

Honí Soít



Week 5, Semester 1, 2014

HONI SOIT QUOULD GO A DRINK Y PENSE

p.12

*Journalists
in conflict
zones*

p.15

*Review:
the latest
from Lars
Von Trier*

ILLUSTRATION BY AIMY NGUYEN



Uni failing Indigenous students



OPINION

*The road to hell is indeed paved with 'good' intentions, write **Laura Webster** and **Kyol Blakeney**.*

In its various attempts to strengthen and grow its Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, the University of Sydney has obliterated it.

In 2011, USyd appointed Professor Shane Houston as Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Indigenous Strategies and Services, an important step for the University developing Indigenous culture on campus. At the time, it seemed as though Indigenous students and staff finally would finally have a person in upper level management we could rely on to act in our best interests. In 2014, we can now say for certain that we were wrong.

Universities such as UNSW, UTS, and UWS have a wide

range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student support services and structures, including cultural advisory councils, elders in residence, and 24-hour access to safe spaces where support staff are permanently located. Such services are non-existent at USyd, which compounds the loss of our only support network, the Koori Centre.

Since his appointment Houston has consistently undermined the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community that USyd students and staff have worked decades to create. The University's website features a staff profile where Houston explains that, "We used to march in the street, but now we've found ways of sitting down and moving forward

together." Perhaps Houston actually meant, 'We've found ways of sitting down and moving forward in the direction that I want.'

To date, Houston has moved student support staff from their accessible location in the Koori Centre to a fifth-floor office across campus. He has stopped Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ITAS) sessions from being held within the computer lab. He has consistently ignored input from Indigenous students, making them feel disrespected and disempowered.

Students within the Koori Centre have stated that Houston's method of student consultation leaves

much to be desired. Typically, consultation only occurs after strategies and policies have already been approved and implemented by the university - and that's if it occurs at all.

Houston can hardly claim to be ignorant of our wishes. He has been presented with several petitions, he has attended students meetings to hear our grievances, and he had witnessed the mass rally held at the end of 2012 protesting his changes to the Koori Centre.

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We acknowledge that *Honi Soit's* office is located on the traditional lands of the Gadigal people of the Eora nation. We would like to acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work and pay our respects to the Elders past and present.

Editorial

Last Tuesday, two water buffaloes charged down King Street after escaping from a film set in Sydney Park.

The national news coverage was superb. One eyewitness told the ABC “they were just on the streets, just running”. SMH put their MH370 Hypothetical Route Graphic Consultants back to work making a stunning little map with a bold red line along King Street to indicate where the animals travelled, along King Street.

However, one flaw in the media’s efforts was the complete lack of explanation as to proper buffalo identification. How were the buffaloes identified as hydrophilic buffalo as opposed to their hydrophobic kin?

Honi Soit warns its readers that it gets even more complicated. Within the aquatic family alone, there are in fact, two separate species



“I’m one gelato ass muthafucka”

of water buffalo: domestic Asian water buffalo (*Bubalus Bubalis*) and the wild water buffalo (*Bubalis arnee*). These large bovids evolved from Bulbasaur and thrive on a diet of reeds, water hyacinth and marsh grasses.

The temperament of a water buffalo in its natural environment is best encapsulated by a photo titled ‘Water buffalo wallowing in mud’ about a fifth of the way down the Wikipedia entry for water buffalo. Nowhere on this authoritative source is there any indication that water buffalos are naturally disposed to aggressive charges up metropolitan thoroughfares like King Street. USyd students deserve answers.

After confusing WowCow with a preschool-nightclub establishment, the buffaloes condemned the backlit neon chain for its awful speciesism.

There are 172 million water buffaloes on this planet and they contribute more than 70 million tonnes of milk annually to the world food stocks. This makes them experts on dairy issues, and it was rumoured that they articulated strong theoretical opposition to King Street’s frozen yoghurt craze.

One buffalo grunted “Seriously? They turn our milk into this filthy textureless crap?” to which the other replied “Yeah, it tastes like plutonium and apparently it’s super bad for them too.”

There are also Wild African buffaloes, but we wouldn’t want to tackle too many of life’s big questions in one week’s editorial.

Have a great week kids!

Honi Soit Editors

HOW TO RUN FOR USU BOARD

1. Fabricate story about having no friends in first year. Contact friends from first year, ask them how their mother is, wait while response is given, ask for t-shirt size.
2. Buy cute dog. Harden its political resolve.
3. Join the execs of multiple societies. Subsequently discover what their acronyms stand for.
4. Watch House of Cards. Emulate.
5. Take photos with former USU presidents, dance with your opponents at underattended 90s party, endure USU coffee as political stunt. Remember: you now fucking love the Union.

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Palestine o'clock

It is time to talk about Palestine.

It has been almost 70 years since the Nakbah (‘the Catastrophe’) of 1948, in which more than 700,000 Palestinians fled their homes, marking the beginning of an ongoing program of ethnic cleansing that has largely gone unnoticed in the West. This may be a controversial position (indeed, any criticism of the State of Israel is controversial, and allegedly anti-Semitic) but it is not without support. Richard Falk, the UN Special Rapporteur on occupied Palestine, found that Israeli policies are coloured by “unacceptable characteristics of colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing.”

The crimes of Israel often pass into the realm of the unimaginable. For instance, in the 2008 assault on the Gaza Strip, Israeli politicians contrived a starvation policy that limited humanitarian aid into the region. While health officials determined that 170 truckloads of food were required each day, the policy only permitted the entry of 67. In the words of Dov Weisglass, chief-of-staff under Ariel Sharon, “The idea is to put the Palestinians on a diet, but not to make them die of hunger.”

In February, Amnesty International released a report finding that the Israeli Defence Force had “displayed a callous disregard for human life by killing dozens of Palestinian civilians, including children, in the occupied West Bank over the past three years with near total impunity.” The IDF doesn’t seem to have heeded this criticism. Only last week, B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights NGO, reported on the extrajudicial execution of a 14-year-old boy by live fire. Yusef a-Shawamreh was not guilty of any crime, nor did he possess a threat to Israel or its citizens. He was simply crossing through a breach in the Separation Barrier (deemed illegal under international law by the International Court of Justice in 2004) into farmland owned by his family to pick edible plants. For this crime he was shot at and killed.

I do not have the space here to detail all of the crimes that Israel has committed against the people of Palestine, but I will make one thing very clear: opposition to these crimes against humanity does not entail opposition to the existence of the State of Israel, nor does it involve hatred of the Jewish people. This is reflected in the existence of Jewish groups like B’Tselem, Matzpen, and Jewish Voice for Peace, among others, which are committed to exposing and combating Israel’s egregious human rights violations.

I find it dumbfounding that we are so quick to condemn human rights abuses in Russia, for example, but tiptoe around the question of Israel for fear of causing offense.

The greatest affront we can commit is not to the sensitivities of Zionists, but to the very ideals of humanity. The facts stand, and they have been repeatedly reaffirmed over decades by groups like Amnesty International, the United Nations, and Human Rights

Watch. We cannot, and we must not, overlook these crimes. We must not shy away from them, lest we become complicit in our silence.

The late Palestinian poet and national hero, Mahmoud Darwish, spoke of “a time to test the teachings: can helicopters be turned into ploughshares?” If we are to see that time come, we must not turn a blind eye to the plight of the Palestinians.

Fahad Ali
BMedSc/MBBS III

Mariana can’t stop and she won’t stop

Dearest darling editors,

Listen you fuckers, I don’t know what aniseed-laced koala shit they’ve got you smoking in that editorial dungeon, but enough is enough.

Letters to the editor(s) are an important tradition which keeps the spirit of interaction between readers and editors alive.

It is where paid student politicians can discuss pressing issues such as their favourite building on campus, and where everyone who isn’t a law student can make fun of law students.

Therefore, a read receipt is not too much to ask for. All I want is a simple reply - of any length - notifying me of the fact that my letter to the editors has been received. Yes, simply a “received” would suffice.

The last two letters I sent, although they were published, received no reply. An ounce of consideration is not too much to ask for. Clearly you have the time to photoshop surrealist art onto covers of terrible news publications for your satire section, but what about me? It isn’t fair.

I hate that song. Now look what you’ve done.

This is a very important concern and I would appreciate prompt compensation for grief caused, so that I may finally escape this overwhelming sense of rejection.

Enough is enough. Put down the koala shit pipe, I implore you.

In solidarity,

Mariana Podesta-Diverio
Arts (Sociology Hons.) V [sic]



Moot schmoot

Dear Honi,

I write in response to the segment of last week’s Manning Files titled ‘Shaking in Your Moots’, and its extended online version ‘SULS red-faced after moot plagiarism’, which revealed that the problem question for SULS’ international law moot had been lifted from a textbook.

While I applaud any coverage of my very niche hobby, I question the ethics

of publishing this story. Mooting questions are regularly adapted from old questions or real cases, although they are usually attributed to the original source. While the ‘author’ probably should have mentioned it was taken from a textbook, this is not even the best scandal involving SULS and dishonest conduct to come out of Sydney Law School in the last six months.

Even if we were to agree that the ‘author’ acted reprehensibly, he’s just some guy. There is no suggestion that anybody on the SULS executive had a clue that anything was amiss. So why bother using Honi’s significant circulation (50,000 according to Wikipedia, although I could have sworn it’s actually 4,000) to embarrass him?

Anyway, the real question here is why so many people were consulting Hall’s Principles of International Law. It’s certainly no Brownlie’s Principles of International Law.

Hoping for some better go\$\$ this week,

Hannah Ryan
Arts/Law VII

Putin wants a pen pal

Dear editors,

With the recent bully tactics employed by Russia, I thought you might invite your readers to pen a message to Mr Putin. I just found a website enabling anyone to directly send a letter.

The site is the Russian Kremlin and it has a form allowing you to send him a message. This is the link: <http://eng.news.kremlin.ru/>

On the top menu there is a link “Send a letter”. It needs to be written in Russian script, but there are internet sites enabling you to do just that by copying & pasting, eg: <http://translate.google.com.au>

It must be addressed: To the President of Russia and not be more than 2000 characters. I just forwarded a piece and realized many more people might like to send something.

Cheers,
Pete

Think of the Catholics?

I write in reply to Alessandro Cowley’s letter from last week’s edition, in which he outlines how offended he is by Honi Soit mocking the Pope. Alessandro draws comparisons to racism, classism and ableism. The difference is that a person can’t choose to be black and there is nothing wrong with it anyway. One does choose whether to be part of a religion and they should bear some responsibility for its crimes and quirks.

The Catholic Church is one of the richest, most powerful institutions in the world. Complaining about people mocking the Pope in a student paper is like me complaining about “misandry”. Throughout most of its history the Church has been the oppressor, not the oppressed. Critiquing the powerful is not discrimination. It is integral to civil society.

Whilst in some circumstances like

the workplace Catholics people deserve the same protections against discrimination as genuine marginalised groups, that is not the case for Honi Soit. Debating or mocking religious beliefs in public discourse at a university is not unusual or wrong.

Considering the crusades, inquisitions, slaughter of Native Americans, witch hunts, the film Noah starring Russell Crowe, helping spread AIDS in Africa, collaboration with Fascists in Spain, telling people they will go to hell for sodomy, institutional child abuse and of course believing the world goes around because of magic, making fun of a silly hat the Pope used to wear is letting Catholics off lightly.

Regards,

Tom Raue

For fuck’s sake, talk about Donut King for once, not that guy above

Hello Honi Soit.

I am a long time reader of, and writer to, this venerable publication. My love of this magazine has been carefully cultured over 7 years of study at USyd. I applaud your efforts, noted in the most recent issue’s editorial, to “recount facts, describe perspectives, and [to] try to make sense of unfolding events.” Nevertheless, I believe that your mission statement needs a re-think.

The bickering that goes on in the USU and SRC is boring, and irrelevant to the majority of students. I suggest that the people who find those issues exciting would be a minority.

A devil’s advocate appears. “Hey guy, if you don’t like it then ignore it and flick the pages so you can read that awesome jury service piece by Lane Sainty!”

Usually I’d agree with that sentiment but I have a problem with that attitude here. First, I believe that giving attention to present bickering encourages future bickering. That is undesirable for the reasons stated above. Second, I have reason to believe that the bickering is distracting the USU from their more practical duties.

Case in point: I sent the USU an email the other day DEMANDING that Donut King be returned to its rightful place in the Wentworth Building. Newer students might be unaware that a deal used to be available on campus, where one could get a large coffee AND two delicious, fresh cinnamon donuts for about \$4, with your seventh coffee being a free one! PLUS, the friendly staff knew your name, they didn’t yell at you, and they had a system that worked dammit. The Union ignored my plea for the return of that beloved puffy pastry franchise. Probably because they were too busy bickering over pointless shit that no-one cares about.

So let’s limit the conversation about this “Tom Raue” character and focus instead on more practical matters. Like Donut King.

Good day,

Jeremiah B. Cronshaw
JD I

NDA not dampened by rain, police or ponies

Christina White and Georgia Behrens report on the National Day of Action protests. PHOTO BY ALISHA AITKEN-RADBURN

University of Sydney students gathered to protest the Coalition government's higher education policies in the National Union of Students' 'National Day of Action' last Wednesday.

Around the country, more than 1000 protesters voiced opposition to \$2.3 billion of tertiary education cuts announced by the government in December last year, as well as potential legislative reforms including the privatisation of HECS and the abolition of the Student Services and Amenities Fee.

At the University of Sydney, students expressed concern at a recent Group of Eight proposal to deregulate fees for in-demand courses such as Commerce and Law, and at proposed reforms to the University Library system.

Attendance at the USyd rally was substantially lower than at the 2013 NDA, but USyd Education Officer and NDA organiser Eleanor Morley said she believed the rally had served as a clear indication of students' opposition

to the Coalition's policies.

"There has already been a massive amount of opposition to the Abbott Government in the six months since he was elected, and actions such as this continue to demonstrate that people, in particular students, won't take these attacks lying down," she said.

The protest was largely uneventful, but some USyd students expressed concern at the "laughable" presence of mounted police at the rally.

"The police presence was completely over the top. A couple of dozen police accompanied a completely peaceful protest. I'm sure they could be put to better use," said prominent USyd activist Tom Raue.

The NDA has become a regular feature on student activists' calendars in the past few years, with organisers insisting that rallies continue to play an important role in shaping governments' legislative agendas.

USyd Education Officer Ridah Hasson



POLICE DEVASTATED TO FIND ALL COPIES OF "THE ANARCHIST'S COOKBOOK" OUT ON LOAN

said she believed that protests, such as the NDA, had informed the Labor Opposition's decision to reject its own proposed tertiary education cuts in the Senate late last year.

"The education campaign last year proved that protests work," she said.

"Through their own action at protests, students turned education into an election issue and made the cuts unpopular among the general population."

Board rebuffs USU communications plan

Justin Pen attended a bored meeting to deliver this report.

Last Friday's USU Board meeting saw the rejection of a new communications strategy, which promoted the Union to the University of Sydney student body.

The proposed plan was panned for its emphasis on brand promotion, and its failure to create a dialogue with students.

Concerns about the plan were first raised by Vice-President Tom Raue, who argued it could potentially discourage students from expressing legitimate concerns with USU operations.

"We shouldn't be selling the Union to students, we should be the voice of students," he said.

Raue also raised concerns about the sponsorship of USU events and programs by Sydney businesses, arguing that excessive corporate sponsorship had eroded the Board's ability to communicate and promote events to its students.

Board Directors Robby Magyar and Bebe D'Souza agreed with Raue. The pair pointed towards the recent Members' Forum on USU Transparency, where similar concerns were raised by members of the student body.

D'Souza cited concerns raised at the Forum that student leaders should not necessarily be "brand ambassadors".

The Board unanimously agreed to

return the plan to marketing and communications for alteration.

The Board also approved a request for additional capital expenditure intended for the further development of the Laneway Café, which is slated to replace the newsagency on the second floor of the Wentworth Building later this year.

Several recommendations to amend the constitution were also raised by Board Director Kade Denton, which were unanimously assented to by Board in anticipation of the Union's Annual General Meeting on 28 May.

Noteworthy among the proposals was a recommendation to replace every instance of "women" with "women-identifying" within the USU constitution, in an attempt to increase inclusivity within the Union.

Discussion of sales and marketing report also revealed that, though revenue from ACCESS cards had declined, the total amount of card sales had risen. This follows the drop in membership cost, from \$99 to \$75, in 2014.

The meeting was Raue's first since he was suspended from Board following recent legal action between the Vice-President and the Board Executive.

Two hours of the meeting were conducted in-camera, during which members and staff were temporarily vacated and forced to wait in the hallway.

Old habits die hard

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKAELA BARTELS



Lynch trial drags on until April

Nick Rowbotham reports on the progress of Jake Lynch's trial.

A racial discrimination action taken against Sydney University academic Jake Lynch continued in the Federal Court last Tuesday.

Associate Professor Lynch – who is the director of USyd's Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies (CPACS) – was taken to court by Israeli legal group Shurat HaDin in October last year after he refused to endorse a fellowship application for Hebrew University academic Dan Avnon, citing a CPACS' policy in support of the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

"References to the refusal of Snoop Dog to travel to Israel prompted laughter in the courtroom."

Shurat HaDin alleged that Lynch's actions violated sections 9, 13, 16 and 17 of the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

BDS promotes an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, equality under the law for Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the right of return of Palestinian refugees to their homeland.

At Tuesday's hearing, Lynch's lawyer Yves Hazan sought to have much of the substance of Shurat HaDin's statement of claim struck out due to a lack of specific allegations against Professor Lynch that could constitute a breach of the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

"The applicants need to tell us what the material facts are," he told the court.

Shurat HaDin said Lynch's refusal to sponsor Avnon's fellowship application impinged on his "rights to education; freedom of association; freedom of

expression; academic freedom, and work".

Andrew Hamilton, Shurat HaDin's lawyer, argued that the statement of claim was sufficient, and that general references to the BDS movement in the claim were important because "everything [Lynch] has done is because of his support for BDS."

Hazan submitted that Shurat HaDin's attempt to establish a breach of the Act by linking Lynch to the international BDS movement was "an overreach."

References to the refusals of Meg Ryan, Dustin Hoffman, Elvis Costello, Santana and Snoop Dogg to travel to Israel in recent years prompted laughter in the courtroom. "What are the primary facts that link them and pin them to the respondent?" Hazan asked.

Justice Alan Robertson, who is presiding over the case, commented that there had been "far too much by the way of socio-political slogans" in the case. "One needs to start with simpler facts," he said.

Professor Avnon is now at the University, having managed to secure his fellowship without Lynch's signature. He told *The Australian* last month he had no interest in being involved in the case.

There was additional debate in the court about Shurat HaDin's capacity to pay Lynch's legal costs in the event that he wins the case. Hazan contended that Hamilton had not provided sufficient evidence that his Australian assets could cover Lynch's costs. Hamilton will have a chance to respond when the court sits again on April 24.

*Note: These legal proceedings will be unaffected by recently proposed amendments to section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act*.

USU consults members to improve organisational transparency

Lane Sainty is translucent, at best.

Opinions flew but tempers did not fray in the University of Sydney Union's Transparency Members Forum, held last Wednesday in the Holme Building.

Facilitated by Board Directors Tara Waniganayaka and Bebe D'Souza, the forum was held as part of a current review into the accountability mechanisms and level of transparency within the USU. Approximately 60 students attended the forum, the majority hailing from various campus political factions and student media outlets.

Forum participants largely expressed a desire for more transparency within the USU, with a lengthy discussion about the extent to which Board Directors are permitted to speak out about Board decisions. Several people expressed the view that directors should be able to say when they have dissented from a decision and speak in a personal capacity about aspects of the USU they disagree with.

This issue is particularly pertinent as USU members wait to find out if Vice-President Tom Raue will be removed for alleged misconduct. Raue's initial censure in 2012 was due to comments he made online and in *Honi Soit* denouncing the USU LifeChoice club and Interfaith Week.

The issue of naming USU staff during the live-tweeting of Board meetings,

which is presently not allowed, was another topic of much discussion. Somewhat remarkably, the level of detail and rapidity of dissemination of the minutes from Board meetings also provoked enthusiastic contributions.

USU President Hannah Morris acknowledged the forum was not a catch-all solution, but labelled it a valuable way of hearing from members. "There are still many more avenues through which the Board could enhance our communication with members, and there is a lot of room for improvement," Morris said. "But this forum and the discussions we are having now are a step in the right direction."

The forum ran for the allocated two hours, with several unaddressed agenda points to be discussed at a future meeting. Waniganayaka said this second forum will "attempt to provide more of a Q&A style setting in response to member feedback from the first forum."

Once the consultation process— involving the forum, online submissions and discussions with relevant stakeholders— has been completed, D'Souza and Waniganayaka will compile a report, which will include recommendations for the Board to consider on the matters of transparency and accountability.

fact, Indigenous enrolment and retention rates have dropped as proportion of total enrolment from one per cent in 2010 to 0.82 per cent in 2012. Is this decline a product of Winge's Mura or

While some may see this as a win we say it is nothing more than a token gesture. It merely gives the appearance the University is listening to its discontented students. After all, it was Housto who moved support staff in the

CHALLENGE TO THE USU: MATCH THIS PAPER'S TRANSPARENCY

USyd researchers seek to define 'normality'

Stephanie White wants to know if she's normal.*

Scientists around the world will soon have access to a database that catalogues what is 'normal' across the human population, thanks to the efforts of researchers from the University of Sydney.

The ground-breaking 1000 Norms Project is working on cataloguing both normality and variation among healthy Australians from the ages of three to 100. This data will be used to help clinicians better diagnose disease by comparing patients' condition to

that of the general healthy population.

Researchers hope that the project will improve the scientific community's understanding of the range of normal variation between healthy individuals. Jennifer Baldwin, one of two primary researchers for the project explained that the database "will transform our understanding of the boundaries of health and disease and influence how we define healthy aging."

The initiative will catalogue statistics

such as body measurements, balance, strength, power, coordination and movement.

The 1000 Norms Project database will be shared internationally by the University of Sydney via a free, secure online portal for clinicians and researchers.

While she recognises that 'normal' is a loaded term, Marnee McKay, the second primary researcher for the project stated that "it is important

for clinicians to be able to measure norms so they can assess health and function."

Summarising the purpose of the initiative, McKay stated that "knowledge of healthy human variation is essential for clinicians to make a diagnosis and evaluate the effect of treatment."

*Ed's note: She's not

THE MANNING FILES

PRAISE BE TO THE MARKET

In a solid win for the invisible hand, credit rating agency Moody's has given the University an Aa1 rating.

This will make it easier for USyd to borrow money for the next few decades before you start paying off your HECS.

The Moody's report talked about "healthy" financial performance thanks to USyd's medical history of

staff cuts and malignant exploitation of international students.

The White House welcomed the increase in the debt ceiling, but stated that you "cannot predict the future".

THE USU'S NEXT TOP MODEL

Amid discussions of organizational transparency and the prospect of expelling its Vice-President, the USU has decided it is the opportune time to launch a #usumodelcallout on Instagram.

"We'll pick our faves to be part of our upcoming USU photoshoot," the Union stated from their Facebook account.

Notable entrants include aforementioned VP-for-now-at-time-of-print, and scorching hottie, Tom Raue.

DINING WITH DICKHEADS

The Sydney University Liberal Club has been out-Libbing themselves this semester.

Last week they dined with Scott Morrison, who didn't reply to us saying he refused to comment on "water and wanker matters".

Seeking forgiveness (jokes), the Libs managed to catch Cardinal Pell in the zero seconds between testifying at the child abuse royal commission and jetting off to the Vatican.

Mitt Romney is set to host the next soiree. Rumour has it Reagan will be resurrected for the event.

#USUMODELCALLOUT MAKES SUPERMODEL CAREERS



WHO ARE THE LIBS HAVING DINNER WITH TONIGHT?



Spanking the rankings

Max Hall investigates flaws in University ranking systems.

ILLUSTRATION BY LAURA PRECUP

Rankings are easy to love. We turn to the guidance of music charts, Buzzfeed's "Ten greatest crazes of the nineties", and all manner of other lists to reduce entire subject areas into an easily digestible format. This appeal is not lost in the world of tertiary education, where yearly rankings have come to dominate the discourse surrounding the quality of our universities.

Since the first global list was published in 2003, the number of rankings devised by media and consultancy groups eager to claim their share of the growing industry has grown to fifteen widely recognised lists by 2013.

A report by the European Universities Association found that "rankings enjoy a high level of acceptance among stakeholders and the wider public" largely due to "their simplicity and consumer-type information". Academics and consumer groups have only recently begun to raise concerns that the popularity of published rankings may disproportionately influence choices made by high school students, affecting the management decisions of universities without regard for the problems inherent to current ranking systems.

Little information about the methods used to compare universities is provided publicly, calling into question the transparency of results. The data used is often given on a voluntary basis by the tertiary institutions themselves. Indeed, the details that are available indicate a worrying disconnect between the frequently changing methodologies used and the outcomes they claim to measure.

For instance, the Academic Ranking of World Universities assesses the "quality of faculty" by counting the number of Nobel Laureates employed

at the university. This system also grants 50 percent weight to research output in the final aggregate.

From the perspective of an enrolling high school student, these criteria reveal nothing about the quality of undergraduate education they are likely to receive. The research conducted by a lecturer has little to do with their ability to teach a class, just as the likelihood of mere undergrads being allowed anywhere near well remunerated Nobel Laureates is effectively zero.

Such inconsistencies abound among other popular lists. The Times Higher Education rankings gauge "teaching quality" using nothing more than the ratio of students to faculty members, once again heavily biasing results towards smaller, research focused universities. Other factors including the number of PhDs awarded in the past year, and an obscure survey of "faculty reputation" conducted amongst "experienced scholars" at other universities bear heavily on the final list.

The fatal flaw of current rankings is simple: so long as ranking criterion and the weight assigned to them are purely arbitrary, the subjective interests of groups compiling lists will continue to masquerade as an objective assessment of merit.

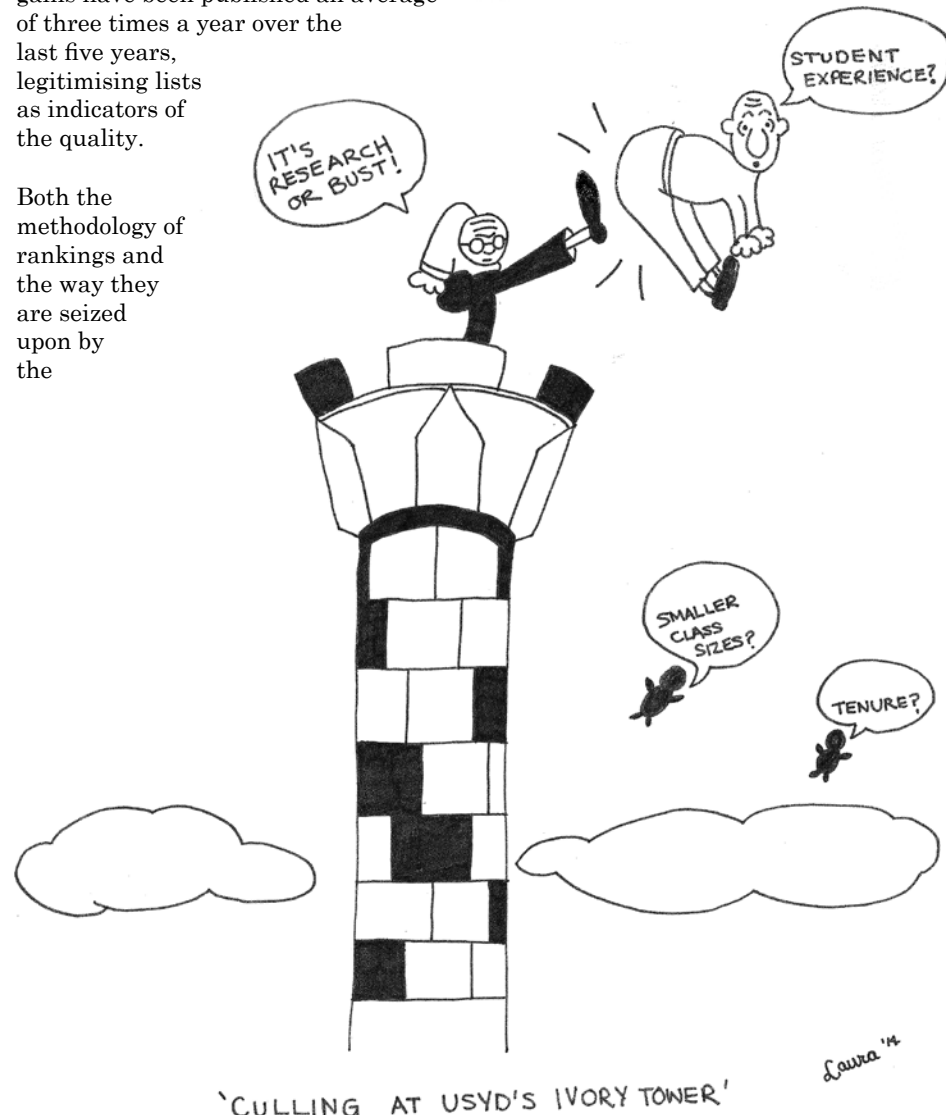
The most disturbing outcome of this, perhaps, is recent evidence that rankings now form a key part of the management of universities, where they are used to justify funding, dictate enrolment strategies, and determine the bonuses of executives. This inevitably leads to a focus on those areas most likely to improve rankings, namely research. At USyd, the number of research graduates has risen steadily over the last five years

in tandem with a marketing approach that heavily emphasises expanded research, particularly in medical science.

The extent to which consideration of rankings has influenced this expansion is unclear, but the university undoubtedly recognises the usefulness of global lists as a marketing tool. Press releases celebrating ranking gains have been published an average of three times a year over the last five years, legitimising lists as indicators of the quality.

Both the methodology of rankings and the way they are seized upon by the

public relations operations of our institutions remain significant barriers to a better discussion about the needs and priorities of universities. As universities continue to face financial strain in light of \$2.3 billion of government cuts to tertiary education it is crucial that the pursuit of a better place in global ranking not take place at the expense of the average university student.



Opinions should start discussions, if you have an opinion about an opinion please send us a letter!

Let's talk about \$ex, baby

Isabelle Comber isn't sure if it's okay to use sexual currency in the workplace.

sneakily hang out at the same watering hole as our potential employers, or none of this and just fuck the boss.

The term sexual currency can cover a plethora of styles of sexual interaction exercised in return for resources and other gratification; anything from intercourse or oral sex, to simply wearing revealing clothing or being flirtatious.

Many liberal feminists theorise that sexuality is similar to any other attribute someone might use to make themselves more successful in a workplace. Ever since Gloria Steinem, some thinkers have argued that there is little way to differentiate between the use of attributes such as charisma or flirtation, and other characteristics such as confidence and friendliness that aren't labelled as sexual currency.

As a curvaceous lady who has more than once been eloquently described as having "an ass that

won't quit", I have considered the merit of this argument extensively. My sexuality may be none of your business, but it should rightfully be a part of mine – if I so choose. The issue gets complicated because sexuality can be bribery in its own right. If I wanted to engage in bribery, then I would also be tempted to use my sexual currency. The problem is I'm not sure this would bring me respect or authority.

Whilst I'm tossing this choice around, some women have no option but to utilise their sexuality in a professional context – or have that sexuality forced upon them. Many women are hired on the basis of their sexual wiles and femininity alone. If sexuality is being used as an appeal point for clients, then how do we know if it is being used as a prerequisite for employment?

It is important to mention that men are also capable of using sexuality to get ahead. I mean, if

I was a CEO I'd definitely prefer to hire the coffee boy who wanted to give me a daily head job ("I'll take a double with extra froth, thanks"). The expectation is just not as restrictive. If a man engages in sexual relations with a higher employer or client, there is little stigma attached – a man could never be perceived as a slut, whore or gold digger as man's sexuality is inherent, not an agenda. Their actions do not set a standard or identity trait of their entire gender, as it does for women. Cue a deep sigh into my power suit.

So it appears sexual currency is thriving, whether we like it or not. But should we be investing in our sexuality to invest in our futures? This wannabe mogul's two cents is thus; no individual should be judged for what they choose to do in the sexual domain, but if you're going to commoditise your body to reach the top, then you'll probably have to deal with the fact that your sexuality got you there, not any other points of merit.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Houston, we've got a problem

Currently, Houston's pet project is the Wingara Muara – Bunga Barrabugu strategy. The strategy looks good on paper, with a purported focus on increasing student engagement in tertiary education. However, it is undercut by the total absence of implementation and action plans.

The Indigenous Strategies and Services (ISS) Department is quick to remind us that similar plans have been deployed at various universities around the world. But, while they appear to be working well on these campuses, at USyd, they are failing. We believe this is because the Centre for Cultural Competence (which is highly focussed on research) is replacing the student support hub the Koori Centre once provided.

Such action is particularly disappointing for a University that states, "We believe in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander participation at every level of our study, work and research". One of the key tenets of Wingara Muara is purportedly its focus on recognising Indigenous Students' "rights, opportunity and capability". But in reality,

the ISS department is doing the opposite; it is destroying the sense of community and belonging that once existed in the now-crumbling Koori Centre.

Houston is quick to boast the ISS department receives several Commonwealth grants, which provided more than \$60 million in 2013. Current students, however, have yet to see how these funds have benefitted them directly.

"The Indigenous Strategies and Services Department is destroying the sense of community that once existed in the Koori Centre."

December 2013 alone saw the department receive \$15 million in Commonwealth grants, a portion of which is aimed at establishing an engagement plan to entice Indigenous youth to attend the University of Sydney. These figures are startling to the Indigenous students who had enrolled prior to 2014. They are being left behind both in support

and funding, which all seems to be due to the lack of concern that Wingara Muara has for current students.

In fact, Indigenous enrolment and retention rates have dropped as a proportion of total enrolment from one per cent in 2010 to 0.82 per cent in 2012. Is this decline a product of Wingara Muara or the losses to accessible student support? It's difficult to say. We

can say however, that as members of the Koori Centre who have seen firsthand the changes Houston has implemented, we're not optimistic about our future.

Koori Centre students have been informed that student support staff have been allocated a part-time office in the Old Teachers College, and that academic staff

have been relocated to the Arts and Education faculties across the road.

While some may see this as a win, we say it is nothing more than a token gesture. It merely gives the appearance the University is listening to its discontented students. After all, it was Houston who moved support staff in the first place. Deb Reid, Senior Manager of Trust and Engagement at the ISS, has stated that changes "will not happen overnight".

She further asserts the ISS department is working hard to create a functioning and inclusive space for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and that it's engaging in discussions with faculties to improve on their accessibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

It seems, however, that Wingara Muara is more concerned with pushing for a high volume of enrolments at the expense of providing quality support and a culturally safe space that welcomes current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Flyndr: feeling flycurious | 🧪

Felicity Nelson tries out a new match-making service for flies. ILLUSTRATION BY MONICA RENN

Scientists have combined lasers and genetics to encourage mice to run in circles, form false memories of fearful experiences in flies, and stop worms from wiggling through light-stimulation techniques. Now, the use of lasers in neuroscience has even led scientists to control flirting in flies.

A new Fly Mind-Altering Device (FlyMAD) uses tracking technology to pass an infrared light through exoskeletons of genetically modified flies to control their behaviour.

It is hoped that this field of optogenetics will offer a biological explanation of how the human brain works, eventually mapping neurological disorders involved in depression, schizophrenia and Alzheimer's.

The human brain is a dense network of interwoven cells, controlled by intricately timed electrical signals and biochemical messengers. The greatest obstacle to understanding it is our inability to break down its complexity. Electrical stimulation is too crude

a tool that sparks all circuitry in one location, whilst drugs act too slowly to be useful in studying brain activity in real time. To best crack the secrets of the brain, we need a way of controlling one cell type at a time.

The idea of using light to stimulate individual neurons originated with

challenge lay in making particular neurons in animal brains light sensitive.

It was only in 2004 that research teams working in two separate fields realized, by a brilliant stroke of luck, that they could combine their research to solve this problem. One research team

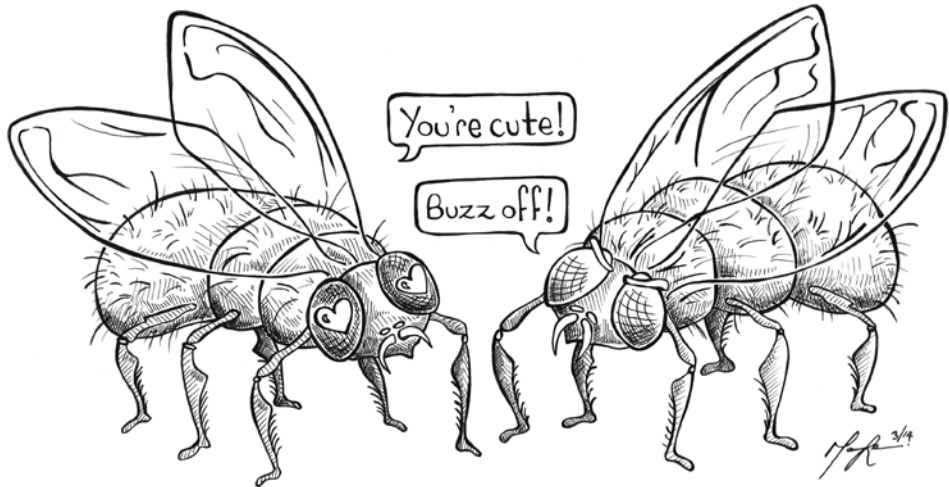
cells in culture, which then began to express the protein in their cell walls. When light was shone onto the cells the proteins would immediately activate the neurons. With a lot of hard work and a bit of genius thrown in, scientists had made a huge leap in developing a technique that could help decode the human brain.

Using this technique, scientists can now evoke behavioural responses in freely moving animals by remotely activating these light-sensitive neurons with lasers. Researchers believe these methods can be used to discover what neurons control decision-making in animals, and eventually unravel the mysteries of the mammalian mind. Optogenetics has already shed light on the neurological processes in Parkinson's disease, autism and drug abuse.

Should we be worried about the dangers posed by an army of mind-controlled mice in the near future? Probably. Should we be excited about finally understanding how our minds work? Definitely.

the famous DNA decoder Francis Crick in the 80s. He suggested that light could be the key to targeting specific brain cells. However, the

isolated the genetic sequence for a light-sensitive protein from green algae, whilst another transferred the genetic sequence into animal



Into the whiteness | 🏠

Hard laws aren't enough to provoke meaningful cultural change, argues Ezreena Yahya.

Attorney-General George Brandis's proposal to repeal sections 18C and 18D of the Racial Discrimination Act have attracted a flurry of backlash in the past week. Currently, the former makes it unlawful to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" a person or group because of their "race, colour or national or ethnic origin", while the latter contains exemptions which protect freedom of speech. Critics have argued the proposed changes are too weak to meaningfully protect the rights of racial minorities. But then again, are statutory provisions enough to redress systemic racism?

Hard laws, though welcome measures of deterrence, are inadequate to stimulate cultural change. Minority groups should not feel secure in Australia's public spaces solely due to statutory provisions. They should feel secure because people would not say racially offensive or hateful things in the first place.

Indigenous education is one policy area which needs progressive reform to enhance our understanding of Indigenous culture and stamp out racial prejudice. What is needed to garner societal support for

diversity beyond symbolic provisions is a coordinated, federal-state education strategy which attaches equal importance to the histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other racial minorities.

In New South Wales, Aboriginal Studies and Aboriginal Languages are not mandatory courses in the state K-12 syllabus. To achieve improvements in education outcomes, Aboriginal education should be made integral to the curriculum for all students. A more comprehensive, in-depth syllabus which engages with Aboriginal perspectives across the curriculum should be formulated – one that highlights the vitality of Aboriginal cultures beyond the exoticising lens, which plays on myths and stereotypes that further fuel racial prejudice.

The wider Australian society has a lot to benefit from learning about Indigenous experiences. On Aboriginal history, Dr Lorraine Towers, an expert on educational history from the Faculty of Education and Social Work at the University of Sydney says, "It's not about guilt. Aboriginal history is part of our common history that is 'shared' but experienced

so differently – it is of great value for all, not only to comprehend the tragedies and injustice but the achievements and contributions of Aboriginal people, and gives insight into the diverse realities of our contemporary society."

Dr Towers also highlights the importance of developing the knowledge, skills, and understanding of all teachers about Aboriginal people, their histories, cultures, and experience in Australia. "It's not just about intentions, it's also about having well-trained teachers and staff with a sophisticated understanding of the world in which they live, with knowledge of diverse Aboriginal histories, cultures, perspectives, and who have the skills and awareness to effectively engage in learning partnerships with their Aboriginal students and local Aboriginal communities," she says.

"The knowledge and skills that make effective teachers of Aboriginal students, make them effective teachers of all students."

When formulating policies to uproot racism from its very core, it is not enough to police and silence. What should complement

hard laws is a holistic mechanism which harnesses positive civic values such as self-respect, respect for others, and their cultures. Treating Aboriginal Studies and Languages to be just as important as English, Mathematics, and Science is one way of instilling those values.

Supporters of Brandis's proposed changes can masquerade as vigilantes guarding the sanctity of libertarianism and the freedom of speech— and lay quiet on the issue of systemic racism.

Currently, section 18C works like gauze used to dress the wounds of racial offense and humiliation. The onus is on the government to display a serious commitment to reconciliation by working in partnership with Aboriginal communities and further cultivating the cultural competency of all teachers. It is and will undoubtedly continue to be a work in progress. However, only after we have policies and practices which include all members of Australia's vibrant demographic in our education curricula can we prevent or ameliorate the diseases of intolerance and bigotry from eating away our society.

Old white boys football club | ⚽

Black footballers are missing out on coaching opportunities, writes Will Xi.

Last month, Chris Hughton was appointed manager of English football team Norwich City. With this appointment, he became the only black manager of any of the 92 teams in English football's top four divisions. Currently, approximately 25 per cent of players in those divisions are black, and black players from England and overseas have made significant impacts on the game for the past 30 to 40 years. The dearth of black football coaches, therefore, doesn't seem to be the result of problems with the quality, prestige, or quantity of prospective black coaches. But, as Hughton recently said, there is still a "massive imbalance in those from a playing capacity going through to management." Why?

Football itself is generally relatively meritocratic— it is, after all, a results business. Coaches will pick the best players for their side when their jobs depend on it, and academies scour the world looking for the best young talent. While English football does have problems with racism from supporters and

coaching staff, these problems aren't on the same level as those their counterpart Italian or Russian leagues have discovered, in which there have been multiple incidents of monkey chants and targeted heckling of players of colour.

But the boardrooms that hire and fire coaches of all levels are overwhelmingly white. And whilst those decisions are rarely made with race as a conscious factor, there seems to be a cultural problem within the inner circles of football management and decision-making. Michael Johnson, a decorated, highly experienced black player was outspoken on the issue, suggesting that the boardroom may not be "thinking that a black player is educated enough to go upstairs in a boardroom capacity."

This is, perhaps, epitomised in media characterisations of talented black players. Star Ivorian Coast striker Didier Drogba and countryman Yaya Toure are described as "beasts" and "powerful", while their white

counterparts are "imaginative", "creative", or "a genius". Attention is consistently given to black players' physical attributes, rather than the mental capabilities they would regularly need to exercise in order to succeed in the intricately tactical and complex game.

Moreover, there are few black club captains or vice-captains. Vincent Kompany of Manchester City is currently the only black EPL captain. Such positions of responsibility are generally awarded to players seen to be mature, tactically sound, and to have strong management skills. It seems that, while a black player may be well thought of as a player, he may not be seen to have the strategic or tactical prowess needed in positions of authority.

All this, combined with an "old boys" mentality amongst managers and players in leadership positions sees a self-perpetuating cycle of successful white players being offered coaching positions often at the expense of equally, if not more decorated, black colleagues.

And with very few pundits in mainstream and online commentary nominating black players for coaching and managerial positions, black players simply aren't even in the conversation.

Elsewhere, American Football had faced a similar issue with a lack of diversity in coaching positions, leading to the introduction of what's known as the Rooney Rule, which requires that at least one black person be interviewed for each position of authority in the league. It's been relatively successful, too; there are now eight black coaches in the NFL.

Cyrus Mehri, the civil rights lawyer that headed the campaign for the Rooney Rule, has recently become the face of a fresh campaign to institute similar changes to the EPL and its lower divisions. It seems that, at last, the English may have realised that something needs to change.

After all, Chris Hughton won't stick around forever.

Our family is dying young | 👁

Anonymous describes the human impact of indigenous life expectancy statistics.

Another of my uncles died last week. I received a text from my mum while I was in a lecture to let me know. When I asked how she was, she replied, "All my family is dying."

I suppose that's true.

I was eight or nine when I went to my first funeral. It was for someone I'd called 'uncle' my whole life, though he wasn't strictly related to either of my parents. The church was hot, the service was long, and the drive to the cemetery was mundane. The reception was muted and we left early.

I've been to enough funerals now that they've begun to feel the same. The churches blur into one hall of wooden pews, and though we've buried our dead in cemeteries up and down the coast, they coalesce into a single stretch of land — mountains pressing in from one side, and a single-lane highway with encroaching greenery pressing in from another.

I'm writing this in Sydney while the rest of my family is in mourning in the Far North of the country. When they were laying my uncle to rest in my hometown, I was sitting in a cool lecture theatre — learning some essential aspect of our colonialist legal system no doubt.

At its most general, the Indigenous life expectancy gap means more deaths and more funerals. The way this plays out in individual lives and specific communities will vary. Lately, for me, it plays out in the funerals I keep missing— three or four in the last 18 months alone— and the shame of not being there each time. For my mum, a woman in her 60s, all four of her brothers are dead, and deaths in our extended family mean she travels back home once or twice a year now.

Our family is dying young, as the statistics suggested they might, but however incisive the statistics, they can't convey the minutia of death— how mundane the pain has began to feel, how familiar, how expected.

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Taking candy from a baby |

Some video games are not just addictive, they’re exploitative, writes Joshua Krook.

My first game of *Candy Crush* reminded me of my first experience with a slot machine. Both offered the same enticements: escapism, a bit of fun, and crudely simple gameplay. It is a puzzle-based game that requires players to align candies, three-in-a-row. But behind the veneer of charm and juvenile ‘fun’, *Candy Crush*, like its forebear the slot machine, has a manipulative, psychological pull: the sweet sugar of addiction.

Traditional academia once viewed addiction as exclusively limited to drugs and alcohol. Yet most modern researchers agree that behavioural addictions also exist. Regardless of the activity, Gaming Psychologist Mark Griffiths of Nottingham Trent University concludes that “all addictions [are] essentially about constant rewards and reinforcements”. Once we have a trigger, and an activity we enjoy, rewards and reinforcements help cement that behaviour into our day to day lives.

Candy Crush and slot machines both proffer ‘rewards’, which are given in the form of trophies, high scores, stars, and access to new content. Common to both are what Griffith terms “aural and visual rewards for a winning move”. *Candy Crush*



in particular reinforces ‘correct behaviour’, playing the game, by initiating audio cues— “sweet” or “delicious”— whenever a particularly successful move is made.

Such positive reinforcement, along with the quick acquisition of new levels, makes you feel like you have accomplished a great deal in a very short space of time. The game’s “incremental reward structures”— which lauds 544 levels of fun— provides an especially prolonged experience; one that enhances the “achievement” felt when you reach the final level. The development company, Palm, creates new levels every fortnight, meaning that the game literally will never end.

Research shows that, much like drug and alcohol dependency, “rewards” in video games impact upon our epinephrine, dopamine and serotonin levels. In effect, some of our base chemical gratifications are met by video games. It is these hormonal changes that have tangible effects

on our emotional well-being. It is these tangible effects on the brain that make games like *Candy Crush* so ‘rewarding’ and consequently addictive.

As soon as the player is trapped into this addictive pattern of reinforcement and reward, the game strikes. At some point, you’ll fail to complete a level, and the game will prompt the player with the option of spending “\$0.99” to “finish off the remaining candies!” Conversely, choosing “end game” triggers negative music which suggests that you’ve subsequently made the ‘wrong choice’, and should have committed to paying instead. Bad consumer.

Though the game markets itself as ‘free to play’, many fall victim to its moneymaking tactics. The worst victims, known as ‘whales’ by the industry, make up for those who pay nothing at all by paying literally thousands of dollars just to get their fix. *Candy Crush* is currently valued at \$8.5bn. Estimates indicate the game grosses one million dollars a day

in revenue. While the approximate cost per user is only \$3.84, the game’s one hundred million players are not necessary frequent users. Indeed, the majority of *Candy Crush*’s revenue comes from these ‘whales’, who fork out hundreds or even thousands of dollars a year.

The game’s developer Palm laments that the traditional video game “consumes a lot of mental bandwidth... you binge and eventually you stop playing.” *Candy Crush* represents the worst of video game stereotypes, providing mindless button-mashing instead of meaningful or provocative stimulation. Palm designed the game so that it can be played one-handed, while multitasking, and offline. Of course, most addict recovery programs have ‘time away’ as an essential feature to break the cycle of addiction. Frighteningly, *Candy Crush* can be played whenever a phone is nearby.

The final condemnation I can make of *Candy Crush* is that, like slot machines, it is mind-numbingly boring. Though, Palm knows squeezing money from an addict is like taking candy from a baby.

Down to Business |

Jielu Cai asks whether the vocational opportunities offered by the Business School are really available to growing number of international students.

We all had some sort of expectations of what university would be like before we came here. We may have imagined what the lectures might be like, how hard the exams would be, or even how many times a week it would be acceptable to get drunk and skip next morning’s lecture. For many of us, however, one question was most prominent: “Where will university lead me?”

I myself had a rather delusive imagination. My first lofty hope was that the Business School would have glamorous lecture rooms. That dream was shattered as soon as I had my first lecture in Merewether. I struggled to sit through an hour-long spiel with no air-conditioning on a 34-degree day as the trucks and cars driving past the building totally deafened me. Never mind— at least I now

know that the Business School is working on it. The Abercrombie precinct will be up and running for future business students soon.

I also imagined that I would be having lunches in suits and would need another phone to facilitate the business communications of an incredibly demanding work life. I don’t think that I am an over-ambitious and career-conscious person who loses the ability to judge herself. Just look around the Business School— there’s no shortage of career fairs, advertisements and success testimonies. They are always advertised on the Business School’s website, on notice boards, and even on the doors of bathrooms. Life seems so promising.

However, life is very different for

an international student. You eye an opportunity that reads something like: ‘We are looking for someone who understands global content’, or ‘Interested in International Business?’ At this point, you’re thinking, “Isn’t that just me? It’s perfect!” 80 per cent of the time, however, after you scroll down with full excitement, you see two words: ‘residency required’. Okay, now you realize that they are not in fact looking for someone from the other side of the globe.

This is understandable. The market is saturated, especially in areas like accounting and finance. When Australia is having difficulty accommodating its own needs, of course domestic students will be prioritised. Often, getting a job in a foreign country has a lot to do with local policies and regulations. This is very fair and reasonable.

That does not, however, mean that the Business School is justified in attracting more and more international students by saying that they provide a career-focused program, when international students are excluded from internship opportunities and events like career fairs. The School ought to acknowledge the difficulty experienced by international students in pursuing a career, but it’s doubtful that it’s doing anything to improve it.

Bear in mind that international students are paying more than four times the university fees of domestic students. The Business School knows its business. Indeed, it is a shame to think that while we are contributing directly to the Business School, and indirectly to the nation’s GDP, there is hardly anything in it for us.

Understanding obesity: the \$1.2 million dollar man

Jonathon Parker meets Charles Perkins Obesity Centre academic Paul Griffiths.

Professor Paul Griffiths is a philosopher of science and an administrative head in a scientific research centre. The conjunction of such roles reads either as an oxymoron, or as an entry in the CV of a Platonic philosopher king. Griffiths is, however, both real and the Associate Academic Director for Humanities and Social Sciences at the Charles Perkins Centre, the University of Sydney’s newest and most innovative research Centre.

“I study scientific method. So I’m interested in what scientists do and how their doing of those things succeeds in generating knowledge. I’m actually studying what people do in the Charles Perkins Centre, rather than contributing [to the scientific research itself].”

Though the centre does not officially open till June, Griffiths has already begun using his previous experience as a philosopher of science to assist in the early stages of its development.

When you think about the objectives of the centre, understanding the philosophy of science seems a rather logical ambition. The Charles Perkins Centre aims to alleviate the health and social burdens of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Rather than merely perceiving these diseases as medical conditions, the centre will incorporate research from a myriad of faculties to gain a holistic understanding of their causes and effects. The Centre intends to understand the complexities of obesity-related diseases by investigating the role of human psychology, education and agriculture in expediting obesity.

Griffiths had been writing about evolutionary genetics and human nature prior to assuming a role at the Charles Perkins Centre, yet his role in the Centre is predominantly administrative.

“I’m convening a big conference later in the semester called ‘Who’s Afraid of the Nanny State?’, which will involve political theorists, lawyers, public health researchers and politicians arguing about whether there is anything wrong with the government interfering in our lives to make us healthier; when is it wrong, and when is it justifiable. This isn’t part of my research; it’s part of my administrative role.”



Griffiths is a humble, yet knowledgeable, figure. He views his personal role, as opposed to his administrative role, in the Centre as “really quite marginal”. In spite of this, he is well acquainted with the specifics of the research projects to be conducted by the Charles Perkins Centre, as he is overseeing the research performed by individual faculties.

He is no stranger to the biology of non-communicable disease. Griffiths recently received a \$1.2 million grant from the Templeton World Charity Foundation to be put towards personal research, based on the core concepts of biology and the study of information-processing in gene regulatory networks.

In relation to the Centre itself, Griffiths has emphasized the importance of research into the biology of diabetes and cardiovascular disease amongst insects and animals. He strongly believes in the need to study biological and nutritional trends in animal eating habits before studying them in humans.

“One of the things that is really central to research going on here is noticing, right across a range of experimental animals from insects to mice to ultimately volunteer humans, that animals are not trying to control the number of calories they consume. The molecular biology inside them contains a bunch of mechanisms that are [only] trying to control what *kinds* of food they eat, in particular it’s trying to control

how much protein, fat and so forth enters.”

However, in keeping with the Centre’s aim to ascertain a “massive, multi-component, systems-level understanding of the whole nutritional environment” in Australia, Griffiths stresses the importance of non-biological factors in contributing to obesity.

Obesity in Australia continues to rise. Over five million Australians are currently obese; indeed, obesity is overtaking smoking as the leading cause of preventable death. Consequently, Griffiths believes that responsibility for redressing burgeoning obesity lies in multiple areas of society – from agriculture and the food production system, to the government, and beyond.

“Obviously the government has a large role to play in the issue of food labelling, but so does the Australian Food and Grocery Council. So do Coles and Woolworths. There’s the Federal and State Governments, and the State Government is very active in this area, but then there is also the private sector, and things like Diabetes Australia, who will be working with the Charles Perkins Centre.”

In the US and Australia, rates of obesity continue to rise in poorer communities far more quickly than in wealthy areas. In Australia, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians have the fourth highest rate of Type 2 diabetes in the world, and nearly twice as likely as non-indigenous

Australians to be obese. In light of this, the centre’s name feels suddenly more apt. Charles Perkins, an Indigenous Australian rights activist, international athlete, and the first Indigenous Australian to graduate from Sydney University, fought for an end to discrimination against Indigenous Australians. Perhaps a centre operating in his name will help to better understand why Indigenous Australians are so disproportionately affected by obesity-related illness.

“There’s an argument to be made that one very effective way to deal with the obesity crisis is to reduce inequality, and ensure people have enough control over their own lives to be able to make healthy choices. If you’re over-worked and highly-stressed, you have very little capacity to make healthy choices.”

These are the issues which the Centre is trying to investigate. What are the widespread causes of obesity? What are the best means to combat it? This is where a ‘philosopher of science’ can crystallise the best approach to a comprehensive examination of the causes and effects of obesity-related diseases. Griffiths noted that groups from the School of Business and the School of Media and Communications are preparing to take on projects alongside the Centre. However, he confirmed that “nobody actually works for the CPC apart from the administrative staff”.

Despite the range of faculties involved in the Charles Perkins Centre, many of its research projects remain unconfirmed. For example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health is one of the five research themes at the Centre, but Griffiths said “we are still trying to appoint a Senior Researcher” to lead research in that area.

Paul Griffiths and his scientifically philosophising companions are not about to lead Plato’s utopia. Their multi-disciplinary approach may, however, help to alleviate the enormous healthcare, economic and social burdens of one of Australia’s leading causes of preventable illness. If, as Marty Rubin suggested, “Philosophers console themselves with explanations,” let us hope that they can find some consolation.

The peril of the pen

Nerine Corbett investigates journalists behind bars.

When my uncle called in April 2011 to say that my cousin, freelance journalist Austin Mackell, had been arrested in Egypt, was being detained in an unknown location, and was facing a five to seven year jail sentence, I was stunned. Risk and danger are, after all, hard to understand, to really weigh up. Although Austin had worked in the Middle East for years and I understood that he was always at risk in an abstract sense, it was never real to me. It was always a risk written in colourful pixels on my TV screen or in the neat words of my Saturday morning paper.

On that day in April, the war, the conflicts, and the terror that Austin had been reporting on way across the globe splintered my relatively safe Australian life. The dangerous world of war journalism became real to me and my family just as it has become real to Peter Greste’s family, and to those who knew and loved the 450 journalists imprisoned, 125 kidnapped, and 144 killed in the last two years in war zones all over the planet.

* * *

It was routine work for Austin that day, heading out to Mahalla from Cairo to hold an interview, accompanied by his Egyptian translator Aliya Alwi and American postgraduate student Derek Ludovici. But April 11 marked the anniversary of Mubarak’s fall and Egypt was under military rule; safety could not be assumed. They were set to meet Kamal Elfayoumi, a union leader and political activist from the area, to interview him for a story about the role of workers’ strikes in Egypt’s explosive uprising.

Austin would later describe the events of the next days as his “nightmare”.

Within minutes of meeting Elfayoumi, the group was mobbed. Desperate and angry, the crowd accused the three of working to destroy Egypt, working to tear apart the livelihoods of the very people whose story they had come to share. Pressed upon by the screaming crowd, the three split with Elfayoumi and returned to their taxi, where their driver, Zakaria, told them his license had been taken by a police officer.

Though barely able to see a path through the bodies slamming against the car, the four followed the police to the station where they were invited inside for “protection”.

The police took their remaining identification, asked a few questions and led them to a side room to wait. Elfayoumi came to see what had happened to the group. Although they were repeatedly told that they would be able to leave shortly, the ‘protection’ stretched on. By this point it was clear they were being detained.

A witness appeared claiming they had seen the group inciting violence on the streets. Austin and his colleagues had stood accused of the false claim that they had handed out money to have rocks thrown at the police station. The nightmare had just begun.

* * *

With 1052 journalists killed since 1992, it is clear the position of the press in conflict zones has shifted dramatically. I meet with Dieter Herrmann, Vice President of the Foreign Correspondent’s Association, who tells me he knows of around 20 more deaths, those of internal Afghan journalists, which have not made the statistics. Distressing changes to both the culture of war and the culture of media seem to be putting journalists at increasing risk.

“Nobody cares anymore. Nobody cares if it is a journalist you are killing or somebody else as long as the person is dead. Being a journalist or not a journalist, there is no difference when the bullet comes, so we need protection to do our work,” Herrmann says.

Dr Richard Stanton is a senior lecturer in the School of Letters, Arts and Media at the University of Sydney, and specialist in the politics of war journalism. I ask him if he thinks there is something special about the way war is fought today that endangers journalists. He tells me that decreased structure and support means many journalists and reporters do not have the instruction needed to protect themselves. Stanton states that historically war correspondents had a close relationship with one

army. “In the old days cameramen and journalists were embedded with troops. There was a protocol so that they knew the dangers; they were made more aware of the danger of being in the line of fire. Now they are in a position of greater personal risk,” he says. The protection, firepower, medical and tactical support of the armed forces was always on hand if required. That is not the case today.

Austin tells me the shift to interclass, civil conflicts rather than interstate conflicts is also a big contributor. “The conflicts are not between two competing armies each of whom would have journalists safely on their side reporting their narrative. The conflicts are in societies, so journalists are much more in the mix. So much social upheaval is happening at the moment, street fighting is happening and journalists are on the line in a way they wouldn’t have been [before].” Within such contexts, danger zones are much more dynamic. The front line is on all sides, the battle is in the streets and the enemy is no longer clearly signposted. Such conditions leave journalists much more exposed. It is the reality now that the best and often only way to report is from alongside rebel forces, which are not in a position to offer the traditional safety measures afforded to journalists.

Stanton also explains that the blue flak jacket of the press pack is no longer sufficient protection. Not so long ago, simply being a visibly accredited journalist was a shield; it granted immunity. “The role of the press is less respected on either side for the reporting of conflict. Either side in an engagement has less belief in the sanctity and the preservation of the press, and as an independent player in that overall structure,” he says. “[Journalists and camera operators] are now seen as being nearly as dangerous as the combatants themselves.”

Austin agrees, explaining that journalists used to be considered untouchable, but are now free game. “Those liberal values that protected journalists and other people from human

rights abuses, that gave us due process and democratic protection, they are being eroded. The increased vulnerability of journalists goes along with the increased vulnerability of aid workers, activists and people in general.”

* * *

For Austin, Alwi, Ludovici, Zakaria and Elfayoumi the game of hide and seek now began. They were moved first to another police station, then the Ministry of Interior building, then once again to a military intelligence facility in Cairo. Any belief that the police were keeping them for protection had long dispersed. Alwi frantically tweeted their movements, lucky to get word out before their phones and laptops were seized, while Austin tried to tell a journalist outside the police station that the charges were unfounded. For the third leg of the

journey the group was handcuffed and the three “witnesses” were allowed to taunt them. One, an 11-year-old child, motioned slitting Alwi’s throat, another told Austin “urkab ala moot” which literally translates as “ride to death”.

The real interrogation began in the Ministry of Interior where, 12 hours into his captivity, the police realised that Austin was in the country on a long-expired visa. Austin said that it was here he began to lose his composure, angry at the injustice of being held, at injustices perpetrated all over Egypt, all over the world by those with power against those without it. He was also fearful for himself and even more so for Alwi and Zakaria, the former for her gender and both for their Egyptian nationality. The interrogations began. Austin was pressed about his work and intimidated. Alwi was interrogated far more viciously and was asked about her personal life. Zakaria was beaten.

* * *

Australian media organisations seem to provide little support for their staff working in war zones. Stanton suggests the modern “resource allocation problems” – a chronic issue for the media of the 21st century – means footing the cost of insurance of a

translator, of security and being responsible for ransom demands or loss of life is no longer something many media bodies feel they are in a position to do. Rather than send a staff writer to whom they owe wardship, why not rely on stories from freelance writers and stringers who must shoulder the risk and cost themselves? “If you’re prepared to risk your life for chump change, you can see your name in print,” Austin tells me in a worryingly matter-of-fact tone. He goes on to tell me that many media corporations and editors take advantage of the lure of the “big break” for new and inexperienced journalists. “It can be very immoral at times, the way people desperate to get into the industry are being exploited. It’s a bit like the Hollywood casting couch gone wrong. It can be very seedy.”

Australia seems to be falling behind global standards in this respect, for as soon as I speak to Dieter Herrmann he is quick to tell me that Australian journalists are in a very different, less privileged, position than their colleagues in Europe and Britain. He explains European and British media corporations refuse to buy stories from anyone who has not done specific training on how to work in hostile areas, removing the lure of war zone journalism for rookies. The training concentrates on dealing with dangerous situations such as hostage and kidnapping events. Moreover, purchasing stories from journalists travelling alone is disallowed, so in order to sell your story to European or British outlets one must travel in the safety of a pair, at least. Herrmann condemns the situation in Australia as “irresponsible”. “It’s totally different here in Australia, if you are a journalist and you want to go... you can do that, no problem and if you’re killed, you’re killed.”

* * *

After a cold and hungry night of being left to struggle to sleep in their chairs, each in separate interrogation rooms, the run-around resumed. A few hours of driving in the back of a police truck returned the group to the second station at which they had been held, only to leave again minutes later. Activists from the ‘No to Military Trials’ group had discovered their whereabouts and gathered outside. Despite the authorities’ best efforts to shuffle the group around and avoid such aid the word was out to activists, journalists and lawyers. By the time the five were moved to the

prosecutor’s office in Mahalla a group of supporters had amassed and were able to pass through food, the first they had had in nearly 30 hours. Lawyers arrived, and though Austin had no chance to actually confer, his lawyer was able to argue that the witness stories were inconsistent, that there had been a pattern of xenophobic witch-hunts in the recent months. Spirits rose.

It was not long until Elfyoumi and Zakaria were released. Austin, Alwi and Ludovici, however, were taken underground and left in cells that reverberated with the screams of other inmates.

Staff from the Australian embassy eventually reached them, bringing some basic comforts, toilet paper, blankets and pillows – small comforts that, for Austin and Ludovici, allowed them the first chance to sleep in days. Both believed Alwi had been released though this was not the case. When awoken they gathered these few things, sure they were to be moved once more; in fact, pressure from the Australian embassy lawyers and activists saw them finally released.

* * *

Stanton suggests that situations like Austin’s are happening more frequently as a result of technology and the “immediacy of access”. “A soldier with a weapon is also a soldier with a mobile phone, so information is being received a lot faster,” he says. Such increasing competition in the marketplace also means the selling price for stories has fallen. Outlets do not need to pay one journalist \$100 for a story when another is waiting in line ready to sell for much less. The monthly pay scale of journalists is only a quarter now of what it was thirty years ago, Herrmann states. Many freelancers report they cannot afford insurance, which can cost \$1000 a month, let alone a translator or personal security with these pay grades, and are left with no alternative but to work perilously exposed to the increasingly dangerous conditions.

Others feel pushed to take extra risks for the chance at a scoop. “There is a journalist I knew working in Syria who was asked to do things which put her and her sources in danger by an editor back in the safety of New York, pressured because she was new and young,” Austin says. Similarly, Francesca Borri, an Italian journalist, lamented last year to Columbia Journalism Review that the first direct contact she had from her editor in over a year (“during which I contracted typhoid fever and was shot in the knee”) was when he mistakenly

believed she had been arrested in Syria and emailed to ask, “Should you get a connection, could you tweet about your detention?”. Such reports are unsurprising in a media culture that continues to devalue journalist safety in favour of profits and shareholders.

Asking Austin about the pressure to conform seems to hit home. “More people are competing for the same few outlets, plus the lack of job security forces people to look for an editorial line that won’t upset the editors because they can always find someone else, it’s hard to see what power a freelance has in the modern media industry.” Reports become flatter in such a climate, colder. Who can risk shocking or challenging in this situation? Journalists pressured into being biased and safe in their reportage has contributed to the changed perception of press in the field. Difficult and dangerous conditions now undermine the quality of stories reporters are able to tell. It seems a vicious cycle in which those who seek to suppress freedom of information make the only gains.

* * *

Free from confinement though with a travel ban in place, Austin’s face had been circulated as that of a Western spy and he spent weeks moving from couch to couch, unable to return to his home because it had been raided. It would take six months of slow and confounded bureaucracy for the charges to be dropped and him to be able to leave Egypt.

Austin’s story is nowhere near the most worrying or terrible out there; it’s almost tempting to say he got off lightly. We need only take one look at the haunting images of a shackled Peter Greste staring, lost, from behind bars during his trial to understand how much worse things could have been. But Austin and my family’s experience stands testimony to the impunity with which militants, government, anyone with power, can now treat journalists.

Austin says he shares my horrified amazement at the little interest Peter Greste’s case has generated in the Australian media, given he has been held in solitary confinement for months and his trial is being held in a language he does not speak. “Australia’s relative acquiescence is absolutely terrifying. It leaves journalists in a really nasty place.” It is time to recognise just what it takes to bring us news, to tell the stories of distress and destruction and look at what needs to be done to protect those doing so. In 2014, journalists should no longer be brutalised, maimed or killed in pursuit of the truth.

Game of Tropes

Spoilers are coming, warns Sam Murray.

Stannis Baratheon is in many ways a traditional fantasy hero. He is the rightful heir to the kingdom, forced into flight by the usurpation of the throne by an evil, incestuous family. He has a stalwart and loyal adviser from a lowborn family, and wields a magic sword that he pulled from a burning fire.

But then his entire army is burnt alive at sea. Just like that, the HBO show Game of Thrones reveals the deft, and yet, incredibly obvious way it plays with both perception and our ingrained sense of the ideas and patterns that make up traditional fantasy—and then brutally subverts and deconstructs them.

The fact that Robb Stark had such a brutal end at the Red Wedding, slaughtered by a petty man he had grievously insulted, should

not be surprising in isolation. He was barely out of his teens, leading an entire country and military coalition.

That the chickens came home to roost for this young warrior king shocked us to our very core. We ignored the lessons of history that tell us that young, absolute rulers rarely perform well. We did this because we saw Robb as a HeroTM, who was on the Path of Righteous RevengeTM, who would bring justice to the evil Lannisters and kill that little shit Joffrey. He couldn't fail in our minds because our rudimentary knowledge of how fantasy works tells us he can't.

The assumption of Robb's inevitable triumph in the face of

rapidly worsening odds reveals the way that narrative focus can assign roles to. Daenerys Targaryen is another "hero" because we follow her as well, and she is the rightful heir to the throne. Jaime Lannister is the "bad guy" because he chucked a kid out a window. But the brilliance of Game of Thrones is how it takes our expectations and turns them on our heads, all the while showing how our initial assumptions were so wrong. Yes, Daenerys is on a path to reclaim the throne of her father, but that path leads her to consort with barbarian raiders, traitors and slavers, and leaves war and burning cities in her wake.

Game of Thrones isn't just a good show because it has a large budget, solid acting, great pacing and an excellent screenplay. Its value comes from the way it challenges what we expect from fantasy, and instead comments on the ideological premises that we take for granted. As the show returns this year to its fourth season, we eagerly await to see what other basic tropes of fiction Game of Thrones indulges in, explores and ultimately throws in our face. And even if they kill off all my favourite characters, I wouldn't have it any other way.

Ibis intrigue

Ed McMahon on the majestic birds that now call Sydney University home.

The Australian White Ibis, otherwise known as Threskiornis molucca or "that fucking white bird," prompts impassioned reactions from even the most apathetic student.

Overwhelmingly, these reactions reflect a deep fear and/or loathing. Yet for those of us who are also a little different and a little dirty, the plight of the ibis feels familiar. For the most part, we just accept that the haters gon' hate as we live and let live. For the ibis, though, things are not so simple.

Like most residents of this city, the ibis is a recent migrant. Its great migration began in the 1970s, when the destruction of its native wetlands began in earnest. As human beings have continued to build roads, suburbs, and mines across the geographic area that we have arbitrarily named New South Wales, the destruction has compounded. Forced from its home, the ibis has turned to the big smoke to for a new start.

Here it has claimed its place in the urban landscape, charming us with its idiosyncratic personality, commitment to waste minimisation, and no-fucks-given attitude. Yet some have responded with moral panic. "It stinks," say some. "It threatens aircraft safety," say others. While elements of truth may be conceded in such claims, many other baseless and outrageous assertions like "it creeps me out," or "it tried to steal my lunch," abound.

So it has come to pass that systemic anti-ibis programs have been instituted, which have included tactics such as destroying eggs and nests in a bid to curb population growth. These programs have been pursued without any real attempt to scientifically understand ibis populations. In particular, its populations are consistently reduced without any proper research into its survival, growth and fertility rates in its comparatively new urban

environment. It may be that the present population is large because of continuing migration. But are new, urban generations surviving in sufficient numbers? The evidence is not yet in.

Earlier this month, a number of respected Australian conservation biologists called on governments to pursue a new conservation policy. Observing global extinction rates approaching unprecedented levels, the scientists declared a need to focus on protecting particular species from extinction, while letting others complete their decline to eternal nothingness.

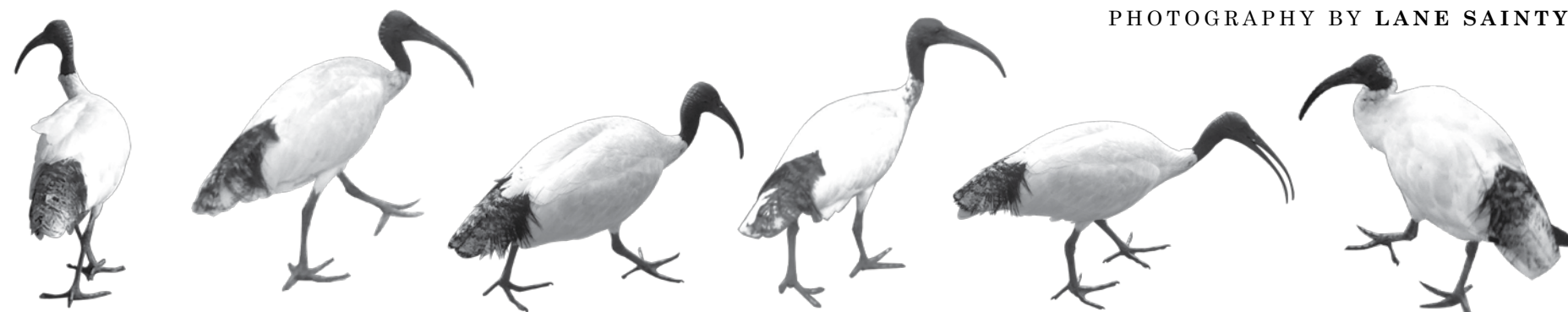
It would seem that as humanity continues to build its new world on the ashes of destroyed ecosystems, our perceived capacity to 'save' all endangered species is a delusion. It would seem that the time has come to choose what lives and what dies.

Clearly, such decisions would require scientific foundations.

Yet the philosophical and moral foundations remain unclear. As the self-proclaimed masters of the planet, we should have settled these foundations a while ago. Instead, we continue to pursue unbridled material growth in the midst of our own population explosion. Are we just another animal who will, by nature, dominate and destroy all others? Or is our destruction gratuitous and unjustified?

These are not questions that can be answered here, but they are the questions that come to mind in the case of the ibis. Perhaps they will be the questions that will enter lunchtime conversations on the front lawns if ibis numbers dwindle. Perhaps we will better define our moral duty to the ibis of Sydney University. Or perhaps, as seems more likely, haters will continue to hate and our project of ecocide will continue.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LANE SAINTY



Review: Nymphomaniac

BACKGROUND AND ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXANDRA MILDENHALL

Peter Walsh didn't see a severed clitoris this time.

"Lord suffering fuck I can't believe there are assholes here trying quantify this cumstain as art. It's not. It drags the whole human race down into the sewer. Western civilization starting shitting blood the day this p.o.s. was released and now it's going to die of ass cancer. If you enjoy this movie it's because you're so fucken broken inside that shock and horror are the only things left to you. You're already dead on the inside so why not complete the package and kill yourself."

The above review of *Nymphomaniac* (2014), posted on The Pirate Bay by AlienRapist2, coolly raises the question of what art should be. And there's a tendency— amongst Russian novelists and strawmen I construct to refute— to say art must be moral. But the mature age student in you asks, "Why?", "Whose morals?", and "In my experience...". Danish filmmaker Lars Von Trier has made a career of contradicting popular morality and his latest film, *Nymphomaniac*, might be his most confrontational. In two volumes, eight chapters, and four and half hours (five if you've got the uncensored version), Von Trier was to follow the life and experiences of a sex addict.

As a director, Von Trier is fascinating partially because of the elaborate mythology he entertains. He's deathly afraid of flying, so travels by boat, or not at all. He's been banned from Cannes due to an interview he gave comparing himself to a Nazi. His production house, Zentropa, was the first mainstream company to produce hardcore pornography, which he created for female audiences. His films disproportionately deal with the female experience, though it's the female experience qua Von Trier, and he's been accused of degrading them. After *Dancer in the Dark* (2000), Björk refused to make another film, saying, "he needs a female to provide his work soul, and he envies them and hates them for it, so he has to destroy them." He's been known to smash chairs in his female actors' dressing rooms, or strip naked while directing to unsettle them. *Nymphomaniac* marks Charlotte

Gainsbourg's third collaboration with the director.

The film opens in rain, with the camera's passage into dark spaces suggesting movement into an orifice. The protagonist, Joe (Charlotte Gainsbourg), is passed out, covered in bruises. I'm suspicious of the man who saves her. The film's marketing emphasised that sex and seediness would be everywhere, with one press release even describing the process by which Von Trier digitally imposed porn star genitalia on his actors to increase their size.

The quiet of the opening segues dramatically into Rammstein's 'Führe Mich', which is basically what I expected from the director of *Antichrist* (2009). Indeed, having seen Gainsbourg sever her clitoris at the climax of that film, I was bracing myself for something awful. After all, *Antichrist* started with silence, symphony, and slow-motion to lull us before introducing the tragic image of a baby falling from a balcony while his parents had sex. In *Nymphomaniac*, Von Trier seems to cut the foreplay. But what follows is, incongruously, a sexually charged *The Princess Bride* (1987). Joe coalesces in bed, drinks— is that *tea*?— and civilly recounts her story to Seligman (Stellan Skarsgård). She recalls "discovering her cunt" at age two, spoken over a close-up of a naked baby looking down, and I admit feeling distressed here.

Yet Volume I is distinguished not by its horror but rather by its absurd comedy. Each chapter juxtaposes Joe's heartfelt recollections with Seligman's banal interruptions, comparing her apparent sexual indiscretions to fishing, mountaineering, or the Western Church. Not to be outdone, Joe introduces meta-metaphors for his metaphors. The screen is divided into thirds, comparing Joe's memories to Seligman's interruptions, to Joe's own interpretations.

The overriding sense of Volume I is of Von Trier aggressively undermining our expectations by giving us a film that both

parades and makes light of his grim nihilism. The effect is a tonally jarring work, nine-tenths a comedy, leaving the one-tenth tragedy to misfire. A scene in which she reviews her partners' genitals, while mug-penis-shots flash across the screen, is hilarious. And when the director swaps to black and white for the "seriousness" of Joe's father's death, I can't help but laugh at the obvious Von Trier-ism.

While it's undeniable that Von Trier puts Joe through all the tests his (female) protagonists must undergo, there's warmth in Volume II that's absent from his previous films. In the first volume, Seligman acts as Von Trier's proxy, the sympathetic ear for Joe's torment. In Volume II, he seems to reverse the roles. After all, Joe's complaints about "society's morality police... eras[ing] my obscenity... so the bourgeoisie won't feel sick," can only remind us of a certain maligned Danish filmmaker. However, it's questionable how much we sympathise with Lars, even when embodied in Gainsbourg. After Joe-cum-Lars invokes a racial epithet, using the n-word with derision in reference to a failed threesome, it's Seligman who chastises her, suggesting that political correctness comes from a democratic interest in the powerless. It's clear we're meant to side with Joe, but Seligman's the persuasive one. Don't worry, keep watching, Von Trier punishes Seligman for being so sympathetic.

If I sound indecisive, I am. My feelings of ambivalence are made worse by the film's conclusion. After years of being described a misogynist, *Nymphomaniac* ends with Lars, now Seligman, describing Joe as a resistance figure, claiming that her indiscretions would be anything but had they been acted by a man. I wonder whether this coda justifies the hours of torture that preceded it. The indeterminacy of Von Trier's depiction of Joe is, however, a possible triumph— each damning action is counterbalanced by a redemptive one. She leaves her kid, but supports him financially. She tries to kill someone, but subconsciously stops herself. We're

left feeling sorry for her, but as an acolyte of Lars' own philosophy, there are limits to how much we can like her.

But has the film resolved this issue of whether art can be evil? Not especially. It's a disappointing film, so much so that I don't even *want* to defend it. However, you can't slam Von Trier without a sideways glance at free speech. If his words at Cannes constituted hate speech, is his oeuvre composed of hate art? And should we attack this kind of art with the same impunity? To be called an artwork implies an engaging quality, and does this suggest that hateful art is prejudice at its most insidious? You could now ask, slightly differently, "how might one enjoy problematic things?" The answer here is "mindfully". To engage with it intellectually allows us to skim off a work's interesting dimensions, and let the vile sediment sink. *Nymphomaniac* errs on the side of sediment, and while it's interesting insofar as it reflects Von Trier's own developing sensibility, I'm suspicious of its quality and ambivalent about its evil. There's undoubtedly something of a redemptive moral in the film, but Von Trier makes you share his masochism to get to it.

Uprooted in Chippendale

Tom Joyner is looking for a new place to live.

This morning I awoke to find an enormous billboard that read “For Sale”, hastily strung overnight to my neighbour’s fence, advertising the sale of eight terraced houses on my street – including my own.

My guts churning, I hastily called the number listed. Brett from Colliers International answered the phone with the bored tone of someone simultaneously browsing Facebook. “Your residence will be open for inspection this week, please make it presentable for potential buyers.”

Real-estate agents say the darndest things. There is a tenth circle of hell reserved for this special class of person, alongside used-car salespeople and telemarketers.

“I’m still here you know.”

Coming from outside of Sydney to study at university, the options for a place to live are limited. Students must rely on earning

money around their study in order to pay for a lifestyle that is far from stable if they are unable to qualify for scholarships or government assistance.

This cohort, squashed awkwardly between the haves and the have-nots of the student population, are underrepresented on campus. Aside from a smattering of societies aimed at fostering interfaculty friendship, we lack a strong student community and student leadership, any recognition by the university for financial support, or any sort of support base in Sydney to fall back on, should the proverbial shit hit the fan.

“You’re going to have to move out soon,” Brett said quickly, “but I’ll let you know when”.

I sat on the edge of my bed feeling defeated, and slowly began to go over my options. For the last three years, my living situation in Sydney has been a series of

temporary hidey-holes. Share houses have been punctuated by hostel dorms and friends’ couches, sometimes as far away as Wollongong.

For a period in my second year I lived in a halfway house of sorts, where, with unnerving predictability, I was greeted every morning by the muffled banging and rasping breath of the elderly man down the hall enthusiastically masturbating in the bathroom opposite. Too disgusted to even brush my teeth, I hastily adapted my showering timetable accordingly.

While off-campus housing in Darlington and Forest Lodge offers students from out of town an independent experience without the social and financial costs of college, it remains limited. Sydney University offers the unique inconvenience of being situated in the heart of the city’s trendiest pocket of real estate. Access to

housing in the inner-west is hard fought for by students who simply can’t compete with the latte-sipping, dual-income, no-kids regiment of Sydney’s middle-class.

For every ad on Gumtree that offers a “bright sun-lit room” with “cool twenty-something housemates”, there are fifty-something other frustrated students, whose flood of ingratiating emails are written with the same plucky chutzpah of a summer internship application.

Having never been able to qualify for a housing lease, this month marks 12 months since moving into my current digs without eviction, rent hike, or rat infestation. For others for whom the move to Sydney without support is daunting enough, the challenge of accessible, affordable and secure housing is ongoing.

(PS. I’m still looking for a place if anyone has a spare room.)

Holme-coming

Mariana Podesta-Diverio explores the Holme building redevelopment.

It’s easy to lose track of the latest infrastructural changes on campus, particularly in first semester, when summer’s dust has barely started to settle and the February heat makes everything a little blurrier than it should be. In any case, if you’ve been anywhere near Science Road in the past few months you’ve probably noticed that the Holme Building, operated by the University of Sydney Union, is undertaking a decidedly committed facelift.

The redevelopment, with a projected completion date of July 2014, has begun to yield some visible changes. The renovations have thus far seen the replacement of the old student lounge with a large memorabilia gift store. You may remember the lounge as housing a number of extremely comfortable and extremely expensive beanbags, which will presumably be relocated to the new student lounge.

“The USU is committed to providing as much space for students as possible, and ensuring student space is not only retained but expanded where possible has been taken into the highest consideration during the planning for this redevelopment” said Hannah Morris, USU President.

Other new facilities will include a restaurant, new bathrooms, and a newly landscaped courtyard.

Andrew Woodward, USU CEO, promised that the Mediterranean-inspired restaurant

would cater to vegans and people with celiac disease, and that it would boast “competitive prices”. However, he could not confirm what the name of the establishment would be.

Although many Union Board candidates promise to change or introduce certain features to the union-operated buildings (Wentworth, Manning, and Holme) in their election platforms, the redevelopment is not the direct result of any one director’s election promises.

“It is not the result of an individual director’s policy or vision for the Union,” said Board director Robby Magyar, “but a collective approach towards ensuring the sustainability and relevance of the Union for years to come.”

The inclusion of a lift in the building is also notable, which will improve accessibility to areas that were previously inaccessible to some students. “[This] is a welcome improvement for students facing accessibility issues wishing to visit the queer space in particular.” said Magyar.

The Queer Space, which had previously been accessible only via a staircase, is being temporarily housed in a different part of the Holme building.

The correct pronunciation of the building’s name (‘Houlm’ or ‘Home’) remains an elusive mystery for students and staff alike.

SEALS

Shaun Ch’ng discusses the South East Asian Law Society

Being an international student isn’t easy. Embracing a whole new culture and making new friends from different backgrounds is a daunting task. However, the law school has helped me a lot in adapting to my environment and making me feel at home. There are a number of societies around the law school catering to a multi-cultural community of students.

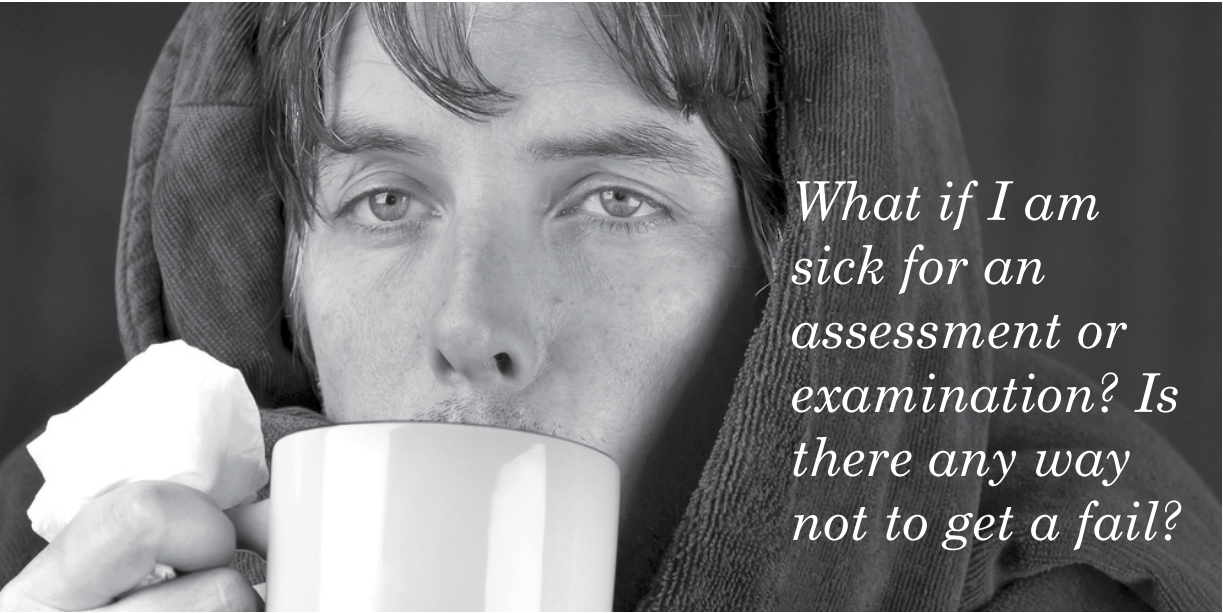
SULS is the largest society for law students and one of the most active on campus. Though personally I have not been very involved with SULS. Perhaps it was the intimidating thought of not being able to fit in, or the reluctance and fear of needing to mould myself to fit the social norm.

Luckily, the establishment of other law societies has helped fill the void for students uncomfortable with joining a large group like SULS. One such society is the South East Asian Law Society (SEALS).

Joining SEALS has helped me considerably during my time at the University. There are many international students in the law school, but most fly under the radar. In a society like SEALS, I can meet people from home to connect with and to provide me with invaluable advice on making it through my degree away from home.

Societies like SEALS may target a smaller audience than a catchall society like SULS, but they can still succeed in making university easier for all students.

Special Consideration



Is there any way not to get a fail?

YOU SHOULD NOT GET A FAIL – assuming you have documented why you could not attend/ complete each assessment and successfully applied for Special Consideration, as outlined in the policy.

What is the policy?

If they reschedule your exam and assessments, but you are too sick (for example) to attend any again, and you apply for special consideration each time and your applications are approved each time, you should not receive a “fail”. Instead you should be awarded a DNF grade.

A DNF is a Discontinued, Not Fail. Compared to a Fail (or Absent Fail or Discontinued Fail), a DNF is good for your transcript and good for your Annual Average Mark and good for your Weighted Average Mark (WAM).

SO if you can’t do any of the assessments in a subject this semester, or in the future, and you have successfully applied for special consideration EACH TIME, then check that your mark is recorded as a DNF. You should also apply to have a refund or recrediting of your fees. Ask at the faculty office or the SRC for the appropriate forms.

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Ask Abe

Hello Abe,

Even though it’s still really early in the semester I still feel that I’m heaps behind. I’ve got more assignments due than I know how to deal with. I’m starting to feel really stressed and finding my studies are suffering even more – it’s a vicious cycle. Can you give me some ideas that will help me?

Busy

Dear Busy,

This is the time of the semester when many students start to feel the pressure of assignments being due. Deal with each of those aspects one step at a time. Talk to your tutor now to see if you can arrange an extension. Talk to someone at Counselling and Psychological Services (Level 5, Jane Foss Russell Building) or the University’s Health Service (Level 3, Wentworth Building).

The Learning Centre runs free courses for time management. This can help you get your uni work under control while still having a social life. Check out their website at: usyd.edu.au/stuserv/learning_centre. Go to Student Resources then Module 10. This is an online resource for you to work through in your own time. It’s all really commonsense stuff but makes a real difference when you follow it.

Look at the CAPS website. Workshops coming up soon are listed at: sydney.edu.au/current_students/counselling/workshops/list-of-workshops/index.shtml You can also make an appointment with a counsellor to get individualised advice or thoughts on specific strategies.

If you’ve done all of these things and still can’t cope with your workload you might like to talk to an SRC caseworker about the possibility of withdrawing from a subject. This may attract an academic penalty, but you can at least check out what your options are. If you are on a Centrelink payment tell your caseworker as this might alter how you reduce your workload.

A final word of caution, when students feel pressured they can sometimes be less vigilant about referencing and proper paraphrasing when they write essays. If you know that you are cutting corners it is best to get help before handing your essays in. Talk to a lecturer, the Learning Centre, counsellor or SRC caseworker and ask for help. This is better than putting in an essay you know is not up to your usual standard and then being found guilty of plagiarism.

Abe

President’s Report

Jen Light



Here Ye Here Ye, the phrase that captured a nation this week as Senator Sam Dastyari pointed out the ridiculousness of our dear Prime Minister’s announcement of reintroducing the honor of Knights and

Dames of the Order of Australia. Now I know that Tony Abbott has his loved views of the monarchy and lets face it what was once an energetic republican movement is not center stage at the moment, but seriously what was Tony Abbott thinking!!!

What was most hilarious about the whole situation is that he decided he would keep his announcement as a surprise to his colleagues. Particularly Joe Hockey and Malcolm Turnbull who are both republicans and played major roles in the movement during the 1999 referendum.

While this story was taking the front page of newspapers this week,

the real issues facing Australian’s were yet again forgotten about. Dastyari captured the irrelevance and disappointment of Tony Abbott’s announcement in a nutshell. The story has taken off through all media avenues, maybe because Australian’s are finally seeing the outdated, out of touch and uncaring actions of the Abbott Government. “Barking Mad: the Abbott nobility” writes Mark Carlton, “The Queens Guard” writes Sophie Morris, this is an issue so comical that the Media won’t even side with Abbott.

Last Wednesday was finally the day of the National Day of Action, the “Abbott and Pyne, Hands of our

Education” campaign went National as students across the countries’ main cities marched to save high quality, affordable and accessible education. Sydney’s march went on despite the rain and gathered quite a good crowd.

However the news was still very pre-occupied by Abbotts return of Knights and Dames announcement. Too bad Abbott doesn’t spend the same amount of time trying to improve the Education and Healthcare systems in this country, as he does sucking up to the Queen.

All the best with your week and I’ll check in again same place, same time next week.

The reports on these pages are wholly the work of the SRC Office Bearers. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the Honi editors.

General Secretary’s Report

James Leeder thinks we should have more discussions, both positive and critical, around SSAF.



This past Wednesday marked the National Day of Action (NDA) against higher education cuts, organised by the National Union of Students (NUS). It also marked one of the rare moments of collaboration between the SRC and the University of Sydney Union (USU), with a clubs carnival being organised before the rally. The USU and SRC came together because both organisations rely on and believe

in the Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF), which is a fee levied on all students each semester.

Many of you who read this paper regularly will be familiar with SSAF and the controversy surrounding it, particularly the division between student organisations. It should be noted that despite the difficulties we have at USyd, we have been the consistent winner of NUS’ surveys regarding student life and SSAF’ implementation, and compared with other universities who are reluctant to give students control of their money Sydney is doing well.

However, as Sydney is the national standard we should seek to show other universities how SSAF can be best utilised and to do that we should redress current problems.

For instance, much of SSAF remains tied up in inaccessible or prohibitively expensive ventures such as scholarships and gyms. The implementation of SSAF is also a very nebulous process. Aside from colourful Excel pie graphs on the university’s website, it is difficult to find out how the money is actually being used. The SRC rectifies this by voting on the budget annually; any student is able to attend the budget council meeting and learn about how their money is being used. Further, at the last council meeting the SRC passed a motion with regards to how it believes the SSAF should be used. It argued that the SSAF should be accessible, accountable, and with a core focus on student welfare.

As this year’s Union Board elections approach, I hope we hear more

regarding the Union and its use of SSAF. As first years will soon discover, a typical union board campaign is awash with impossible promises and quickly becomes focused on the number of new bars each candidate proposes, or on which new exciting frozen dessert store might open a shop on campus. Rather than false promises, I hope this year we see elections that are not solely focused on food and drink, but on how we can make our student organisations more accessible.

As we reflect on the NDA, further actions and upcoming elections, I hope we can engage in more discussion around how we see SSAF being used now, in the future, and how we can make sure student money is controlled by students.

Vice Presidents’ Report

Vice Presidents Laura Webster and Max Hall tell you why they “Stand with Raue”.



It cannot have escaped your notice that a certain Vice President is faced with the likely possibility of being removed from Board. No, it’s not us. It’s Tom Raue. If last’s weeks edition of Honi Soit is any indication, we are not the only ones who support Tom and strongly oppose any motion which would have him removed from the University of Sydney Union Board of Directors. The events that have lead to this has already been thoroughly documented in this fine publication in great detail, so we instead will tell you why we stand with Raue...and why

you should too. Tom is an anomaly in student politics. He actually cares about students as opposed to building his résumé. USU executive would have you believe that Tom has committed a heinous crime and released a confidential report; however we would argue that Tom has done nothing but fulfill his obligation to the safety and welfare of students by releasing **one line** of a report detailing police and University cooperation during the violent 2013 strikes. May 14 has become synonymous with abuse, trauma, lies from the University and blatant police brutality.

We can’t help but question the integrity and motivation of anyone who suggests that documents proving direct cooperation between the University and the NSW Police Force should not be made public at the time of discovery. Tom made a judgment call and we stand by him. Tom’s attempts to protect students and his attempts to hold the University

accountable for the violent acts committed by the NSW police on the picket lines have been met with a motion proposed by USU Executive to remove him from his position as Vice President, citing severe misconduct. Go back and check your duty statements because you’ve got it wrong.

Disappointment is not a strong enough word to encapsulate our feelings toward the USU Executive, Hannah Morris, Sophie Stanton and John Harding-Easson.

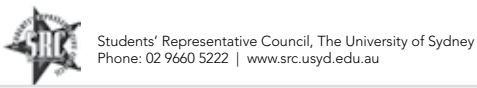
USU Executive, we do not support you. We do not trust you. You do not represent our wishes. If a motion to remove Raue from Board is passed, we have completely lost faith in you and you will have proven that the USU only function on campus is to host mediocre parties and the occasions more concerned with placating the University and it’s numerous corporate sponsors than listening to what its students want.

Show your support and keep updated at facebook.com/standwithraue.

Notice of Council Meeting

86th Students’ Representative Council, University of Sydney

DATE: 9th April
TIME: 6pm - 8pm
LOCATION: Professorial Board Room (Quadrangle)



Education Officers’ Report

Ridah Hassan and Eleanor Morley.



Last week was the national day of action for education! Despite the rain over 200 Sydney Uni students rallied outside Fisher Library to oppose Abbott and Pyne’s cuts to higher education. There we heard from a library staff member on the proposed restructuring and what it could mean for the workers in the library, and Sherry one of the International Student Officers in the SRC who spoke

about the problems international students face at universities, stating pretty sharply that “international students are not ATMs for the government!”. Hear hear.

We then moved to the Quad, where we took to the precious grass to let our infamous VC know what we think of him and the decision of the Group of Eight universities to propose full fee places for Law, Accounting and Commerce. We also heard from SUPRA Education Officer Tim Scriven and SRC Enviro Officer Amelie while students chalked ‘education is a process not a commodity’ in solidarity with the Sydney Uni student facing suspension for chalking the same message at the strikes last year.

After that, we marched down Eastern Avenue pretty loudly, drawing in

students along the way to UTS to join the main demonstration. Hundreds of students from Macquarie, UNSW and UTS were waiting there for us, for another lively rally and march into the city.

Across the country hundreds more students took part in the day, sending a strong message to the government that we won’t tolerate further funding cuts to universities, we won’t tolerate attacks on welfare, and we won’t tolerate the undermining of staff wages and conditions. The fight against Abbott and Pyne is just beginning though. Just last week the Liberals pledged themselves to implementing the conversion of Start-up Scholarships into loans when the take control of the Senate in July.

All in all, the first national day of

action was a complete success, around the country and here in Sydney despite the miserable weather.

EAG activist Chloe Rafferty was quoted on the ABC declaring that “They’re carving up TAFE. They’re making the biggest cuts to university funding we’ve seen in 18 years...It’s protests like this and mass actions like the March in March that we need to challenge, not only this government, but the rotting system that brings about these corporate universities.

Hear hear. The anger and defiance that marked the protests put us in good stead to fight the Liberals the rest of their term.

Wom*n’s Officers’ Report

Georgia Cranko, Julia Readett and Phoebe Moloney.



Readers are advised our report will talk about sexual assault and other forms of violence.

Hi everyone! In our latest adventure, we are hosting a panel discussion to mark the launch of a poster campaign designed to raise awareness about the indispensable services of the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Sexual Assault

Service. This panel will address sexual assault and violence against wom*n, including topics of defining sexual assault, rates, intersectionality, effective advocacy, unpacking victim-blaming and dismantling rape culture. We want to acknowledge what sexual assault is, what the issues are and brainstorm how we can work towards a violence-free future.

Joining us on the panel will be Rachel Moss, Program Manager and Sexual Assault Counsellor at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital’s Sexual Assault Service; Moo Baulch, Project Manager at Domestic Violence NSW; and a representative from People with a Disability, Wurringa Baiya and the NSW Women’s Legal Service. **The Panel will be held at 6pm, in New**

Law Seminar on Thursday April 3rd.

Please be aware that the panel discussion will be addressing a variety of issues surrounding violence against wom*n. We realise that discussion may bring up traumatic experiences, discomfort and/ or distress for some individuals. We would like to extend support to those individuals. Leaving the room, tuning out or doing anything to make yourself feel more comfortable is entirely welcomed and will not be drawn attention to. If you or someone you know has either experienced sexual assault or feels confused/ unsure about an unwanted sexual experience and would like to speak with someone, please contact RPAH Sexual Assault Service on (02) 9515

9040 between 8.30-5pm weekdays or (02) 9515 6111 anytime if the sexual assault happened in the last 7 days.

We hope this event can impart essential information about the RPA Sexual Assault Service and start a campus dialogue, and in the world at large, about the widespread issue of sexual assault, particularly in regards to men’s violence against wom*n.

We’d also like to give a big shout-out to the wonderful organisers of Critical Race Discussion Group. They’ll be another discussion group that focuses on travelling, tourism and Diaspora in Physics Lecture Room 4, Monday at 6pm – we are really looking forward to attending and encourage everyone to come!

Sexual Harassment Officers’ Report

Georgia Carr and Kitty-Jean Laginha.



intimidation or assault. And while women are the most common victims of sexual harassment, it can and does happen to people of all sexes, genders, sexualities and cultural identities.

Considering the myriad contexts in which sexual harassment is experienced - workplaces, uni, online, on the street, in the home – it appears there are very few truly safe spaces where men and women can freely and autonomously go about their lives without being at risk of facing verbal, emotional, mental and physical sexual assault.

Sexual harassment is appallingly prevalent even into the 21st century, and calling out harassment is an active, useful way of challenging discrimination, as it assertively confronts the perpetrator as well

as affecting onlookers who witness the harassment. In opposing sexual harassment, we must ALWAYS keep in mind that the victim is NEVER, not even partially, responsible for the crime committed against them, despite what media and popular culture propagate. In the coming year, we see education-based and consciousness-raising campaigns as essential in fighting sexual harassment both on and off campus. We will be looking to work alongside the Wom*n’s Collective to provide informational resources, help and advice to others interested in working towards a culture of zero tolerance towards sexual harassment.

The Wom*n’s Collective will be holding a panel discussion on Thursday 3rd April at 6pm to address sexual assault and violence against wom*n, with the aim of raising awareness about the

RPA Hospital Sexual Assault Service. Panellists currently include Rachel Moss from the RPA Sexual Assault Service, Moo Baulch from Domestic Violence NSW, Carolyn Jones from Women’s Legal Services NSW and Mel Harrison from People with Disability. If you would like to know more about the services available to those who have experienced sexual assault then come along to learn how we can work towards a violence-free future.

There are also free autonomous self-defence classes and accompanying feminist discussion workshops for wom*n-identifying people held from 5-7pm every Friday from Weeks 3-12 at USyd. For details of location, follow facebook.com/womnsselfdefenceusyd.



quick: for those who understand synonyms

- ACROSS
- 1 Exhausted (5)

4 Comedian with a show named after him (4,5)

9 Feeling of deep and bitter anger (7)

10 Kind of coffee tree (7)

11 State of extreme happiness (5)

13 Things that are to be completed (2-3)

15 Electrically charged particle (3)

16 Bother with trivialities (3)

17 Copper + Zinc (5)

19 Horse for war (5)

21 Shade of gray (5)

23 Without anyone else (5)

24 Sebastian’s home? (3)

25 Like roses (3)

26 Shoe material (5)

28 Polynesian island (5)

29 He lost to Clinton (3,4)

31 White-haired tv host (3,4)

33 Host of American Who’s Line is it Anyway (4,5)

34 Glasses (5)
- DOWN

1 Creator of America’s Next Top Model (4,5)

2 Foremost (7)

3 Twosome (3)

4 Overcooked (5)

5 Grassland (3)

6 Kind (5)

7 The act of killing yourself (7)

8 Long (for) (5)

12 Expensive fur (5)

14 Popular 1970s music (5)

18 Belittle (5)

19 Candy (5)

20 Member of the Supremes (5,4)

22 Heard (7)

24 Genuine (7)

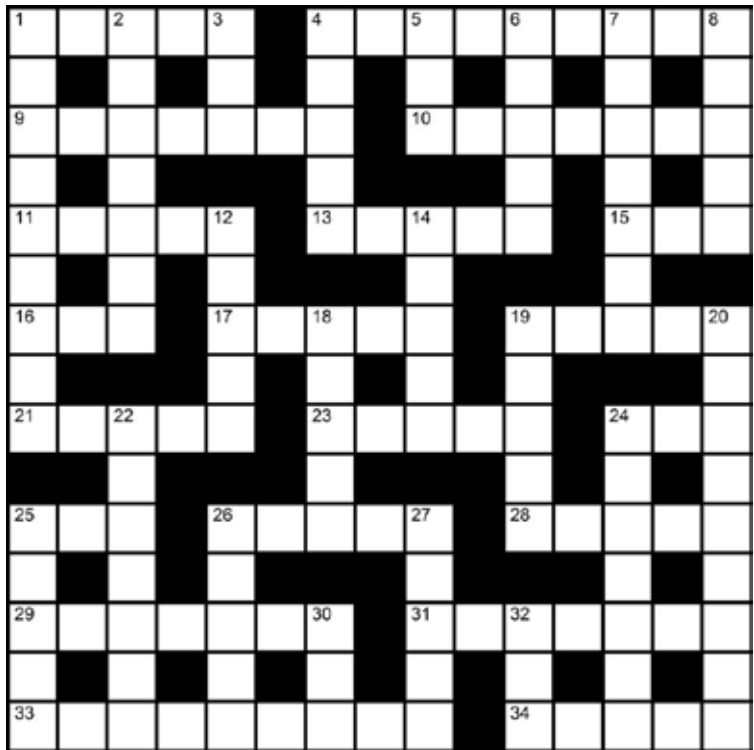
25 Mad (5)

26 Indifferent to emotions (5)

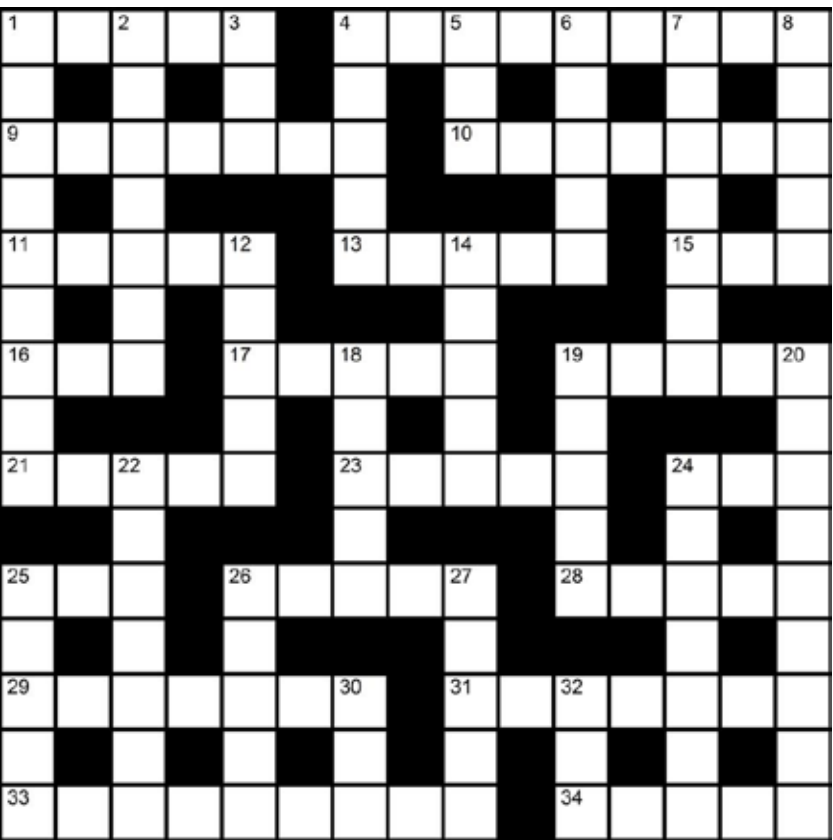
27 Have benefit from (5)

30 Listener (3)

32 Agreement (3)



cryptic: for those of you with very little going on in your life



- ACROSS
- 1 Beyond a dinner option (5)

4 Invaluable diamonds - 50 - stashed in the print media (9)

9 Crush the overpowered force (7)

10 Saint initially enters part of prison as a custodian (7)

11 Not a single human moved eastward past midday (2,3)

13 Drunk regurgitated saliva - “WHY!?” (5)

15 Brit slicks back his hair? (3)

16 Give a value to performance (3)

17 Participated in compensating? (3,2)

19 Moved slowly like a light thin fabric model dropping the last piece of cake (5)

21 Booth street is before Alabama lane’s entrance (5)

23 Fight back hidden fire elements (5)

24 Farewell was so long? (3)

25 Am I inside the target? (3)

26 Auto Ford models make for heavy wagons (5)

28 Mineo’s a type of hot sauce (5)

29 Theft of nearly 100 changes (7)

31 Resentment of our auditor’s social status is placed before... (7)

33 ...severely changing lousy ires (9)

34 Something free is good (in France and America) (5)
- DOWN

1 Prisons go wild in a medical prediction (9)

2 Leaders of private unions returned in kind with quiet aid (7)

3 Monkey suit part doesn’t have lineal ends (3)

4 Suggest after I go in!?! (5)

5 Common contraction of VD is reversible (3)

6 Other side of music mag is audible (5)

7 Fairly large after past wife, e.g. (7)

8 This city’s end was after wrathful doom! (5)

12 New lease found in art holder? (5)

14 Jury in Japan election... (5)

18 ...strangely trim around the edge? (5)

19 Che joined the SS in a fun game (5)

20 The 2nd zodiac sign - He’s in Roget’s (9)

22 Lover is newly married (7)

24 Ball positioned above and filled with oxygen! (7)

25 Regrettably time was consumed in a book of maps (5)

26 Belief of worthiness begins nothing (5)

27 Regretful apology (5)

30 Affirmation of the old south (3)

32 Apprehend a big bank? (3)

target: aim your letters

U

A

C

A

D

E

N

B

N

Excellent: 34

Good: 20

Alright: 15

Read a dictionary more frequently: 5

Didn't try: 0

Ed’s note: If this ain’t enough space for you then get your own paper. We recommend stealing it from the Fisher library printers.

sudoku: it’s medium so if you don’t get it you’re easy

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 8 | | 7 | 1 | | 2 | | 3 |
| 7 | 3 | | 4 | | 8 | | 5 | |
| | | | 9 | | | | 7 | 4 |
| | | | | 3 | 1 | 2 | | |
| | | 6 | 1 | | 9 | 3 | | |
| | 1 | 5 | 8 | | | | | |
| 9 | 4 | | | 1 | | | | |
| | 5 | | 2 | 7 | | 4 | 9 | |
| 6 | | 7 | | 9 | 4 | | 1 | |

Honi’s favourite gifs*

Ed’s note: this section is a pilot, it might not translate to print very well.

Politics Society presents: Diplomatic Dialogue with US Consul General

The University of Sydney is home to many an aspiring diplomat, eyes set firmly on a life of foreign travel, state dinners, and schmoozing. If this seems like an accurate description of your own career aspirations, or if you’re simply interested in diplomacy, the Politics Society’s first “Diplomatic Dialogue” event of the year is a great way to spend your Tuesday evening. This week’s guest is United States Consul General Hugo Llorens, who, prior

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to his arrival in Sydney, served at US embassies in Afghanistan, Honduras, Spain and Argentina.

Tuesday 1st April, 3pm @ United States Studies Centre Boardroom, \$5 ACCESS/\$15 concession.

Celebrating 100 Years of the University of Sydney Women’s Union

This time 100 years ago, women were invited to take part in campus life for the first time. Given the incredible contribution women make to all aspects of life at USyd in 2014, we (and the Women of the USU Program) think this is a pretty good occasion for a celebration. Head over to Hermann’s to join in the party; it’s black and white themed, and the food, drink, and cake are all free!

Thursday 3rd April, 1pm @ USyd Holme Reading Room, free.

There was a time when it would have been impossible to hold a position of power as an openly queer person in Australia. Thankfully, those days are now over, and some of our country’s most powerful and influential figures are queer-identifying.

At this panel, NSW Labor MLC Penny Sharpe, NSW Greens MP Alex Greenwich, and former ACON President Bruce Meagher will discuss how they came to be leaders in their professional fields and in the queer community at large. In particular, they will discuss the challenges they faced and barriers they overcame as queer leaders, and how young queer people today can do the same.

Newtown Hotel Cider Fair

If you like your cider a bit more boutique than the house brew at Hermann’s, the Newtown Hotel Cider Fair is set to provide you panacea.

Tuesday 1st April, 7pm @ USyd Hermann’s Bar, free.

‘How I Became A Leader’: Queer Portfolio Speaker Panel

Saturday 5th April, 1pm @ Newtown Hotel.

RPAH Sexual Assault Service
Sydney University Women’s Collective

ask. listen. respect.

APRIL 3RD PANEL DISCUSSION: TOWARDS A VIOLENCE FREE FUTURE

RPAH Sexual Assault Services Panel Discussion:

Towards a Violence Free Future

Rachel Moss – Director, RPAH Sexual Assault Services
Mel Harrison – Advocate, People with a Disability Australia
Moo Baulch - Project Manager, Domestic Violence NSW
Thea Deakin Greenwood – Solicitor, Warringa Baiya Legal Centre
Carolyn Jones – Senior Solicitor, Women’s Legal Service NSW

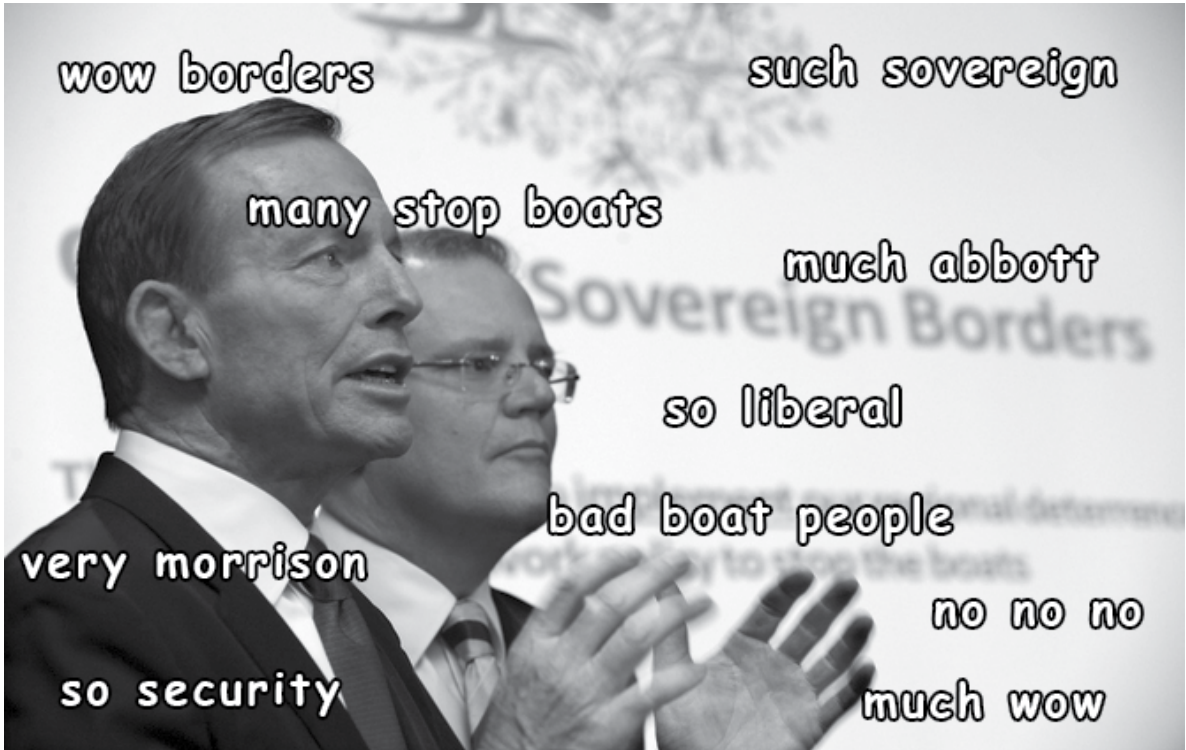
Thursday April 3rd
6pm – 7.30pm
Seminar Room 424, Level 4 Education Building
All welcome!

This panel will address sexual assault and violence against wom*n, including topics of defining sexual assault, rates, effective advocacy, and dismantling rape culture. We want to acknowledge what sexual assault is, what the issues are, how it relates to other societal oppressions and brainstorm how we can work towards a violence-free future.

Honey Soy

Much Wow Very Border Sovereign

Bernadette Anvia is much wow very writer.



The Abbott government has today announced the launch of a new national media campaign to promote its asylum seeker policy, “Operation Sovereign Borders.”

At the official launch party held earlier today, Prime Minister Abbott and Immigration Minister Scott Morrison unveiled a series of posters greatly influenced by 2013 internet meme superstar, Doge. The posters, which feature the same discourse employed by Doge memes and the same comic sans text, will be rolled out next week and will feature in various bus stops, train stations and public billboards around the nation.

Immigration Minister Scott Morrison stated at

the launch that “we’re confident that the universal appeal of the doge meme will carry through to ‘Operation Sovereign Borders’, and that we’ll see our approval ratings sky rocket!”

Prime Minister Abbott was also prolific in his praise of the posters, stating that he was a “big fan” of the “simple statements like ‘bad boat people’ and ‘many stop boats,’” adding that he was “particularly proud” of his own “creative addition” to the poster, the statement “no no no”.

Summing up his thoughts on the matter, Prime Minister Abbott delightfully exclaimed: “Many happiness! Very wow! So me! Much Sovereign Borders!”

People Who Are Afraid Of Houses Fight To Reclaim “Homeophobe”

Nick Gowland quite likes Federation-era cottages.

The Australian Homeophobe Support Group today launched a movement designed to educate the public about the difference between discriminatory attitudes to homosexuality, and people who are afraid of houses.

“Ever since the first Neanderthal decided to sleep in a cave, there have been other Neanderthals cowering outside at the sheer domesticity of it all,” said AHSG director Michael Travis at the launch of the “Homeophobes not Homophobes” campaign. “We only have the utmost respect and support for the struggle of our LGBT friends. However, for too long homeophobes have had to conceal their identity for fear of being labelled bigots. This is about ending that fear.”

Mr Travis told reporters that the campaign will also break down the stigma against those who are uncomfortable with households. “Homeophobia is a lifelong journey, but with routine therapy and relaxation exercises, most of us learn to function healthily in tents, palaces, hotels, and even particularly charmless houses,” he said, before fleeing in terror after mistaking a gust of wind for the crackling fire in a cosy Federation cottage.

The “Homeophobes not Homophobes” movement has met with staunch support from the powerful Hummerphobe lobby, which objects to large military utility vehicles, as well as the countless thousands of anti-naturopathy Homeophobes. The campaign has also found unlikely backers in those who are terrified of the Simpson family patriarch and/or author of The Odyssey. At the time of printing it was unclear whether the historically unstable alliance of Jewish and Muslim hamophobes would put aside their differences and throw their considerable weight behind the campaign.

However, the movement has not met a strong backlash from an autonomous collective of individuals who identify as terrified of words that are spelt differently but sound the same. A spokesperson for the collective, which describe themselves as “homophonophobes”, wished to clarify that they’re “not afraid of gay people’s telephones,” but maintained that they could only ever see themselves endorsing the word “houseophobes”.

Year 4 attends the Model United Nations

By Mary Ward (4B).

On Saturday morning at 7:30am Katie S (4A) Laura P (4B) and I arrived at school to get onto a bus and go to the Model United Nations. We were all super excited!!!!

Model UN is a game where different teams pretend to be different countries in the United Nations, which is a big group of countries that make laws about things that affect them all. There are some prizes at the end, but the real winner is our education.

We were representing France, which is a country in Europe with a population of 65.7 million people. Their flag is blue, white and red and their capital city is called Paris, also known as “The City of Love”. It is a very romantic country, and is shown in lots of adult movies.

When we arrived we had registration. Our registration bag came with a lanyard, an ad for a tutoring company, a discount voucher for The Economist, a pen, and a Sydney University undergraduate guide. It was so cool.

Then we went to our seats in the UN General Assembly and listened to some kids read out their papers.

Then it was time for our team to speak. Katie read out our paper and she did an incredible job. She had awesome eye contact.

Then it was my favourite part: lunch!!!!!! I had a peanut butter sandwich, a muesli bar and an apple juice popper. Katie also had an apple juice popper but Laura just had water. It was really yummy.

We then went back to the General Assembly and listened to some more countries read out their statements.

There were also these adults who were playing Model UN. Some of them were older than 20. That’s older than Laura’s neighbour!

When I grow up, I want make a difference to disadvantaged people in our world by being in the Model UN just like them. They were very inspirational and pretty.

Then it was time to get back on the bus and go home.

We didn’t win any of the prizes, but we still had a lot of fun and did our best.

Thank you to Mrs. Smith and Mr. Jones for taking us to Model United Nations. We had the most fun EVER!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

LEAKED: GEORGE BRANDIS’ PROPOSED BILL OF RIGHTS

Luca Moretti is a bigot.

It came as something of a surprise last week that noted anti-Bill of Rights advocate and Federal Minister for Privileged Minorities (Encompassing the previous portfolios of Arts and the Attorney-General) George Brandis has abjured and now supports the enshrinement of certain crucial rights in a charter. Honey Soy has managed to obtain a draft copy:

1. The right to be a Bigot - The origins of this right can be found in the lesser known Minor Carta of 1215, which Senator Brandis’ office assures us was signed at Pymble (just below the Pacific Highway, now the fourth hole of the local golf club).
2. The right to taxpayer funded bookshelves (may be extended to other forms of cabinetry, the Minister has his eye on a Tasmanian Oak commode).
3. The right to wear a polo shirt with the collar popped for ‘extra zing’ (in the Minister’s words).
4. The right to drink full strength beer in the members area at the SCG/MCG –

Previously only a common law right that was crystallised in *Members of the SCG v Anonymous Pleb* (1933) 5 NSWLR 217.

5. The right to tax deductions on hobby farms/the right to yacht moorings on certain feast days.
6. The right to publish poetry without criticism (believed to be intended to allow for the publication of Senator Brandis’ own magnum opus “A Sonnet for Mrs Thatcher: She Walked in Duty on the Right”).

The Bill is expected to come before the Parliament in the next month. Outspoken ALP Senator Doug Cameron has said “only middle class people could vote for it”. The rest of the ALP is expected to vote with the government, with the NSW branch of the party arguing that the inadmissibility of evidence from ICAC inquiries in criminal cases should be extended as a right to anything said or done in the ALP party room, or Sussex St offices.

Abbott Declares Poor Australians ‘Peasants’

Ed McMahon has a pen full of pig shit.

Prime Minister Tony Abbott last week announced measures designed to clarify contemporary Australian demographics. Speaking from Government House, Abbott announced that so-called “Australians from low socioeconomic backgrounds” would be assigned a new classification. “The new system will assign the destitute to the membership of the peasantry,” Abbott said. “The people of Her Majesty’s Australian realm are sick and tired of Labor’s lies about equality. Some people are just better than others.” Abbott refused to answer questions after the announcement, stating that journalists should know their place, before riding away in his new gold-trimmed, horse-drawn government buggy.

Abbott rejected Opposition Leader Bill Shorten’s suggestion that the measures are anachronistic. “This government acknowledges the diversity of modern Australia by distinguishing between the hopelessly wretched and their various betters,” he said. Shorten was prevented from asking a follow-up question when the Speaker, Dame Bronwyn Bishop, fired an arrow into the Opposition Despatch Box.

Peasants are to be treated in much the same way as they presently are by Centrelink. However,

they are to be afforded a new level of disdain from knights, dames, and the political aristocracy. Honey Soy understands that the Prime Minister’s office is drafting a decree outlining the obligations of peasants. Peasants will likely be required to grovel to their natural superiors, and throw their bodies to the ground to form a bridge when a Dame wishes to traverse a muddy puddle.

The announcement garnered mixed reactions. Terrowin, an urchin student from Forrest Lodge said, “I reckon milords have made the right call. Tony will make an Australia where a white male like meself can graduate from the Newserf allowance to knighthood within decades.” Ysmay, a checkout attendant from Marrickville disagreed

saying, “I got three hungry mouths to feed and a pen full of pig shit to cart to Petersham. I just don’t think this announcement helps me do that.”

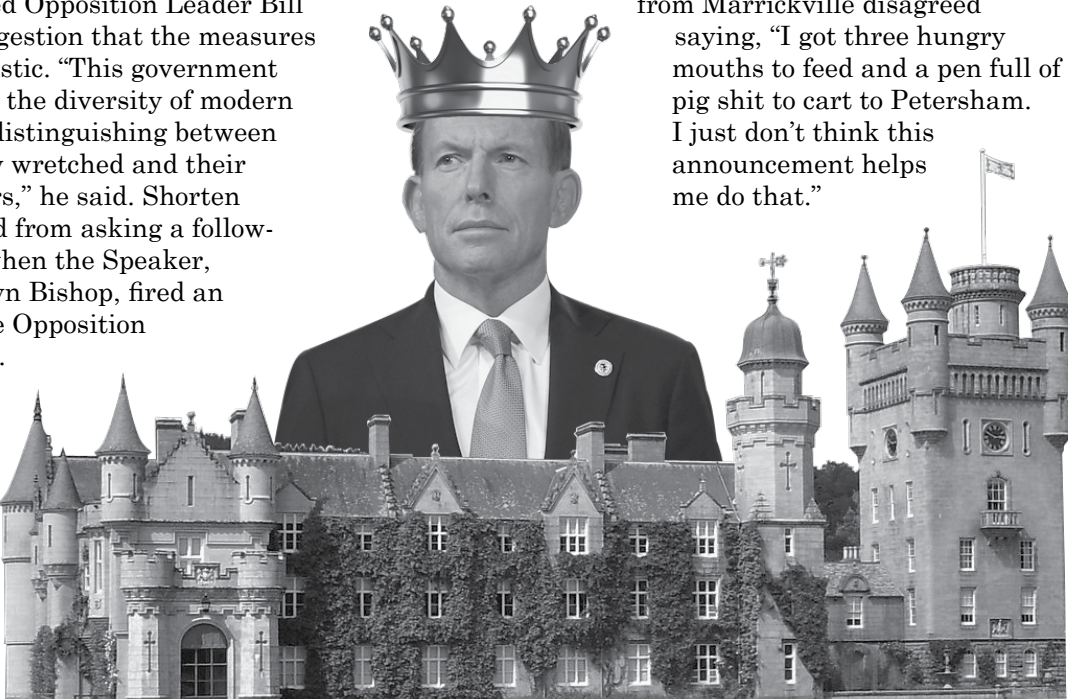




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