, Paola Totaro, reported periodically on Italian affairs with 10 stories for the year in the SMH and nine in the Age. Her main topic was the mafia (six stories in the SMH, five in the Age). She also wrote two first-hand reports on Italy’s refugee problems.

The rugby union was covered by the SMH’s chief rugby correspondent, Greg Crowden (ten stories in the SMH on the match and related matters, one in the Age). Both papers made regular use of freelance journalists and travel writers. Desmond O’Grady contributed two stories to the SMH. Age columnist, Kate Holden, who had a writing fellowship in Rome during 2008, had three stories in the Age about life in Italy.

3.5.4: Television news and current affairs

Story numbers and topics

In 2008 there were 156 news and current affairs stories with significant Italian content across the various programs that were analysed. Of these about 47% were broadcast on SBS World News. Sport comprised about 43% of the content for all broadcast Italian items, and politics about 24%. For both topic areas this was higher than the averages for the data set as a whole (34.2% for sport and 18.7% for politics). Figure 3.5 shows the number of stories (or count) of Italian television News and Current Affairs for the combined year 2008 (156 stories) by news topic: Arts, Business/Industry, Fashion/Design, International Affairs, Politics, Sport, Tourism/Travel and Other. Thus, of the 156 stories, there were 68 stories on Sport or about 43% of all 2008 stories.
Coverage

About 55% of all politics items were broadcast on *SBS World News* and 26% on *ABC News* and *Lateline*. *Lateline* provided extended coverage of the Italian election via a five minutes and 39 seconds segment on the two MPs in the Italian parliament who were on the campaign trail in Australia which was broadcast on 8th April 2008.

*SBS World News* also dominated coverage of International Affairs. Italian Sport content was predominately on the commercial newscasts *Seven Nightly News, National Nine News* and *TEN 5pm News*.

The ABC’s *7:30 Report* broadcast an item on the death in Italy of Miriam Makeba, singer and anti-Apartheid campaigner, and the mourning of her death in South Africa. *Lateline* broadcast a lengthy interview with Italian author Roberto Saviano who has been living in fear for his life following the 2006 publication of his best-selling book on the Camorra, the Neapolitan mafia.

About 29% of political stories were broadcast in January 2008 (dissolution of the Italian Parliament) and a further 28% in April – the 2008 election. Sport content was broadcast mainly in May and April.

Major stories covered by television were:

- The Italian election and Berlusconi’s re-election for a third term as Prime Minister
- Italians in Australia voted for and elected two centre left candidates to Parliament in Rome
- Criticism of Berlusconi for his comment about U.S. President elect Barack Obama as ‘young, handsome, and evenly tanned’
- Concern that Berlusconi would lead the G8 group of industrial nations
Protests against Berlusconi’s government, especially policies on immigration and education.

Other stories covered a wide range of topics:

- Italy’s 5 billion Euro compensation for Libya for colonial occupation
- Big Italian lotto win for a Sicily resident
- Crackdown by police on the mafia
- Financial troubles at Alitalia and subsequent union protests, flight cancellations
- Funeral for Italian military personnel killed in a helicopter crash in France
- Seizure of contaminated milk products in Naples
- Carbon emission policies in Europe under threat because of the Eurozone financial crisis
- Violent protests over the site of a rubbish dump in Naples
- EU condemnation of plan to fingerprint gypsies
- National strike by transport unions
- Italian woman locked in her room for 18 years because she became pregnant while unmarried
- Rome food summit and discussion of high international food prices
- Closure of Italian dairy farms following discovery of dioxin in mozzarella cheese
- Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli arrives in Sydney for tour.

Major sports stories were:

- Australian rugby team, the Wallabies, European tour and matches against Italy
- Moto GP and Australian rider Casey Stoner, and wins by Valentino Rossi
- 21-year-old Sebastian Vettel wins the Italian Grand Prix
- Many regular SBS World News football (soccer) reports.

3.6: The year 2009

3.6.1: Events in the news

In 2008, an election year which saw Silvio Berlusconi returned as Prime minister, there were 24 stories in the Australian in which the name ‘Berlusconi’ featured in the opening paragraph. In the non-election year of 2009 there were 76 such stories in the Australian. Most of these have been classified in this study as stories about politics as their newsworthiness arises largely from Berlusconi’s status as Italian Prime Minister. However, the main subject of the stories is Berlusconi himself rather than domestic or international political actions undertaken by him. Thirty-nine of the stories deal with marital issues, the so-called sex scandals, or other behavioural matters. A further 11 stories associated Berlusconi with court proceeding or corruption matters.
In December, a man with a history of mental health problems threw a statuette at Berlusconi injuring him severely enough to require treatment in hospital. The attack and its consequences were covered by eight stories in the *Australian*.

In April there was a major earthquake in the central Italian region of Abruzzo which devastated its capital city of L’Aquila killing almost 300 people. The quake and its aftermath, which included allegations of shoddy construction and criminal negligence, were covered by 10 stories in each of the *Australian* and the *SMH* and nine in the *Age*.

In July, the G8 summit of the world’s richest nations was held in L’Aquila, the location of the April earthquake. The Australian Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, attended meetings associated with the summit. There were six stories in the *Australian* covering the meeting. One of them was tellingly head-lined ‘New Berlusconi photo scandal overshadows G8’.

The trial of Amanda Knox, accused of sexually abusing and murdering her house-mate, Meredith Kercher, in Perugia, commenced in January and generated five stories in the *Australian* across the year. There were nine stories in the *Australian* relating to the mafia, with two of them suggesting Italian-Australian criminal links.

Other notable events included the death of six Italian soldiers in a bomb blast in Kabul (two stories in the *Australian*), the plight of refugees in Italy (four stories in each of the *SMH* and the *Age* but not covered by the *Australian*), and the allegedly politically motivated proposed closure by the Berlusconi government of Italian consulates in Brisbane and Adelaide (two stories in the *Australian*).

2009 was a major year for sports stories because the Italian rugby union team played two tests in Australia in June and the world swimming championships were held in Rome in July. The rugby union generated 22 stories in the *Australian*, 11 in the *SMH*, and seven in the *Age*. The swimming generated 25 stories in the *SMH*, 16 in the *Australian* and 14 in the *Age*. The swimming titles were more newsworthy than usual because of controversy over the use technologically advanced swim-suits. At the same time, it should be pointed out that the references to Italy in sports stories can be relatively minor even if the reference is in the head-line. The story, referring to Australian swimmer Stephanie Rice, headed ‘Rice in doubt for Rome’ (included in the sample because of the direct reference to the swimming titles in Rome) is such an example.

In the Arts, the Venice Biennale in June and its Australian exhibit were given more than usual prominence in the *Age* (three stories) and the *SMH* (two stories) as the event was covered by the *Age*’s own Senior Arts Writer Gabriella Coslovich.

### 3.6.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.11 and 3.12 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2009 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.11 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.12 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.
Table 3.11: Stories in each medium, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
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<td>15</td>
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<td>178</td>
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<tr>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
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<td>93</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>177</td>
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<td>82</td>
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Table 3.12: Stories in each medium, 2009

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<th>International Affairs</th>
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<td>11.8</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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An examination of tables 3.11 and 3.12 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the Australian (326 stories) is far greater than in the SMH or the Age which have very similar story numbers (178 and 163 respectively). The gap between the Australian and the other two papers is similar to that in 2007. The Age and SMH are notable for their increased attention to politics.

Figure 3.6 presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. The proportion of stories on Italian politics (18%) is significantly greater than that for the data set as a whole (12.1%) in 2009, politics generated twice as many stories as fashion/design. International affairs (14%) also ranked significantly higher than for the data set as a whole (10.6%).
3.6.3: Sources and coverage

In the Australian the pattern of news sources used for Italian news in 2009 was similar to that of 2008. Once again the most important source of non-sporting Italian news in the Australian was the London Times (53 stories, 30 of which were by the Times’ Rome correspondent, Richard Owen, and eight by the Times’ additional correspondent, Lucy Bannerman). During 2009, the Times had despatched a second reporter to Italy, Lucy Bannerman, to reinforce the paper’s correspondent, Richard Owen (Day & Popham 2009). The Sunday Times provided 16 stories of which eight were by its Rome correspondent, John Follain. AFP was the prime source for 45 stories and Associated Press for nine stories. Of Richard Owen’s 24 stories, 22 referred prominently to Silvio Berlusconi thus indicating a significant narrowing of the subject matter covered. As stories about Berlusconi became more frequent, this topic, arguably, ‘crowded out’ other subjects.

The Australian sent its own sports writer, Nicole Jeffrey, to Rome to cover the world swimming championships. Its political reporter, Lenore Taylor, covered the G8 summit and meetings on climate change in Rome. Its Europe Correspondent, Peter Wilson, contributed two stories on Italy, both on the earthquake.

Both the SMH and the Age significantly increased their in-depth coverage of Italian affairs in 2009, largely due to the efforts of their European Correspondent Paola Totaro. She contributed 43 stories on Italian affairs or on European affairs involving Italy in a significant way. While 15 of these were about Berlusconi and Italian politics there was also extensive coverage of the earthquake (eight stories), Italy’s refugee problem (four stories) and international affairs including the Australian Prime Minister’s visit and the G8 meeting (nine stories). The majority of these stories were also published in the Age. The swimming was covered for the Age and the SMH by their own sports writer, Michael Cowley.
In 2008, the *Age* and the *SMH* had largely ignored stories about Berlusconi as a ‘celebrity’. However, in 2009 they paid significantly more attention to this subject. The *SMH* carried 24 stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph while the *Age* carried seventeen. Coverage of the ‘sex scandal’ was much more ‘low-key’ in the *SMH* (seven stories) and the *Age* (six stories) than in the *Australian*. Significantly, however, the *SMH* carried an editorial commenting on Berlusconi and 'Italian-style' politics. It commenced: ‘The image of Italy as a nation mired in corruption and obsessed with celebrity scandal is a cliché. So it must be frustrating for patriotic Italians when the country’s prime minister becomes embroiled in a sex and corruption scandal that ticks all the boxes of the national stereotype’ (‘That’s amore: politics Silvio-style’, 22 June 2009).

The character and actions of Berlusconi, together with the scrutiny and criticism of him by the foreign press, led to the emergence of the theme ‘Italy on trial’ in some media coverage. For example, Richard Owen starts one story with the statement: ‘In any other G8 country a prime minister embroiled in allegations about the procurement of call girls and suspected of spending the night with one of them would be forced to resign or be forced out’ (‘PM’s media empire hides its master’s shame with a TV figleaf’, *Australian*, 23 June 2009). This was a trial which, in the view of the foreign media, Italy could only win if public opinion in Italy turned against Berlusconi and he was ousted from the Prime Ministership.

Another significant aspect of coverage of Italian affairs in 2009 was the fact that the media themselves became a major story. This had two main aspects. Firstly, long-standing issues about Berlusconi’s ownership of large sections of the Italian media, and the political use he made of them, came to the fore. Many stories, particularly in the *Australian*, were about his attempts to control media coverage of the sex scandal issue within Italy. This involved attacks on the opposition press and threats of defamation, and subsequent actual legal action (‘Silvio hits back over ties to teen’, *Australian*, 16 May, 2009; ‘Media tycoon gags free speech’, *Australian*, 10 November, 2009). It also involved the use of his television stations to boost his popularity (‘Berlusconi in TV offensive to combat gal-pal scandal’, *Australian*, 29 May, 2009; ‘PM’s media empire hides its master’s shame with a TV figleaf’, *Australian*, 23 June, 2009), and legal attempts to block publication of embarrassing photographs (‘Berlusconi orders seizure of topless photos from villa’, *Australian*, 2 June, 2009). Berlusconi’s actions to gag the Italian media led to a mass protest in Rome (‘Berlusconi faces backlash on press freedom’, *Australian*, 5 October, 2009).

Secondly, Berlusconi ramped up his long-standing attacks on foreign media, particularly targeting Rupert Murdoch and the London *Times*. As the *Times* itself reported:

Silvio Berlusconi has launched an attack on the *Times*, criticising recent articles focused on his friendship with an aspiring model. In a series of television interviews the Italian Prime Minister said the coverage was inspired by a business dispute with the rival media mogul Rupert Murdoch, chief executive of News Corporation, which

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iii The theme was also evident in some Australian media responses to the re-election of Berlusconi in 2008. For example, an extended interview between journalist George Negus and the newly re-elected Marco Fedi and Nino Randazzo on SBS’s *Dateline* program, was largely structured around Negus’ question: ‘How come – what is your explanation of a man like Berlusconi getting re-elected?’ (‘Italian Politics’ 2008)
is the parent company of the *Times* and the *Australian*. ('Attacks a Murdoch vendetta: Berlusconi', *Australian*, 6 June 2009)

The attack on the *Times*’ coverage is of obvious relevance to this study because of the close relationship between that paper and the *Australian*. The number and tenor of stories published in the *Australian* during 2009 about Berlusconi appears consistent with the idea that News Corporation papers were conducting a campaign against him. An admittedly subjective assessment of the 76 stories, which featured Berlusconi in the first paragraph, published in the *Australian* in 2009 rated two as positive in their presentation of Berlusconi, 19 as neutral and 55 as negative.\textsuperscript{iv} At the same time, it should be pointed out that other major papers, including the *Financial Times* and the *Independent of London*, France’s *Le Figaro* and Germany’s *Die Welt*, were publishing articles highly critical of Berlusconi (Brown 2009).

In 2009, media coverage of Berlusconi and Italian politics also became a controversial issue in Australia, though the focus of the controversy was the *Australian Financial Review*, rather than any of the newspapers under consideration in this Report. In November, the *Australian Financial Review* published a feature entitled ‘via Dolorosa, Italia’ which critiqued the supposed apathy in Italy about Berlusconi’s behaviour, attributing it to Berlusconi’s control of the media. It was accompanied by cartoon map of Italy which used crude language to re-name Italy’s cities and regions. The paper published several letters criticising the item as a slur on the Italian populace. Subsequently, a group of Italian-Australians took a complaint to the Australian Press Council and to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (Anti-Discrimination Division). The tribunal complaint was resolved through mediation in August 2011 and the *Australian Financial Review* published a note saying, ‘we understand the publication caused offence to some members of the Australian-Italian community. The AFR regrets this and any such offence was unintentional’ (as reported in ‘The Diary’, *Australian*, 15 August, 2011).

3.6.4: Television news and current affairs

Story numbers and topics

In 2009 there were 198 news and current affairs stories with significant Italian content across the various programs that were analysed. Of these 77 (39%) were broadcast on *SBS World News*, and 78 by the three commercial newscasts *Seven Nightly News*, *National Nine News*, and *TEN 5pm News* combined. Italian stories broadcast by *ABC News* and *Lateline* comprised about 21.3% of all items.

\textsuperscript{iv}This assessment was undertaken by the first author of this report.
Coverage

Political content comprised 8.6% of all Italian news and current affairs broadcast stories. This is less than half of the average for the data set as a whole (18.7%). Sport content was dominant comprising more than 41% of stories. The three commercial newscasts (*Seven Nightly News, National Nine News, TEN 5pm News*) accounted for about 39% of all Sport coverage and *SBS World News* about 38%; and *ABC News* about 21%. Politics comprised 41.2% on *SBS World News* compared with 23.5% on *ABC News* and *Lateline*.

Content classified as ‘Other’ comprised 73 stories or 37% of all Italian news and current affairs television. The dominant stories in this category were the devastating L’Aquila earthquake in central Italy (32 stories) and the guilty verdict for American student Amanda Knox. The ABC’s then European correspondent Emma Alberici, and all of the three commercial networks, reported on the earthquake from L’Aquila. CNN’s Diana Magnay was prominent in *SBS World News* coverage of the earthquake.

Of the ten items broadcast by ABC’s *Lateline* during 2009, three covered the L’Aquila earthquake and its aftermath, three items covered the G8 Summit, including Chinese President Hu Jinto’s decision to cancel his attendance because of unrest in western China, and one item each on the World Swimming Championship, U.S. secret agents facing potential imprisonment in Italy, and the drowning during a violent storm of refugees fleeing Libya by boat for Italy.

ABC’s *7:30 Report* broadcast a lengthy item on the ‘back-flip’ by swimming’s international governing body FINA to allow a range of new technology swimming suits to be used at World Swimming Championships in Italy.

Major stories included:

- The earthquake in central Italy (L’Aquila) which killed more than 250 people; and aftershocks delayed rescue efforts.
The G8 meeting in Italy – which Prime Minister Rudd attended
Berlusconi’s gaffe that thousands of earthquake displaced people should regard themselves as being on a camping weekend
Berlusconi suffers broken teeth and a fractured nose in incident in Milan
Berlusconi’s admission that ‘I’m no saint’ in reaction to release of lurid tapes made by a call-girl during two encounters; allegations that escorts were paid to attend his parties
Prominent British lawyer David Mills found guilty of corruption – he was paid money to give false testimony in a case involving Berlusconi’s business dealings
Amanda Knox guilty murder verdict.

Other stories included:

- Six Italian soldiers caught in deadly attack in Afghanistan
- Eroding support among Italians for the Afghan war
- Italian cruise ship attacked by pirates
- Arrest of a 63-year-old man for raping his daughter over a 25 year period
- Many incidental references to Italy and Eurozone economic crisis in Finance Reports
- Crucifixes banned in Italian classrooms
- Italian police arrest mafia leaders in Naples
- Thousands at Press Freedom Rally in Rome protesting against Berlusconi’s laws
- Sicilian mudslides 50 feared dead
- Bank in northern Italy has wheels of Parmesan cheese in its vaults
- Vatican loses fight to ban abortion pill in Italy
- Gas explosion at Italian railway station kills 15 and 50 injured
- Borders between Italy and Switzerland redrawn to accommodate climate change
- Gaddafi gets red carpet treatment on visit to Italy
- Italian art world debating whether a sculpture depicting Christ on the cross is by Michelangelo
- Death of 17 year old coma patient and moral and ethical debate on euthanasia in Italy.

Sport stories:

- Many from World Swimming Championships in Rome; D’Arcy suspended and does not attend; Melissa Gorman win
- Italy wins the Federation Cup for second year
- Italian football captain Fabio Cannavaro cleared of drug charges
- Barrichello wins Italian Grand Prix ahead of teammate and current leader Jenson Button
- Stoner wins at Italian GP
- Many SBS soccer reports.
3.7: The year 2010

3.7.1: Events in the news

2010 was a quieter news year for Italy than 2009. Silvio Berlusconi and his role in Italian politics was still a very prominent story but to a lesser degree than in 2009. In the *Australian*, there were 32 stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph. Of these eight focussed on his personality (e.g. writer of love songs, 'self-professed Casanova', vain performer), 10 were mainly about sex scandals and alleged corruption, while 14 covered his political challenges and survival, despite the scandals and street protests. In December it appeared that Berlusconi might lose the Prime Ministership through a no-confidence vote but he narrowly survived. Demonstrations in Rome at the time left 90 people injured and dozens arrested.

In the *Age* there were 22 stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph. Seven centred on his personality, 13 on politics, and two on international affairs. There were 16 such Berlusconi stories in the *SMH*, four centred on personality, 11 on politics and one on international affairs.

2010 saw the canonisation in Rome of Australia’s first saint, Mary MacKillop. This was, of course, a very newsworthy event but the extent of its coverage is not reflected in this study as the event was deemed to be primarily a church and Vatican matter rather than an ‘Italian story’. Only reports which included wider reference to Italian affairs were included.

Within Australia, a significant ‘Italian story’ arose out of South Australian Premier Mike Rann’s support of a trade fair in the Italian region of Puglia. It was alleged that he was using State resources to support the venture because of personal connections to the region. The matter generated eight stories in the *Australian*.

During 2010 film festivals in Italy received greater than usual coverage in the *Australian*. There were six stories about the Venice film festival and one about Australian entries in the Rome International Film Festival.

In sport the major story was the rugby union match between Italy and Australia held in Florence in November. There were ten stories in the *SMH* related to the match mainly by the *SMH*’s Chief Rugby Correspondent, Greg Growden. Two of these appeared in the *Age*. There were nine stories in the *Australian* related to the match by the paper’s Rugby Union Editor, Wayne Smith.

Other newsworthy events in Italy included a train crash which killed at least nine people (one story in the *Australian* sourced from AFP), and separate incidents of riotous behaviour over immigration, football security, and a garbage disposal crisis in Naples (all three reported in the *Australian*).

Events about Italians working overseas which made the news included the death in May of Italian freelance photographer, Fabio Polenghi, who was covering street protests in Bangkok (two stories in the *Australian*). Other newsworthy events outside Italy, which were classified as ‘Italian stories’, included a story, reported in the *SMH*, about the
establishment in Abu Dhabi of ‘Ferrari World’, a theme park dedicated to this Italian brand.

3.7.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.13 and 3.14 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2010 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.13 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.14 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.13: Stories in each medium, 2010</th>
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<td>Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<td>SMH</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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<td>All Stories</td>
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<th>Table 3.14: Stories in each medium, 2010</th>
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<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
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<td>Australian</td>
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<td>SMH</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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</table>

An examination of tables 3.13 and 3.14 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian* (317 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have very similar story numbers (194 and 191 respectively). The gap between the *Australian* and the other two papers lessened over that in 2009. The *Age* and *SMH* are notable for their increased attention to politics.

Figure 3.8 presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. As in 2010, politics generated significantly more stories than fashion/design. The proportion of stories on sport at 30% was about average as was the proportion for business/industry and tourism/travel.
3.7.3: Sources and coverage

In the *Australian* the pattern of news sources used for Italian news in 2010 was similar to that of 2009, except that contributions from the *Times*’ Rome correspondent, Richard Owen, were much reduced. Richard Owen ended his 15 year posting in Rome in September. Nevertheless, the *Times* remained the most important source of non-sporting Italian news in the *Australian*, providing 36 stories, eight of which were by Richard Owen. *The Sunday Times* provided 17 stories of which six were by its Rome correspondent, John Follain. AFP was the prime source for over 30 stories and Associated Press for at least 13 stories. As noted, the *Australian* sent its own correspondent to Italy to cover rugby union.

One noteworthy aspect of coverage was the establishment of a direct link between sections of the Italian press and the *Australian* through the *Australian*’s ‘Global Opinion’ column. In March this column carried an editorial excerpt from the Italian newspaper *Corriere Della Sera* criticising German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s position on economic reform in countries such as Greece. In November it carried a piece from *La Repubblica*, highly critical of Berlusconi’s ‘abuse of power’.

In the *SMH* and the *Age* first-hand coverage was led by the papers’ European Correspondent, Paola Totaro. Fifteen stories on Italian affairs by Totaro appeared in the *SMH*, 12 of them on Berlusconi and Italian politics. Fourteen stories by Totaro appeared in the *Age*. As in previous years, this coverage was supplemented by articles by freelance journalists. Jo McKenna, an Australian freelance based in Rome, had three stories on the mafia and its Australian links published in the *Age* (two in the *SMH*). Long-standing Rome-based correspondent, Desmond O’Grady, had two stories in the *SMH*. 

![Figure 3.8: Distribution of stories by topic, 2010](image)
### 3.7.4: Television news and current affairs

#### Story numbers and topics

Of the 130 Italian TV news and current affairs stories, about 49% were broadcast by *SBS World News*. Sport accounted for about 50% of stories broadcast by all program sources analysed. Politics comprised only 10% of all items in 2010, and more than two thirds of these were broadcast by *SBS World News*.

#### Coverage

*ABC’s 7:30 Report* broadcast a seven minute segment in May on perceptions of deepening rifts between Germany, Italy and France over how to combat the Eurozone’s debt crisis.

About 29% of stories were classified as ‘Other’. Content for these comprised specific stories on U.S. student Amanda Knox, the mafia, crime, and the plight of refugees seeking asylum in Italy. The mudslides in February and April were most prominent. *Sky News*, a major source of international TV news, captured the February mudslide in the town of Maierato in the Calabria region.

*4 Corners* on the ABC broadcast a program in March 2010 on Roma gypsy children in Europe who stake out major tourist centres with the aim of stealing money, credit cards and other valuables.

Stories included:

- Berlusconi survives two no confidence motions in Parliament
- Berlusconi accused of pardoning a teenage girl in prison
- Berlusconi fails to appear at trial at which he is accused of paying a British lawyer to give false evidence at corruption hearings
- Landslide destroys centre of small town in Southern Italy.
Other stories included:

- Eight cyclists killed by speeding car
- Anarchists claim responsibility for bomb attacks on Swiss and Columbian embassies in Rome
- Italy to host most expensive art made by living artist; diamond encrusted human skull by Damien Hirst to be exhibited at Palazzo Vecchio in Florence
- Italian authorities delay opening of rubbish dump after rioting
- Fiat workers protest against working conditions
- Nine killed in rail disaster
- Google and Italy sign deal to scan rare books
- African refugees flee southern Italian town after clashes with locals and police
- Death of Italian filmmaker Dino De Laurentiis
- Thousands travelling to Italy to learn the art of gelato making.

Sport stories:

- Cadel Evans in Tour of Italy
- Wallabies play Italy in Florence
- Rossi to return one month after breaking his leg at Italian races at Mugello
- Italy knocked out of World Cup; SBS soccer coverage
- Jamaica's Asafa Powell clocks fastest time 100 metres time in Diamond League meeting in Rome
- Pedrosa wins Italian Moto GP
- Inter Milan wins Championship League.

3.8: The year 2011

3.8.1: Events in the news

2011 could be described as a 'bumper year' for Italian news in the Australian press. As we have observed previously, there are certain news subjects, in which Italy is prominent, which provide a fairly consistent, almost routine, diet of news, even if there is no single event that especially boosts coverage. This is most evident in sports coverage. Football (the 'world game'), tennis, cycling, motor racing and motor-cycle racing, involving Italian teams and individuals, routinely generate stories (though usually brief ones) in the Australian press. Coverage of Rugby Union involving Italian teams or Italian players playing in Australia (and vice-versa) is also frequent though more variable when it comes to the highpoints. In any given year there may or may not be matches between the Australian Wallabies and the Italian team and the number of such matches scheduled in a year can also vary.

Travel stories are also a regular and substantial category as are stories about Italian fashion and Italian products more generally, including, for example, cars and films. This
'base-line' coverage is overlain by stories about specific situations and events, the newsworthiness of which, individually and collectively, can vary greatly from year to year.

2011 saw a conjunction of very newsworthy situations and events involving Italy.

The Eurozone Financial Crisis: Over the year there were 63 stories in the *Australian* on the European financial crisis which included significant reference to Italy. News stories with a focus on Italy commenced in July (‘Italy focus of European crisis talks’, *Australian*, 12 July). They gained momentum in August (eight stories) and September (seven stories), reached a high point in October (24 stories) and November (25), and fell away almost entirely in December (one story). During the high point in story numbers bad financial news (a down-grade of Italy's credit rating, rumours of a government financial default) were accompanied by a political crisis which saw the downfall of Berlusconi as Prime Minister and his replacement by economist and former EU Commissioner, Mario Monti, in mid-November. The rapid falling away of the story came after the installation of Monti and the adoption of austerity measures to deal with the crisis.

There were 28 ‘Italian stories’ on the European financial crisis in the *SMH* and 21 in the *Age* distributed across the year in a similar pattern to those in the *Australian*.

While some of the stories on the Eurozone financial crisis focussed very specifically on Italy's finances, others, while making significant reference to Italy, focussed more on wider ramifications including impacts in Australia. One effect of the globalisation of finance is that countries as geographically distant as Italy and Australia can quite often appear in the same finance or business story. Put simply, events in one country readily affect business in another. For example, in 2011, a proposal to re-introduce nuclear power generation in Italy was defeated in a referendum. This was widely reported in the Australian press because the result depressed the share prices of Australian uranium stocks ‘as confidence in the nuclear power sector was further dented by political developments in Europe’ (‘Italian “no” on nuclear depresses local miners’, *SMH*, 15 June, 2011).

The Berlusconi Scandal: In the *Australian* there were 74 stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph. In 14 of these the main topic was the financial crisis. Of the others, 26 dealt primarily with his sexual affairs and a judicial enquiry into them. Four dealt with other court matters such as alleged fraud. Five stories dealt with growing protests against Berlusconi in Italy, including protests by Italian women about his sexual attitude and behaviour.

In the *Age* there were 42 stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph, of which 20 dealt primarily with his sexual affairs. In the *SMH* there were 19 stories overall, with eight on Berlusconi’s sexual affairs.

Sport Highlights: In September and October the Rugby Union World Cup was held in New Zealand. The significance and extended nature of this event resulted in there being 22 rugby union stories involving Italy in the *Australian* for the year. European cycling championships in which many prominent Australian cyclists, including Cadel Evans, participated generated greater than usual coverage, particularly in the *SMH*. *SMH* sports writer, Rupert Guinness, spent much of the summer in Europe filing stories on cycling.
This included 21 stories relating to Italian races, especially the Giro d’Italia. Such detailed coverage was possible because Rupert Guinness travelled to Italy to cover the Giro d’Italia as a guest of Australia’s professional cycling team, Green Edge. There was also a large number of tennis stories arising from the Australian Open in January, where Italian players did well (five stories in the *Australian*), and a Federation Cup match between Italy and Australia, which Italy won, in February (six stories).

Other events of note in or involving Italy included the appeals trial of convicted murderer Amanda Knox (seven stories in the *Australian*), refugee and immigration issues (five stories) and conflict in Libya (five stories).

Events about Italians overseas which made the news included the murder of an Italian hostage by an Islamic group in Gaza City (three stories in the *Australian*) and the death of motorcycle racer, Marco Simoncelli, during the Malaysian grand Prix (three stories in the *Australian*).

In Australia, there was controversy over plans to build a new Australian pavilion for the Venice Biennale. This generated four stories in the *Age*.

### 3.8.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.15 and 3.16 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2007 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.13 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.14 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

#### Table 3.15: Stories in each medium, 2011

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<th>Arts</th>
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<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
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<td>41</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>245</td>
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<tr>
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<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td><strong>All Stories</strong></td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>235</td>
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#### Table 3.16: Stories in each medium, 2011

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<td>19.8</td>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
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</table>

An examination of tables 3.13 and 3.14 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the *Australian*
(403 stories) is far greater than in the *SMH* or the *Age* which have very similar story numbers (245 and 227 respectively). The gap between the *Australian* and the other two papers is similar to that in 2007. The *Age* and *SMH* are notable for their increased attention to politics. This is particularly the case for the *Age* which carried 45 stories relating to Italian politics in 2011.

Figure 3.10 presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. The proportion of stories about politics at 17% is much higher than the average for the whole data set (12.1%). In 2011 Italian politics generated far more stories than Italian fashion/design. At 27% the proportion of stories on sport was about average. International affairs, under which most stories dealing with the Eurozone crisis were classified, accounted for 19% of stories, significantly higher than the average (10.6%).

![Figure 3.10: Distribution of stories by topic, 2011](image)

3.8.3: Sources and coverage

In the *Australian* the pattern of news sources used for Italian news in 2011 was similar to that of 2010, except that James Bone had replaced Richard Owen as the *Times*’ Rome correspondent. The *Times* was the most important source of non-sporting Italian news in the *Australian*, providing 49 stories. James Bone wrote or was a contributor to 22 of these. *The Sunday Times* provided 12 stories of which five were by its Rome correspondent, John Follain. AFP consolidated its position as the main source of news agency material. Over 60 stories were sourced to AFP while 16 were sourced to AP.

The *Australian* also published an editorial extract from Italian newspaper, *La Stampa*, as an item in its regular ‘Global Editorials’ feature. It was a scathing criticism of Berlusconi and his PR machine.
In the first half of 2011 first-hand coverage of Italian affairs was provided to the SMH and Age by their European correspondent, Paola Totaro. Of her 13 ‘Italian stories’ in the Age, 11 were about Berlusconi and Italian politics. Of her 12 stories in the SMH, nine were about Berlusconi and Italian politics. In the second half of the year Karen Kissane took over as Europe Correspondent for the SMH and the Age. Her eight stories for the SMH and six for the Age, which made significant reference to Italy, were all on the European financial crisis.

As in previous years, this coverage was supplemented by articles by freelance journalists. Desmond O’Grady provided five stories for the SMH, two on travel and three on the illness of Australian tennis legend, Ken Rosewall, who had fallen ill in Italy.

As well as reporting on and analysing the political situation in Italy, the Age and the Australian saw it as being within their remit, as major Australian papers, to take a clear editorial line on the Berlusconi government and thereby seek to influence public opinion on the matter, at least in Australia. The Age was the most pro-active in this regard. On 21 January 2011, the Age ran an editorial under the heading ‘Time to say addio, Mr Berlusconi’ which reviewed Berlusconi’s position and growing calls for his resignation by Italy’s religious, political and business leaders. It quoted from the Italian newspaper, Corriere della Sera, and commented on Berlusconi’s ‘highly dubious’ political and personal reputation. It concluded that ‘He should resign or, if not, be stood down.’

In February, 2011 the Age published a substantial 879 word opinion piece by Marco Fedi noting, with Fedi’s by-line, that, ‘Marco Fedi is a member of the Italian parliament with the opposition Democratic Party of Italy.’ The article was headed ‘Berlusconi is tearing Italy apart’ and commenced with the statement: ‘The PM has to step aside, face court and take responsibility for his private life and its detrimental impact on public life’. The article critiqued Berlusconi’s controversial political life and called for a greater involvement in politics amongst Italian voters, including those who live abroad.

After Berlusconi’s fall in November, the Age published an opinion piece by Amanda Vanstone, Australia’s Ambassador to Italy from 2007-2010, welcoming his resignation but also taking a broader look at Italy’s economic and social problems.

The fact that the Age took a very clear editorial position in Italian politics very early in 2011 helps account for the more than usual attention it gave to the topic for the rest of the year. In previous years the Age and the SMH had carried a similar number of stories about Italian politics. In 2011, however, the numbers in the Age (45) were much greater than those in the SMH (25).

The Australian also took an editorial position on Italian politics. In an editorial headed ‘Time to go’ (12 November, 2011), the Australian commented: ‘For nine of the past 17 years, Silvio Berlusconi has been Prime Minister of Italy, during which time he has disgraced himself and embarrassed his country.’ This editorial, it might be pointed out, came very late in the day when it was already very likely that Berlusconi would be ousted.
3.8.4: Television news and current affairs

Story numbers and topics

Of the 203 TV news and current affairs items in 2011, about 44% were broadcast on SBS World News with an additional 32.5% on the ABC News and Lateline program. The ABC’s 7:30 Report also broadcast items on Berlusconi and the Italian economy.

![Figure 3.11: Italian television stories by topic, 2011](image)

Coverage

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and the appointment of Mario Monti as Prime Minister, the continuing debt crisis and austerity measures, political content accounted for about 42% of all 2011 news content, while Sport accounted for about 23%. The majority of stories were broadcast in November. SBS World News broadcast about 49% of all politics stories, while 38% of all politics stories were broadcast on ABC News and Lateline. This compares to about 12% of political content on the three commercial newscasts combined. 42.5% of all sports items were broadcast by the commercial newscasts and 38.8% by SBS World News.

Items classified as ‘Other’ comprised about 21% of all TV news and current affairs content broadcast in 2011. The dominant story in this category concerned the plight of African refugees fleeing Libya and Tunisia and seeking asylum in Italy. In July, the ABC’s flagship program, 4 Corners, investigated the flow of refugees from Tunisia and Libya who had travelled to the Italian island of Lampedusa after fleeing uprisings in the Arab world.

4 Corners also broadcast an investigation in August 2011 of the Camorra and organised crime in Italy.

Major stories:

- French and German leaders finalise tough new plan to save the Eurozone
- Italy and Greece struggle to find support for austerity measures (debt crisis)
- New Italian Government under Mario Monti to tackle debt crisis
• New Italian Government finalised
• Mario Monti replaces Berlusconi as Prime Minister
• Mixed response of Italian community in Australia to Berlusconi's resignation
• Italians celebrate Berlusconi's resignation
• Italian senate passes tough austerity measures to prevent Italy from seeking the kind of bailout needed by Greece
• Market uncertainty over Italian debt; globally share markets dive
• Tens of thousands rally in Rome to oppose Berlusconi's government because of his poor handling of government debt
• Berlusconi's popularity poll ratings drop because of allegations of sex scandals and corruption
• Italy's credit rating lowered to A
• New allegations (September) against Berlusconi using his government plane for escort services
• Vatican speaks out against Berlusconi who has been charged with having sex with an underage prostitute
• About a million Italian women protest against Berlusconi
• Italian magistrates open inquiry into alleged affair between Berlusconi and a then teenage Moroccan model.

Other stories:

• Northwest Italy ravaged by floods (November)
• Appeals Court acquits Amanda Knox of murdering her housemate
• Italian police investigate mysterious death of NSW backpacker at a Rome tourist village
• Riot police respond to thousands protesting in Venice against the anti-immigration party, the Northern League
• Italian man questioned over vandalising historic fountain in Rome
• Four Italian journalists taken hostage in Libya
• Boat with bodies of 25 refugee asylum seekers found in Italy
• Refugees clash with police on Italian island of Lampedusa
• Refugees from Libya and Tunisia heading to Italian island of Lampedusa
• 500 refugees in narrow escape after boat crashes into rock on Lampedusa.

Sport Stories:

• Euro2012 football championship
• 17 arrested in Italy for football match fixing
• Carly Hubbard dies in cyclist training accident in Italy
• Much football on SBS.
3.9: The year 2012

3.9.1: Events in the news

2012 promised to be a much quieter news year for Italy in the Australian news media than 2011 given the fall of Berlusconi towards the end of the year, his replacement by reserved technocrat Mario Monti, and the easing of the Eurozone financial crisis. This was certainly the case as far as mainstream Italian politics was concerned. There were only seven stories in the *Australian* in which Monti featured in the first paragraph, three on finance, three political and one announcing that Rome would not be bidding for the 2020 Olympics. Berlusconi remained prominent in the news, though at a much reduced level, with 15 stories in the *Australian* in which he featured in the first paragraph. Ten of these related to court matters in which he was involved. The others included a substantial (905 word) feature article by ABC radio journalist, James Panichi, which analysed the state of Italian politics. The article was prompted by Berlusconi’s announcement in December, 2012 that he would again run for the job of Italian Prime Minister (‘Left candidate grist to Berlo’s mill’, 10 December 2012).

However, it was events outside politics which, in the main, kept Italy and Italians in the news. In January, the Italian cruise ship, *Costa Concordia*, ran aground off the Italian island of Giglio. The death toll was 32. The accident raised serious questions about the conduct of the captain of the ship and some crew members. The event and its aftermath generated 13 stories in the *Australian*.

In Australia there was a long running custody dispute (referred to as the ‘abduction case’) in which an Australian mother was seeking to keep her four Italian daughters in Australia despite court orders that they were to return to Italy. This generated 11 stories in the *Australian*. Most remarkable for sheer story numbers was the signing up of Italian star footballer, Alessandro Del Piero, by Sydney FC. This event and subsequent reports of matches involving him (in which he was routinely referred to as the ‘Italian superstar’ or ‘Italian legend’) generated 27 stories in the *Australian*. In a further twist, Del Piero’s playing in Australia led the Italian media to take some interest in Australia’s A-league. Turin-based, *La Stampa*, called it ‘a graveyard of football’, an assessment which, of course, made news in Australia.

The other major sport story was the Australian Rugby tour of Europe which included a test match against Italy in Florence. There were ten stories about the tour in the *Australian* which made prominent reference to Italy or Italian players.

The falling away of press interest in Berlusconi and Italian politics and was even more evident in the *Age* and the *SMH*. In the *Age* there were three stories in which Berlusconi featured in the opening paragraph while there was just one in the *SMH*. Neither paper had stories which featured Monti in the opening paragraph.

As in the *Australian*, the major news events for the year were the *Costa Concordia* disaster (17 stories in the *Age*, eight in the *SMH*) and the international custody dispute (nine stories in the *SMH* and four in the *Age*).
In other subject categories, the SMH (but much less so the Age) excelled in its coverage of Italian themes in 2012. In cycling, the Giro d’Italia was covered on a daily basis by SMH sports writer, Rupert Guinness, whose trip to Europe was sponsored, as in the previous year, by Australia’s professional cycling team, Green Edge. Thus the extent of coverage was directly linked, in this instance, to the availability of ‘sponsored reporting’.

During the year there were 27 stories in the SMH related to tourism and travel in Italy. There were 30 related to Italian fashion/design, a much larger number than in either the Australian or the Age. In stories in the SMH about cars, Lamborghini excelled with five separate appearances.

3.9.2: Story numbers and topics

Tables 3.17 and 3.18 present data for Italian story numbers in each of the three newspapers for 2007 as well as their distribution over topic areas. Table 3.17 presents this by story numbers. Table 3.18 presents the topic distribution across the total number of stories in each newspaper in percentage terms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Arts</th>
<th>Business/Industry</th>
<th>Fashion/Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<th>Fashion /Design</th>
<th>International Affairs</th>
<th>Politics</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Travel/Tourism</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>All Topics</th>
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<td>4.5</td>
<td>42.3</td>
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An examination of tables 3.17 and 3.18 suggests a number of noteworthy differences in coverage of Italian news amongst the three papers. Clearly, total coverage in the Australian (276 stories) is greater than in the SMH or the Age. Coverage in the SMH is also significantly greater than in the Age (209 and 156 respectively). Reporting on politics, in particular, fell away very sharply in the SMH and the Age in 2012.

Figure 3.12 presents the distribution of stories by topic for the three newspapers, taken as a whole. The proportion of stories about politics (5%) is less than half the average for the story set as a whole (12.1%). In 2012, Italian fashion/design generated more stories than Italian politics as it had in 2005 and 2007. The proportion about sport (38%) is
significantly higher than average (29.2%). The ‘other’ category is also higher than average, doubtless because of the extensive coverage of the *Costa Concordia* disaster.

![Figure 3.12: Distribution of stories by topic, 2012](image)

### 3.9.3: Sources and coverage

In the *Australian* the pattern of news sources used for Italian news in 2012 was similar to that of 2011, except that overall numbers were down, particularly for stories from overseas (as opposed to ones largely generated in Australia such as the Del Piero items). The *Times* remained the most important source of non-sporting Italian news in the *Australian*, providing 24 stories, eight of which were by *Times* correspondent, James Bone. *The Sunday Times* provided six while the Australian’s European Correspondent, Peter Wilson, provided four stories in which Italy was prominent. AFP was the prime source for over 40 stories and Associated Press for 10. The *Australian* sent its own correspondent, Brett Harris, to Italy to cover rugby union.

The *Age* and *SMH*’s Europe correspondent, Karen Kissane, travelled to Giglio Island to provide first-hand coverage on the *Costa Concordia* disaster. She also reported on the earthquake in northern Italy in late May. The *SMH*’s Fashion Editor, Georgina Safe, covered fashion shows from Milan in February and September. She travelled again to Milan in December this time, as the *SMH* noted, ‘courtesy of Bulgari’. The *SMH* also sent its own correspondent, Georgina Robinson, to Italy to cover rugby union.
3.9.4: Television news and current affairs

Story numbers and topics

About 39% of items in 2012 were broadcast on *SBS World News*, compared to about 17% on *ABC News* and *Lateline*. 42% of items were broadcast on the three commercial networks combined.

![Figure 3.13: Italian television stories by topic, 2012](chart)

Coverage

In contrast to previous years, political content comprised only about 9% of all Italian news and current affairs in 2012. More than 59% of content was classified as Other – dominated by coverage of the *Costa Concordia* disaster in January.

Of the 146 items classified as Other, about 47% (69 items) involved the *Costa Concordia*, about 19% (27 items) involved the international custody battle between an Italian father and his Australian wife and their four daughters living in Australia, and about 8% involved the magnitude of 5.8 earthquake in northern Italy which killed more than 12 people and left hundreds injured.

The SEVEN network’s current affairs program *Today Tonight* had an exclusive interview of more than 15 minutes in length with Captain Francesco Schettino of the *Costa Concordia*. The captain had also recently told his story to Italy’s *Canale 5* and the U.S. network NBC. The ABC’s *7:30 Report* also broadcast a seven minutes and four seconds analysis of the *Costa Concordia* disaster and its implications for the global cruise industry. The disaster was also covered extensively by *SBS World News*, *ABC News* and *Lateline*. The ABC’s European correspondent, Philip Williams, filed several reports on the disaster.

On political content in 2012, the ABC’s *Four Corners* program re-broadcast in June a BBC investigation into the Eurozone debt crisis and the potential for a global economic ‘meltdown’. 
Today Tonight also broadcast two other segments in 2012. One covered a story about Italian scientists who argued that fried chips absorbed less fat in cooking than other foods. The other involved a man living in Queensland who had links to the Italian mafia but had escaped imprisonment for drug smuggling.

Major stories:

- Prime Minister Mario Monti says he will resign after the passing of the budget
- Court sentences Berlusconi to four years jail for tax fraud; he claims judicial harassment
- Costa Concordia and its rescue; survivors; Captain in court etc.
- Also stricken cruise ship Costa Allegra; Ferry crash near Rome
- Italian judge jails six scientists and a government official for manslaughter over the lack of predictions of the L’Aquila earthquake
- Italian coastguard rescues 200 refugees from sinking boat off coast of Sicily
- Earthquake of 5.8 kills more than 12 and 100 injured northern Italy; Monti returns early from NATO summit
- Four sisters at centre of international custody conflict to be sent back to Italy from Australia.

Other stories:

- 56 people rescued but many missing after refugee boat capsizes near Lampedusa
- Financial markets turn to Italian banker, economist and President of the European Central Bank, Mario Draghi for way out of debt crisis
- SBS story on desperate Italians going to Australia to seek their fortune (reflecting on the immigration wave of the 1970s)
- Mourning for 16-year-old schoolgirl killed by a bomb outside her school
- Thousands of pensioners and unionist protest against stringent austerity measures
- Clash between mafia and the church in southern Italy
- British and Italian murdered in Nigeria as British commandos try to rescue them
- Italian court sentences Swiss billionaire and a Belgian baron for deaths resulting from asbestos poisoning
- Cold snap in Europe.

Sport stories:

- Wallabies beat Italy
- Yamaha’s Jorge Lorenzo wins the Italian San Marino MotoGP
- Euro2012
- Italian cyclist Riccardo Ricco banned for 12 years for doping
- Italy withdraws from bid to host 2020 Olympics because of financial crisis.
Chapter 4: Trends and Variations in Italian News
4.1: Newspaper story numbers, 2005-2012

A search of the *Australian*, the *SMH* and the *Age* for the period 2005-2012 generated a data set of 5325 items which, for the purposes of this study, were identified as 'Italian stories' (see Appendix 1 for details of the methodology). As noted earlier, a broad view of what constitutes 'Italian news' was taken as our aim was to provide as complete an account as possible while at the same time maintaining a focus on contemporary news links between Italy and Australia. All subjects have been included. We have also not restricted the study to news actually sourced from Italy itself. We have included news about the activities of Italians abroad, including Australia, as long as there was a contemporary connection with Italy.

Table 4.1 shows the number of Italian stories which appeared in each newspaper for each year. In every year the amount of coverage in the *Australian* substantially exceeded that in the *Age* and the *SMH*. In all years except 2005 the amount of coverage in the *SMH* exceeded that in the *Age* though the margin here was not so great.

Table 4.2 shows the proportion of total stories carried by each newspaper for each year. The *Australian*'s proportion varied between a high of 60.1% in 2005 and a low of 43.1% in 2012. The *SMH*'s proportion varied between a low of 19% in 2005 and a high of 28.7% in 2006. The *Age*'s proportion varied between a low of 17.8% in 2007 and a high of 27.2% in 2010.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.1: Italian stories published in each medium, 2005-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>number of stories</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<td>SMH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.2: Italian stories published in each medium, 2005-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>per cent</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
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<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.1 presents the same data in a form which allows us to readily see the variation in the total number of stories from year to year and the variation from newspaper to newspaper. In the period 2005 to 2007, there was a significant spike in story numbers in 2006 largely because of the Turin Winter Olympics held in February and the football world cup held in Germany in July. These also account for the high proportion of the total story numbers in the SMH (28.7%) for that year. The SMH covered these events in considerably more detail than either the Australian or the Age (see 3.3.1 for details). 2006 was also an election year. This also boosted story numbers but not as greatly as the sporting events.

In the period, 2008 to 2011 we see a substantial increase in story numbers both for the data set as a whole and for each newspaper. The Age numbers go up from 122 to 227, an increase of 83%. The SMH numbers go up from 132 to 245, an increase of 86%. The Australian numbers go up from 230 to 403, an increase of 75%.

2008 is notable for its low story numbers, despite the fact that it was an election year in Italy. While the Australian gave reasonable coverage to these elections, the Age and the SMH gave them very limited coverage. This contrasts with the much greater attention they gave to political events in Italy from 2009 to 2011.

The biggest fall in overall story numbers between 2007 and 2008 was in the Australian. This can in large part be attributed to the fact that the Australian abolished the position of staff correspondent based in Rome towards the end of 2007.
4.2: Italian newspaper stories by topic, 2005-2012

Table 4.3 shows us the topic distribution by year for all newspaper stories. There is considerable variability in coverage across years for all topic areas. There are many factors that are likely to contribute to this and it is not possible in each instance to discern their relative importance. Clearly the occurrence or non-occurrence of newsworthy events is a major factor. For example, the large number of stories in ‘international affairs’ in 2011 is largely attributable to the ‘Eurozone financial crisis’ of that year. As already noted, sport is inflated in 2006 because of the Turin Winter Olympics.

Table 4.3: Italian stories by topic published in selected newspapers, 2005-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
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<td>49</td>
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<td>93</td>
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<td>Sport</td>
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<td>177</td>
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<td>Travel/Tourism</td>
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<td>667</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>875</td>
<td>641</td>
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</table>

Table 4.4 presents the same data in percentage form.

Table 4.4: Italian stories by topic published in selected newspapers, 2005-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>2005</th>
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<th>2007</th>
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<td>6.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All topics</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sport accounted for 42% of stories in 2006 but only 19% in 2007.
Figures 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4 show the distribution of total story numbers in the period 2005-2012 by topic for each newspaper.

Figure 4.2: *The Australian*, stories by topic, 2005-2012

Figure 4.3: *Sydney Morning Herald*, stories by topic, 2005-2012
These figures indicate that, while the total number of Italian stories is much larger in the *Australian* than in the *SMH* or the *Age*, the three papers share similar overall editorial priorities with respect to the attention given to various topics. All three are ‘comprehensive’ rather than specialist newspapers and cover ‘soft’ as well as ‘hard’ news. All three give significant attention to all of the topic categories, often through special sections (e.g. ‘Traveller’, ‘Essential Style’ and ‘Drive’ in the *SMH*). The weightings for topics do, however, vary amongst papers. A combination of ‘politics’ and ‘international affairs’ accounts for 28% of stories in the *Australian* but only 19% in the *Age* and 16% in the *SMH*. A combination of ‘fashion/design’ and ‘tourism/travel’ accounts for 25% of stories in the *SMH* but only 15% in the *Age* and 14% in the *Australian*.

### 4.3: Year-by-year topic data: newspapers

Greater variation both amongst the three newspapers and across the period of the study for particular newspapers becomes evident if we examine the year by year topic data.

**Figures 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11** present story numbers for each newspaper for each year by individual topic. In interpreting this data we should keep in mind that a number of quite distinct factors determine the represented patterns of coverage.

Firstly, there is the fact that the total number of stories in the overall data set is much larger for the *Australian* than for the other two papers. As noted earlier, the *Australian* contributed 2635 stories (43.1%), the *SMH* contributed 1429 stories (32.6%), and the *Age* contributed 1261 (24.3%). This reflects the *Australian*’s greater editorial commitment to international news generally and, in some years, to Italian news in particular.
Figures 4.5 to 4.11 show that this greater coverage can occur across all topic area for particular years but that it is most marked and consistent in the topic areas of arts, international affairs, politics and sport.

The second factor determining the illustrated patterns of coverage relates to the degree of year to year volatility that is characteristic of news in the different topic areas.

In ‘soft news’ topic areas such as arts, tourism/travel, and fashion/design, the amount of potentially newsworthy matter available from year to year is fairly constant. Arts events, such as film festivals and the Venice Biennale, work to regular timetables as do the major fashion shows and releases. Stories generated by the travel and tourism industries are always readily available. Tourism-related disasters, such as the Costa Concordia sinking, are, it should be noted, conventionally classified as disasters (in our case ‘other’) rather than under tourism. In such ‘soft news’, the amount of coverage is more likely to be determined by editorial policies and resource allocation than by the ‘news events’ themselves.

In sport, the amount of potentially newsworthy matter available from year to year is also fairly constant at least when it comes to the ‘main bulk’ of the supply. Annual events and sports ‘seasons’ work to regular timetables. The yearly cycle is, however, punctuated by special years when mega events such as an Olympic Games or a football world cup are held.

In the ‘hard news’ areas of politics, international affairs and disasters there is likely to be more volatility in the number and scale of newsworthy events involving a particular country from year to year. Here, there is greater unpredictability and a greater potential for crises of various kinds to develop at a particular point in time. Here it is the occurrence and nature of events themselves that dictates what becomes news, though the extent of their reporting still remains dependent on the systemic factors, such as degree of cultural proximity, noted in Chapter 2.

The third set of factors determining the patterns of coverage illustrated in figures 4.5 to 4.11 relate to the varying editorial priorities of the different newspapers (and changes to them that occur from time to time), the financing of news gathering, and special syndication arrangements such as those involving the London Times and the Australian. Perhaps the highest level of editorial and financial commitment is where a newspaper in one country maintains a full-time staff reporter in another. This arrangement guarantees a substantial and regular flow of news from that country into the newsroom of the home paper. Furthermore, it is likely that, the investment having been made, much of this news will be published.

Such an arrangement was maintained by the Australian in 2005, 2006 and most of 2007. It helps account for the dominance of the Australian in this period across all topic areas.

It is not possible to fully disentangle the factors outlined above as they rarely operate independently. However, a review of figures 4.5 to 4.11, taken together with information drawn from the year by year analysis presented in Chapter 3, enables some insight into the way these factors (and other serendipitous ones) give rise to variations in coverage.
Figure 4.5 shows unusually high coverage of the Arts in the *Australian* in 2007 and 2010. The story count in 2007 was boosted by eight stories in the *Australian* which related to the death of Luciano Pavarotti. In 2010 the *Australian* carried an unusually large number of stories on films which involved Italy or Italians. There were 25 such stories in all, six of them on the Venice Film Festival.

![Figure 4.5: Stories on the Arts, 2005-2012](image)

Figure 4.6 shows unusually high coverage of business/industry in the *Australian* in 2007. No single event or situation accounts for this. However, stories about the activities of Australian merchant banks in Italy (five), changes to food regulations (four) and speculation that Australia would buy Italian military transport aircraft (two) all contributed. It is also noteworthy that in 2009 the number of business/industry stories in the *Age* was greater than the number in the *Australian*. This can in part be attributed to the fact that in May the *Age* ran a special feature called ‘The Italian Issue’ in the ‘Good Food Epicure’ section of the paper. Four of the 27 stories in the section were classified as business/industry because they emphasised food importation. The *Age* also maintained a persistent interest in stories about the importation of Italian wines (nine stories classified as business/industry).
Figure 4.7 illustrates year to year variability in reporting on fashion/design. These variations can be largely attributed to changes in editorial priorities and, in particular, changes in the amount of editorial resource devoted to coverage of this area. The *Australian*’s dominance in the field from 2005 till 2007 can be largely attributed to the fact that the paper had a staff correspondent in Italy for this period. Its correspondent, Natasha Bita, contributed 24 stories on fashion in 2005, 17 in 2006 and 15 in 2007. Also noteworthy is that in 2007 the *Australian* carried ten stories about Italian cars, which were classified under ‘fashion/design’, because of their emphasis on aesthetic/design features of the vehicles. In 2010, the *SMH* dominated in this topic area following a revamp of its week-end ‘Drive’ section.
Figure 4.8 illustrates the general dominance of the *Australian* in coverage of international affairs involving Italy. The larger than usual numbers for all three papers in 2011 is explained by coverage of the Eurozone financial crisis.

![Figure 4.8: Stories on International Affairs, 2005-2012](image)

**Figure 4.8: Stories on International Affairs, 2005-2012**

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

- **Australian**
- **SMH**
- **The Age**

Figure 4.9 illustrates year-to-year variability in coverage of Italian politics. The *Australian*’s coverage is significant across all years and more so in the election or ‘crisis’ years of 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011. Coverage of Italian politics in the *SMH* and the *Age* was almost non-existent in 2005. By 2009 both papers carried regular coverage of Italian political affairs. It is noteworthy that in 2011 coverage in the *Age* was considerably greater than in the *SMH*.

![Figure 4.9: Stories on Politics, 2005-2012](image)

**Figure 4.9: Stories on Politics, 2005-2012**

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90
2005 2006 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

- **Australian**
- **SMH**
- **The Age**
**Figure 4.10** shows year-to-year variability in sports coverage. The peak in 2006, particularly in the *Australian* and the *SMH*, can be largely attributed to coverage of the Turin Winter Olympics.

![Figure 4.10: Stories on Sport, 2005-2012](image)

**Figure 4.11** shows year-to-year variability in story numbers about travel and tourism. The variability reflects changes in editorial priorities across time within particular newspapers. For example, the *SMH* carried a particularly large number of stories about travel/tourism in Italy in 2011. There appears to have been a special editorial focus on Italy in that year as there were ten stories across the year specifically headed ‘Destination Italy’ in the *SMH*’s Saturday travel section (‘Traveller’). This carried over into 2012 when a further ten stories appeared under that heading.

![Figure 4.11: Stories on Travel/Tourism, 2005-2012](image)
4.4: Television and current affairs story numbers, 2008-2012

Table 4.5 presents the distribution of Italian news and current affairs stories in the data set by source program. The selected programs in the data set attempt to capture the diversity of Australian television news and current affairs programming; that is, between commercial newscasts of differing length, commercial current affairs programs, and newscasts and current affairs programs broadcast by national services such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and the Special Broadcasting Service. The story numbers, it should be noted, are not strictly comparable as what has been regarded as a ‘story’ can vary from a 30 second news item to an extended current affairs segment of several minutes or more. A comparison of story numbers within news bulletins is more viable, though in this regard it should be noted that some evening news bulletins (Seven Nightly News, National Nine News, and ABC News) are half-hour bulletins while others are one-hour bulletins (TEN 5 pm News and SBS World News).

Given its position and role in Australian broadcasting, one would expect SBS to be dominant in general foreign news coverage. As Table 4.5 shows, SBS World News accounts for about 43% of all Italian stories in the data set. ABC News accounts for 15.5% of all Italian stories and ABC’s Lateline program 5.4%. The three commercial newscasts each account for between about 10% and 13% of stories; the higher percentage reflecting the 60-minute bulletin, TEN 5 pm News.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>number of stories</th>
<th>per cent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABC News</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lateline ABC</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SBS World News</td>
<td>398</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Nightly News</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Nine News</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TEN 5pm News</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>13.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:30 Report ABC</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Corners ABC</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Current Affair (NINE)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Today Tonight (SEVEN)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>932</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows the number of television news and current affairs stories in the data set for each of the years 2008 to 2012. In contrast to the statistics for press reports the total number of stories in 2012 is higher than for the previous years. This is accounted for by the large number of visually dramatic stories on television about the Costa Concordia disaster. As noted in the yearly analyses, both news and current affairs programs extensively covered this disaster with on-the-spot coverage, extended interviews and analyses. For example, the SEVEN network current affairs program Today Tonight broadcast a lengthy interview with the captain of the Costa Concordia. Similarly, in 2009,
the devastating earthquake in L’Aquila in central Italy was extensively covered accounting for the high number of stories that year. All three commercial newscasts had correspondents in L’Aquila as did the ABC. *SBS World News* relied on reports from *CNN*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of stories</th>
<th>per cent of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>21.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>21.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>932</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4.5: Year by year topic data: television

*Figure 4.12* shows the trend in political story numbers on television between 2008 and 2012. The high number of stories in 2011 reflects the resignation of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and the appointment of Mario Monti as Prime Minister, the continuing debt crisis and resultant austerity measures.

*SBS World News* emerges as the dominant source of Italian political television content followed by *ABC News* and *Lateline*. Across the five years of the data set, *SBS World News* accounts for about 52% of all Italian television political stories. In 2008 *SBS World News* accounts for 55.3% of all political stories, 41.2% in 2009, 69.2% in 2010, 49.4% in 2011 and 52.4% in 2012. *ABC News* and *Lateline* combined range from a low of about 14% of all Italian political television stories in 2012 to a high of 37.7% in 2011. It should be noted that prominent stories not included in this television analysis have the effect of displacing time for general Italian political content. For example, Pope Benedict’s visit to Australia in 2008 and the canonisation of Sister Mary MacKillop in 2010 were extensively covered and thus reduced time available for other Italian stories.
Figure 4.13 shows the variability in sport story numbers on television between 2008 and 2012 and, in general, follows a similar trend to press reports. The slightly higher number of stories in 2009 result from the World Swimming Championship in Rome in that year. Across all years, *SBS World News* coverage of European soccer matches was prominent. Overall, *SBS World News* accounted for about 39% of all Italian television sport stories from 2008 to 2012 compared to about 18% on *ABC News*, and about 16% on the 60-minute *TEN 5 pm News*.

Figure 4.14 shows the trend in story numbers classified as ‘other’ on television between 2008 and 2012. The data for 2009 and 2012 show higher numbers of ‘other’ stories than other years.
In 2009, as mentioned above, the L'Aquila earthquake was extensively covered on Australian television news and current affairs. The guilty verdict for American student Amanda Knox also received extensive television coverage. In 2012, nearly half of all stories classified as 'other' involved the Costa Concordia disaster, and about 19% involved the custody court case between an Italian father and his Australian wife and their daughters living in Australia. The earthquake in northern Italy, which killed more than 12 people and injured hundreds, was also a prominent news story in 2012. The dominant television story classified as 'other' in 2011 was the plight of refugees fleeing Libya and Tunisia and seeking asylum in Italy. The ABC's flagship current affairs program, 4 Corners, investigated this story focusing on refugees who had travelled to the Italian island of Lampedusa.
Chapter 5: Conclusions
Chapter 5: Conclusions

5.1: Italy’s prominence in the Australian news media

Italian stories have a substantial and regular presence in the Australian news media. If you had been a thorough reader of the national daily, the Australian, over the period 2005-2012 you would have encountered, on average, one story with a substantial Italian content per day. If you were a reader of the SMH or the Age you would have encountered, on average, one story every two days.

In a 1999 review of developments in modern Italian studies in Australia, Pesman commented that, ‘except in time of terremoto, terrorism or more than usual malevolent mafia crime or political corruption, modern Italy has not impinged on Australian consciousness. It is in an Italian past not present that Australian expatriates and visitors have dwelt’ (Pesman 1999: 74). In her conclusion, Pesman supported this observation with the comment that, ‘in the mid-1990s Italy rarely makes even the back pages of Australian newspapers’ (1999: 84).

Whatever the merits of Pesman’s larger argument about attachment to Italy’s past and her assessment that Italian news was a rarity in the mid-1990s, this study clearly demonstrates that such an assessment is not applicable to the period from 2005. Furthermore, the news interest in Italy demonstrated in this study is to a large extent an interest in contemporary Italy – its politics, its role in international affairs and business, and its fashion industry.

Editorial space is always, however, tight and much more newsworthy material is available than can be included. Thus it is not surprising to find Age and SMH contributor, Desmond O’Grady, recording, in 2005, that his various dealings with Australian newspapers as a freelance journalist reminded him of the ‘marginality of Italy in respect to Australia’ (O’Grady 2005). Clearly, the editors would not take all that he could offer. They did, however, take a significant amount. In that year O’Grady wrote or contributed to 15 substantial articles for the SMH and 12 for the Age.

The most notable trend in story numbers over the period of the study is the marked increase in Italian stories in all three newspapers over the period 2008-2011. Politics was the main contributing topic category to this increased interest.

A daily viewer of SBS World News over the period 2008-2012 would, on average, have encountered six stories per month with a substantial Italian content. A viewer of Channel 10’s main evening news bulletin would have encountered, on average, two stories per month. Of course, the television news story numbers are much lower than for newspapers. However, television coverage of major news events in Italy, such as the L’Aquila earthquake and the Costa Concordia disaster, was extensive even on commercial television.
Overall, this study reinforces the importance of *SBS World News* in providing reasonably regular surveillance of Italian affairs. SBS accounted for almost 43% of all Italian stories across the ten news and current affairs programs that were analysed.

**5.2: Italy’s relative prominence**

As noted in Chapter Two, previous studies of international news flow have demonstrated that political influence and economic size, as measured by GDP, are major factors in determining the relative global news prominence of countries. The comparison of coverage of Germany, France, Italy and Spain in the Australian press over the period 2005-2012, undertaken as part of this study (see section 2.4.4), produced results broadly consistent with the view that political influence and economic size were important factors. However, there were significant variations from the expected pattern. Most significantly, for the years 2009, 2010, and 2011 the number of Italy-related stories was greater than for Germany-related ones, despite Germany being the largest economy in the Eurozone. This unexpected result can be attributed to the inherent newsworthiness of Italian politics in this period and to editorial decisions made in Australia about the degree of attention Italian politics warranted.

**5.3: Italy’s topic profile**

The 5,325 stories in the newspaper data set were classified according to eight topic areas: Politics/government; Business, industry and trade; International affairs; Sports; Fashion/design; Travel/tourism; The Arts; and Other. The ‘other’ category included natural disasters and accidents such as the sinking of the *Costa Concordia*.

This content analysis demonstrated that Italy’s ‘topic profile’ in Australian newspapers is a broad one which ranges across many spheres of human activity. This is an indicator of the breadth of Australian-Italian relations and of Australian interest in Italy.

All the main topic areas that routinely make news in the *Australian*, the *SMH* and the *Age* are substantially represented. Sport with 29.2% of the total had the largest number of stories. In interpreting this, however, one should note that it is in the nature of sports coverage to have large numbers of quite brief stories which report on results.

The proportion of stories in other substantial topic areas ranged from 7.3% (business/industry) to 12.1% (politics). The arts accounted for 9.4% of stories. The largest sub-category here was film, though many other areas, most notably classical music and art, received coverage.

Italy’s topic profile is marked by high numbers of stories in the fashion/design category (8.8% overall). The majority of these stories relate to Italian-designed clothing. Also prominent are stories about design aspects of Italian high performance cars. Italy’s iconic brands – Armani, Versace, Ferrari, Maserati and Bulgari amongst them – are no strangers to the news media.
The topic profile in television news and current affairs is narrower than that in the press. In television, just three categories – politics, sport and ‘other’ – account for over 85% of stories. This does not, however, suggest a narrow interest in Italian affairs. Rather, it reflects the nature of the programs selected for analysis and the fact that television and current affairs formats severely limit story numbers.

5.4: Sources of news and their financing

This study took a broad view of what constitutes ‘Italian news’. In particular, the study was not restricted to news actually sourced from Italy itself. The study has also included stories about Italy written by journalists in Australia. Hence, there are many and varied sources for stories in the newspaper data set.

For news from Italy foreign correspondents employed by Australian newspapers played an important role. In the early years of the study, the Australian had a full-time correspondent based in Rome. In later years stories about Italy for that paper, as for the SMH and the Age, received coverage from a ‘Europe Correspondent’. Journalists from Australia were regularly sent to Italy to cover special events. Routine news was very often drawn from news agency material. Coverage in the Australian was marked by the large number of stories it drew from the London Times and the Sunday Times.

Analysis of the ‘editorial economics’ of particular areas of coverage such as fashion, tourism and sport, is beyond the scope of this study. However, in the course of the study it was noted that some events received more than usual coverage because sponsorship arrangements were involved.

5.5: The Australian press and Italian politics

In their 2008 study of the Italian expatriate vote in Australia in the 2006 and 2008 elections Mascitelli and Battiston conclude that, ‘The Australian media overall provided little coverage of Italian events, and less so of Italian political events. More often than not, the media provided a superficial explanation, often poking fun and seeking out the ridiculous in the Italian events’ (2008: 30).

This study portrays a quite different picture of media coverage of Italian affairs, a picture which is at once more complex and variegated. It is certainly true, as noted in chapter 3, that the SMH and the Age paid little regular attention to Italian politics between 2005 and 2008. Even so, these papers did carry quite substantial stories when occasion arose. For example, the 2006 elections generated ten stories in each of the SMH and the Age, many of them on expatriate voting. In the SMH there was an extended profile of Marco Fedi.

The Australian’s coverage of Italian politics in this period was consistently substantial. In 2006 it carried 35 stories related to the elections. As well, as pointed out in section 3.3.4, there was substantial Australian television coverage of Marco Fedi and Nino Randazzo as significant public figures. While personality and novelty angles were certainly not eschewed (one can note, for example the ‘odd couple’ frame in the Foreign Correspondent’s
coverage of Fedi and Randazzo taking up their seats in the Italian parliament) there seems little evidence, at least in this period, of any consistent ‘seeking out of the ridiculous.’

The years 2009-2011, taken together, saw substantially increased attention to Italian politics in all three newspapers. The *Australian*, in particular, focussed on the personality and actions of Silvio Berlusconi. In 2009, a non-election year, there were 76 stories in the *Australian* in which the name ‘Berlusconi’ featured in the opening paragraph. The number and tenor of the stories about Berlusconi, many of them taken from the *Times*, appears consistent with the idea that Murdoch papers were conducting a campaign against him, which included ridicule as a weapon.

Starting in 2009, the Australian press increased its involvement in Italian politics through commentary on the Berlusconi government. In 2009, the *SMH* carried an editorial highly critical of the Italian government. In 2011 both the *Age* and the *Australian* editorialised around the theme that ‘Berlusconi must go’. This level of involvement in the affairs of another democratic country is unusual for the Australian press and might reasonably be linked to the presence in Australia of a substantial Italian community which carried voting rights in Italian elections.
Appendix: Notes on Methodology

Search strategy: newspapers

The newspaper story sets analysed in this study were created by searching digitised versions of the selected papers using Factiva.

Factiva is a business information and research tool owned by Dow Jones & Company. Factiva aggregates transcripts of news items from various mainstream media including newspapers, magazines, television and radio. It includes comprehensive coverage from over 35,000 publications in 26 languages, and is continuously updated. Its coverage extends back 35 years and is stored and able to be searched by subscribers to Factiva. Using a free text search function, subscribers are able to search for key words appearing either in the headline and lead paragraph of news articles, or in the full text of news articles. The free text search can be constructed using Boolean operator terms; otherwise any text entered will be searched for as an exact phrase. There are other search options that can be used to refine a free text search, including selecting a range of dates to search within, selecting particular news sources to search, and choosing specific exclusions like republished news.

There is another type of search that can be run in Factiva that uses an indexing process called ‘Dow Jones Intelligent Indexing’ to group articles by type. This function is intended to minimise the need for creating difficult free-text searches. However, it can also be used alongside free text searches to augment the search results. Dow Jones assigns codes for four types of terms universally across all content. Those terms are Companies, Industries, Regions and Subjects. The terms are based on indexing standards, such as the ISO (International Organization for Standardization) for Regions. Each indexing term has a details page that gives additional information about the term, and for the 'Italy' region search it states that the search includes 'Stories about this country'. It also states that the term was first applied to Factiva articles on 1 January 1984.

For the 'Italy in the News' project a combination of the two search types noted above was used to generate a story set which was as comprehensive as possible.

The research manager, in conjunction with two coders, created a search strategy using Factiva's 'search builder' that would capture the majority of coverage of Italian stories in the Australian news media in the past eight years (2005-2012). Searches were conducted by year, made possible by Factiva's option to enter a date range, which allowed an inclusive date to be entered (01/01/2005 – 31/12/2005 for example). Three newspapers were chosen for the analysis for their wide coverage and authoritative presence in Australia. These were the Australian, the Sydney Morning Herald, and the Age. Each paper was entered into the 'source' field, and searched separately by year. To capture Italy as a subject, a number of search options were tested.

After testing, it was found that the ‘Region’ index missed some relevant Italian stories, such as some stories about the activities of Italians abroad. It was decided that the ‘Region’
search function could be used in conjunction with a free text term to capture a greater number of stories relevant to Italy. The final search strategy involved entering the following text into the free text field: \( (\text{re=}\text{Italy}) \text{ or hlp=} (\text{Italy or Italian* or Rome}) \). This allowed for the ‘Region’ index term to be included as well as the headline and lead paragraph (hlp) of the articles to be searched for the terms ‘Italy’ or ‘Italian’ (with a wildcard on the end) or ‘Rome’. Factiva defined ‘lead paragraph’ as the first two paragraphs of an article.

It would not have been viable to undertake this kind of study through an analysis of the actual hard copies of the papers. The search strategy was designed so as to capture a very large number of ‘Italian stories’. However, searching digitised versions of newspapers carries some limitations. We cannot claim that, via this method, we have elicited all relevant stories. It could very well be that some stories which would have been deemed relevant were not captured because they did not contain any of the terms Italy, Italian* or Rome. It is important to note that when statements are made in this report about story numbers (e.g. the number of stories in a particular newspaper covering a particular event) the reference is to stories captured by our search methodology.

The number of stories was later refined by the three coders, who included relevant stories according to data set creation rules developed by the research manager. Instructions for producing data sets from the Factiva results and coding individual news items were developed following a ‘trial’ involving a search for relevant stories in the *Sydney Morning Herald* for 2005. The criteria for a story’s inclusion were as follows:

To be included, the story needed to have a palpable link with the country Italy, currently or relatively recently. This might be through events occurring in Italy which were reported, Italy acting on the European or world stage, Australians or others visiting Italy and reporting on it, Italians visiting Australia, or stories about Italian products. We did not include stories exclusively about people of Italian origin in Australia, or general stories about Italian culture/food/restaurants and so on in Australia or elsewhere outside Italy. We did not include a stories about, for example, Da Vinci’s paintings in a London gallery unless there was a current link to Italy. However, if there were a story about Italian art in Australia which referred to a specific exhibition of works currently on loan from an Italian gallery it was included. Stories making passing references to ancient Rome were not included but a story on a current archeological finding in Italy would be included.

To be included, Italy had to have prominence and not merely appear in large list of countries. If the story was about some joint action or problem faced by a number of countries (e.g. financial issues affecting Europe or involvement in NATO ) the story was included if Italy was amongst the ‘top five’ countries noted. Stories describing many products from different countries or stories mentioning many destinations (e.g. cruise ship itineraries) were not included unless the Italian element was particularly highlighted. If the mention of Italy or Italian/s was incidental to the main topic of the story and the words Italy or Italian/s did not appear in the opening two paragraphs of the story, the story was excluded.
There were a number of specific exclusions. Stories dealing with Vatican affairs were excluded unless they were related to Italian affairs more generally. Stories referring to ‘Rome’ as a way of designating the Catholic Church were also excluded unless they were related more generally to Italian affairs. Stories referring to Italy’s cultural heritage in a historical fashion were not included unless there was also a current or relatively recent news link with Italy or Italians (e.g. a report of an Italian academic giving a talk on Italy would be included but a London-based analysis of a Da Vinci painting would not.)

The resultant sets of stories were saved as RTF (rich text format) files. This was an option available through Factiva that provided the following information for each story: title, medium (e.g. *Sydney Morning Herald*), date, number of words, author, and some text. For The *Sydney Morning Herald* and The *Age* the percentages of stories included out of the total number of stories produced by the Factiva search fell between 40-52% in all years except one. The number of relevant stories produced by the Factiva search for The *Australian* was higher, as was the percentage of relevant stories, with 55-69% of stories included. This was consistent for all three coders, and no year was completely covered by just one coder.

**Search strategy: television**

The dataset for Italian television news was obtained by searching the Informit database ‘TV News’ available through RMIT Publishing, Melbourne. This database began collecting Australian television news and current affairs from late 2007. The database covers all major Australian television news programs as well as a large selection of current affairs programs. It provides a one paragraph synopsis of each story and descriptive details on such matters as story length, broadcast date and time, and names of contributors. It also provides a link to a digital video of each news item.

For the current study, each of the years 2008 to 2012 inclusive was selected and analysed using the search terms ‘Italy’ or ‘Italian*’ or ‘Rome’ (as for the newspapers data set) for the programs that had been chosen for analysis. The selection of items was based primarily on the synopsis provided by the database for each item but where the reference to Italy was not clearly evident the actual video clip was viewed to determine whether the item warranted inclusion in this study. This procedure resulted in a data set of 932 stories.

**Content analysis**

The 5235 stories in the newspaper dataset and the 932 stories in the television data set were analysed using quantitative content analysis. Each story was coded according to the following variables: name of newspaper, year of publication, main topic and story length (number of words). This enabled subsequent analysis, both on a year-by-year basis, and for the data-set as a whole, of the number and distribution of ‘Italian stories’ in and amongst the three newspapers. It also enabled analysis of the number and distribution of stories by topic area. As Tiffen has noted: ‘By examining newspapers systematically and subjecting observations to the discipline of a structured coding scheme, changes that might remain invisible, impressionistic or contested are able to be charted with greater precision and certainty’ (Tiffen 2011: 39). However, the method also has limitations. While it attempts to objectively describe the ‘manifest content’ (Berelson 1952: 74) of texts,
there can be a degree of arbitrariness in the content categories which are used to classify material, and a subjective element in the allocation of materials to the chosen categories, i.e. the coding. Where more than one coder is used steps need to be taken to ensure a consistency of approach so as to ensure the reliability of the data.

In addition to this broad quantitative analysis, a more fine grained analysis of the content of newspaper stories in the data set for each year was undertaken. The ‘rich text format’ files of the stories for each year, as generated through Factiva, were examined. This enabled an interpretative discussion of the coverage of major news events and news sources for each year.

**Intercoder reliability**

The research manager developed the protocols for collecting and coding articles and trained the three coders who worked on the project. The coders referred any queries to the research manager. There were also regular meeting held between the coders and the research manager to ensure consistency and reliability. In addition, the research manager randomly checked records to improve inter-coder reliability. Inter-coder reliability in topic classification is rated as greater than 80%.
References


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Notes on Authors

Peter Putnis is Professor of Communication and Director of the News and Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra, Australia. The focus of his research is on international communication and media history, especially the political economy of international news production in the nineteenth and twentieth century. He has been Chair of the History Section of the International Association for Media and Communication Research and is a past president of the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association. He serves on the editorial board of the journal *Media History*.

Franco Papandrea is adjunct Professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design and Member of the News and Media Research Centre at the University of Canberra, Australia. His primary research interests are in communication and media policy and industrial organisation of media. His appointment to advise the two foremost Australian public inquiries into newspapers (House of Representatives Select Committee on the Print Media — 1991, and the Independent Inquiry into Media and Media Regulation — 2011) twenty years apart has been a highlight in his career. He is also active in Italian-Australian community affairs, is an elected member of the Consiglio Generale degli Italiani all’Estero (advisory council to the Italian Government and Parliament on issues pertaining to expatriate Italians) and has served on its Executive Committee.

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The News and Media Research Centre (N&MRC) undertakes research into the continuing influence of media content in shaping the way we communicate with each other and understand the world around us, particularly in relation to key issues such as health and the environment. The research of the N&MRC contributes to practical initiatives by governments, consumer groups, and communication and media companies to improve communication systems and standards.

The work of the Centre encompasses: user perspectives on new communication technologies; the role of the news media and public communication in shaping knowledge about social issues; research into the ‘mediatisation’ of politics; and the role of the media in the policy development process.

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