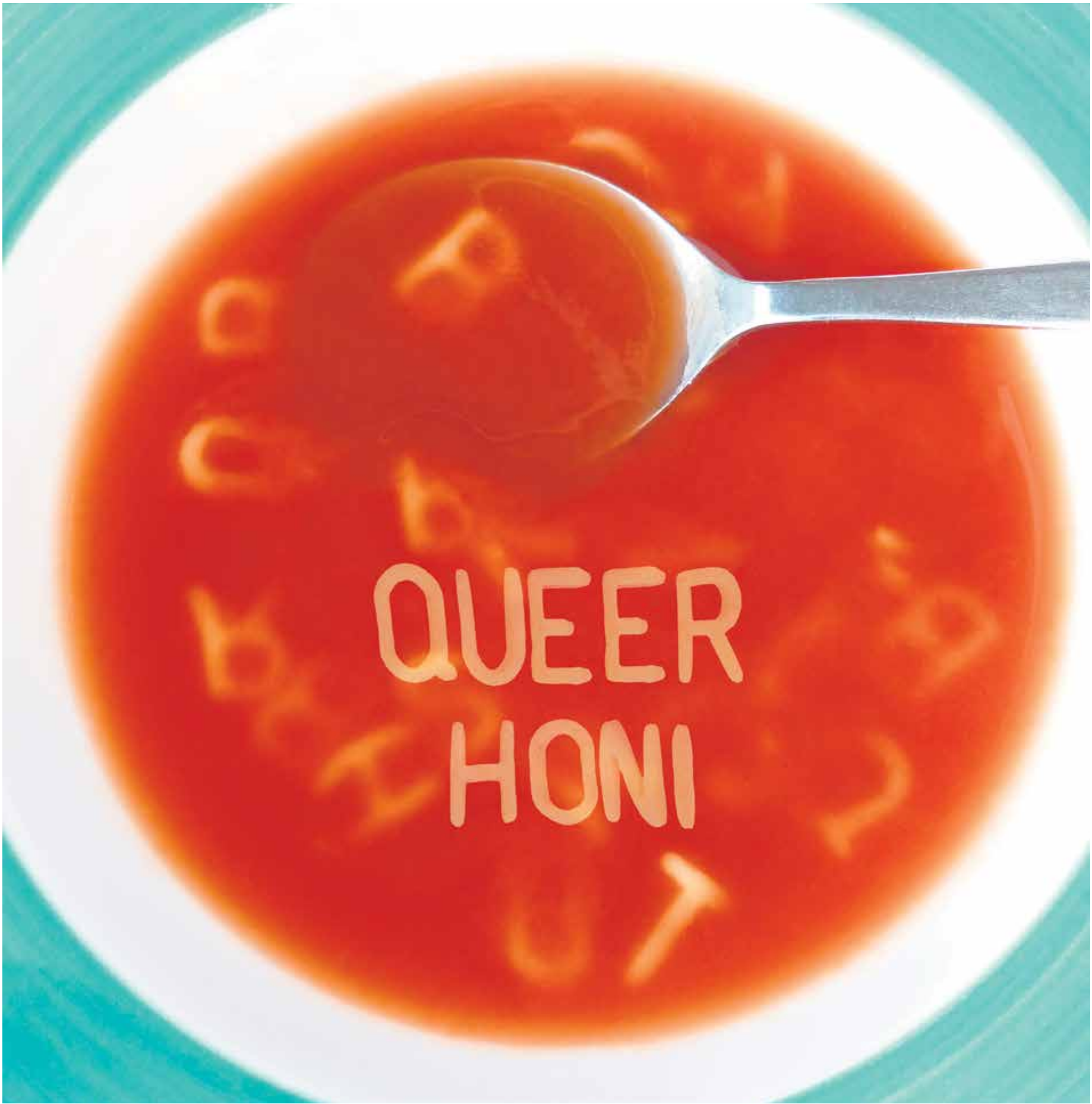


Honi Soit

SEMESTER TWO, 2016 • QUEER HONI, WEEK 9

FIRST PRINTED 1929



Post a Letter,
Make Things
Change

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Oliver Moore

EDITORS

Gale Chan, Imogen Grant, Sam Langford, Victoria Zerbst

CONTRIBUTORS

Anonymous, John Black, Gale Chan, Susie Elliot, Eric Gonzales, Wes Gray, Harry Hassett, April Holcombe, J.J., Andy Mason, Mark Millar, Oliver Moore, Connor Parissis, Perri Roach, Riki Scanlan, Marcus Wong, Noa Zulman.

ARTISTS

John, Eloise Myatt, Katie Thornburn, Victoria Zerbst, Robin Eames.

COVER

Ellie Rogers

AN APOLOGY

Karl Stephanovic

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Naaman Zhou's Medicare card

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation. The University of Sydney – where we write, publish and distribute *Honi Soit* – is on the sovereign land of these people.

As students and journalists, we recognise our complicity in the ongoing colonisation of Indigenous land. In recognition of our privilege, we vow to not only include, but to prioritise

and centre the experiences of Indigenous people, and to be reflective when we fail to.

We recognise our duty to be a counterpoint to the racism that plagues the mainstream media, and to adequately represent the perspectives of Indigenous students at our University. We also wholeheartedly thank our Indigenous reporters for the continuing contribution of their labour to our learning.



EDITORIAL

Oliver Moore

A confession, of sorts: I love *Honi Soit*. From before I even finished high school, I read *Honi* online, eagerly drinking in the vibrant and inclusive campus culture that was so far from my conservative small town high school. The existence of a queer autonomous edition of anything was my idea of heaven. The trusty pages of *Honi* buoyed me through the chaos of undergrad, always a welcoming inky cover in times of need. It is an incredible privilege to have the opportunity to produce this edition, earlier versions of which slowly, surely helped me understand myself.

I have an enormous respect for the power and history of this scrappy student publication – looking over the words of years past and seeing the same commitment to social change, to innovation, to a better and brighter future. I can't help but wonder what generations future might think of what we have achieved.

The first Queer *Honi* was published forty years ago. Where will we be in 2056? Will marriage equality finally be legalised? Will trans kids be able to access medical treatment without a court case? Will I be able to walk down the street with my friends without being harassed by transphobes and homophobes? I don't know, but I hope so.

Letters

Please be nice to each other

Dear *Honi*,

Having a safe and accessible queer space on campus is important for LGBTQIA+ students. It allows us a place to meet one another, somewhere to study or rest and a location to organise ourselves, without the potential harassment or judgement from non-queer people. It is a space that is designed to be safe from discrimination, bullying and abuse based on identity. It is a refuge from dealing with the experience of being ostracised in mainstream society. It is a place to learn and to thrive in our often marginalised identities.

Initially entering a queer space can be intimidating in itself already, especially if someone is new to LGBTQIA+ things. Entering a queer space where exclusive social groupings have already been established makes it doubly intimidating and even more so when said groupings operate in a clique-like manner. Unfortunately this is my experience of the queer space located at USyd's main campus. Whilst the formation of cliques seems somewhat inevitable, I have seen how the creation of such

has seen some people who used to be more involved in the queer collective slowly drift away as they are excluded, whether intentionally or not, from those clique-like social groups. This makes the space daunting to be since those groups also tend to dominate the space with little awareness of their effect on others.

The queer space itself isn't exactly welcoming either. Some seem to treat the space as party central and whilst there are many things that can be celebrated as part of being LGBTQIA+, this frequent party demeanour tends to have negative impacts as well. Quite often when I have entered the queer space it is often really noisy, rowdy or a mess, and not conducive for those who want a quiet place to study or take a nap. I have witnessed or have been made aware that people drink, have sex and smoke directly outside the space (all violations of the space's usage policy). All this then makes the space unsafe.

I suppose this comes down to the purpose of the queer space. My understanding is that people go to queer spaces to find a sense of belonging and a community. It is to gain some support and solidarity in

our identities. It is to see what can be done to help better the lives of LGBTQIA+ people. It is somewhere to recollect and recharge ourselves. It is there to celebrate queerness but it is also a location to learn about other's identities. Or at least that's why I initially started to go to the space. But I no longer feel that I can do that. I am aware that some regular users of the queer space overtly express that they do not think certain LGBTQIA identities are 'queer' enough; that those identities do not experience discrimination in the wider society and therefore do not belong in queer spaces. This means I no longer feel that I can be proud of a certain part of my queer identity without having to defend and heavily debate it, something I didn't expect to encounter in queer spaces. I no longer feel a sense of support and if anything I get more from non-queer people and allies than from those who frequent the space.

I also get a sense that the queer space currently leans heavily towards the left end of the political spectrum, which makes sense since the left has traditionally supported LGBTQIA+ people and causes. However, does that mean that the queer space is only a safe space for those with particular political factional alignments? Can someone who is politically central feel comfortable in the space? Can a queer Liberal exist in it without harassment? Perhaps yes if they never bring up their political alignments.

This begs the question of whether there can be a thing as a 'safe space' as it is near impossible to ensure the comfort and safety of everyone that enters. It is also a reason why 'safer space' is now often used, being more a more accurate term, instead of 'safe space' as such spaces strive to be safe for everyone.

I implore current users of the queer space to do some reflection and to consider how their behaviours may affect other users of the space because while they are able to thrive in their queerness, others have been alienated and left to fend for themselves.

- Anonymous

Mate I'm not sure this is the right edition of the paper for you

To the editors of *Honi Soit*,

As a member of staff I am very disappointed at some of the current campaigns being run at the University for the paper. The campaign that is concerning is SIN for *Honi*.

The campaign is a mockery of Christian religion and should not be endorsed by the University. I find the contents on their Facebook page and the wording of their campaign highly offensive and am appalled that this is being spread around the University.

The University should be about acceptance of all people and religions.

It is very disappointing.

Regards,

Georgia Kalavritinos
Campus Infrastructure & Services

Stupol falls from grace

Dear *Honi*,

I am writing to implore the student political community at this university to reflect seriously on the shallow and opportunistic appropriation of social justice work which has been so rife during this election season.

Alongside the usual beige buzzwords of inclusivity and diversity and the endless appeals to the ever-elusive, almost mythical 'mainstream student' (who confusingly doesn't give that much of a fuck about politics but also thinks occupying and protesting are really edgy and cool), this year seems to have brought out a flood of claims of activist experience and dedication. Regardless of ideological bent or actual political experience, almost all of the tickets seem intent on presenting themselves as seasoned grassroots social justice organisers.

A number of tickets include people with real experience in

social movements on and off campus who have made useful contributions to building a radical student community, but many of them are bullshitting. At the *Honi* debate last week, all three tickets claimed to be committed to holding the university management to account and covering campus activism. But many of the candidates are first or second years who could have been in high school during the most recent staff strikes, the big mobilisations after Rudd announced the 'PNG solution', the fight against fee deregulation under Abbott and the demonstrations against the forced closure of remote Aboriginal communities.

There is something particularly disturbing about the dishonest claims of involvement in feminist and Aboriginal rights movements. The issue of sexual violence on campus has effectively been treated as a political football by the various factions as they seek to capitalise on the explosive attention it has received this year. This exposure has been the work of dedicated activists in the Women's Collective, and survivors who have overcome their own trauma in order to bring the abhorrent culture of assaults and administrative cover-ups to light. The overwhelming majority of people on SRC and *Honi* tickets were not involved in any of this at all. It is profoundly disrespectful for these people to be appropriating social and political capital from the trauma and hard work of others – the abusive misogyny doled out in the comments sections on every article attest to the exhausting and confronting nature of this vital campaign work and to the bravery of those organisers.

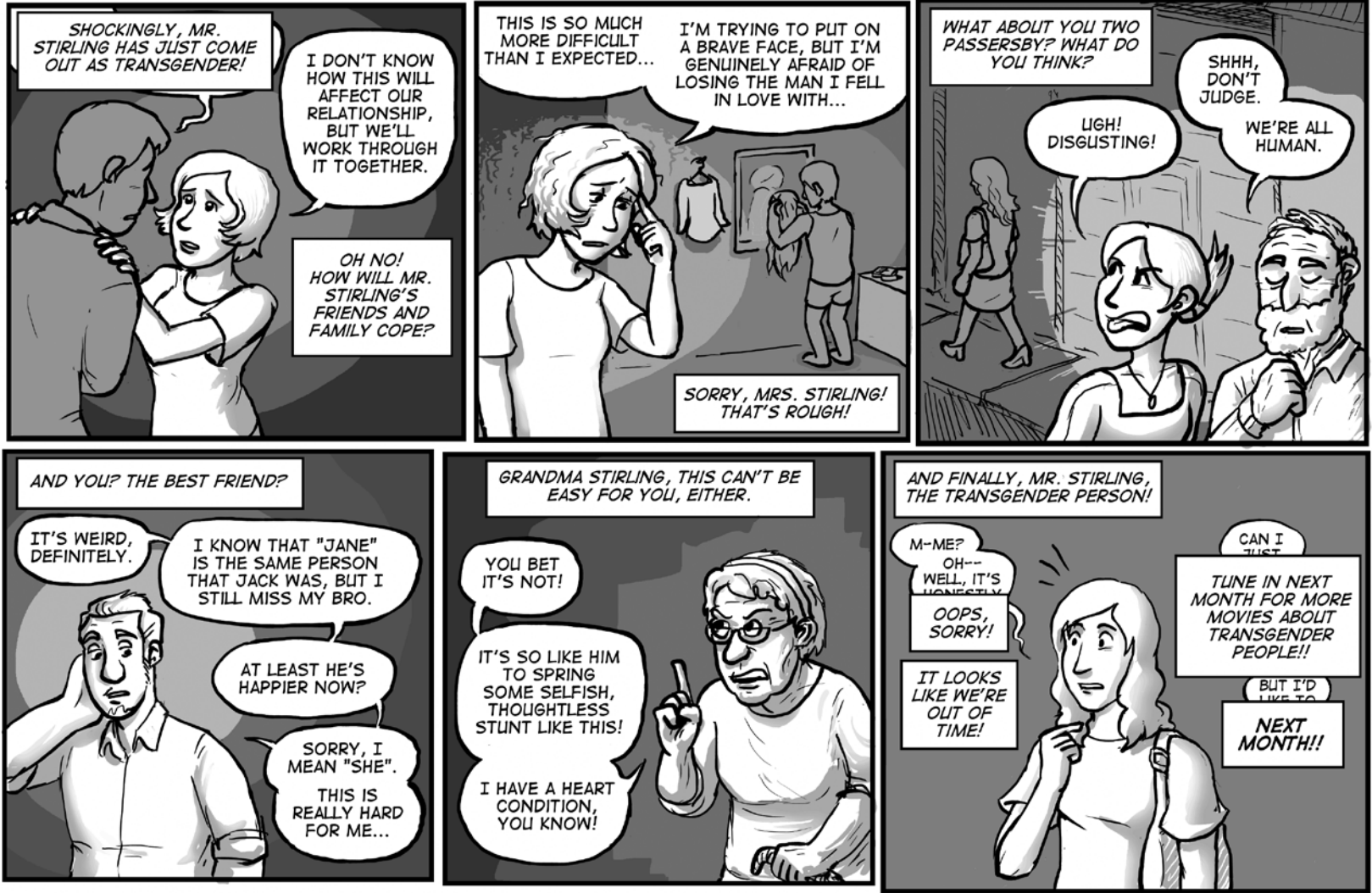
Similarly, in the upside-down world of student politics, second-year students who have taken one Indigenous Studies unit and attended a couple of demonstrations are now presenting themselves as activists for Aboriginal rights. After the recent uproar about the abuse of Aboriginal kids in juvenile detention after the media coverage on Don Dale, would-be student politicians and *Honi* editors are seeking to jump

on the political bandwagon. Again, this is phenomenally disrespectful to the suffering of Aboriginal people and their courage in standing up against the inhumane treatment they continue to receive at the hands of colonial Australia. In a context where Aboriginal adult and youth incarceration are among the highest in the world, more Aboriginal children are being removed from families than at any other time in history and Aboriginal services and programs have been savagely cut, Aboriginal people face very different consequences for demonstrating than white middle-class students from the inner city. Yesterday, several members of Students Support Aboriginal Communities attended a demonstration in Blacktown organised by the local Aboriginal community about the issues of police violence, over-incarceration and child removal. There were about 40 people at one of the tamest protests I've ever seen, but the demo was also attended by 8 mounted police, perhaps 2 dozen regular police on foot and a dozen riot police. This is as many cops as you might see at a rally of 2000 people for a non-Aboriginal issue in the city. These kind of dishonest claims also disrespect the rich history of Aboriginal students and supporters organising on campus, stretching from the community closures and the Redfern Aboriginal Tent Embassy in the last couple of years (in which hardly any of the current crop of student politicians were involved) all the way back to the Freedom Ride in 1965.

Radical political organising is difficult, stressful, draining, sometimes traumatic work. Many organisers have to engage in activism on top of work and study, leaving little time for anything else. Social lives and mental health can go out the window very quickly. Oppressed people don't have the luxury of deciding whether or when they will get political – if your community is being destroyed, you have no other choice. We don't need these fair-weather friends of social movements. If you are fair dinkum about participating in the struggle for a better society, you should show your face at rallies, support social movements and organise in your own community not only when it's fashionable but all the time, for life. I would like to be proved wrong and for all student politicians to blossom into inspiring social justice organisers, but I'm not holding my breath.

- A.M., Arts/Science IV

Wow! A movie about a transgender person!



Art by John

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Email editors@honisoit.com.
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No headless torsos.

The Kids Are Not Alright

Connor Parissis interviews specialist psychiatrist Dr Stephen Koder

The correlation between queer-identification and mental health problems is unjustifiably high. Beyond Blue report 36.2% of transgender and 24.4% of lesbian, gay and bisexual Australians experiencing major depressive episodes compared to the 6.8% of the general population. Queer-identifying Australians are twice as likely to have high levels of psychological distress compared to heterosexual peers, with Australian LGBTI+ people having the highest rates of suicide, or thoughts of suicide, of any population in Australia.

While bigoted conservatives, politicians and health professionals call for causation between queer-identification and mental health problems, psychiatrist Doctor Stephen Koder stresses, “we do not see sexual diversity as a psychiatric disorder,” and stated that his transgender patients “have absolutely no mental health problems. All I had to do was verify their condition of being, and to support and facilitate their transition.” Dr Koder, one of few psychiatrists in Sydney

specialising in transgender identities, agreed for an interview regarding the correlation between queer-identification and mental health problems.

Dr Koder discussed how school environments allow for this correlation to flourish. He acknowledged the “abundant research that show schools that show proactive inclusiveness and support of queer students, show decreased mental health problems and much lower distress levels and dissociated levels than those at schools who do not offer that kind of validation.” This brought into conversation the attack on the controversial Safe Schools program which Dr Koder called a “politically motivated set of circumstances by the federal government to withdraw support.” He stated, “In my clinical work the attack is a tragedy. I was happy to encourage people to get their schools to consider inviting Safe Schools to educate their staff and create policies, but that doesn't seem to be so available anymore. I'm disappointed that our state government hasn't stepped in, as the

Victorian government did. We can only hope public pressure and the weight of scientific evidence will be brought to the politicians concerned if they have any real regard for the wellbeing of the young.”

Issues such as the Safe Schools program and marriage equality have “unfortunately become politicised.” With the constant bombardment of these issues in the media, it creates misconceptions and overall uncomfortableness for the queer community, allowing for feelings of inferiority and the opinions of extremists to thrive.

Whilst the Orlando shootings were a horrific attack on the queer community, Koder “picked up an outpour of compassion, public demonstrations and support... and when things like that happen to any community, one positive thing that could happen is compassion for the group of people.” Events like this can make people feel extremely vulnerable, intensifying mental health problems and it is in the best interest of the community and those not in it to offer support and com-

passion, which is exactly what happened.

To decrease the correlation between queer-identification and mental health problems, a push towards the decrease of heteronormativity and cisnormativity in society would ultimately lead to further equality and acceptance, and eventually decrease mental health problems. Dr Koder suggests, “The battle has to be fought on many fronts. Any queer identity should be more normalised and humanised, and this is slowly happening through media in various ways,” including creating role models for queer youth and their parents. “There are clearly political and legislative issues that also need to be addressed by society. Speaking personally, Koder stated, “In my field, there is great scope for legislative change enabling for transgender people to transition fully, to be more legally recognized, and not have to jump through so many hoops.” Whilst being extremely difficult to transition, it simultaneously invalidates the sex/

gender distinction and enforces biological determinism. Koder addressed the unnecessary expenses involved in hormone therapy, which “acts as an incentive to access that sort of treatment in other ways that are outside of the law, which can be dangerous.” Ultimately this leads to societal ostracising for those who don't ‘pass,’ or fit into the hegemonic gender norms, leading to fewer employment opportunities, making hormone treatments and sex affirmation procedures further unaffordable, and intensifying mental health conditions.

Overall, Koder potentially suggests, “it is possible that as a group there may be greater vulnerability to mild level issues of mental health that could be correlated with sexual orientation. We're talking biology here. We can't say we are born with sexuality but not mental health issues. There could be some correlations above and beyond these social factors but only time will tell, and we will only know once we address these social factors, which is in our power.”

MASCULINITY IS COMPLICATED

I love other men, therefore I am

Eric Gonzales ponders upon masculinity in men

How should I react when someone brandishes the F-word, livid at my limp-wristed effiteness?

As well-meaning advice in the art of bully deflection, Sir Ian McKellen would tell me to not give a shit. “Gay men are more masculine than straight men,” he tells Sir Patrick Stewart, the Professor X to his Magneto, “because they love other men.” I'd be hard-pressed to impute any malice given his track record of co-founding Stonewall, a UK LGBT rights charity. But as someone who has struggled to find self-esteem beyond the muscle-bound and stoic conception of ideal masculinity, the words fail to resonate.

In actuality, these words assume that masculinity should be equated to a currency of self-worth, with no space for the feminine. It subtly erases male-identifying people who aren't necessarily ‘masculine’ – especially perpetrated in wider society by those who insist on

plastering ‘no fats, no fems, no Asians’ to their dating app biographies. The fetishisation of masculinity shared by McKellen and many gay men marginalises those asexual and aro-mantic individuals who, while identifying as men all the same, are barred from this narrow avenue of performative masculinity.

Empowerment predicated on a quota of masculinity ironically becomes disempowering and exclusive because it only applies to particular individuals: it buoys the ‘men,’ and emasculates the ‘boys’. That said, this is no invective against masculinity, which can be a crucible of individual possibility and expression. Rather, there is more worth in embracing the beauty of who you are and building upon that constructively, instead of adhering to a system that bears little likeness to you. After all, the hirsute of manliness needn't be conflated with the pursuit of happiness.



BIRTHS, DEATHS & PLEBISCITES

Honi soit queer mal y pense

OUR MELBOURNE CORRESPONDANT SENT THIS

I never expected my life would end up like this.

I had dismissed it as another well intentioned piece of potato policy, ultimately doing more harm than good whilst it stares at you with those puppy-eyes. Yet when I went searching for those soft dewy eyes to pity and scorn, I found something much different.... much darker.

In its place was a strapping young piece of legislation. Endowed with a stiff respect for the views of all, dripping with democracy, containing thick

wads of public funding ready to spurt forth into the lap of anyone willing to take handle of and salaciously argue the issue. Muscles strong enough to carry the will of the people, yet supple enough to allow a politician to defy that will.

I was aroused. I couldn't stand the idea of Bill "Australia's Ineffectual Step Dad" Shorten killing my succulent plebiscite, no matter how poisonous it is. I'd seen the private member's bills. I knew they dare not hold a candle to the wild throbbing ride that this plebiscite would provide. They were all too safe. No sense of danger or excitement to them, nothing that could hope to ros-

tle the dusty loins of the fathers of our great nation...

Sadly, as I write, it seems increasingly likely that the plebiscite will be blocked. My love will be crushed, left to wither away and die in The lonely halls of Parliament house. So I ask: If Parliament will not show it love, if the Australian people will not show it kindness, let me. Let me marry this Plebiscite and make it my own. I will tend for it, support its dreams, and give it kiss at least once a year.

Please, I beg of you, if you have any sense of compassion, please change this cruel law so that I may marry the legislation of my kinky nightmares.

IN OTHER NEWS, HOW COOKED IS STUPOL?

I know you're all busy running for the chance not to show up to council once a month, but please, in these trying times, take a second to think about the students you're hoping to represent.

Campaign season is rough on everyone, but for those among us who have any variety of anxiety disorder, stimulation disorder, or just don't like being suddenly touched by strangers who want things from you, it's akin to hell. Please don't be shitheads, ask people before touching them.

Gender and Capitalism

April Holcombe advocates for the destruction of both

Before we take our first breath of air, society sets out a path that we must follow. Before we know our own name, others presume to know a whole lot about us. The rigid gender binary is everywhere, and transgression is punished through social exclusion and institutional discrimination.

Gender is a category (like race, nationality, sexual desire) which is constructed and shaped by the way people interact with each other. As people organise their societies and their economies in different ways at different times, their familial and sexual relations change with them.

So how is our society organised?

Capitalist society is predicated on a tiny minority owning and controlling the vast wealth of the world. Production is geared towards what will create the most profits for this minority, not what the mass of people actually needs.

The rich throw these products onto an unplanned market, hoping to sell them for the highest possible return. Profits rule the world: to maximize them, the bosses must squeeze every last drop of work out of us at the lowest possible cost. Making workers work harder for less is a central concern of the employing class. All of this requires iron discipline and subordination in the workplace. Workers must have their every movement controlled for efficiency. They must be made dependent on their wage for survival.

With such intense and inhuman social relations, the nuclear family glues us to the capitalist project. A private place cut off from 9-to-5 industrial servitude can feel like a sanctuary - husbands might feel more powerful directing wives and children than

they do following orders - but they are also disciplined by dependents at home who rely on their wage to live.

Then there's the work conducted inside the home. Cooking, washing, raising children and caring for the sick is essential for a society to exist. Under capitalism, it keeps workers replenished each day for another round of labour, and children prepared for the discipline of school and work. ather than being a social responsibility, these tasks are part of the private, unpaid labour that is done overwhelmingly by women in the home. The Australian Bureau of Statistics calculated the value of this domestic labour as equivalent to half of Australia's GDP. This is not a bill that the bosses and politicians want to pay.

Such a profitable institution requires extreme socialisation into the expected roles from day one. By the time young people enter the workforce, years of intense gendering has steered them towards certain industries and work-patterns. Once in the workforce, they find that women are paid significantly less than their male counterparts, which in turn reinforces the gendered nature of social and family life.

The mass social movements for sexual liberation of the 60s and 70s have changed this situation considerably. Though still unequal, men do more housework and childcare than they once did. The stigma surrounding single mothers and divorce has lessened. LGBTI rights have internationally made enormous gains on marriage equality and adoption rights. All of this is positive, but it also demonstrates that when social pressure threatens to blow the lid off the status quo, the system can accommodate alternative family

arrangements. These are fitted around the nuclear norm and in so doing adapt oppression to new circumstances. For all the changes, the private family continues to be a closed-off unit that throws the cost of keeping a healthy, exploitable workforce onto workers themselves. For the individuals in it, updated gender stereotypes and expectations that fit with this reality are no less oppressive.

The family simultaneously limits our horizons and too often denies us a genuinely fulfilling existence. We work in order to support family members, but then work prevents us from developing these relationships satisfactorily. Rather than liberating and pleasurable sex lives, we are tired and bitter after work, too busy cooking or fixing the washing machine to enjoy our bodies. The market turns our desires into products it can sell for a buck: the \$50 billion pornography and sex industry are about attaining the idealised, commodified experience of pleasure. Sexual repression for working class people is necessary to prove – as sexist advertising does from every billboard – that our bodies are not our own.

Only in a society in which human satisfaction comes before the profits of a tiny few can there be genuine liberation and freedom from the pressure to conform to gender roles. That means overthrowing the class of parasites who demand our subordination in every area of life. Sex is a basic human need for which consent should be the only rule, not the ability to buy it, find time for it, or any other consideration. Similarly, raising children is a social good that should be the collective responsibility of all, rather than the private, unpaid duty of exhausted parents.

On Pinkwashing

Imogen Grant is sick of it

The upcoming marriage equality and plebiscite bills provides a great opportunity to consider how governments and parties are politically rebranded. The rise of support for single issue queer politics, like marriage equality, aids racist and colonialist institutions by enabling them to cast themselves as ‘progressive’ through a practice called “pinkwashing”.

In Israel, the government is putting millions of dollars into a branding campaign to detract away from its treatment of Palestinians. Israel attempts to pinkwash its reputation by framing itself as a “gay haven” located in the Middle East through activities like funding gay Israeli advocacy groups and running gay tourism campaigns.

This strategy aims to normal-

grassroots mobilisation against Israel's brutalities.

As pointed out by Al-Qaws, a Palestinian queer advocacy group, it is irrelevant whether Palestinian society is homophobic or not. The alleged concern for queer people in Palestine conceals Israel's direct culpability in oppressing Palestinians.

Israel is framed as the only gay-friendly country in an otherwise queer-hostile region, done through pinkwashing and the use of orientalist tropes; positioning Israelis as civilised and egalitarian, and Palestinians as homophobic, barbaric, and anti-cosmopolitan.

This messaging recruits, often unknowingly, queers from overseas into a collusion with Israeli state violence. It denies Israeli homophobic oppression of its own queer citizens and it dismisses the work of Palestinian queer organisations.

We must see Israel's promotion of its gay rights record abroad for what it is – pinkwashing and another mechanism for justifying Israel's colonial violence. We must challenge this false benevolence about liberal inclusion and single-axis identity politics. We can do this through promoting the Palestinian liberation struggle as relevant to queer movements and by building an activist practice that does not separate itself from struggles against colonialism, racism, and neoliberalism.

There can be no freedom of gender and sexuality without freedom from Israeli state violence and control. Queer rights are not safe until all people's rights are safe. We neglect other struggles at our own peril as all our struggles are bound together.

ise the Israeli occupation and larger apartheid policies and to reframe the occupation in terms of civilizational narratives measured by (sexual) modernity. It is also a countermove against the global Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement which has cultivated widespread



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A Conservative History of Marriage Equality

Riki Scanlan doesn't know where to go from here

Imagine the very near future where marriage equality is legislated. Joyous queers, hand-in-hand, proceeding down the aisle to celebrate their newly gained matrimony. Rainbow rental cars revving along the street towards honeymoon. But can we expect queer politics to remain energised in the campaign to broaden queer rights and oppose queerphobia?

The problem with the recent renaissance in queer politics is that it has been overtaken by a focus on marriage equality as the fundamental goal of the movement. We have a serious opportunity to expand the campaign beyond marriage equality: the current debate should challenge the conservative construction of gender–sexuality normativity and family values.

This conservative politic crystallized in a new form, in Australia, in the 1990s, with the Howard consensus around religion, laissez-faire economics, and families. In this time, conservative religious politics experienced a revival, aided by think tanks, lobby groups, and parliamentary forums. Marion Maddox, in *God Under Howard*, traces this development, examining the careful framing of the discussion over gender and sexuality by Howardites and the discriminatory policies that they enabled.

The Liberal Party, in 1995, elected John Howard for the second time as their leader. This followed a years-long campaign for a renewal of heterosexual family values by the religious right of the Party. A turning point in the campaign saw Lyons Forum co-founders Chris Miles and Alan Cadman organise a cross-party petition against Hewson's decision to send a message of support to the 1994 Sydney Mardi Gras. They used the Parliamentary Christian Fellowship to lend their campaign the veneer of moral outrage, while wedding Hewson on his resistance to

An overwhelming majority of people support marriage equality, but their support for a formality, a symbol, does not equate to their rejection of queerphobia.

traditional family values—but Hewson was never given a chance to sign. In the end, Howard was the only man who met the new benchmark of ‘family values’, religious commitment, and bushy eyebrows for leadership of the Liberal Party.

When Howard became Prime Minister, part of his platform was the opposition to ‘special interest minorities’ who did not represent the ‘mainstream’. But these categories had been carefully constructed: the ‘mainstream’ was implicitly aligned with ‘traditional family values’—glossed by some in explicitly homophobic terms, and the silent mainstream was no more than the vocal minority of the Howardites. In the 80s and 90s mining magnate Hugh Morgan funded a series of think tanks, lobby groups,

If we achieve marriage equality, where do we go from there? Legislation cannot amend homophobia out of existence.

and publications that developed both ideology and policy aimed at removing the ‘special privileges’ enjoyed by women, queers, Aboriginal people, and the poor—privileges aimed at redressing imbalances in society. One such policy, income splitting, proposed tax incentives to structure families as a single-(male)-income married (heterosexual) couple with children; others suggested restrictions to IVF or adoption access for homosexuals; and, of course, suggestions were made to revise the Marriage Act to explicitly exclude queer marriage.

These ideas were ridiculed at the time, but in the early 2000s, Howard accomplished many of them, saying proudly that they had achieved by stealth what they could not do outright. There was a smoke-and-mirrors approach to Howard's leadership: never overtly discriminatory, yet endorsing discrimination by ‘understanding where it comes from’; always putting the focus on removing benefits for marginal groups, yet slashing support for everyone. The ‘family-values’ ideology concealed a laissez-faire economic agenda, creating a bastardised conjoinment of the two.

Howard's leadership of the Liberal–National Coalition achieved the deft unity of neoliberal economics with social conservatism. This ideology reinvigorated a conception of the family unit as heterosexual, nuclear, and with two or three kids: one for mum, one for dad, and maybe one for the country. Dad is the breadwinner; Mum is the housewife; and if they run their family like that, they get sweet tax benefits. The kids grow up ‘normal’, get an education, and join the workforce.

The campaign for marriage equality, based on the ‘universal right’ of marriage has, to its credit, forced Howard's overt homophobia to the sidelines once again. The Liberal–National Coalition cannot

credibly oppose marriage equality as a method of consolidating and expanding their socially conservative base. Fractures exist between the ‘conservative warriors’ of the Coalition and its more pragmatic elements.

All is not well in the marriage equality campaign, however. While it has succeeded to date, in part due to wedging the Right via appeals to universal equality under the guise of marriage, it has limited itself from launching a thorough, ongoing critique of gender–sexuality normativity, or of ‘family values’, or of the many other discriminatory policies.

An overwhelming majority of people support marriage equality, but their support for a formality, a symbol, does not equate to their rejection of queerphobia. All kinds of secret resentments may coincide with public endorsement of marriage equality. The campaign for marriage equality has hardly cracked open the debate over sexuality and gender: instead, its strategy has been to subsume queers within the ‘mainstream’: by declaring We are just like You.

At the moment, we have an impossible-to-pass marriage equality bill proposed by Labor and a contentious plebiscite. If both fail, Labor promises to pass it if elected in 2019, or the Coalition may cave and pass a marriage equality bill—which is exceedingly unlikely. If we achieve marriage equality, where do we go from there? Legislation cannot amend homophobia out of existence.

The great opportunity of the marriage equality campaign is that it is both national and universal. It is a banner beneath which we have an opportunity to advance new challenges to conservative politics. But instead of taking up that opportunity, we have shrouded ourselves in the proceduralism of plebiscite-or-not. And if we win a sham plebiscite, some politicians will nonetheless vote No, on account of their electorates doing so, which shall legitimate homophobia in the backroom halls of power.

The queer movement presently is all too willing to subsume itself within socially conservative family values rather than opposing them; all too willing to dislocate marriage equality from the social context of queerness in Australia; all too willing to set aside broader challenges in defence of queer rights to achieve a symbolic victory of marriage equality. If we win that way, we lose.

Sadly, I do not think that the queer movement is up to the challenge that I wish it would take up. Declare me a cynic, but we have thrown away our opportunities.



What might have been...

‘Art’ by Oliver Moore

Dual Citizens

John Black examines being trans and having an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Have you ever felt that something has always been different about you - something you couldn't quite place? Many LGBT people know well the confusion of not knowing what that something was, and the subsequent epiphany of finally figuring it all out.

But what if there's something else that's also different about you, something that fundamentally changes the way you think and perceive the world?

For the “dual citizens” who are both trans and on the autism spectrum, this is no hypothetical.

Individuals who have autism or Asperger's Syndrome are usually diagnosed with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), with an incidence rate of around 60 to 100 per 10,000. A conservative estimate of the prevalence of gender dysphoria in the general population is 7 per 10,000.

When ASD people are examined for their rate of gender dysphoria, their rate is a whopping 54 per 10,000 - over seven times more than the general public.

And in reverse when gender dysphoric people are examined for rates of ASD, they have a rate of 780 per 10,000 - almost ten times as often!

Clearly there's a huge correlation between these two populations, but why?

One theory suggests ASD is only more common amongst those who ‘transition’ as it often affects social function, so those with ASD may be separated from societal expectations, making them more likely to realise they're trans.

Other theories propose the creation of dual citizens through means of developmental biology and neurology. Others consider how trans/ASD visibility affects the numbers and the increased likelihood of a diagnosis and care with better financial resources.

When you’ve met one dual citizen, you’ve met one dual citizen. We are all unique.

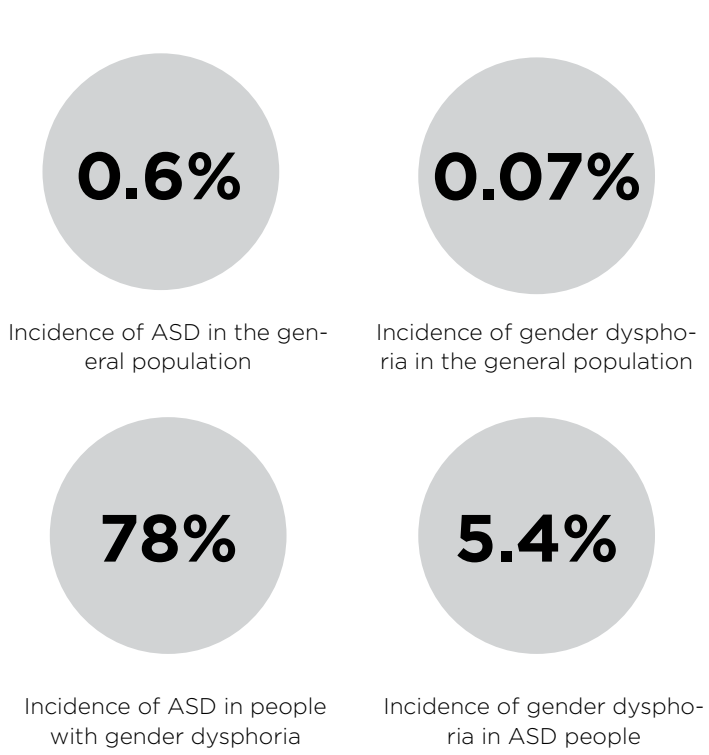
My psychologist noticed the dual citizen phenomenon amongst her clientele, “We still don't fully understand the mechanisms that make it more likely for individuals with ASD to experience gender variance . . . what tends to be better representation is discussions with individuals who have experienced both, to talking from a lived experience perspective.”

And so I shall do exactly that.

Centuple citizen

When they saw this article's title, Robin Eames laughed. “Dual citizen? Ha! More like centuple citizen!” Besides having ASD and being a genderfluid femme androgyne, Robin also lives as an intersex person with physical disability - a degree of intersection best summed up by their self-descriptive term: queercrip.

“My feelings about my gender and body are very tightly tied up with how I perceive myself



“It’s okay to be not normal,” he concluded, “as long as you aren’t an asshole.”

as a physically and mentally disabled person, an intersex person... my disability is also a part of my identity and some parts of it are things I would consider traits not symptoms.”

I asked Robin how having ASD changes the way they experience being trans. “So much... how I interact with the world, read other people, take up space, the codes I apply to myself, the clothes that I wear, the aesthetics that I adopt.”

As a genderfluid person, Robin sometimes wishes to convey their masc aspects, and at other times their femme aspects. But relative to their neurotypical peers, Robin's repertoire for presenting a particular gender is more limited “when certain textures of clothes and makeup are unbearable (due to sensory hypersensitivity).”

Robin also found themselves struggling to understand the rigid social structure of binary gender: “I grew up feeling kind of dislocated from other people and I didn't connect well with the ways in which people were ascribing binary gender onto the kids around me.”

While acknowledging their trans and neurodiverse status as having medicalised aspects, Robin agreed with my psychologist's stance and decided that when it comes to looking for causes of the dual citizen phenomenon, “it's something of a moot point to me, because we can't identify [the causes] and I don't see a need to.”

A richer experience

While most people I spoke to attribute their trans status to quirks of biology or consider it in medical terms, Andy takes a different point of view. As a non-binary trans man, he

acknowledges gender as a social construction.

He outlines the synergistic effects of his being trans while also having ASD and explains that ASD almost acts like a magnifying glass that strengthens what he feels as a result of being trans, both good or bad. “They combine to create a richer experience of my identity.”

Connected, yet very different

“To me, being trans is almost entirely about the body - the physical sex of the body, and the distress of it being wrong,” Nick explained but quickly added, “I know other people's experiences are different, so it makes sense that we prefer different words, too.”

I asked Nick about whether there was a connection between having ASD and his experience of being trans. “Definitely, I think ASD is why my social dysphoria is so weak, because I'm just less socially aware in general. [But] I think it also makes me more aware of the physical dysphoria, because of the touch sensitivities.”

Does Nick consider his ASD status to be anything like being trans? Yes and no. “They're similar, because they're both this weird thing that you're aware of... but couldn't quite say how ... until one day you realize - ahhhhh, that's what it was all along!”

Sharing positivity

RJ is an assigned-male person who is questioning his gender and feels that each half of his dual citizenship was quite separate.

“People with ASD struggle with engaging in intimate relationships regardless of sexuality or gender identity.”

He nonetheless agreed that it was a double whammy of societal exclusion. “You're considered an outsider to societal norms no matter what.”

RJ also recognizes the power to share knowledge that can come with being a dual citizen.

“I can let people know that everyone is different and that's fine.”

Does RJ still think there are downsides to being in multiple minority groups? Of course. “No one wants to struggle through life,” he agreed. “But embracing challenge is key to living healthy and happy.”

“It's okay to be not normal,” he concluded, “as long as you aren't an asshole.”

Conclusions

Some commonalities among these dual citizen's experiences include using the term “trans” to describe themselves but in every other respect, there accounts are radically different.

Robin saw being trans as inexplicably tied to being disabled, a union of something they discovered about themselves with external medicalisation. Andy saw his trans status as an identity, framed by social and cultural norms. Nick considered it a medical condition of the body, almost entirely separate from these same norms. And RJ recognised the chance that questioning his gender gave him a chance to share a message of universal respect.

To paraphrase Dr Stephen Shore: When you've met one dual citizen, you've met one dual citizen. We are all unique.

Ally 101

Gale Chan wants you to be better

Hey there! So you're looking at being an ally? That's great! Before you claim that label though, here's a quick run down of things you should be doing:

1. Ask people what their name and pronouns are, no matter what they look like. Ask if there any situations where these might be different, and ask if they would like you to correct people who use the wrong ones.. Unless told otherwise, use the name and pronouns in all contexts and

circumstances and even when referring to the person in the past.

2. Educate yourself about the causes you are standing up for. Inform yourself about specific issues and difficulties queer people face, and don't ask them to explain them for you. Listen to queer people and actually pay attention to what they're saying. Actively consume diverse media, and seek out voices that are different to your own.

3. Speak up for, but not over our voices. Look to amplify the voices of the groups that you are in solidarity with rather than overshadowing them.

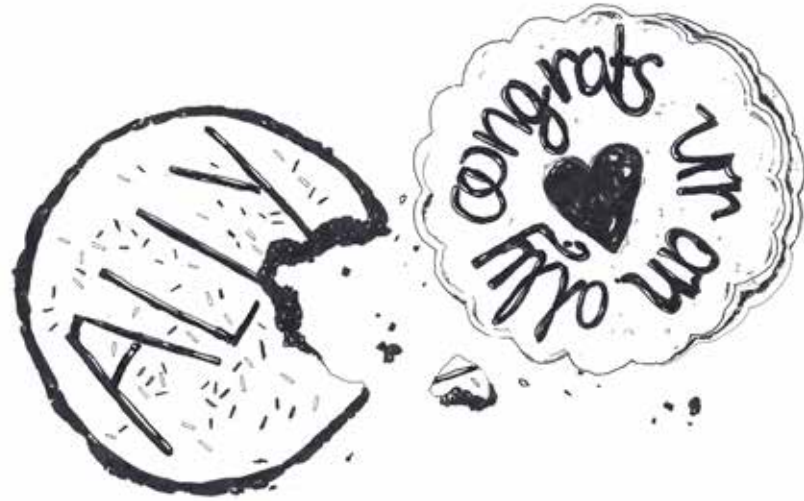
4. Accept that you will mess up at some point. We all do. The trick is to recognise that you've potentially hurt people, apologise, learn from the experience and do better.

5. Being an ally is an active role, not a passive one. It is about giving and lending support, and not leaving those you are in solidarity with to do all the work. Speak up when other non-queer people do shitty things. Tell your friends to knock it off when they're perpetuating homophobia and transphobia. Call them in, educate them, and engage them with the issues..

6. Don't expect a pat on the back for being an ally. . Being an ally is about solidarity with those oppressed and dismantling the structures around privilege, not about feeling good about yourself for meeting the bare minimum requirement for being a decent human being.



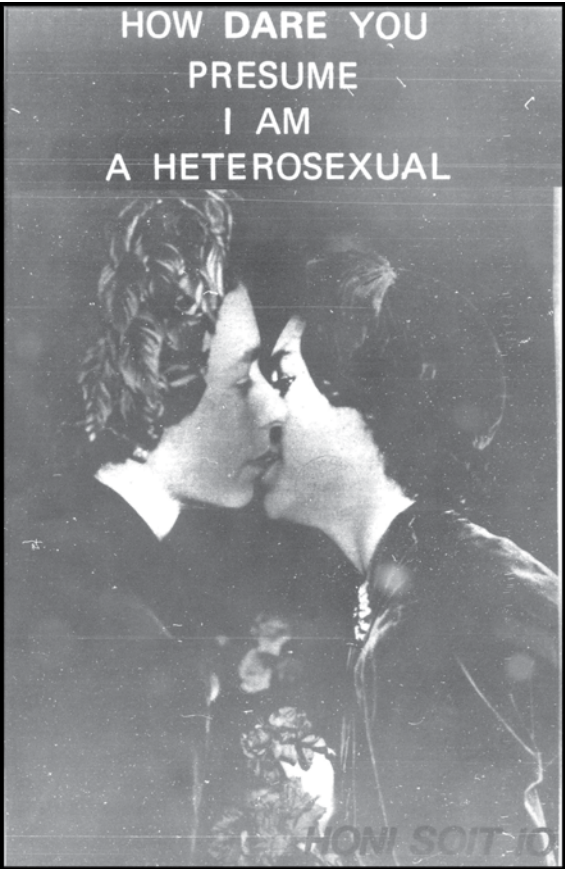
Art by Robin Eames



Art by Eloise Myatt

From the Archives

Clippings from *Honi's* 87-year history



HONI SOIT No. 10 4.5.76

This almost exclusively homosexual issue was edited by JEAN RHODES in collaboration with Anne Talve, Ken Davis, Rose X (teachers Schol.) Chris Degap Martin Smith, Anne X (teachers Schol.) and Terry ALSO the following "straights" Paul Jones, David Hunter, Tom Thompson Michael Gormly, Keith Shadwick, Thanks To Chips!!

Dear Editors,
I was so pleased to hear that you are going to make this next issue a 'gay Honi'.
My only complaint is that this does not happen every issue. I am sure that the quality of the paper would be much improved if all workers on and contributors to Honi Soit were homosexual.
Yours in solidarity,
Michael Brown
Engineering 1

In 1976, *Honi Soit* published it's first queer autonomous edition, two years before the first Mardi Gras and almost a decade before the anti-sodomy laws would be removed. We have this editorial collective, and their faculty sponsor, Leonie Kramer to thank for *Queer Honi* today.

Typically Transgender

Gale Chan wants a broader narrative

The typical trans narrative presented in the mass media goes something like this: as a young child you always had something in the back of your mind, always knew that something felt wrong about you, about your body. You

tive is a valid one, it erases a lot of others, especially those of non-binary trans people

Trans narratives that differ from this path are considered illegitimate and invalid. Those who choose different forms of transition are made to feel

of Western gender beauty standards. There is almost no representation of people outside the gender binary, nor of those who appear more androgynous (except as 'art' pieces).

It is easy to make stereotypical assumptions and generalisations about trans people and to lump them all together as desiring the same thing, but there is no typical trans life. There is no 'normal' transition. A diverse representation of transgender people is important. Room should be made for non-binary people. Room should be made to celebrate people who don't 'pass'. Room should be made for a large range of body types. Room should be made for people who don't fit the typical narrative.

Many non-binary people feel they aren't trans 'enough' to call themselves transgender

struggled through puberty and hated every physical change that happened. Come your mid-twenties or beyond you suddenly have a crisis and one day break down as you realise that you are transgender and have been "born in the wrong body". After this realisation you begin transitioning, you change your name, your pronouns and eventually have "the op". Now and only now are you are truly a fully functioning person in the gender you identify as, but you must never tell anyone of your history because it is a horrible thing and no one will ever like you anymore if you do.

While this typical narra-

illegitimate, and as a result many non-binary people feel they aren't trans 'enough' to call themselves transgender. In Western societies only cis-normative "passing" trans people are celebrated and those who don't are subject to ridicule and additional interrogation. Popular media representations of transgender people embody white, slim, able-bodied, cis-normative versions of transness, and conform radically to binary gender norms. Think Aydian Dowling and Caitlyn Jenner. Even famed transgender people with more diverse backgrounds like Janet Mock and Carmen Carrera still possess appearances that are typical



My transness

Marcus Wong doesn't know what xir doing

Hi. My name's Marcus. You might have seen me around. I'm that random person who wears a flower crown around university. I wanted to write about my experiences as a transgender person. It is important to note that my experiences as a trans person are not universal, and that in the wealth of trans identities and experiences, mine is but one and should not be used to stand for all experiences.

That being said, I'm going to use some of my experiences, and my body, to help explore some of the complexities of the transgender experience.

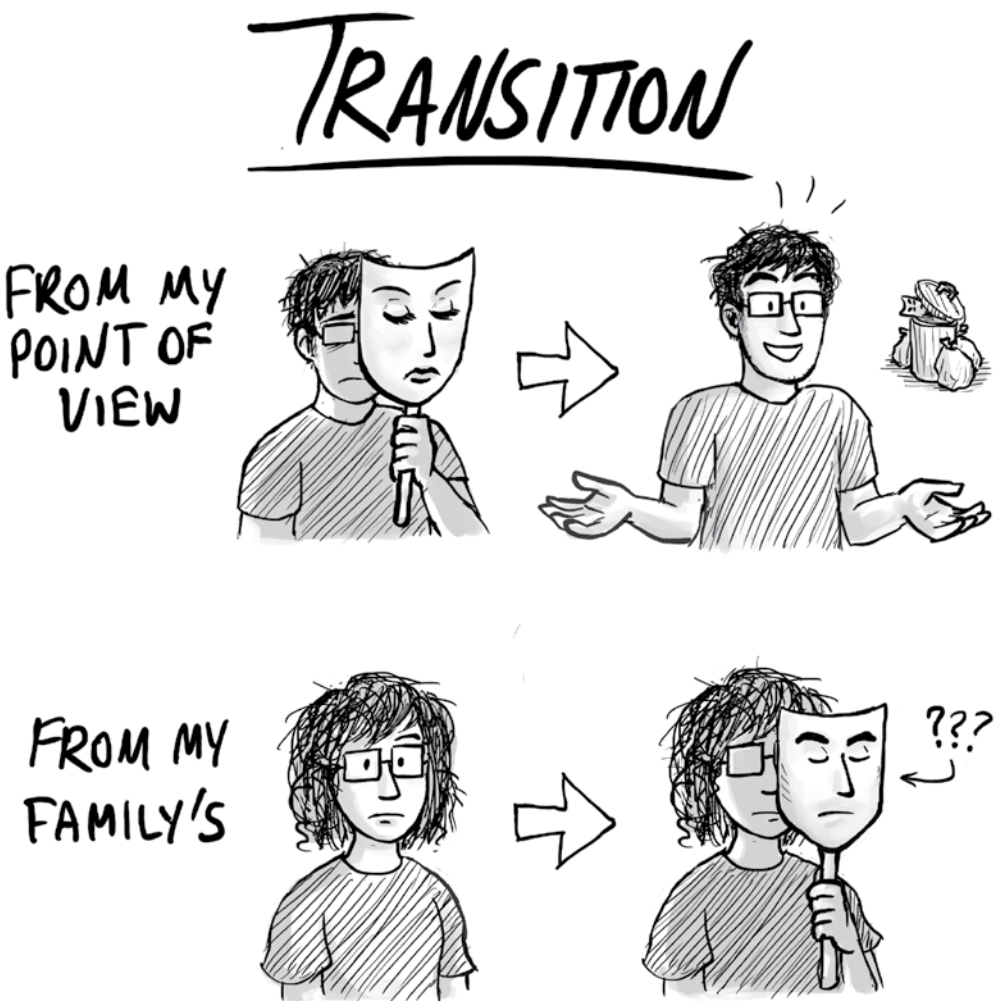
I was assigned male at birth (AMAB). Simply put, when I got plonked out into the world the doctors held me up and said 'it's a boy.' Turns out they were wrong. I'm still struggling to grapple with my gender identity. This is not in the sense that I'm confused necessarily, but that unlike many others, I do not have

ably neutral way, I am still read as a man because of my body. I do not 'pass'.

Yet there is particular emphasis on valuing trans people for their ability to 'pass', and while I'm happy for trans people who 'pass', holding them up as shining beacons of what a trans person should be creates issues for those of us who cannot. I, as someone who does not 'pass', have to expect that people will misgender me, which can be quite frustrating, amongst other things. There is an interesting dichotomy then between 'passing' politics and visibility. Where many who 'pass' might not be visibly trans, and can settle comfortably into their own gender on a societal level, I find that I have to try to make myself more visibly trans.

Transgender people are often expected to follow a fairly specific narrative; about how we always knew we were 'trapped in the

I'm not sure how someone interacts with me and still thinks I'm a dude, but hey, the world's a weird place.



Dancing to their own tune

Oliver Moore asks what the music scene's like if you're trans

Much has been written in recent times on what seems to be the music industry's biggest problem: diversity. Women are treated worse, paid less, harassed more, and are less likely to be successful, not to mention the myriad of other risks associated with a job that requires you to be out late at night in pubs with strangers.

Frustrated with the the underrepresentation of people other than cisgender men, and tired of not feeling safe in venues, Sydney-based singer and songwriter Rachel Maria Cox (who goes by RMC) founded Sad Grrls Club, a DIY label and booking agency which aims to promote gender diversity in the local music scene by giving people who aren't cisgender men a hand in creating

Girls, and non-binary people, to the front. Front of the crowd, front of the stage, front of the fucking industry.

music and getting it heard. Sad Grrls Club also runs an annual festival in Sydney, which will expand to Melbourne for the first time in October this year.

Gender diversity is in no way limited to just having more women in a lineup, as RMC explains. "I came out around the same time as Sad Grrls Club launched, and so people always just assume I'm female – I identify as non-binary." One of the surprise challenges of being an out musician was "learning to be really on top of making sure press outlets use correct pronouns and things like that". RMC is passionate about safer spaces in music venues and stresses that they need to go beyond a lack of direct violence and also combat micro-aggressions like not making assumptions about people's pronouns, and not touching people without their consent.

Safe spaces are especially important for trans and gender non-conforming musicians, who face harassment that varies widely, dependent on how they choose to express their gender on any given day. Ruby Markwell, frontwoman of The Football Club, a folk-punk band from Footscray, moved from Brisbane to Melbourne to begin transitioning. In terms of presentation she's "mostly content to present femme onstage and neutral offstage," but acknowledges that each of these comes with its own set of pros and cons, especially around bathrooms. "We played in a club that had 'chicks' and 'dicks' as the bathroom demarcations, so I just tried to Platform 9 ¾ it and go straight through the middle," she laughs.

While moving to Melbourne gave her the opportunity to begin exploring her identity, Markwell at first found the disconnect between who she felt she was and how she was seen uncomfortable:

"I desperately wanted to be able to take part in elements of the Melbourne music scene I knew I belonged to – to be around trans people in bands, queer people in bands, women in bands. I was acutely aware that the way people saw me was at odds with who I actually am, and I felt like an imposter whenever I thought about taking part in the music culture created by people just like me."

Despite having an abundance of horror stories of transphobia, from experiences in online

spaces, to venues, to remarks from other bands, Markwell remains positive about her experiences: "For every dudebro tagging their friends in the comments section, there's a heartfelt email from someone going through exactly what I was going through two or three years ago. That's why visibility is important."

Markwell, like RMC, is tired of the male-dominated scene, and describes the way forward for Australian music as "girls, and non-binary people, to the front. Front of the crowd, front of the stage, front of the fucking industry."

For Elizabeth Tanter, a Melbourne-based sound engineer and singer-songwriter, the idea of being visibly trans and performing was "too scary", so they stopped gigging around the time they began transitioning and instead shifted to work as a live sound engineer. "[Transitioning] was definitely a consideration in winding up some of my musical projects," they admit. For them, the most important thing live music venues can do is work towards being a safe space, and work to make a more inclusive environment. "It's immediately obvious if a venue is trying to be a welcoming space, and I really appreciate it."


These days they don't mind performing as a visibly trans person, and say people are generally pretty positive, even if it does tend to be in an "inspiration porn-y" way. Presenting femme

"We played in a club that had 'chicks' and 'dicks' as the bathroom demarcations, so I just tried to Platform 9 ¾ it and go straight through the middle"

at work however, they find themselves frequently dismissed, taken less seriously, and have their expertise questioned, especially by members of the bands they engineer. "That stuff never happens if I'm wearing pants and speak in a low voice."

The Football Club's new EP, *Songs About Friends* is out September 30. Sad Grrls Fest Sydney takes place on October 8.





WHAT TO LISTEN TO
WHEN...

you want to celebrate trans and non-binary musicians and their talent!

I Wanted to be a Girl and Not Sad

Astrid&

No Allegiance

Simona Castricum

YoYo

Two Steps on the Water

Real Friends (Seen 12:08am)


The Football Club

A Phone I Can't Use

Rachel Maria Cox

Fragile Blue

They.Them.Theirs



scan 4 tunez

I was a teenage heterosexual

Perri Roach on fucking up and growing up

"Who do you think are the gay people in our year group?" I would sometimes ask my friends at my Anglican girl's school, "I mean, statistically speaking, at least ten of us have to be."

Whenever I said this my voice would seem to slip out from under me, quivering an octave higher than normal, spuriously casual. A list of suspects would be reeled off: the girl with a pixie cut the quiet girl from art class; the captain of the water polo team (water polo just seemed like a gay sport, you know?)

If you're reading this and you know me from high school and we ever had this conversation, I can confirm that yes, I was one of these secret gay people.

This conversation felt innocuous enough at the time but looking backing on it makes me grimace. Retrospectively, I recognise that this game of "guess the closeted queers" was a way for me to deflect my own insecurities about my sexuality and reaffirm my "straightness" to my peers. In a sense, I was also seeking out other queer people, reference points as I navigated through my own confusion-- but that doesn't make it any less of a shitty game to play. This game served to isolate, create an other out of queer people. It failed to respect queer identities, representing them as being socially undesirable. I was playing werewolves, working desperately to pin the unwanted identity on someone else.

How can I reconcile the homophobic things I did before I understood I was queer? How many of my queer siblings out there still carry wounds

from the casual homophobia I partook in?

In the comfort of my presumed heterosexuality, I was able to leave my internalised prejudices unexamined. It never occurred to me that the way I talked about queer people could potentially propagate homophobia.

I am, as we all are, still working through my entrenched, internalised homophobia. Accepting the fact that I wasn't straight was made signifi-

I can confirm that yes, I was one of these secret gay people.

cantly more difficult by the fact that I had been socialised to see queer relationships as inferior to heterosexual relationships and queer identities as either a joke or non-existent.

I wish I could go back and celebrate the queer experiences I had during this time, which at the time I either dismissed or felt ashamed of -- my enormous "girl crush" on our school captain; the day the only openly queer girl in our year grabbed my hand in the corridor after Biblical Studies, my face flushing beetroot red.

"I'm not queer," I sometimes thought, "but I

The Straight Girl Experience

Noa Zulman fakes a yes

I can't remember the first time I said 'No' to a man.

Aside from a few garbled attempts at pronouncing my name, the word has been central to my sense of self. My Dad used to joke that no one would bat an eyelid if I scrapped the 'A.' In fact, he jibed, it would probably just aid in my teen-aged cultivation of a 'future lawyer' aesthetic. Suffice to say, I've always been argumentative.

What I can remember is the first time I said 'yes.'

As a queer woman, I had consented to my own emotional abuse.

Cade was a Tinder match. I was the naive Australian girl who had never gone further than a few furtive kisses at sweaty house parties; he, the awkward American guy with a charming, boyish smile. Our early conversations were characterised by forced questions about the other's day, punctu-

ated by long silences and awkward attempts to set up a 'first date.'

In the beginning, I remember telling myself, "There's probably not meant to be any chemistry right now. When you meet him in person, the sparks will fly." My internal monologue read like something out of Dolly Magazine: generic, forced, and cookie-cutter heterosexual. I never felt any attraction to the guy, but I desperately wanted that 'quintessential straight-girl experience' that my inner voice encouraged me to play along. If it looks like the real thing, then it must be real, right?

My memory of our only physical date is hazy- it was a Sunday, we met in an indistinct café in Bondi, he wore a white Polo shirt. The 'date' lasted a very uncomfortable fifteen minutes. He did most of the talking. I chalked it up to being an American thing and let him babble on about baseball, his Mom, and how great the weather in Sydney was. Excusing myself with a mumbled excuse about needing to get home for lunch, I left feeling oddly numb.

I never told anyone in my family, much less any friends of mine about the date, or indeed about Cade himself. I

tried to convince myself that this was because of the embarrassment of admitting that I'd met a guy over Tinder. In reality, I never told anyone for fear that they'd 'out' me, at a time in my life when my confidantes were few and far between.

When most people recount their shock Tinder stories, they're usually one of two kinds of bad: an awkward miscarriage of expectation vs reality, or a dangerous sexual encounter that leaves them permanently scarred. Mine was neither in the conventional sense of things. I hadn't created an expectation for my date; I'd manufactured one for myself. That expectation left me scarred- not in a physical, tangible sense, but in a sense of self. As a queer woman, I had consented to my own emotional abuse.

As a community, we spend so much time educating ourselves on the importance of positive sexual consent when engaging in relationships with others. Maybe it's time to start demanding that same level of positive consent from ourselves.

Because sometimes 'yes' really means 'no.'

What is a Woman

Harry Hassett

What is a woman?
That I find it so impossible to understand one
Is she human?
Is she foreign to the earth?
Or perhaps its product?
Mother nature herself is believed
To be woman, is she not?
I am a product of mother nature
Am I, woman?

Men too are her product
They, the products of women, are they
women?
We know they wouldn't like to think so, for they try so hard not to be
But men are simple to understand
Their actions. Predictable
Patterns that are easy to follow like footprints in the sand

Woman though,
Are clouded in mystery
Shadowed in intrigue, masking so easily, their demeanor
Perhaps, it is not the woman I am attracted to
Rather the mystery she wears as a cloak around her bare shoulders
More beautiful than the jewels covering her neck, even more
Beautiful still is the jewel of her neck
Delicate
Breakable
Elegant

One would think that one woman would
Easily understand another
Is this where I fail?

For nothing would make Me a woman
Not inside
But what is a woman inside
mmm?
Really? What does she look like?
Not like me; evidently
See
I am nothing
And I am everything
A cocktail, and assortment, a panoramic plethora of ...
Well that's where no one ever quite understands this
Me or rather the mees.
For there are many
They're many

An infinity of selves none of which are entirely
Female
(at least in terms of those I have encountered)

See being as I am, it is no wonder that I have no clue what is
A woman
What they think. How!
They behave
What they want? How could I know?
How could one inquire into a world so foreign to them
Further still how can one gain insight when one is no more than oneself
When one is not
A woman inside
As if there was such thing
Well here lies my dilemma

What is a woman? Not me
Not I



Are we there yet?

Susie Elliot is thinking about Oxford Street and safe spaces

Art by
John



The first time I encountered drag queens, I didn't even have a pen license. While it might sound like nightmare fuel for your average Sonia Kruger-loving upwardly-mobile Mum, growing up three minutes away from Oxford St was quite wholesome. Nearly all of my neighbours were gay, both in sexuality and temperament, and it never occurred to me that homosexuality should be sheltered from children. Despite the trope of the young gay kid running off to the Big Smoke to discover solace and amyl, Stonewall was only a stone's throw from my front door. Yet even with the privilege of being raised so close to the pulsing centre of LGBTI resistance, when I eventually was able to join it, the community I saw was not one that resonated with me. It didn't feel like a place of resistance; it felt like every other male-dominated corner of Sydney nightlife, except with more glitter and they played Adam Lambert. Yet there is a part in me that wants so badly to fit within it; that wants to fight for a street that belongs to us; that wants a headquarter for our resistance. After all the turmoil and confusion of finally becoming comfortable in one's sexuality and/or gender, the place that we fought to find seems so distant to us. Where is our space? Did they think they could add a rainbow flag and call that a community?

Oxford Street is synonymous with gay resistance and culture in Sydney. It is the home of the legendary annual Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. From the first Mardi Gras in 1978,

a protest against the injustices of sodomy laws, Oxford Street has been a site of resistance and social change. Those arrested in 1978 had their names, occupations, and addresses published in the Sydney Morning Herald, even when most of the charges were dropped. Many were fired, had their families destroyed, and this year, in 2016, an apology was made. This vibrant culture of bars and exuberance is all but gone now, and Oxford Street is littered with closed shops, empty buildings, and fading signs. Darlinghurst, San Francisco - places charged with the complex history of the LGBTI community are slowly being eroded.

Most discrete communities have a geographical centre from whence they have grown, this cannot be said for LGBTI culture. Queerness is not something you tend to grow up with, but come to learn and navigate later on when your closet days are over. Sometimes I wonder if 'culture' is really the right word for us anymore? Our community is so vast that it is hard to call it a community, as our experiences are so incredibly different. It's hard to put the experiences of a transgender Indigenous person from a rural area in the same category as a metropolitan gay man. There are communities, customs and differences within an enormous LGBTI group, which is perhaps the limitation of Oxford Street and places like it. When one goes to the gay bars and clubs in Darlinghurst, you find them dominated by cisgender homosexual men; and if you take a look at Grindr, you can see this group's tendency to be racist, misogynist and judgmental.

If you go out on Oxford Street expecting inclusion and safety, you're gonna have a rude awakening. One only has to bring up the street's waning reputation to be inundated with tales of being groped without consent and the unsettling persistence of sexual offers by gay men at gay clubs. These stories sound awfully similar to those of the sex culture in straight clubs, and is the kind of conduct a progressive agenda should aim to erase. This isn't to say that party culture can't be radical, political, or liberating, but Oxford St seems to not practice the acceptance,

*Where is our space?
Did they think they could
add a rainbow flag and
call that a community?*

self-expression and resistance which is what had once made it so famous.

If Oxford Street is no longer the queer cultural hub for Sydney, where is? What kind of relationships do queer people have with different parts of the city? Maddy Ward says

"I feel much safer in Newtown than Mosman as a queer person, for example...I love Oxford Street in all of its trashy camp glory. It's kind of dominated by white cis gay dudes, which is shitty, and I wouldn't necessarily call it the most significant place for queer people in terms of meaning. I think that belongs to the Cross or Newtown. But Oxford St is good for a boogie". She also stated that her experiences growing up in Townsville have shown her that it is important that "every community has their own significant place that is meaningful". This can be felt so deeply for people from places that breed hostility towards people who don't adhere to hetero and cisnormative constructs, as more practical meaning behind these places is purely safety. The word safety truly means to be free from violence, from all different shades of violence. The violence of isolation, of slurs, of being seen as the Other, is so common and damaging, and this is what is missing from mainstream conversations about safe places. People continue to incorrectly define safe places and spaces



es as totally centred around being free from physical violence, which is a misinterpretation of LGBTI experiences. Misgendering, fetishising, mockery- these are all things that hold the same underlying values as hate crimes do, but the myth that the presence of physical violence is the only "real" danger out there continues to be perpetuated.

Even Newtown, however, is not as safe as it might seem. The introduction of lockdown laws in 2014 pushed partygoers out from the city, and has led to a rise in violence against queer people. In 2015, Stephanie McCarthy, a trans woman, was beaten up at the Town Hall Hotel, and in April of this year Isaac Keatinge was assaulted on the streets of Newtown. He was wearing a dress and makeup. The attackers were a group of men who harassed him with homophobic remarks, and multiple punches were thrown to his head. Keatinge ended up in hospital and shared the photo of his wounded face on social media to show the risk of basic self-expression.

Only a few months later in June, the Orlando shooting took place, again reminding us of the fragility of our safety. It was often called a hate crime in mainstream media, not because its vic-

tims were LGBTI folk, but because the shooter had sworn allegiance to ISIL on a 911 call, even though no links were found between the shooter and ISIL in the formal investigation following. The media took it as a hate crime against the U.S., and used it to perpetuate disgusting Islamophobic hatred, not to actually promote the safety of LGBTI people. Mainstream media utilised the violence against our community to perpetuate violence against another community. Even then, people were still refusing to call it a queer hate crime, showing a level of ignorance that is hard to imagine.

These two attacks on our community occurred in so-called 'safe places'. Newtown is unofficially noted as the new Oxford St; Pulse was a gay nightclub, and yet violence still infiltrated. The shocking and heart-breaking fact of LGBTI districts is that they don't exist in a vacuum: safety is never guaranteed. Even in supposedly safe spaces, our protection is often reliant on quite a few fragile factors and pure hope.

What then, of all of this? Perhaps the question we pose to ourselves is more important than the answer. As Maddy said to me about LGBTI folk in regional areas, "overall the attitude is shit, but not as shithouse as it could be."



PERSPECTIVE

These boots were made for walking

By Andy Mason

Sexuality, like the rest of life, is a complicated thing and attempts to simplify it by reducing people's experiences and identities to static labels are often not only futile, but damaging. I've found that labels are a lot like boots – if you get the wrong ones you can expect a lot of chafing and tripping over yourself, but if eventually you find a pair that fit, as long as you look after them, they'll serve you well. They might wear out eventually, and you'll need new ones, but that's just life, isn't it?

Like most people, the beginning of my sexual and romantic life was characterised by the assumption that I was heterosexual. I was constantly pressured into seeking relationships with the opposite sex, and bullied because I never found any. Friendship circles became sexually segregated early in puberty, and didn't desegregate for a few years afterwards. Male friends who were successful in their search for sexual conquest lorded over the rest of us like some dick-head aristocracy, and homophobic slurs were levelled at any bloke who didn't score goals with chicks, or who didn't play the game. All in all, it was pretty grim.

At about 16 I met somebody who I connected with, and a romantic entanglement developed. I carried into it a tempered version of the sexist expectations I had absorbed from my surroundings – while I did not think that sex was the ultimate point of our relationship, I certainly saw it as very important. Male peers were constantly inquiring as to our sexual progress – I generally lied to them to avoid the violent accusations of gayness that would have followed if I had been honest. We did eventually end up having sex together after about a year, but a cacophony of anxieties always echoed in my head during these experiences – was I enjoying this, was she enjoying it, were we doing the right things, did I even really want this – and in the end these anxieties led to misunderstandings that played a part in our relationship's undoing.

Male peers were constantly inquiring as to our sexual progress – I generally lied to them to avoid the violent accusations of gayness that would have followed if I had been honest.

I was never really honest with my first partner about my feelings towards sex, and I also felt compelled to keep other things from her. From shortly after we started seeing each other, my battle with my romantic and sexual feelings towards male friends began. Ironically, our homophobic boys club was also filled for me with sexual tension – all the sweaty, shirtless sportiness was often too much to bear. Despite my liberal-bourgeois upbringing and the nominal tolerance of my school and my

supposedly diverse neighbourhood of Newtown, I understood these feelings as unwelcome and wrong. As I experimented quietly with moving discussion about queer desires among our friends from crude insults towards something more serious and honest, I discovered that many of my male friends found such desires threatening. I internalised their feelings, which quickly developed into a powerful self-hatred. Problems with depression and alcohol developed which have stayed with me for the 5 years since. I want to make clear that there was nothing irrational about this – although it might be difficult for some people to understand, these feelings were my way of responding to a hostile environment. My suspicions that my feelings would be unwelcome were confirmed by the responses of my peers to them, and the reasonable thing to do became to deny such feelings as far as possible.

The thing that made all of this very difficult was that I always seemed to develop sexual feelings for my best friends. With girls this was always awkward, with boys it was catastrophic. My ultimate desire in all cases was for a heightened emotional intimacy, a more fulfilling connection – my desire for sex, if present, was a desire to satisfy people who I felt had given so much to me. The thought of losing our existing relationships if they recoiled from me after my expression of these desires generally kept me from expressing them to anybody apart from the cat, and instead I cultivated internal tensions, using alcohol as an emotional anaesthetic whenever things were becoming too hard to bear.

For about three years after this I actively and openly hated sex, condemning it as a fundamentally painful and evil thing. Whenever desires developed I repressed them, and if unable to do this I punished myself. I began to be exposed to feminist discourses about sexuality, learned about the male gaze and the sexual objectification of womn and, as a response, developed a new understanding of myself as a patriarchal oppressor and my desires towards womn as destructive and inexcusable. This mirrored the existing, similar understanding I had about my same-sex desires and also became deeply entrenched in my personality. My inability to destroy what I saw as evil impulses led me to conclude that it was really fundamentally me which was evil, and this train of thought led me further and deeper into the bottle, and sometimes towards a desire for death.

At some point in my first year or so at university I first encountered the concept of asexuality, and felt I had discovered something revelatory. No way of identifying myself previously had ever been satisfying – straight, gay or bi were all at best uncomfortable, and more often very chafing fits. I was straight because everybody else was, I was gay because I was not like them, I was bi because I didn't know who I was. Ace discourse seemed to offer something different – I could describe myself as something more like what I was. In my search for a label I tried to think of what my romantic and sexual experiences had in common. I initially decided that the underlying theme in all of it was the fact that I didn't want sex, or if I did want it I wished I didn't. It seemed like some ace people simply had no interest in sex at all, and this was clearly not me, but it seemed there were others who perhaps had desires but did not feel comfortable expressing them in the usual formats. The boots had some holes in them – I learned quickly that

my enthusiasm for a new way of describing myself was matched by an equal enthusiasm held by many for denying it, or asserting its illegitimacy. This was sometimes malicious but more often a product of ignorance, and so I kept this pair of boots, deciding they were better than nothing.

Over time I learned new words, new terminologies, new discourses and slowly found a path towards accepting myself and my feelings.

I learned about pansexuality, and found it resonant – the genders of the people I am attracted to have been not merely diverse, but actually irrelevant to my desire to connect with them. I am not attracted to genders, but to people. Another useful term was demisexual – I am not totally without sexual desire, but require a well-developed emotional connection in order to experience it. The boots suddenly fit better because I felt I had made them myself. They are still not perfect, but I am polishing them and learning how to walk in them. For once I am optimistic to see where they take me.

A little way along this new path I have met another wanderer, who has come from different places but found herself in similar shoes. It's proving most fulfilling to find our way together, helping each other cross ditches, one of us creating footprints for the other if the ground is muddy or uneven. Sex fits into this wonderfully – a pleasure, not an obligation, an opportunity to continue conversations after we've run out of words. It is respectful, supportive, communicative and patient, because we are. We're wearing in our boots together, and they're feeling better every day.

Boots and laces by Victoria Zerbst



CUTE GAY SHIT

Cute Gay Shit

Plebiscite got you down? Had a long week? Sick of being misgendered? Sit back and relax with these sweet stories. We asked you what the best parts of being queer were, and here's what you had for us. Don't forget to love yourself, tell your pet you love them, write to your local member about the plebiscite and treat yourself to something nice. Celebrate you.

My girlfriend and I were walking through Central Station one evening, holding hands and being generally adorable, when we were approached by an older man in a suit. We were cautious at first, but soon learnt that he just wanted to say thank you - as a gay man, he was too scared to hold hands with his partner at night. He was pleased and proud to see young happy queer couples, unencumbered by his fearful experiences. It made me realise how lucky I was to have such an incredible girlfriend and be able to share my love with her without shame. - Katie

Just knowing that I have people who support me no matter what, and who care for me, is enough to help me get through the day. Be it help in the form of advice (shoutout to anyone who helped me with assignments!), banter (Light Side always!), or simply a conversation (Have you seen this series?), the acceptance of who I am is something that I will always cherish. I came out to my parents with the help of diagrams because I had no idea how to translate 'demiromantic' and 'asexual'. -P - Aliza

I gave a Lib a blowjob at NatCon last year - Anon

The first person I ever came out to was my best friend. I was 16 at the time, and it had been a sort of unspoken fact in our friendship until I finally decided clear the air and tell him. His reaction was one of mild indifference - he came from a very progressive family. "Oh, is that it?", he asked in an almost bored tone. As an inherently anxious person, it made me feel fantastic. It was no big deal! Last year, after 18 years of friendship, he came out to me over the phone while discussing a big night out at Mooseheads during ANU's uni night. My response was a dry: "oh, is that it?" He laughed whole-heartedly at that. We've always shared everything: xbox games, a Sims God complex, and an absurdist sense of humour - now we share an attraction to men. The only thing we don't share, alas, is a pants size. Makes wardrobe coordinating impossible to be honest. - Cameron Gooley

I started becoming a loser friends with a girl at uni who was in a few of my classes and the topic of crushes/dating came up. I mentioned that I wasn't interested in finding anyone to date really. She said, "Oh so like, you're asexual? That's cool, I'm demi," and changed the subject. And I felt suddenly so weightless, like everything made sense? I'd never thought about that label for me but it felt /right/ and I was (am) so happy feeling more at home in my own skin. - Anon

My partner not only fully accepting my gender identity, but supporting me in front of his mother - R

On my first date with my current girlfriend, we went to see the Jurassic World Exhibition at the Melbourne Museum and had a fantastic time, and stayed in there watching the T-Rex segment until the museum was meant to close - which we didn't realise until we walked out and found all the staff waiting for us to leave before they came in to close up. They let us stay in late because they "didn't want to interrupt our cute date" which was very sweet and we were very embarrassed but very happy :) - Amy

When some of my clients tell me how much they love women and females and wax lyrical about their heterosexuality, and then drool over me/cum from the uninspiring handjob I provide I laugh a lot inside because I am transgender and not a woman and they are a bit gay. I don't get dysphoria at work because I have a different work name/partial persona and because of the protection of privacy in the industry staff recognise that who I am at work is not a full picture of my personality. Whereas at other jobs I really felt defined by fellow staff by how fast I could cashier and take orders in drive thru simultaneously. Macking my multi-gendered babes and friends on a night out after work, with a fat wad in my bra, is enjoyable. I, earn off the backs [+ trust funds] of rich cis white 'straight' men and I LOVE it. One time I put on a corset and docs and rolled around in like 3k of \$50's eating chicken fingers to BBHMM and selfie videoed it - D

My first kiss with a boy was in a bathtub that three of us were attempting to sleep in, much to the chagrin of the third person. I remember at the time enjoying it not just cos it was my first kiss but because it's a ridiculous fucking story. - Danny

Last summer I did a show with 2 of my close friends. One of them is agender and a man, one is a non-binary transfemme babe and I am non-binary. We devised the show together, directed ourselves and performed as a trio. It is the best art I have ever done/been a part of and is my standard for future work. The writing process involved a lot of shittalking and failed attempts at physical theatre. It was sooo good. Rehearsals would just wash off the dirt of microaggressions from the past week. We didn't only focus on trans stuff but instead tried to make the show queer in tone rather than 100% in content. As in we wanted it to be weird and refreshing and colourful and a little ~punk~ in line with our positive experiences in the queer community. I felt safe making and performing that show. The closing scene consisted of a queer initiation ceremony in which we gregorian chanted an ode to queerness and covered ourselves in whip cream, fruit, skittles and gatorade to the tune of Love on Top, every 'you' in the song edited/replaced with 'me'. ~Self-LoVe~ I might be overselling it but it felt like we created a world I wanted to live in. Being trans (and feminist, polyamorous, queer etc) has encouraged me to question damaging norms in society and replace them with more helpful, positive understandings of relationships, life and myself. That has genuinely made my life better. Being on the edge empowers you to see the cistem (heh) for what it is, and build/rebuild shit that's better. And making I think sick art with people I love in a community just bloody stupendous. - Shevvi

As I've started dressing more androgynously and come out to myself as nonbinary, what's made me the happiest is my friends and even strangers picking up on the androgyny. The first time a stranger (kindly) asked about my gender made my day, and the second time a girl I'd known for all of ten minutes looked at me and said, "You don't identify as female, do you?" (I mean, yeah, stereotyping isn't good, but not being misgendered is A+.) - Ruby

I was about 14 years old, and I'd cracked open the hair bleaching kit during a late Sunday night movie. I'd gone through the instructions, and felt like I knew what I was doing. I was getting ready to watch My Big Fat Greek Wedding, and I'd just finished putting the bleach through my finger-length hair. I cheekily thought, why not my eyebrows as well, and (stupidly) covered them thoroughly. I sat to watch the movie, and unfortunately must have nodded off. Next thing I remember, I was waking up to "Miller comes from the Greek word Milo, which means apple" which is the very end of the movie. As a result, my eyebrows were burnt off, and my hair was a platinum blonde. What was exciting for me, was drawing on my eyebrows for the next 6 weeks. I got to choose my look, it was the first time I got to use make up and control how I looked in the world. It was the first time I felt in control of my femininity. - Andrea Z



Very Gay Clipart by Victoria Zerbst

the butch undone

JJ



Untitled

Wes Gray

sunlight doesnt scare me anymore
when it comes through the window
and warms your clothes
and its like you never left
i can smell you again // i am not afraid

rain makes me sad again
when it knocks on my window
and falls through the glass
and my face gets cold
the kiss is sweeter // i do not miss you

time isnt agony
as i feel my skin stretch
crack open fray regrow veins
filled with smoke lips chapped balm
poison is kinder // i hate you

hands dont make me crawl
fingers nails eczema stretch marks
flakes of skin medicine licked from skin
burning aching nights over toilets
clothes feel fresher // when im naked

now when i kiss i kiss myself
my tongue to my ear my heart my throat
my fingers to my groin
this is what i am now i know
that i am kind // even if i wasnt once



I've never felt more femme
than when I fucked you
in the arse, deep
and begging for more

Strapped on cock, my hands
grasping and firm
at your hips, cunt
dripping down my leg

You gasp, give me more
and I pull back just a breath,
just long enough to shudder
as you beg

Your front hole, soaking,
wants to swallow me whole
as I sneak a finger round,
caress your dick

I take you again, sinking
without air or breath,
hissing, good boy slut,
I'm proud of you

Gazing down below to bear
you open in to me, trusting
I will captain you
through waters loosed

Femme as caring water, femme
the malleable ground;
deep and whisper-strong
across the waves

Femme taking your body,
raw, the butch undone,
I'll keep your pieces
as you drift for awhile

Taxi Cab

Harry Hassett

It is brighter than one would expect
In the witching time of night
The air has no charge
Just, perhaps the scent
Of cigarettes, you hold
within your hand.
Cigarettes? Not mine,
I burnt mine long ago. I was
Coming into myself.
For; mine is a self one must grow
into, a shell to be filled.

Tonight it died; this poor self of mine
its branches
Crushed; between my
Teeth, as my lie choked its tender leaves
You were so, perplexed. I could see
it in your eyes,
I could not, join you.
But you are no fool, you are
Immune
To my untruths

I tasted the lie upon my tongue
Ran it back and forth across my
palate, burning my taste buds
A sour wine is not so easily for-
gotten.

Through your eyes my translu-
cy glared
I need no punishment but my own
My whip bites harshest, my flesh is
so prone to the familiar rope

I am the foul stench of tobacco
clinging to my hands
reminding me often
of my sins.
But God! How your scent still
lingers on my clothes
Following like I couldn't, embrac-
ing like I wouldn't
And, fleeing like I let myself.



MTF FTM

anonymous

It isn't normal, I've been told
To be afraid of suit and tie,
And scared of mirrors - or at least of
The stranger there who's never I.

I've searched for others, but in vain
For all I found was pain and hurt
Sick jokes or else condemning words
To twist my dreaming into dirt.

So is it so surprising that
I too regard this with disgust?
But I can't shake the fantasies
That always find me in my lust.

Still, blood is blood, and I am caged
Within my flesh, as all must be
And though my prison binds me now
I know that one day I'll be free.

Between these shoulders is a lie
And though I wish I didn't care
The people look, so I must hide
The shameful weakness buried there.

These hips are round and curved; they seem
A sculpture to the public's eyes
Yet hideous to mine, and so
I live under a cloud of sighs.

And subtler and further south
The problem isn't clear at first
But when it is, you'll realize why
Of all these problems, it's the worst.

So when you simply don't believe
I'm not a girl, at least at heart
Though I know you do mean well
Your words are tearing me apart.

P
O
E
T
R
Y

Dirty Deeds

Mark Villar

He asked me, "Are you clean?"
Hesitantly I replied
What do you mean?
I had a shower this morning
Is that what you're asking
Such an innocent question
Misunderstood in many ways
Not knowing the right answer
I chose whatever might deliver
Mutual satisfaction and praise
Now that question is back to haunt me
If only I wasn't so perplexed by its irony
Filling my thoughts constantly
With guilt, anger and shame
I wonder who was truly to blame



The Hon. Mike Baird, MP
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Premier Baird,

RE: State Legislative Reform - Births Deaths Marriages Registration Act 1995 (NSW)

As representatives of queer higher education and tertiary students around the country, we write to you today to request a change in the law. Specifically, we request a change to the *Births Deaths Marriages Registration Act* 1995 (NSW) (“**the Act**”) in line with the changes currently being passed through the Victorian and South Australian legislatures. The Act in its current form equates a person's status as transgender with the state of their body, and specifically their reproductive organs. In order to ensure equality before the law for all Aus-
tralians, this law must be changed to allow transgender people to register their gender on their birth certificate without proof of surgery. Additionally, Part 5A of the Act sets out the requirements for change of sex in order to be a “recognised transgender person” under the *Anti-Discrimination Act* 1977 (NSW) (“**the Anti-Discrimination Act**”), the significance of which we will touch on later.

In NSW, such an application under Part 5A of the Act to alter the register to record change of sex currently requires “statutory decla-
rations by 2 doctors, or by 2 medical practitioners registered under the law of any other State, verifying that the person the subject of the application has undergone a sex affirmation procedure”. Section 32A specifies such as “a surgical procedure involving the alteration of a person's reproductive organs carried out: for the purpose of assisting a person to be considered a member of the opposite sex”.

These requirements pose significant and ongoing difficulties to transgender people in NSW for a number of reasons. First, the require-
ment of surgery means that only individuals within a certain financial bracket are able to have their gender formally recognised. This amounts to discrimination based on socio-economic status. Secondly, not all individuals whose gender differs from that assigned at birth desire a surgical procedure. Requiring surgery to legally recognise a transition to the “opposite sex” not only constitutes discrimination against non-binary genders but also against those unable or unwilling to undertake a medical transition. The LGBTQIA+ community has long recognised that medical transition is no longer a necessary nor even expected component of being transgender, and as well as rejecting the use of the terminology “opposite sex”.

Moreover, the surgical procedures available for a ‘sex affirmation procedure’ differ wildly and it is wholly unreasonable to demand such procedures for everyone. For instance, there is currently no available genital reconstruction surgery (GRS) procedure for trans men in Aus-
tralia. While GRS procedures have limited availability overseas this is only at massive financial and emotional cost. The end result of these standards is that a trans person who has completed a social transition, who may even have been on replacement hormones for extended periods of time, but has not undertaken surgery cannot be considered a “recognised transgender person” under the law.

This has a flow-on effect into other areas as the Act sets the standard for recognition under the Anti-Discrimination Act. Despite a num-
ber of amendments to the law over the last decades, freedom from discrimination under the law for transgender and gender-nonconform-
ing people remains limited, at best. Without undertaking surgery as outlined above, transgender Australians cannot legally force people to treat them as their preferred gender, and thus are not afforded much of the protections of the Anti-Discrimination Act.

Requiring proof of surgery from two medical practitioners is also out of step with other standards around the country. Forms of identi-
fication other than a birth certificate, including Commonwealth identification such as an Australian Passport, only require a letter from a registered medical professional affirming the gender of the transgender person in order to update their records. However, in order to meet the current definition under the Act, a transgender man must undergo a hysterectomy at the very least in order to correct his birth certifi-
cate. In a situation where such a person has already undergone an identical procedure for unrelated medical reasons it is unclear whether they would be unable to ever correct their birth certificate. Not only does this demonstrate that the definitions under the Act are wholly ambiguous but they are also out of step with Federal standards. It's time we brought New South Wales up to speed.

Fortunately, NSW won't be acting alone. As we mentioned earlier, South Australia and Victoria have already introduced bills to parlia-
ment to rectify these outdated standards and enable anyone to apply to the Births Deaths and Marriages Registrar to change their birth registration to designate their nominated sex descriptor. In Victoria, such an application will only require a statutory declaration by the person seeking to change their records along with a supporting statement by someone who has known the person for at least 12 months. In South Australia, the application is to be supported by a statement and certificate issued by a medical practitioner or psychologist. In both Victoria and South Australia these changes may be made by people who are already married, and any changes will not affect their marital status. While we find both of these approaches preferable to the current situation in NSW, we find the Victorian system superior as it does not treat a person's gender status as a medical issue.

These legislative reforms demonstrate that any kind of gender reassignment surgery no longer forms part of our legal conception of transgender. All transgender Australians should have access to gender recognition regardless of prohibitive medical conditions, disability, financial barriers or any other reasons for being unable or choosing not to undertake surgery. It's time for NSW to join the Commonwealth, Victoria and South Australia in firmly acknowledging that it is not surgery or any other kind of medical transition that makes someone transgender. Leaving the law as it is only prolongs the struggle of many Australians, enabling discrimination through bureaucracy and unnecessary medical intervention. While many trans people may seek this intervention voluntarily, it is not the role of the government to stipulate when and how this intervention should arise.

Yours sincerely,

in solidarity with the Australian Queer Student Network (AQSN)

SRC REPORTS

President

Chloe Smith

Although the SRC has been in full election season mode for the past two weeks (thankfully culminating in voting on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week – go vote!) our work hasn't stopped in the slightest.

This time of year is one of the busiest for our casework staff, as they deal with discontinue not fail and census dates, show cause, special consideration applications, and various academic appeals. This work is particularly valuable and useful for students who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged when navigating the complex bureaucratic systems that make up our university, such as international students or students with disabilities. They can literally make the difference between students dropping out of uni or graduating with their degree.

At Academic Board last week, the SRC raised the issue of how the university can be more supportive of students with disabilities or carers roles – Carers Australia estimates that university students caring for sick or disabled relatives have an average 97% drop out rate across Australia. This is a shocking and totally unacceptable statistic and one which must be addressed if we are to achieve the vision that Sydney Uni was founded on, of providing quality education for all. The university must commit to providing safeguards and support structures to ensure that students with disabilities and caring responsibilities have the same chance of completing their degrees as their peers.

Meanwhile, our legal service has been busy continuing to prosecute the case for SCA students regarding the closure of the campus and the move to main campus, and working hard on a range of other issues including sexual assault and safety on campus, tenancy and migration rights, and many more. One of the big projects of the SRC in 2017 will be to secure a solicitor for the SRC who has experience dealing specifically with sexual assault cases, to continue to draw light to this important issue and ensure our reporting systems and support structures are fair, accessible, and just.

Your SRC is always here for you and we never stop working. If you need advice and support, give us a visit. It's your SRC. Enjoy week nine!

General Secretary

Georgia Mantle

When a lot of people think about queer rights I have noticed they tend to think solely about marriage equality, while of course the right to marry the person you love in so important I find that

Note:
These pages belong to the Office Bearers of the SRC. They are not altered, edited or changed in any way by the editors of *Honi Soit*

non-queer people don't understand the full extent of discrimination and margination that comes from being apart of the LGBTQIA community. Access to adequate health and support services are essential for everyone's well being yet to often queer people are neglected when it comes to these services as health practitioners are woefully under trained in regards to LGBTQIA issues.

I have found during my term as General Secretary that there is still such a need for a better understanding of marginalised identities too often I see people forgot that queer people, women, Indigenous people are people and the issues that we face are not limited to our identities but also that our marginalization is often intersectional.

University management needs to do more to support Queer students, the rainbow campus initiatives have been amazing while the Ally Network has been making huge improvements yet there is still so much more to be done. At the beginning of this semester Sydney Student allowed students to enter preferred names however there is still no place to indicated a person's preferred pronouns. Also for a student to have their real name on their graduation certificate they need to go through the lengthy and costly process of official name change. Students continuing to work and push management for meaningful change is so important but we also need management to facilitate these changes and meet us students half way. I hope that the University of Sydney will not only pledge their official support for marriage equality but will also commit to making the lives of Queer students better through increased mental health and support services on campus.

As always please remember that our casework and legal service are here to help you. This is a free service provided by the SRC for all undergradutae studnets.

Wom*n's Officer

Anna Hush

Welcome to week 9! This semester is flying by, and I can't believe this is my final report as Wom*n's Officer! The Wom*n's Collective has been busy as ever - on Monday, we hosted the President of the Human Rights Commission, Gillian Triggs, who spoke about the newly launched national survey on campus sexual assault. The survey is being rolled out at USyd this week, so look out for an email with details about participation! It's important to note that while this research is obviously valuable, it must be complemented by substantive action from university management. We are still calling for the demands made in our August open letter to be implemented in full.

One group that often gets forgotten in the conversation around campus sexual assault is staff. Like students, staff are vulnerable to sexual assault and harassment in the workplace; staff can receive disclosures of sexual assault from students, which can be traumatic, especially for staff who have themselves experienced abuse or violence in the past. Staff have been supportive of the undergraduate-led campaign against sexual assault from day one, and we are extremely proud to launch a new network called Staff Against Rape, through which staff can access resources designed to support survivors, and take a pledge to stand with students on this issue. Check out our website at staffagainstrape.org, and give our Facebook page 'Staffagainstrape' a like and share. With the support of the Sydney branch of the National Tertiary Education Union behind us, we are so proud to have staff as allies in the fight against sexual assault on campus.

What's up next for the Wom*n's Collective? On Thursday 22 September, we are co-hosting an event with the Law Society, called 'Sexual Violence and Women's Rights in the Cyber World'. A panel of activists, lawyers and industry experts will discuss online harassment and misogyny - join us in the Law Lounge at 1pm on Thursday!

If you'd like to get involved with the Wom*n's Collective, or you have any comments or questions, please email womens.officers@src.usyd.edu.au.

Welfare Officer

April Holcombe

The Welfare Department assisted in the Halal not Hanson BBQ that took place Wednesday 14 September on Eastern Avenue. This was a great success, with many students popping by to grab a halal snack pack, talk to fellow anti racists, and launch a water bomb at Pauline Hanson's likeness. With the Muslim prayer room having been ransacked 5 or 6 times this year, and racist graffiti popping up all over campus, it is crucial we make a stand and show solidarity with Muslims on and off campus against racism. The appalling opening parliamentary speech by Pauline Hanson later that day shows what we're up against.

The most recent federal budget cuts was the Welfare "Omnibus" bill, which cut \$6.3 billion from the welfare state. This savage attack was passed with support from the ALP. All while Scott Morrison talks of the "taxed vs. taxed-nots", as if it is students on Centrelink and not multinationals like Apple who are draining our taxes! The Welfare Department is totally opposed to these cuts and will resist them.



ENTRIES CLOSE
SEPTEMBER 30

Signal

The 7TH ANNUAL HONI SOIT
OPINION COMPETITION

Join us for the award ceremony and an evening of partying to cap off the year.
Food and drink will be provided.

Submit an original opinion article no longer than 800 words with the theme *Signal* to opinioncomp2016@gmail.com by September 30.

DATE: OCTOBER 20, 7pm
LOCATION: TBA
1st PRIZE, \$1000
2nd PRIZE, \$600
3rd PRIZE, \$300



Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney Annual Election

Polling Booth Times and Places 2016

POLLING LOCATION	WED 21ST SEPT 2016	THURS 22ND SEPT. 2016	PRE-POLLING
Fisher	8:30-6:30	8:30-5:00	Pre-Polling will also be held outside the SRC's Offices, Level 1 Wentworth Building, on Tuesday 20th September from 10am-3pm.
Manning	10:00-4:00	10:00-4:00	
Cumberland	11:00-3:00	11:00-3:00	
SCA	12:00-2:00	No polling	
Engineering	No polling	12:00-2:00	
Conservatorium	12:00-2:00	No polling	
Jane Foss	8:30-6:00	8:30-6:00	



Authorised by P. Graham, SRC Electoral Officer 2015, Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney | p: 02 9660 5222 | w: src.usyd.edu.au

Notice of Council Meeting

88th Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

DATE: 5th October
TIME: 6–8pm
LOCATION: Professorial Board Room (Quadrangle)



Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney
Phone: 02 9660 5222 | www.src.usyd.edu.au

Vatican decrees that all Catholics must now say “no homo” after letting the body of Christ enter them

Victoria Zerbst has let the body of Christ inside her too many times

The College of Cardinals issued a statement last Tuesday addressing claims that certain catholic rituals were deemed “highly erotic” by VICE magazine.

As a response the claims, the Vatican have instituted a new practice whereby all members of the catholic church must say “no homo” after consuming the body of Christ.

Pope Francis, in particular, has urged his representatives across the globe to keep a vigilant eye on “homoerotic” undertones in their religious practices.

The Vatican has also prompted strict re-writes to the “questionable” passages in the catholic scripture. For example, Ephesians 1:23 now reads: “which is His, no homo, body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all seriously”.

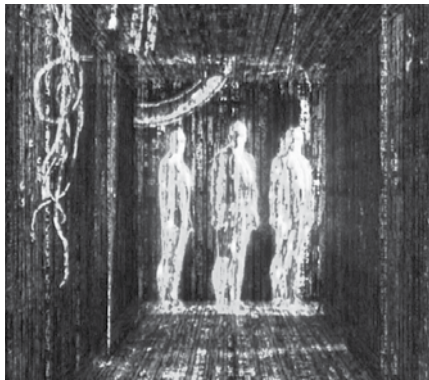
Romans 12:5 now reads: “So in Christ we, who are many, are one body, no homo, and each member, no homo, belongs to one another no homo amen”.

Finally, 1 Corinthians 6:15 reads: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? No homo. Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Seriously. Never! No homo. I said that already. Jesus fucking Christ. No homo.”

These practices are set to take effective by next month, which shall now be known as “Faggot-free

February”. This of course which follows “Jew-free January” and proceeds “Masturbation-free march.”

Local trans women create the Matrix (not the movie, the actual Matrix. It’s real, go into the earth now and find Zion. Time to have a cave rave while Keanu gets some action.)



Keanu getting action is through here

J.K Rowling has hit Twitter.com with some spicy inside info on LGBT characters

Everyone’s favourite literary revisionist hit Twitter this week to graciously reveal some of the other great LGBTQIA+ representation in the hot hits of literary canon - including her own, of course.

Where would we intrepid lovers of the loveably-scarred boy wizard be without good ol’ JK taking to the tweets to let us know about some fun facts we might have missed in her actual books! Of course, it would have been great for her to have literally ever mentioned Dumbledore’s sexuality, and we’re delighted she’s finally cottoned on to the lycanthropy/AIDS parallel that fans (and PoA director Alfonso Cuarón) thought was canon eons ago, but, as always, we’ll take what we can get.

J.K. Rowling @jk_rowling · Sep 17
For anyone curious, I always meant for Sir Cadogan to symbolise my belief in marriage equality. Love is love.

225

1.2K

J.K. Rowling @jk_rowling · Sep 13
A special Harry Potter fact for you all today - Jo Marsh was a lesbian#loveislove

1.7K

18K

J.K. Rowling @jk_rowling · Sep 17
Loved the relationship between Jacob and Renesmee in Breaking Dawn - Stephanie Meyer doing LGBT representation right!

225

1.2K

J.K. Rowling @jk_rowling · Sep 14
I spoke to Harper Lee earlier this evening, who confirmed my suspicions that Scout and Boo Radly ended their days happily married.

276

1.6K

#CUTE: Look at these beautiful AF displays of heterosexual friendship

Ellie Rogers loves being a heterosexual with friends

1. One of these friends has prepared a surprise for the other. How lovely!



2. These two friends are sharing a very heterosexual embrace, cute!



3. These friends have embraced body positivity and are an inspiration to us all!



4. So refreshing to see gals just being pals!



How to Tell if You’re in the Wrong Bathroom

Oliver Moore just wants to shit without being attacked by demogorgons from the fifth dimension

It can often be hard to tell if you’re in the right bathroom - sometimes the signs are unclear, or you might not be in a place where you know you can use the bathroom that most closely aligns with your gender identity.

In times like these, it’s important to play close attention to your surroundings. Firstly, what colour are the walls? Are you in the shadows? Is there adequate waist-height cover if you need to hide from enemy fire? (Note: some acid spitting demons can melt through stainless steel!)

Once you’ve established a safe exit route and two alternate routes of escape, it’s time to get down to business. If you make it in and out without incident, then good for you friend, you’re a braver person than I. But, if you find yourself caught unaware when a monster strikes, it’s important to keep count of eyes, limbs, heads, and mouths, remembering that the nearest one may be behind you.

The tactic I find useful in defending myself from creatures from the netherworld, is compassion. So if you’ve got six scaly tales whipping towards your suddenly incredibly exposed genitals, I like to remind myself that they’re more afraid of me than I am of them. Just as I didn’t want to have to fight off a hellbeast on my bathroom break, they probably didn’t want to be interrupted doing... Whatever it is they do in their time. To make matters worse, I’m not even sure they have an awareness of gender differentiation, so for all I know I’ve just introduced this maelstrom of insanity in their previously unconcerned stable social environment.

Once you’ve checked your privilege and acknowledged that not everyone comes to the table from the same cultural background or with the same level of information, tackling the dragon should be easy peasy!

Shock Hayfever Variant Outbreak

Emma Balfour came up with this joke. She’s writing her thesis, please be nice to her.

Royal Prince Alfred Hospital was overwhelmed today by an outbreak of what has been described as a “freak variant” of hayfever which has been dubbed “gayfever” by one startled ER doctor.

Medical professionals say the signs include a “feverish” level of attraction to people of the same gender, as well as itchy eyes, stuffed noses, and a sore throat.

The source of the outbreak has been linked to Balfour herself, who has been sighted at a number of high-traffic university locations, including the fourth floor of Fisher library.

Trending

[Straight couple going to do the right thing, ask the entire country to vote on whether or not they can get married](#)

[Alphabet soup awarded “most inclusive” activist](#)

[Multiple gender options on forms, but only two titles, what’s up with that? \(Not comedy, just a trend I’ve noticed and am curious\)](#)

[Scientists looking into the antibacterial properties of “no homo” given its effectiveness against airbourne gayness](#)

[AWWW: These horny 16 year old boys can now have legal anal sex behind the bike sheds!](#)

[The hillside where Cory Bernadi was married suffers from subsidence; now a literal slipperly slope](#)

[Queer community “intimidated but excited” about having to marry everyone in Australia following the plebiscite](#)

+ **HETERONORMATIVITY**



WE WON'T WAIT!

MARRIAGE EQUALITY NOW

RALLY

**SAT 8 OCT
1PM TOWN HALL**

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NUS
STUDENTS

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