

Transparent Toilet Blocks & Vaping Quokkas: Frame and content analysis of how the Australian Media has Reported on Youth Vaping.

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Objectives: In May 2023 the Australian Federal Government announced significant new restrictions on the sale and importation of Nicotine Vape Products (NVPs). To understand the broader context of this announcement, our analysis aims to explore what framing devices were used by Australian media leading up to these announcements.

Methodology: A search of the Factiva database provided 456 news articles published from June 2018-May 2023, with 149 of these occurring in the six months prior to the announcement. We conducted a qualitative inductive frame analysis to explore how youth vaping was framed in these articles, and what aspects of the phenomena were legitimised and excluded.

Results: Dominant framing devices identified through the inductive coding process include '*a poisonous epidemic*': constructing youth vaping as alien, toxic, infectious, and escalating towards crisis. The second dominant frame was '*a failure of control*', wherein youth vaping was considered primarily a disruption of control systems such as policing, school authority, and parenting. Subsidiary frames were '*a moral failure*', either of individual vapers, or corrupt companies and politicians; and finally, '*a health behaviour*', with some media acknowledging NVP dependence as a health issue requiring treatment and support.

Discussion: These framing devices are discussed in the context of moral panic theory, and recommendations provided for how the issue of youth vaping can be responded to and discussed in a way that avoids stigmatisation and learns the lessons of past prohibitionist policies.