

Media bias for Berejiklian and against Andrews is clear

By Victoria Fielding

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Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews has endured much criticism from the media for his handling of the pandemic (image via YouTube)

The media has reported on Victoria and NSW's handling of COVID-19 in vastly different and inequitable ways, writes Dr [Victoria Fielding](#).

THROUGHOUT THE COVID-19 pandemic, an underlying complaint of the media is that it has focused disproportionately on negative coverage of Victoria Premier [Daniel Andrews](#), while giving NSW Premier [Gladys Berejiklian](#) a free pass, relatively speaking.

Members of the mainstream media hate to be accused of bias. They sometimes lash out at their accusers. This resentment culminates in news audiences on Twitter disparagingly referred to by journalists and commentators as "Dan stans" whenever they complain of journalistic attacks on Premier Andrews, whether that be at daily media conferences or in media content.

The "Dan stan" moniker represents a battle within a

wider conversation of media critique. News audiences are becoming increasingly literate in recognising and calling out misrepresentation, bias and inaccuracy in mainstream media.

Social media has given us the chance to talk back. And wow, the journalists do not appreciate it.

When you call out bias and are criticised for it – ironically by being called biased yourself – it can be hard to know what the reality is, what with all the accusations flying around.

It's akin to having an argument with someone, and instead of them engaging in the substance of what you are saying, they throw back the straw man: "I know you are, but what am I?" It's as excruciating as it was in the playground.

Journalists often respond to complaints of biased COVID coverage of Premier Andrews by asserting that Victoria has experienced the worst of the pandemic and NSW's "gold standard" response doesn't require as much scrutiny. This justification is invalid – another example of bias against Victoria – since NSW has overtaken Victoria for the total number of COVID cases acquired in that State.

[NSW](#) have a total of 27,192 community cases, as compared to [Victoria's](#) 21,539, as of September 4.

I'm sure you're wondering: is there a way to show the bias against the Victorian government's management of the pandemic?

Yes, there is.

Here is a graph which shows "Dan stans" were

correct in their analysis of media bias when it comes to comparative scrutiny of Labor Premier Andrews and Liberal Premier Berejiklian.

(@AaronDodd) [July 27, 2021](#)

The graph shows the comparative coverage of "COVID" in all Australian mainstream* news, print and online, including the ABC. This comparison includes the category of COVID overall, as well as the sub-topics of vaccines, masks, borders, contact tracing and lockdowns.

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(* Figures do not include websites *The Guardian*, *The Daily Mail*, *News.com.au* and *The Saturday Paper*. Outlets includes ABC and mastheads in capital cities and regional areas, including print and digital news sites.)

Each category is shown as a percentage of articles that mention Andrews without Berejiklian, Berejiklian without Andrews and both premiers in the same article.

As you can see, Andrews has received the most coverage – yes, it will be predominately negative and critical coverage – for COVID overall, masks, border closures, contact tracing and lockdowns.

The only category where Berejiklian, or mentions of both premiers, outperform Andrews is in the only positive category of Covid reporting, the only good news topic: vaccines.

Perhaps instead of calling their audience disparaging names, journalists across the board could consider the complaints of bias and check themselves. These figures are damning. And their gaslighting of those who complain is not helping to correct the distortion.

When Victoria locked down an apartment building Dan Andrews was labelled a "dictator". When NSW do it - crickets. Australia's media bias on full display.
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