

# **How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia? A comparison of opinion pieces within The Age and Herald Sun 2017-24**

**Philip Mendes<sup>1</sup>, Tejaswini Patil<sup>2</sup>, Steven Roche<sup>3</sup> & Rob Taylor<sup>1</sup>**

**1 Monash University 2 Flinders University 3 Australian Catholic University**

## **Abstract**

This paper aims to compare the perspectives presented via opinion pieces published in the two daily Melbourne newspapers, the Herald Sun and The Age regarding the Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) in Victoria from November 2017 until March 2024. A content analysis methodology based on the Bacchi WPR framework was used to explore the nature and content of the views expressed in opinion pieces by the Herald Sun (N=35) and The Age (N=11). Both papers presented a diverse range of perspectives. However, The Age opinion pieces were more likely to present a pro-MSIR viewpoint, and the Herald Sun opinion pieces were more likely to be critical of the MSIR. Those authors supportive of an MSIR were more likely to be compassionate to People who inject drugs (PIDs), and to attempt to reconcile the health care needs of PIDs and the concerns of local residents. Critics of the MSIR, however, prioritized the rights of local residents and businesses ahead of the needs of PIDs. This is the first Australian study to specifically compare the opinion pieces published in two competing daily newspapers regarding an MSIR.

## **Keywords**

Medically Supervised Injecting Room, Australia, media, People who inject drugs, opinion pieces, harm reduction.

## Introduction

In 2017 the Victorian Labor Government established the state's first Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) in North Richmond. But, public attitudes continue to be divided as to the merits of the MSIR. One influence on policy makers appears to be media views on the MSIR. This paper compares the opinion pieces published in the two daily Melbourne newspapers, the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* regarding the MSIR, from November 2017 until March 2024. Based on 46 articles (Herald Sun N= 35, The Age N=11), our findings identify philosophical differences on the merits of varied social and health responses to People who inject drugs (PIDs) between the two newspapers as reflected in their choice of opinion writers, the views expressed in support of or opposition to the MSIR, the language used in regards to people who inject drugs, and discussion of the impact of the MSIR on the local community.

## Background to the debate

Following significant political and media concern around the rising number of heroin-related deaths in the Australian state of Victoria, the state Labor government announced a trial of Victoria's first Medically Supervised Injecting Room (MSIR) in late 2017. The MSIR was to be located in the suburb of North Richmond in the City of Yarra area (hereafter called Richmond) which had the highest rate of heroin-related overdose deaths from 2009-17 including 91 deaths from 2014-18 (Medically Supervised Injecting Room Review Panel [MSIRRP], 2020). This was to be only the second MSIR in Australia, having been preceded by the service established in Kings Cross, Sydney, in 2001.

The *Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Amendment (Medically Supervised Injecting Centre) Act 2017* that enabled the Richmond MSIR trial specified six aims which included reducing overdose-related deaths, enabling access for PIDs to supportive health and welfare programs, improving social amenity in the local community, and lowering overall levels of drug-related harm (MSIRRP, 2020).

The MSIR commenced operation in June 2018. A review by an official panel reported in June 2020

Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?

that the MSIR had been successful in meeting most of its core objectives and should be extended for a further three years (MSIRRP, 2020). Additionally, the 2020 review recommended that the government add a further MSIR site in the City of Melbourne (the Central Business District, CBD) which has also experienced large numbers of overdose-deaths, and high levels of demand for ambulance attendance (MSIRRP, 2020).

A second review released in March 2023 verified the ongoing effectiveness of the MSIR in saving lives, and proposed legislation to establish the MSIR as a permanent program (Victorian Government, 2023). The report highlighted the traumatic lives of many PIDs and the utility of the MSIR in linking them to key health, mental health and housing supports. But it also acknowledged the need to address the legitimate concerns about the impact of the MSIR in terms of manifestations of anti-social behaviour raised by many local residents and business owners (Victorian Government, 2023).

The subsequent legislation establishing the Richmond site as a continuing facility and permitting establishment of a second room was passed in May 2023. But the question as to whether and how the health needs of PIDs can be successfully reconciled with the concerns of local residents and traders about the adverse social impact of the MSIR remains a source of public and political contention. In April 2024, the government announced they had decided not to introduce the proposed second MSIR in the CBD. This was despite an official report by the former Police Commissioner Ken Lay recommending the introduction of a small MSIR in the CBD (Lay, 2024).

### **Ideology in policy approaches to PIDs**

The contours of this public policy debate and the subsequent decision by the Victorian government to not proceed with the CBD MSIR reflects trends in policymaking towards PIDs in Australia. Despite numerous evaluations and recommendations by independent experts of the health benefits of MSIRs, there were a range of other inputs into the policymaking process that affected the final decision, including the opinions of politicians, traders, and community members. While researchers and advocates tend to rely on evidence or human rights frames, Ritter (2021) identifies that some actors in policy processes utilise moral discourse and framing when addressing PIDs.

In general, illicit drug policy in Australia can be seen to reflect two contrasting views known as harm minimization, and prohibition. Prohibition frames drug use narrowly through moral framing as immoral and/or criminal behaviour, and favours law enforcement to prevent access to drugs and abstinence-based treatment for existing users.

In contrast, harm minimization refers to policies and programs intended to prevent harm to the user, their family or the wider location. As defined within the National Drug Strategy (Department of Health, 2017), it includes three distinct strategies: supply-reduction strategies such as legislation and law enforcement which aim to disrupt the supply of illicit drugs; demand-reduction strategies that attempt to prevent and reduce drug use via health responses and education; and harm-reduction strategies which are intended to reduce all drug-related harm either to the user or the community.

The first two strategies can in principle be reconciled with a prohibitionist approach given that they still emphasize minimizing drug use and may be used as a rationale for ongoing surveillance and stigmatization of drug users (Bacchi, 2009: 96). It is arguably only the third strategy, the harm reduction strategy as described above, which clearly divides harm minimization from prohibitionist practices.

Harm reduction adopts a public health rather than a legalistic approach to illicit drug use and in doing so, positions drug users as normative citizens entitled to the same rights as other members of the community. A harm reduction approach does not target abstinence as the sole or preferred outcome of drug treatment, rather, it affirms a number of evidence-based strategies aimed at reducing the risk of harm to the person using drugs (Ritter & Lancaster, 2013). MSIRs are one such strategy, which aim to save the lives of People Injecting Drugs (PIDs) who may be at risk of overdose, while also enabling them to access treatment and other support services, and potentially reduce any adverse impacts of public drug use on the local area.

There are currently only two injecting rooms in Australia: the Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) in Kings Cross, Sydney, which commenced in May 2001, and the MSIR in North Richmond, Melbourne, which started in June 2018. There have also been some official and unofficial

recommendations for the introduction of further sites in Sydney, Melbourne, and the ACT (Dertadian & Tomsen, 2020). Internationally, there are more than 100 MSIRs operating within 60 cities internationally (MSIRRP, 2020). But there continue to be political and ideological barriers to expansion in some countries (for example, France and the UK) including concerns about being seen to approve of illicit drug use and the impact of locationally-specific historical trends and contexts (Belackova & Salmon, 2017, p. 25).

### **The role of the media in the supervised injecting rooms debate**

Previous literature has argued that the media exerts a significant influence on shaping community attitudes and public policy-making processes regarding the causes of and potential solutions to illicit drug use (Atkinson et al., 2019). Building on media and communications literature, Lancaster et al. (2011) analyze the impact of media on illicit drug debates in Australia. They propose that the media can influence illicit drug policy in four primary ways: by determining policy agendas through highlighting specific concerns, such as the number of drug-related deaths; by framing issues to emphasize particular policy solutions over alternatives; by shaping public attitudes to support specific policy agendas; and by guiding the direction of political debates and decision-making processes.

Both these studies refer to the effect of traditional news and print media reports on drugs policy. They do not engage with the rise of social media and its growing influence on public views and attitudes. Nevertheless, the traditional news media, particularly within its online form, continues to exert a significant influence on how contentious policy issues are constructed and problematized (Martin et al., 2022). Hence, that will be the focus of our analysis in this paper.

To date, there has only been a small number of research studies of media reporting of MSIRs. One study interrogated 174 articles in the UK news media that examined a proposal to establish an MSIR in the city of Glasgow. That study reported that the views of some stakeholders such as experts and politicians were prioritized by the media, whilst other voices, particularly those PIDs, were mostly “silenced”. It argued that the absence of PWID voices was significant given the key role that lived experience voices can play in generating public support for MSIRs (Atkinson et al., 2019, p.72).

Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?

There are only two peer reviewed studies of media reporting of MSIRs in Victoria. The first study explored 441 print media reports by *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* concerning the North Richmond MSIR from January 2016 until June 2020. The two newspapers were combined as one sample, and no distinction was made in that sample between editorials, opinion pieces and other articles. It found that some voices were highlighted in the media such as experts, professionals, family members of overdose victims, and particularly anti-MSIR conservative politicians who opposed the MSIR. But PIDs, and also consumer and advocacy groups were mostly silenced. The study suggested that their relative absence could hinder the development of effective support programs within the MSIR (Whiteside & Dunn, 2022, p. 823).

A second study compared the official editorials of the *Herald Sun* and *The Age* concerning the North Richmond MSIR from November 2017 until November 2022. That study reported philosophical differences between the two newspapers based on their sources of information, language and highlighted issues. It identified *The Age* as mostly pro-harm reduction, and supportive of both the current MSIR and proposals for a second site. In contrast, the *Herald Sun* was more sympathetic to prohibition than harm reduction. They adopted an ambiguous approach to the MSIR, presenting qualified support for the Richmond site but strongly opposing additional sites. The newspapers also varied in how they framed PIDs, and the relative importance they placed on the needs of local residents and businesses in MSIR sites (Mendes et al., 2024).

In summary, there is to date limited research illuminating how the Australian media presents the aims and activities of MSIRs, and particularly how the problem came to be represented and the discourse utilized to inform public views and policy making. To address this knowledge gap and building on our previous research, we examined the opinion pieces published in the two daily Victorian newspapers, the *Herald Sun* and *The Age*, regarding the North Richmond MSIR from late 2017 until March 2024. We targeted opinion pieces as a further means of assessing the perspectives of the two papers concerning MSIRs. Opinion pieces are short articles that present ideas and opinions intended to influence public debate (Coppock et al., 2018). They typically appear adjacent to the editorial and letter pages of newspapers, and are usually authored by journalists, researchers, policy advocates, politicians and others with specialist knowledge of that policy area.

Our key research aims were:

1. How MSIR came to be represented as “a problem” in the opinion pieces?
2. In what ways was the MSIR supported, justified or problematised in opinion pieces?

## Methodology

We have chosen to explore the nature and content of the views expressed in opinion pieces by the two daily Victorian hard copy newspapers. These papers were chosen because of their contrasting ownership and associated philosophical perspectives. *The Age* is owned by Nine Entertainment, and generally perceived to present a moderate left-liberal viewpoint on social policy debates. In contrast, the *Herald Sun* is owned by News Corp Australia, and often champions a right-wing social conservative agenda on social issues (Environment and Communications References Committee, 2021; Martin et al., 2022). The aim of our study was to undertake an up-to-date comparative analysis of the differing perspectives adopted by the two newspapers concerning the MSIR.

Our analysis of the opinion pieces is informed by Bacchi’s (2009) post-structuralist discourse analysis framework termed “What’s the problem represented to be?” (WPR). This approach is translatable to an analysis of opinion pieces given that they act as subjective accounts that increase the interactivity of the news media and widen the arena the circulation of discourses by engaging the readers, authors and the public (Patil, 2014). It will enable us to uncover the ways in which media representations of the MSIR and related drug issues can advance the privileging of particular policy definitions and solutions at the expense of others.

## Methods

Building on our earlier comparison of editorials from the *Age* and the *Herald Sun* (Mendes et al., 2024), we chose to analyse opinion pieces to ascertain the extent to which they also reflected an official political or ideological stance concerning the MSIR. Opinion pieces have been identified as

an effective means for influencing and potentially shifting public attitudes to specific policy debates (Coppock et al., 2018).

To identify opinion pieces related to MSIR in *The Age* and the *Herald Sun* from November 2017 to March 2024, the news data base Factiva was mined. We chose this period of inquiry because it encapsulates the first six and a half years of the MSIR's operations in Victoria, hence it covers a significant period of drug policy reform in Victoria. The keywords to search the articles included, 'Medically Supervised Injecting Rooms', 'Medically Supervised Injecting Centre', 'injecting room trial', 'drug injecting room', Richmond, 'injecting', 'heroin', 'drugs' and 'drug policy'. In total, we identified 46 opinion pieces for this period, comprising 35 from the *Herald Sun*, and 11 from *The Age*.

Principles of thematic analysis were followed, using the research aims and the WPR approach to guide the identification of themes and sub-themes (Braun & Clarke, 2013). This included a process of immersion in the data, including the research team reviewing all relevant articles. The opinion pieces were analysed using the WPR approach which has six questions (Bacchi, 2009). We divided the six questions into two parts. The aim of Part One was to centre the analysis on identifying how the MSIR came to be represented as a problem. To develop this, we analysed the opinion pieces by analysing the opinion pieces using the following questions: A) How was the MSIR presented in the articles; B) How were PIDs represented in the articles; and C) What assumptions underpin the philosophical standpoints in the representation of the MSIR as the problem? Next, analysis focused on identifying the material effects — strategies and technique - that accompany the problem representation of MSIRF. These effects were identified by analysing the opinion pieces using the following questions: A) Which stakeholders were prioritized as authors of opinion pieces by the two newspapers; B) Whose views were not represented in the MSIRF debates; and C) Whose perspectives (local residents or businesses or government) did the authors of opinion pieces disseminate, defend or challenge? This coding was initially undertaken by Author one, with Author Two closely reviewing the development of coding for each of the six WPR questions. Authors three and four were involved in reviewing the codes and themes identified by Author one and finalising the themes.

## Results

Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?



By combining WPR (Bacchi 2009) and Braun & Clarke (2013), we generated four themes linked to step one and two. The themes are summarised below.

### **Theme 1: ‘Positioning of MSIR as a problem’**

16 of the 35 authors who published articles in the *Herald Sun* were opposed to an MSIR, and another four authors specifically opposed the proposed second site in the CBD. 11 authors supported an MSIR, and four expressed ambiguous views. In contrast, nine of the eleven authors who published in *The Age* supported the existing MSIR, and introduction of a further MSIR in the CBD. Only one author was firmly anti-MSIR, and one other author presented an ambiguous viewpoint. To consider these two viewpoints we will categorise two sub-themes under theme 1. One relates to the MSIR ‘as a drug Shooting-up Shop’, and the second examines how the MSIR ‘reduces wider social and health harms’.

#### *MSIR as ‘a drug shooting-up shop’*

The 20 critics of the MSIR in the *Herald Sun* used varied frames to identify and characterise MSIR as a ‘Problem’. A number argued on prohibitionist grounds. For example, a former Chief of Staff to a Liberal Party Prime Minister objected to the MSIR in Richmond because it contradicted the “message that illegal drugs are dangerous, addictive and could kill you. Why not fund more rehab places instead?” (Credlin, 2018). In a further article, she rejected the proposal to establish a second MSIR in the CBD, insisting that drug use was “illegal” and should be treated as a law enforcement issue (Credlin, 2023).

Others writing in the *Herald Sun* used prohibitionist language but were subtler in advancing their arguments. The representative of the Police Association (i.e. the trade union representing Victorian police) opposed a second MSIR on the grounds that it would only duplicate the problems that had allegedly plagued the Richmond MSIR. He referred specifically to rising levels of crime and reduced local community safety. He clarified that the Association were not “definitively” opposed to an MSIR, but did not feel the existing MSIR model worked (Gatt, 2022). Indeed, a number of anti-

MSIR authors cited the Police Association view as a rationale for their own opposition (Carlyon, 2021; Credlin, 2018; Kealy, 2021).

The Liberal Party Shadow Minister for Mental Health rejected both the existing MSIR, and the proposed second MSIR on the grounds that the Richmond MSIR had failed as evidenced by ongoing crime, violence, and social harm in the area. She argued that an abstinence-based policy approach would “help people get off drugs – not a centre dedicated to injecting them” (Kealy, 2021). In a further article, she opposed the proposed second MSIR by contentiously claiming that the Richmond MSIR had actually caused a higher level of heroin-related overdose deaths in the area, and insisted that “support and treatment works” rather than an MSIR (Kealy, 2022).

Another author couched his opposition by declaring he was a harm reduction advocate and in favour of MSIRs generally, but opposed the introduction of a second MSIR in the CBD as it would allegedly harm the economy and discourage tourism (Wood, 2020). Similarly, Carlyon (2021) argued that MSIRs benefitted the community by saving lives, but should not be placed in locations where they harmed local residents and traders. In a similar vein, a former Liberal Party state Premier who supported the introduction of the MSIR in Richmond on harm reduction grounds, nevertheless demanded that the Richmond MSIR be moved because “the location of the MSIR is causing more harm than the good it is dispensing” (Kennett, 2021). These three authors arguably adopted what has been called a ‘Nimbyist’ (Not in my backyard) approach (Mendes, 2001) that stigmatizes PIDs as outsiders who should be excluded from the local community.

A few of the articles adopted a more strident tone with one author arguing that the MSIR had exacerbated the existing “drug industry” in Richmond with adverse consequences for the local community (Wilkinson, 2020). Another argued that the Richmond MSIR was a “horrible mistake”, and strongly rejected plans for a second MSIR. He argued the current MSIR was responsible for attracting drug users and “scumbag dealers” to the area, and inflicting direct harm on local residents and particularly children attending the nearby primary school (Price, 2020). In a further article, he pejoratively described the proposed second MSIR as a “drug shooting-up shop” and a “drug shooting gallery” (Price, 2021). He also attacked the government’s decision to make the Richmond MSIR a permanent facility (Price, 2023), and rejected all three locations proposed for an MSIR in the CBD,

insisting “we don’t want it” (Price, 2024). A prominent lawyer also opposed a second MSIR, arguing that it would produce increased crime in the CBD (Galbally, 2023).

Similarly, the one anti-MSIR author in *The Age*, argued that the MSIR had exacerbated existing levels of drug use and deals and contributed to higher levels of crime and violence (Campbell, 2021).

*MSIR ‘reduces wider social and health harms’*

Of the 21 authors supportive of the MSIR, 9 were published in *The Age*, whereas 12 were published in the *Herald Sun*. All of those who supported the establishment of the MSIR in Richmond argued on harm reduction grounds. Phrases such as “evidence”, and “research” were used to establish the MSIR in Richmond. For example, an MSIR would “save hundreds of lives and also reduce wider social and health harms to the community” (Bedi, 2017).

Other authors reflected on historical trends to make the case for the MSIR in Richmond. One commentator observed that there had been public drug injecting areas for over two decades within Richmond, and the MSIR was appropriately designed and located given that history (Stone, 2019). Another writer noted that there was long-standing street drug use in Richmond, and emphasized that the MSIR had been effective in saving lives, and connecting PIDs to supportive health services including rehabilitation programs (Brennan, 2023).

The leader of the minority Reason Party argued that the MSIR saved multiple lives, and also provided a “pathway to therapy” for many users. She urged the government to introduce at least four further MSIRs in other areas of high drug use (Patten, 2020). A Salvation Army representative supported the proposed second site in the CBD given that the evidence from Richmond and Kings Cross showed that MSIRs can “reduce overdoses and public injecting” (Nottle, 2021).

Some authors writing in the *Herald Sun* were ambiguous about their position. They acknowledged that the MSIR should continue because it was saving lives, but adding that major program changes were needed to address resident concerns (Johnston, 2019). Another author accepted that the MSIR was successful in saving lives, but argued that it had also attracted more users and dealers to the area

(Jolly, 2019). A further author praised the MSIR for saving lives, but also criticized the MSIR for causing numerous instances of anti-social behaviour that adversely impacted on the wellbeing of local residents and schoolchildren (Delibasic, 2022a; 2022b).

In summary, returning to the main theme of how MSIR was represented as a problem across the opinion pieces, the majority of the authors in *Herald Sun* used derogatory language to criticise the MSIR. Terms such as “drug users den”, “drug dealers” and “anti-social behaviour” seemed intended to frame the MSIR as an enabler of illegal activity. In contrast, the pro-MSIR articles published in both papers employed a harm reduction lens with terms such as “evidence” and “research” being used to justify the value of MSIR as a legally legitimate medical support service.

## **Theme 2: People Injecting Drugs (PIDs): How were they represented?**

People injecting drugs (PIDs) were represented in varied ways in both the newspapers. Authors who were pro-MSIR framed PIDs as “vulnerable”, “in need of care and compassion”, “highly traumatised” and “reminding society of its obligations to all citizens and upholding human rights”. Authors who were anti-MSIR framed PIDs as “drug addled”, and “aggressive and unpredictable”. To consider these viewpoints, we have presented two sub themes: Deserving of human rights and care: views of Pro-MSIR authors and “Aggressive, unpredictable and underserving: - anti-MSIR views”.

### *Deserving of human rights and care: Views of pro-MSIR authors*

In pro-MSIR news articles, PIDs were framed via a human rights perspective that emphasized their rights as equal citizens. For example, (Kennett, 2017, 2018, 2021) asserted that PIDs are “vulnerable people with health and mental health problems, frequently homeless”...[and] “We must care for every citizen equally”. Similarly, (Bedi, 2017) emphasized “that the lives of drug users are as important as those of other members of our community” (Bedi, 2017), and Brennan (2023) described PIDs sympathetically as “often among society’s most vulnerable...members of our society who are struggling and need help” (Brennan, 2023).

Another standpoint used in the pro-MSIR articles was characterising PIDs as “vulnerable people”,

and hence the MSIR enabling this group, who are often part of the homeless population, to access helpful social and health support services (Nottle, 2021). A community health specialist emphasized the need to provide support to PIDs experiencing homelessness and poor mental health so that they could avoid fatal overdoses (Bartholomeusz, 2023). The leader of the Reason Party described PIDs as “worthy” people who “form a very particular group within society. Most had overdosed many times before the centre opened; most have been diagnosed with a mental illness; most are experiencing homelessness; and nearly all have experienced childhood trauma. Some 13 per cent are Indigenous” (Patten, 2020).

Other standpoints strongly emphasised the care and compassion angle. For example, one pro-MSIR drug policy researcher proactively framed PIDs as “sick and traumatised” people “who have lost everything” (Ryan, 2020). Another author in the same newspaper highlighted that many MSIR users “are victims of childhood trauma, abuse, violence or homelessness and therefore experience higher rates of psychiatric conditions such as anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress recovery. The emotional and physical trauma sustained in early life by many of our clients has set the stage for drug use as a way of numbing their pain”. He emphasized that many were able to access wider health and social support services including rehabilitation as a direct result of their engagement with the MSIR program (Clark, 2019).

Interestingly, one pro-MSIR author used both compassion and blame to describe PIDs, referring to them as “vulnerable patients” who often continued to “endanger their lives” via injecting drug use, “even when they have lost everything: their job, their health, their families and their freedom” (Bonomo, 2020). An additional author, who was ambivalent regarding the MSIR, acknowledged that “many of the people buying and using illicit drugs in the area are desperate and broken. Some are homeless, some suffer mental health problems” (Jolly, 2019).

#### *“Aggressive, unpredictable and undeserving: Anti-MSIR views*

In contrast, anti-MSIR authors used negative frames to describe PIDs. For example, one author characterised PIDs as engaging in “aggressive and unpredictable” behaviour that threatened the safety of residents and their children (Campbell, 2021), whereas another author (Credlin, 2018)

suggested that PIDs “were potentially aggressive and violent persons”.

A potent and predominantly stigmatising frame was to link PIDs aggressive behaviour to the negative impact on the broader community, for example, children, families and businesses. This frame othered PIDs as a separate undeserving category of people. Examples of this framing were abundant, especially in the *Herald Sun*. One author’s opinion piece accompanied by a sharp headline, ‘Drug problem makes us feel under siege’, suggests that as a resident, the two-year MSIR trial is based on flawed policy and encourages “illegal drug users on the streets” to sell drugs to “dealers who ply their trade with agility” (Wilkinson, 2020). The language used conflates PIDs as being involved in “illicit activity” with “drug dealers”. Similarly, Price (2020) objectified PIDs via taking a photo of one user who had “injected in broad daylight”, and was lying “slumped in the gutter, a needle sticking out of his or her arm”. He suggested PIDs were violent individuals who could potentially attack “mums and dads crowded around with their kids waiting for a tram” after attending a football game near the proposed second site in the CBD (Price, 2021). Later, he derided the MSIR as empowering “a rolling parade of drug addicts and their criminal dealers” (Price, 2023).

Panahi (2021) negatively labelled PIDs as “drug-addled individuals” whose interests were wrongly placed by the State Government “above the rights of children”. Carlyon (2021) sarcastically commented that “drug users have rights, too...and they trump the rights of everyone else”. He added that their health seemed to be given a higher priority by the MSIR than that of “nearby schoolkids, traders and concerned parents”. Ryall (2021) asserted that PIDs suffered from “mental illness, particularly anxiety and depression”, and consequently were unable to make sensible decisions about whether or not to use risky drugs.

A few authors, whilst opposing the MSIR, displayed some compassion towards PIDs. They argued that PIDs “deserved” effective abstinence-based treatment, and acknowledged that many PIDs experienced “pain” which was manifested in “mental health, abuse, homelessness, family violence, unemployment to name a few” (Kealy, 2022, Ryall, 2019). And one anti-MSIR local resident said she felt “sadness and compassion when we see homeless people seeking social connection through the drug industry” (Wilkinson, 2020).

In summary, pro-MSIR authors characterised PIDs as vulnerable and needing care and compassion. Conversely, anti-MSIR authors characterised PIDs in highly stigmatising terms that framed them as aggressive, violent individuals whose anti-social behaviour adversely impacted on the local community. This framing implied that they did not deserve the same rights as other citizens.

### **Theme 3: MSIR – the current and the proposed new site: How is the problem to be represented?**

Authors from anti and pro MSIR perspectives in the two newspapers used varied frames to construct the current MSIR and the proposed second MSIR. Pro-MSIR authors argued that scholarly evidence based on ‘what works’ (Ritter & Lancaster, 2017) demonstrated the effectiveness of MSIRs in reducing preventable deaths. For example, one pro-MSIR author highlighted “local and international” evidence, particularly from the long-standing MSIR in Kings Cross, Sydney that verified the value of such a facility (Bedi, 2017). Similarly, another author argued that international evidence documented that MSIRs reduce harm, enhance “community wellbeing, and are cost effective” (Biondo, 2018). The leader of the Reason Party praised the current MSIR as an example of a “solid public health policy” based on “listening to evidence and consulting experts” (Patten, 2022).

Other frames used by pro-MSIR authors related to care and compassion. Biondo (2018) argued that the MSIR was a compassionate response to the “pain of the many families who have lost loved ones to preventable overdose”. Similarly, the leader of the Reason Party noted that “their families still hold out hope that as long as they are alive, they will come off drugs” (Patten, 2022). Other MSIR supporters highlighted that the MSIR could protect families from experiencing the death of loved ones (Brennan, 2023), and emphasized the value of providing “better access to mental health care and treatment” for PIDs (Ryan, 2020). An additional pro-MSIR author argued that the introduction of the MSIR was “caring” and “informed by humanitarian as well as health concerns” (McDonald, 2021).

Those supportive of an MSIR attempted to reconcile the needs of PIDs and the concerns of local residents. For example, a drug policy researcher acknowledged the need to address the legitimate concerns of local residents regarding the impact of the “drug market” (Ryan, 2020). A local

supporter of the proposed second MSIR in the CBD argued that residents and businesses were already adversely affected by “widespread drug use” and associated social harm (Capp, 2021). However, the Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne qualified her support for a second MSIR by insisting that it must be placed “in the right location” as judged acceptable by local traders and residents (Capp, 2022).

Conversely, anti-MSIR authors claimed that the MSIR had provoked increased crime and drug dealing in the area, and played down the importance of lives being saved (Ryall, 2019). One author opined emotively that “Kids are entitled to go to school without witnessing distressing scenes or having to dodge drug dealers and users congregating around their primary school” (Panahi, 2021). Another labelled the MSIR an example of “anti-business tax decisions and anti-social plans to fight drug abuse” (Price, 2021). A HS reporter emphasized that families of PIDs were often “invisible victims” that were subjected to “addiction-fuelled violence, anxiety and financial devastation” (Delibasic, 2022a).

A further concern raised by anti-MSIR advocates was its adverse impact on children, residents and families. This included its proximity to a primary school (Credlin, 2018). Price (2020) labelled the policy to establish an MSIR near a primary school as “lunacy” and unfair to residents, as they were given “no choice” regarding its location. In another article, he similarly condemned the “idiotic” placement of the MSIR “next to a school” (Price, 2022). A further author condemned the location of the MSIR near a primary school, arguing that children had been unfairly exposed to overdoses, violence and drug injecting scenes (Panahi, 2021).

An additional objection was the harm residents faced because of increased number of discarded needles from PIDs visiting MSIRs (Johnston, 2019). Another author quoted the local councillor who highlighted the negative experiences of residents due to large debris of human faeces and used syringes left in local streets. The same author then added provocatively, “such disgusting behaviour is directly linked to drug use and the resulting acts of indecency that plague this community. No one deserves to live like that” (Jolly, 2019).

A local resident argued that the public nature of drug dealing and drug use near the MSIR had caused



significant harm to residents including major fears for the safety of their children (Wilkinson, 2020). A former Liberal Party MP insisted that the MSIR had not reduced local crime, and that “residents felt less safe than when the facility first opened” (Ryall, 2021). The government was also attacked for not consulting with local residents or traders on the locations for the Richmond MSIR and proposed second MSIR. It was suggested that schoolchildren had been traumatized by witnessing street drug use and associated violence (Carlyon, 2021). A Liberal Party Shadow Minister emphasized that local parents, families and traders viewed the MSIR as undermining the safety and amenity of the community (Kealy, 2021).

A prominent lawyer argued that the existing MSIR had negatively impacted on local residents in Richmond. He opined that a second MSIR in the CBD would similarly reduce the wellbeing of residents and traders, and also deter potential tourists and investors (Galbally, 2023). Similarly, it was suggested that “many” local business owners and residents including particularly families with schoolchildren would not be pleased at the government’s decision to make the Richmond MSIR permanent (Deery, 2023a). Concern was stated that parents of pupils at the nearby Richmond Primary School had “genuine concerns” about the negative impact of the MSIR on the safety of their children (Deery, 2023b).

A *Herald Sun* reporter opposed creation of a second MSIR in the CBD due to the likely negative impact of an MSIR on local traders and residents, and also families with young children visiting the CBD (Delibasic, 2022). So did the representative of the Police Association who argued the residents of Richmond were disturbed by the decline in social amenity associated with the MSIR (Gatt, 2022). Even a pro-MSIR former Liberal Party Premier opined that the MSIR must be moved because its location was “imposing untold stress and fear on children and parents in the area” who were being exposed to unconscious bodies and dangerous discarded syringes (Kennett, 2021).

In summary, opinion writers used varying frames to voice their support and/or opposition to the existing and proposed new MSIR sites. The lead narrative used by anti-MSIR advocates was to undermine the legitimacy of the MSIR as an effective medical treatment program by linking it to adverse impacts on members of the local community such as children, families and businesses. In contrast, the pro-MSIR advocates used data, evidence and research to justify the value of the existing

MSIR and the potential benefit a second MSIR would bring.

#### **Theme 4: Stakeholders who were represented in the opinion pieces**

Key stakeholders utilized by *The Age* included a youth mental health researcher, a North Richmond resident, the head of a non-government peak body for alcohol and drug policy, a former Liberal Party state government Minister, a City of Yarra Greens Councillor, a City of Melbourne Liberal Party Councillor, a Director of a hospital Department of Addiction Medicine, the leader of the minority Reason Party in the Victorian state parliament, head of a Victorian child welfare NGO, leader of the Salvation Army Melbourne project, and a freelance writer who was a former heroin user (See also **Table One**).

**Table 1: *The Age* Opinion Writers**

<b>Backgrounds</b>	<b>Number of Op Eds</b>
Local resident	1
Current and former State members of Parliament (1 Liberal Party and 1 Reason Party)	2
Current members of local governments	2
Representatives of non-government social welfare agencies	3
Former PID	1
Health director and researcher	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>

The *Herald Sun* utilized a range of stakeholders including a former state Liberal Party Premier (3 times), a former Chief of Staff to a Liberal Party Prime Minister (2 times), a former state Liberal Party Shadow Minister (2 times), a current Liberal Party state Shadow Minister (2 times), a state political editor (2 times) and state political reporter, a City of Yarra Socialist Councillor, the Medical Director of the MSIR, a local Richmond resident, a CBD resident, a head of a drug policy institute and member of the MSIR Review Panel, a Deputy Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne, the Lord Mayor of the City of Melbourne, a regular columnist who is also a talkback radio host (5 times), two

other regular columnists, the head of a non-government peak body for alcohol and drug policy, a HS reporter (2 times), a HS state political reporter (2 times), the leader of the minority Reason Party in the Victorian state parliament, the Secretary of the Police Association Victoria, a prominent lawyer, and a chief executive of a community health service (See also **Table 2**).

**Table 2: *Herald Sun* Opinion Writers**

<b>Backgrounds</b>	<b>Number of Op Eds</b>
Former and current state members of Parliament (7 Liberal-National Coalition and 1 Reason Party)	8
Former Chief of Staff to Liberal Party Prime Minister	2
State political editor and reporters	7
Current members of local government	3
Local residents	2
Regular columnists	7
Lawyer	1
Police Association	1
Health service and research groups	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>

In summary, while both newspapers used a number of stakeholders to present varied views on the existing MSIR, there was a difference in terms of emphasis. *The Age* sample was smaller, and compared to the *Herald Sun*, did not include regular columnists or in-house political reporters. Furthermore, the *Herald Sun* used more authors who had party political backgrounds including particularly authors associated with the opposition Liberal Party.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The opinion pieces in the two daily newspapers presented disparate viewpoints concerning the representation of the MSIR as a problem, and how the MSIR was supported, justified or problematized. Pro-MSIR authors tended to construct the MSIR as an evidence-based medical intervention that would advance positive social and health outcomes. In contrast, anti-MSIR authors used inflammatory language to label the MSIR as a threat to the well-being of the community, characterized by the term ‘drug shooting up shop’. Similarly, pro-MSIR authors presented PIDs as a

vulnerable group who deserved care and compassion, whereas anti-MSIR authors stigmatized them as aggressive and violent individuals undermining the safety of children and families in the community. Pro-MSIR authors insisted that the MSIR was effective in saving lives and advancing community amenity, whilst anti-MSIR authors argued the MSIR had worsened manifestations of drug-related harm within the community.

The *Age* sample (N=11) consisted of five health and welfare drug policy experts, four current or ex politicians, one local resident, and one former PID. It was dominated by pro-MSIR voices whose views were strongly informed by harm reduction beliefs. They argued that the MSIR was effective in saving lives, addressing the pre-existing drug use problem at the right location, and giving PIDs a pathway to support services. A couple of them argued in favour of multiple additional MSIRs.

The pro-MSIR authors expressed compassion for PIDs whom they regarded as a vulnerable cohort that had lives of equal value to other members of the community. They also contended that the MSIR had a positive impact on local residents, whilst acknowledging some negatives. Overall, they opined that there was scholarly evidence in favour of the MSIR reducing overdose deaths, and further benefit in reducing the grief and loss that might otherwise be experienced by families of PIDs. They sought to reconcile the needs of PIDs and the interests and rights of local residents and traders. They did not view PIDs as existing separate to the wider community.

The *Herald Sun* sample (N=35) was much larger, suggesting that the HS are keen for ideological reasons to keep the MSIR on the public policy agenda. It contained a much larger number of current and former politicians (9 of them were Liberal Party reps), and included 14 authors who were either regular columnists or regular political reporters or editors. Only a small proportion (4/35) were health and welfare drug policy experts.

A slight majority of the 35 (N=20) were critical of the MSIR, and many of that cohort used prohibitionist arguments. But equally 11 were pro-MSIR, and strongly informed by harm reduction perspectives. The pro-MSIR authors presented PIDs via compassionate terms, but some of the anti-MSIR authors framed them in negative, stigmatized language. Critics of the MSIR highlighted the adverse impact of the MSIR on local residents and traders, and insisted the MSIR had worsened the

social amenity of the community. In contrast, pro-MSIR authors argued that there was scholarly evidence in favour of the effectiveness of the MSIR in saving lives, and also wider benefits around reducing the tragedies experienced by families of PIDs. Overall, the HS authors were more likely to view PIDs as existing outside the local community, and not deserving of inclusion.

The major difference between the two newspapers was arguably that the *Age* opinion writers recognized the legitimate needs and concerns of both PIDs and local residents, acknowledged that many residents were supportive of the MSIR, and sought to identify a policy solution that would accommodate both groups. In contrast, the majority of *Herald Sun* opinion writers highlighted the adverse experiences of local residents, and argued that their concerns should take precedence above those of allegedly undeserving PIDs. Given the earlier findings of Atkinson et al. (2019) regarding the impact of the policy actors whose voices were highlighted (or alternatively silenced) by the media, it is possible that the HS's framing of the needs of hostile local residents and businesses as most important influenced the decision of the Victorian Government not to introduce a second MSIR in the CBD.

Our study is limited to the opinion pieces that appeared in the two daily newspapers within a specific time period, and is not representative of overall media reporting of the Victorian MSIR debate. Further research could draw on the wider reports by the two papers (beyond the editorials and opinion pieces) concerning the factors that were judged to be significant concerning the operations of the existing MSIR, and the decision to not introduce a second MSIR in the CBD.

The polarisation of media representations in both the newspapers can be characterised into two dominant themes, namely pro-MSIR and anti-MSIR positions. Whilst the polarisation points to a zero-sum game in drug representations, the value of using Bacchi's (2005) analytical approach flags something deeper and more troubling in the way media representations are an extension of mainstream drug policy in Australia. Our analysis demonstrates that the pro and anti- MSIR camps are part of the very knowledge and systems of thoughts (discursive practises) that are allowed to be expressed in drug policy. Pro-MSIR and the anti-MSIR representations are an extension of the pre-dominant models of drug policy that exist in Australia, namely the harm reduction model and the prohibition model. What this analysis shows is that the newspaper debates act as an extension of the

culturally and institutionally supported conceptual schemas (discourses) that allow only particular understandings of issues and events (Bacchi, 2005, p. 199) to be represented. Additionally, the newspaper representations highlight the political nature of systems of thought (Bacchi, 2005). Our analysis suggests that drug policy and the actors, in this case the columnists, journalists, the public, activists, opinion piece authors and politicians, are operating in systems of thought which primarily allow for the representation of just two oppositional positions on MSIR.

An implication of using Bacchi's (2005, 2009) analytical tool is that the authors of the newspaper articles—as the gate keepers who are making and/or shaping discourses on drug policy - are as much “the prime effects of power” (Foucault cited in Bacchi 2005, p. 200) as are people impacted and in need of drug treatments. If we consider the anti- and pro MSIR representations as power effects, it is not surprising that the polarised nature of the debates raises a more significant issue for drug policy making in Australia, namely, the current lack of engagement with the political effects of drug policy. The findings of this article indicate a need for further analysis of the “power effects” of drug policy discourses and ways in which media representations are an extension of the underlying political systems of thought that embody drug policy in Australia.

## References

- Atkinson, A.M., McAuley, A., Trayner, K.M.A. & Sumnall, H.R. (2019), “We are still obsessed by this idea of abstinence: A critical analysis of UK news media representations of proposals to introduce drug consumption rooms in Glasgow, UK”, *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 68, pp.62-74.
- Bacchi, C. (2005), “Discourse, Discourse Everywhere: Subject “Agency” in Feminist Discourse Methodology”, *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies*, 13 (3), pp.198-209, DOI: 10.1080/08038740600600407.
- Bacchi, C. (2009), *Analysing the policy: What’s the problem represented to be?* Pearson, Frenchs Forest.
- Belackova, V. & Salmon, A. (2017), *Overview of International Literature: Supervised injecting facilities and drug consumption rooms*, Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre, Sydney.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. & Terry, G. (2015), “Thematic Analysis”, Rohleder, P. and Lyons, A. (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Clinical and Health Psychology*, Palgrave MacMillan, Hampshire, pp. 95-113.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013), *Successful qualitative research*, Sage, London.
- Coppock, A., Ekins, E., & Kirby, D. (2018), “The long-lasting effects of newspaper op-eds on public opinion”, *Quarterly Journal of Political Science*, 13, pp.59-87.
- Department of Health (2017), *National Drug Strategy 2017-26*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.
- Dertadian, G.C. and Tomsen, S. (2020), “The case for a second safe injecting facility (MSIR) in Sydney”, *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, Vol. 32 No. 2, pp.180-192.
- Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?

Environment and Communications References Committee (2021), *Media Diversity in Australia*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra.

Lancaster, K., Hughes, C.E., Spicer, B., Matthew-Simmons, F. and Dillon, P. (2011), “Illicit drugs and the media: Models of media effects for use in drug policy research”, *Drug and Alcohol Review*, Vol. 30, pp. 397-402. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1465-3362.2010.00239.x>

Lay, K. (2024), *Proposed medically supervised injecting service trial consultation: City of Melbourne*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/proposed-medically-supervised-injecting-service-final-report>.

Martin, S., Schofield, T., Butterworth, P. (2022), “News media representations of people receiving income support and the production of stigma power: An empirical analysis of reporting on two Australian welfare payments”, *Critical Social Policy*, 42(4), pp. 648-670.

Medically Supervised Injecting Room Review Panel (2020), *Review of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room*, Victorian Government, Melbourne.

Mendes, P. (2001), “Nimbyism vs social inclusion: Local communities and illicit drugs”, *Youth Studies Australia*, 20 (2), pp.17-22.

Mendes, P., Taylor, R., Roche, S. (2024), “How has the media framed the introduction of the supervised injection room in Victoria? A comparison of editorials of The Age and Herald Sun 2017-2022”, *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 59 (2), pp.501-516, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ajs4.302>.

Patil, T. (2014), “You can’t have the struggle without the ugly fringe’ - Publicness in Australian National Imagination: Media representations of the Muslim demonstrations in Sydney in 2012”, *Continuum*, 29(1), 57–69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10304312.2014.964179>.

Ritter, A. (2021). *Drug policy*. Routledge.

Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?



Ritter, A., & Lancaster, K. (2013). Policy models and influences on policy processes. In A. Ritter, T. King, & M. Hamilton (Eds.), *Drug use in Australian society* (pp.99-132).. Oxford University Press.

Ritter, A., & Lancaster, K. (2017). Making drugs policy: Policy models and influences on policy processes. In A. Ritter, T.King & N.Lee (Eds.), *Drug use in Australian society* (pp.266-291). Oxford University Press.

Victorian Government (2023), *Review of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room*, Victorian Government, Melbourne, <https://content.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-03/review-of-the-msir-final-report-february-2023.pdf>.

Whiteside, B. and Dunn, M. (2022), “The print media’s construction of the drug problem in Victorian newspapers: The case of North Richmond Community Health’s medically supervised injecting room”, *Drug and Alcohol Review*, Vol. 41 No.4, pp. 818-829.

## Newspaper Op Eds

### Herald Sun

Bartholomeusz, N. (2023), “Injection of more humanity”, *Herald Sun*, 5 May.

Biondo, S. (2021), “Demand for injecting room can’t be denied”, *Herald Sun*, 11 January.

Capp, Stan (2021), “Ignoring drug use won’t fix it”, *Herald Sun*, 16 June.

Capp, Sally (2022), “For”, *Herald Sun*, 18 August.

Carlyon, P. (2021), “Drug den dialogue silenced”, *Herald Sun*, 21 May.

Clark, N. (2019), “What we do isn’t pretty but we are saving lives”, *Herald Sun*, 12 September.

Credlin, P. (2018), “Andrews loses plot on injecting room and ice”, *Herald Sun*, 15 April.

Credlin, P. (2023), “Only Dan could entertain a drug injecting room in Bourke St”, *Herald Sun*, 16 July.

Deery, S. (2023a), “Public debate suffers in injecting room secrecy”, *Herald Sun*, 7 March.

Deery, S. (2023b), “Politics of drug injecting room has a sharp edge”, *Herald Sun*, 2 May.

Deery, S. (2024), “Premier dabbles in pill testing, cannabis reform”, *Herald Sun*, 27 February.

Delibasic, S. (2022a), “Overdue injection of truth hurting the city”, *Herald Sun*, 18 August.

Delibasic, S. (2022b), “Drug policies must protect the innocent”, *Herald Sun*, 21 October.

Mendes, Patil, Roche & Taylor: How have daily newspapers constructed the introduction of the Medically Supervised Injecting Room in Victoria, Australia?

Galbally, F. (2023), “The last thing our city needs”, *Herald Sun*, 1 May.

Gatt, W. (2022), “Rejecting injecting rooms that do harm”, *Herald Sun*, 26 August.

Johnston, M. (2019), “Dan must pay to end the horror movie”, *Herald Sun*, 15 April.

Jolly, S. (2019), “We’re in a drugs crisis and no idea should be ignored”, *Herald Sun*, 23 May.

Kealy, E. (2021), “City can’t take this drug hub”, *Herald Sun*, 25 June.

Kealy, E. (2022), “Against”, *Herald Sun*, 18 August.

Kennett, J. (2017), “Injecting room deserves to be given a chance”, *Herald Sun*, 1 November.

Kennett, J. (2018), “Liberals need change at the top”, *Herald Sun*, 28 November.

Kennett, J. (2021), “This harm cannot continue”, *Herald Sun*, 31 March.

Minear, T. (2019), “Cops need a role at injecting facility”, *Herald Sun*, 4 November.

Panahi, R. (2021), “Liberals problems run deeper than leadership”, *Herald Sun*, 19 March.

Patten, F. (2022), “Injection of sense required”, *The Age*, 5 September.

Price, S. (2020), “Drugs threat in our streets”, *Herald Sun*, 31 December.

Price, S. (2021), “Running down this town”, *Herald Sun*, 22 May.

Price, S. (2022), “Time we saw drug report”, *Herald Sun*, 20 August.

Price, S. (2023), “It’s not in the Premier’s seat”, *Herald Sun*, 11 March.

Price, S. (2024), “Time to put Capp on past mistakes”, 30 March.

Ryall, D. (2019), “Acceptance is no answer to Richmond’s drug crisis”, *Herald Sun*, 9 April.

Ryall, D. (2021), “Room #2? Hold on a second”, *Herald Sun*, 5 January.

Ryan, J. (2020), “Heroin: no easy answers”, *Herald Sun*, 9 June.

Wilkinson, L. (2020), “Drug problem makes us feel under siege”, *Herald Sun*, 13 February.

Wood, A. (2020), “Injection plan not answer”, *Herald Sun*, 29 June.

## **The Age**

Bedi, G. (2017), “Injecting room the first step in the right direction”, *The Age*, 2 November.

Biondo, S. (2018), “Injecting room not ideal, but beats the alternative”, *The Age*, 23 November.

Bonomo, Y. (2020), “It may not be pretty, but it works”, *The Age*, 7 June.

Brennan, D. (2023), “When I was using heroin, few people knew”, *The Age*, 13 April.

Cage, C. (2017), “Drug facility is just about harm reduction”, *The Age*, 6 November.

Campbell, R. (2021), “Injecting room disaster for city on brink”, *The Age*, 28 May.

McDonald, P. (2021), “More injecting rooms will save lives, ease burden”, *The Age*, 27 May.

Nottle, B. (2021), “CBD safe injection site makes sense for city’s recovery”, *The Age*, 8 July.

Patten, F. (2020), “Drug use not just an inner-city issue”, *The Age*, 19 June.

Pesutto, J. (2019), “Assess injecting room trial fairly”, *The Age*, 3 March.

Stone, A. (2019), “Community needs to be heard”, *The Age*, 15 July.