

# HONI SOIT

VOL 90 SEM 1 WEEK 4



## BABEL

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## 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

I was eight years old when I first went to church. My parents and I were staying with friends in Scotland—diligent Catholics intent on saving my family’s souls. So on a misty morning, we climbed the hill to the local Church.

And what a church. It was a sweep of Romanesque lines, going all the way up to heaven. The pews were hard, but there were centuries in their dark wood. When we knelt, my knees sank into a carpet faded by generations of muttered prayers. On each side, the shadows yawned with candle-lit reliquaries.

But, above all, I was entranced by the words. The hum of incantation, the ebb of a verse-recital, the lilt of a sermon. I felt the power of this institution. I understood why people believe.

In the Old Testament, humans spoke one language. With shared purpose, we built the Tower of Babel, a tower tall enough to reach heaven. But this was hubris. So God smote the tower and confounded its makers’ speech: where there had been one language, now there were many. Where there had been unity, now there was division.

We are obsessed by that lost oneness. I think humans place faith in ideals that promise a return to unity—to harmony and a shared destiny.

I am still an atheist. But I put my faith in language. Its magic isn’t a neat sameness. It’s a universal diversity—a constant across time and culture, but constantly, inevitably changing, dividing and reuniting. **JD**

## NEWS ROUNDUP

### SASS executive removed and new elections called:

The Society of Arts and Social Sciences had their entire executive vacated after it was declared their 2017 AGM was held invalidly. Former SASS president, current board director and USU president hopeful Jacob Masina took the blame for the incident, copping a very tame disciplining at the USU Board meeting on Friday. SASS must now hold a new AGM and hold fresh elections for their executive positions.

### ANU votes to reaccredit to the NUS:

The ANU Students’ Association voted this week to reaccredit to the NUS. After two years of not paying affiliation fees and the ACT branch becoming all but dissolved, they voted to rejoin. ANU has emphasised though, they will only reaccredit given the NUS adhere to strict performance indicators. Following these measures will ensure ANUSA’s continued participation in the national body.

### SUBSKI skiing on thin ice:

SUBSKI have had their club suspension listed but they were issued a final warning from the USU. Any further breaches of regulation will have very serious consequences for SUBSKI’s fate in the C&S program and they’ve been forced to adopt much tougher measures.

For all the latest news for the week, head to [www.honisoit.com](http://www.honisoit.com) and be sure to like us on Facebook.

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## The DMs Electives stan

Dear editors,

I take issue with the analysis given in “the curious case of the compulsory elective”. In particular, I think it’s difficult to say whether doing electives really costs more money or wastes more time.

When completing a degree, students have a set number of credit points that can be filled with units that contribute to a major, minor or electives. Therefore, it is simplistic to say completing electives would “cost to almost \$8000”, when if the electives weren’t taken the student would still have spent money on other units of study. Taking electives could actually be cheaper for some students. For example, business and law units cost the most, so business and law students who must take arts electives for example, which are significantly cheaper, would save money.

Similarly, elective units are probably easier than core units of study meaning that students would spend less time on elective units compared to the alternative of doing units towards a major.

To me, the debate is more about whether students benefit more from a broader education that will result in shallower knowledge of subject areas, or more structured majors and minors that allow increased depth and specialist knowledge.

Sincerely,  
Ilya Klauzner, (Arts/ Economics V)  
(‘The curious case of the compulsory elective’,  
Semester 1: Week 3)

## Our first puzzles complaint :`)

Heyo Honi eds,

Long time fan here. I wish my first time contributing to Honi wasn’t on these terms, but alas. Although I appreciate journalism in its bite-sized and long-form variants alike, the Puzzle section of Honi is undoubtedly my favourite, and what keeps me coming back week after week. However, the crossword which took over the entire section in last week’s edition was nothing short of tedious.

I commend Cloud Runner for creating a crossword with 300 clues, which is no small task indeed. But unfortunately such ambition missed the mark and took a huge toll on its quality and reader’s enjoyment. The crossword was littered with an abundance of 3 letter words, many of which were abbreviations and acronyms. Other clues were far too obvious, stripping the reader of the rigour and satisfaction involved with correctly guessing a particularly niche word. Unlike the majority of crosswords which stump me, I abandoned this one 3/4 of the way through out of sheer exasperation after 1.5 hours.

Maintaining variety in the Puzzle section is also crucial. If the reader gets bored of the crossword and wants to tackle Target or Sudoku to refresh their minds, they should not be denied that option. I truly hope that this doesn’t set a trend for more full-page crosswords in the weeks to come.

Sincerely,  
Shivani Sankaran (Arts/Law IV)  
(‘Puzzles’, Semester 1: Week 3)

## Rest in CCPeace

I believe the real issue here is the CCP, the ideas of millions of young Chinese going abroad to study and be exposed to western ideas obviously makes them paranoid. It is only natural that they would want to keep a close eye on their citizens overseas. This is where student associations come in, the Chinese embassies and consulates maintain close ties with them. And sadly it must be said a very small minority of chinese students are prepared to do in their peers, it does tend to look good on your resume back in China. Combined with the cultural/linguistics barriers, Chinese international students do not get to enjoy the same experiences as Australian students with the knowledge that any perceived anti-communist activities could be reported and impact their lives and those of their families still in China. For more I recommend reading Alex Joske’s series of articles in the real student newspaper Woroni, such as ‘The Truth About the Chinese Students and Scholars Association’. Do Chinese students deserve to be left in peace by the CCP? Of Course!

Cheers,  
Laurence Chappell  
(‘Leave us to peace’, Semester: Week 3)

*In this digital age, you can leave all manner of dirty comments on our Facebook page. But here at eternal print demon, Honi Soit, we love an old fashioned slide into the DMs. Hit us up: [editors@honisoit.com](mailto:editors@honisoit.com)*

## I present to you, some questions, for your consideration:

1. Complete this ABBA lyric: “If you change your mind, I’m ...”
2. How many stations on the Sydney Trains North Shore line begin with ‘W’ (not including Wynyard)?
3. Which country has won the most FIFA World Cups?
4. How many official languages does the UN have?
5. Popular British period drama series, ‘Call the ...’?
6. What is Pokemon #025?
7. Which ABBA member is not originally from Sweden?
8. The music genre, “Merseybeat” or beat music draws its name from a river beside what major city in England?
9. What is the official currency of Switzerland?
10. What is the official currency of Malaysia?



1. the first in line 2. 5 (Wahroonga, Waitara, Warrarwee, Wollstonecraft, Waverton) 3. Brazil 4. 6 (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, Spanish) 5. Midwife 6. Pitakhu 7. An-

## Louder than words

William Tandany delves into the political significance of language.

Nested in the trend of self-productivity, language apps have achieved significant popularity. Amongst the most popular are Duolingo and Babbel, whose gamified interface has become a trademark of, not only online language apps, but skill learning apps in general.

If you've started using a language learning app, pause for a moment to question how that language came to be on your device. As an introductory tool, breaking down complex linguistic systems into bite-size grammatical rules and vocabulary is invaluable to beginners. But normalising this low level commitment and endorsing a schematic pedagogy of language education risks overlooking the socio-cultural dimensions of language and its ever-evolving processes that make it more than just a mode of communication.

Every day new words are created, innovations in grammar finds its way into common usage and old words are given new meanings This happens idiosyncratically all around

the world, across all languages. How then, might one explain the harmonisation of hundreds upon thousands of distinctive tongues and dialects into a nationalised and standardised language coherent enough to be experienced through a freemium app?

Competing perspectives on this question centres upon history. Like all grand narratives, the one of language is one of falling empires, warring monarchs and conquest.

Consider for example, that today the Institute of Cervantes estimates around 477 million native Spanish speakers worldwide, and unsurprisingly it is the most learnt language on Duolingo. Yet the naked statistic obscures the diversity of Spanish speakers and 'variants' of Spanish spoken globally. For instance, many non-Castilian Spaniards, even those mainly residing outside the nation's capital Madrid, consider Spanish a second language to the regional dialect which includes Valencian, Andalusian or Aragonese.

None of these are available on Duolingo.

These dialects are distinct from Spanish, often with Latin-Romance roots as the only common ground. Their coexistence and autonomy in today's era defined by the constitution of the centralised nation state, is a situation some 500 years in the making, dating back to the standardisation of Castilian-Spanish in 1492 under Queen Isabella. After centuries of continental war during the crusades, exchanging the peninsula between caliphate and monarch and the fall of the rival Nasrid kingdom of Granada, Queen Isabella well understood the role of language in establishing hegemony. Her gambit in standardising national Spanish proved fortuitous, arming Columbus shortly after with an indispensable tool in the administration of colonialism and provision of genocide in Latin America.

Regional languages in Spain survived, in part from political compromises and in part clandestinely

as private resistance to the violence of state-craft. The Catalan language today serves as a fulcrum for the Catalan independence movement, combining diverse groups from Barcelonian urbanites to veteran anti-Franco Anarchists against the overweening conservative Spanish government, Partido Popular. Indeed Catalunya and much of peripheral Spain are still haunted by the memory of Franco's dictatorship, whose fascist nationalism and sycophantic Catholicism repressed Spanish cultural and linguistic diversity.

The twentieth century left a legacy of murderous despots who invigorated nationalistic vitriol with the institution of language. More than just a tool for the mediation of communication or culture, language has proven to be a mode of power in itself.

Today its political implications are yet again palpable. Their identities and languages, are wielded by people marginalised by globalisation to make sense of an incessantly changing world.

## Facebook, fake news and authoritarianism

Erin Jordan explores how Facebook helped spread 'fake news' in Southeast Asia.

"You're looking at me like, 'I thought Facebook was already free,' but it's actually not. It's costing you data," Dr Aim Sinpeng, lecturer in comparative politics at USyd, tells me. But there is a free version of Facebook, which we don't have access to in Australia. Facebook Zero.

Sinpeng's research focuses on how social media influences political regimes in Southeast Asia. In light of the ongoing debate about Facebook's role in influencing the 2016 US election, it is apparent that Facebook has a large role to play in many political conflicts.

In 2015, Facebook decided to target some regional black spots that had managed to remain beyond Zuckerberg's reach, by launching a program called Facebook Zero. Facebook Zero is a basic version of Facebook that you can access without internet data charges. Facebook persuaded telecommunications companies in Africa and Southeast Asia to waive the data charges normally linked with the site, arguing that this would boost internet infrastructure and attract potential customers.

That is why today, in some of the most poverty-stricken parts of Southeast Asia, where citizens often have limited access to running water, healthcare and road networks, you can still access Facebook.

Since Facebook Zero was launched, the digital divide between developed and

developing countries has been reduced – on the surface.

But Sinpeng believes Facebook Zero's design is flawed because it makes it incredibly easy to spread misinformation.

"This Facebook Zero version is limited," Aim says. "It comes with pre-installed news which has been pre-selected by Facebook."

Sinpeng argues that these limitations, which are meant to entice new users to commit to Facebook and local telecommunications companies, benefit these businesses at the expense of communities. Users have very little say in what they get to see. This model discourages users from reading news from multiple sources, and balancing biases against one another. Users are offered one steady stream of 'the truth'.

"Because they [users] only have free access to Facebook and not free access to Google, they can't check if what they have read is true against another news site, so it limits [their] ability to check factual

information," Singpeng explains. To further complicate the issue, Facebook Zero targets people from low income

backgrounds, who often don't have regular access to computers and haven't grown up with the internet.

"While it may be a habit for many of us to think critically about the news we read on Facebook, it is not like that for many people who are new to the internet," says Singpeng. "They may not even be in the habit of even thinking of checking if the story is even true."

When designing the app, Facebook primarily focused on closing the digital divide in access, but neglected attempting to close the gap in digital literacy skills. Some governments and developing agencies are now experimenting with vocational workshops, which focus on equipping rural men and women with practical skills to navigate the online world once they have access.

Beyond Facebook Zero's inbuilt limitations, Facebook's push to introduce a mobile-based model has shaped the pattern of internet usage throughout Southeast Asia.

A 2016 report by the United Nations said that the current situation in Southeast Asia is "worrying" because while programs like Facebook Zero have made "access to the internet affordable and flexible", they have also led to a proliferation of mobile data subscriptions rather than fixed connections to broadband. This is problematic because mobile subscriptions lend themselves to being used for social and entertainment purposes, rather than for educational purposes.

This occurs for a number of reasons.

Firstly, there is an economic incentive to use free social media apps rather than to pay to read news. Secondly, social media apps are highly addictive; they are psychologically satisfying. And, when users do use mobile subscriptions to access information, they are likely to read news curated by Facebook Zero or infotainment companies. The report concluded that the development of a mobile-based model limited the internet's capacity to foster "productivity and growth".

Sinpeng is currently researching how Facebook has inadvertently helped spread 'fake news' in the Philippines, which, in turn, helped authoritarian strongman Rodrigo Duterte win the 2016 presidential election. In the Philippines, 'fake news' has become intermingled with the old system of gossip. Each time 'fake news' is passed around families and shared with friends, it becomes harder to distinguish from reality. It is exactly this that the current authoritarian regimes thrive on. An Oxford study published earlier this year alleges that Duterte paid trolls money to spread misinformation that would benefit him and his campaign. One famous 'fake news' story claimed that Duterte was "the best president in the solar system".

With Facebook admitting guilt in light of the Cambridge Analytica data breach, perhaps it will also admit that it was wrong to encourage the proliferation of misinformation in political systems that already do not uphold rights to free speech and freedom of the press.

## The inadequacy of USyd's current Student Mental Health Services

Georgia Tan analyses the gap between the University's duty of care and provision of student mental health services.

Content note: this article discusses mental health and sexual assault

Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence noted at the first Academic Board Meeting this year that it is "out of the Education Budget to run University health services". University representatives reaffirmed that while "the University is not required to provide health services", they believe provision of these services is important for student welfare. It seems that while the University may strive to provide students with education and professional development, without adequate resources provided to support student well-being, USyd is failing to address crucial needs of students.

Currently, USyd offers Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) as the main avenue for students who require mental health support and offer individual counselling, educational workshops, and self-help resources. Reports show that rates of CAPS utilisation peak during assessment periods, notably in Weeks 7, 11 and 13 of the semester.

### The report concluded that USyd currently fails to meet both national and international standards in providing student support services

Meanwhile, over 98 per cent of university students reported mental health issues impacting their studies across the nation, yet only 27 per cent of respondents utilised their on-campus counselling services. This suggests that the majority of students believe services like CAPS are not supportive enough, and prevent them visiting more regularly. The gap stops personal, academic or psychological issues that arise during semester that may not be sufficiently addressed.

The Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015 section 2.3 stipulates that the nature and extent of support services available should be advised by students' mental health, disability and wellbeing needs. However, findings from USyd's Student Wellbeing Report 2014 suggest that the student support needs in place are not being adequately fulfilled.

The report concluded that USyd currently fails to meet both national and international standards in providing student support services. According to the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching Student Experience Survey, USyd ranked at the bottom of Go8 universities at 58.7 per cent, well below the national average of 72 per cent. The next contender for lowest rated university student support services, the University of Melbourne, had a significantly higher rating at 63.5 per cent. Furthermore, the report found that there was a significant absence of training and support for front-line staff to best support the mental health needs and well-being of students.

Despite substantial evidence drawn from University Student Wellbeing Groups, the University claims that its current services are adequate. When asked how current mental health services could be improved, a USyd representative responded that they aim to "introduce mechanisms

to more accurately track the extent to which services meet students' needs". While USyd stated they "welcome dialogue with student representatives" to guarantee they are best meeting the emerging needs of students, the University does not appear to have made significant changes to increase the provision of mental health support services to take on board previous recommendations from recently completed reports on student well-being.

The Vice Chancellor has since revealed that post the work of the Student Wellbeing group, the University proposed a mental health service model that outsources student health services to the Royal Prince Alfred Hospital (RPA).

Backlash to the proposal was swift. It implied the University was distancing itself from the provision of necessary mental health services. Moving mental health services off-campus to the RPA would also involve greater travelling time and commitment for students, which could be another major deterrent for those who already find it difficult to seek out advice from counsellors in the first place.

Ultimately, the University said that the outsourcing of services to the RPA was not approved due to already significant limits in public health funding and substantial delays in accessing support through the public health system.

### The University believes it would be more beneficial to focus on campus services

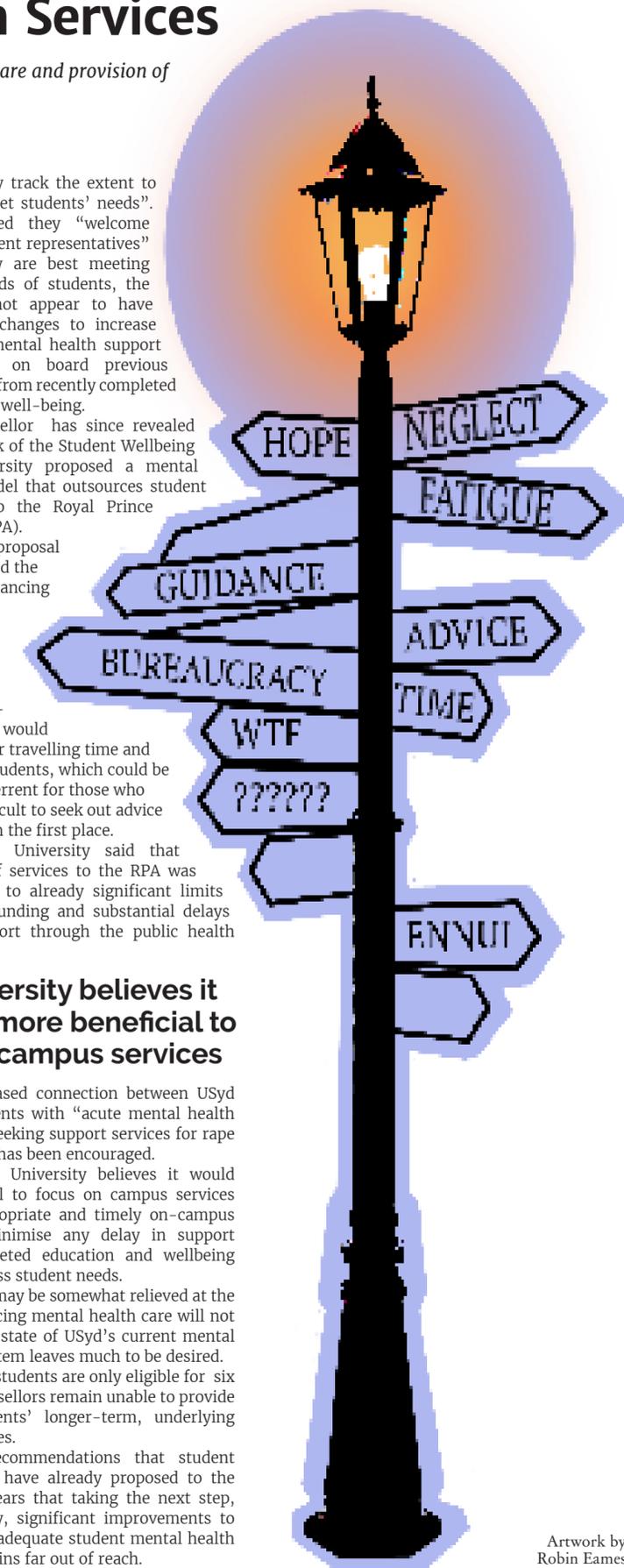
However, increased connection between USyd and RPA for students with "acute mental health distress or those seeking support services for rape or sexual assault" has been encouraged.

Meanwhile, the University believes it would be more beneficial to focus on campus services that "ensure appropriate and timely on-campus assistance" to minimise any delay in support and increase targeted education and wellbeing programs to address student needs.

While students may be somewhat relieved at the news that outsourcing mental health care will not go ahead, the sad state of USyd's current mental health support system leaves much to be desired.

Through CAPS, students are only eligible for six sessions, and counsellors remain unable to provide support for students' longer-term, underlying mental health issues.

For all the recommendations that student wellbeing reviews have already proposed to the University, it appears that taking the next step, to make necessary, significant improvements to the current and inadequate student mental health services, still remains far out of reach.



Artwork by Robin Eames

# Te Tiriti: The Treaty

Maddy Ward traces the binary history of the Treaty of Waitangi.

Waitangi Day in Australia is the biggest single yearly celebration of Maori culture. When I was younger, I largely participated in Waitangi Day as a point of easy cultural access: along with Whale Rider and Scribe, Waitangi Day was a way for me to engage with my culture and heritage in the absence of my extended Maori family. It is an opportunity to experience the sense of community that I craved growing up, one where people gather to share and celebrate our common cultural experiences: however these days, as I grow older and more politically aware, I find it harder to participate in that manner.

Waitangi Day is an annual public holiday in Aotearoa that celebrates the day of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi on the 6th of February in 1840. The history of celebration of the Waitangi Treaty is long and complex, but in its current form the day is touted as one of education, national identity and cultural celebration. But for myself and many other Maori, Waitangi Day and the Treaty of Waitangi are the means by which the falsehood of a post-racial Aotearoa is constructed.

For what is considered the founding document of Aotearoa, there is a large level of inaccuracy in the translation of the Treaty of Waitangi.

It is thus commonly argued that there are in fact two treaties: The Treaty of Waitangi, written in English, and Te Tiriti o Waitangi, written in Te Reo Maori. It could be argued that Te Tiriti is a translation of The Treaty, but the differences in their wording, and thus their meaning, are too much to be chalked up to a quirk of translation.

The primary difference between the two documents lies in the way each discusses the concept of sovereignty.



The Treaty gives the Queen "all the rights and powers of sovereignty" over Aotearoa. Te Tiriti gives the Queen 'te kawanatanga katoa', ie: the complete government over Aotearoa. Te Tiriti cedes a general right of governance to the Crown in return for some protections and for the right for Maori to manage their own affairs. It proposes a relationship between Maori and Pakeha that entails some level

of partnership and power sharing between the two communities, but The Treaty places all legislative and legal power in the hands of the crown. There is a clear difference in the aims of the two documents, one that is ultimately more sinister than a minor disparity in translation.

This extends to the discussion of land rights in the treaties. The Treaty grants the Crown exclusive right to purchase Maori land, and confirms that Maori have "exclusive and undisturbed possession of their lands and estates, forests, fisheries and other properties". Te Tiriti guarantees Maori "te tino rangatiratanga", the exercise of chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their properties and treasures. There is evidently a difference between the ownership of something, as in the Treaty, and the right to govern it, as in Te Tiriti, and the concept of the crown having exclusive rights of purchase is not immediately clear in Te Tiriti. It was rather considered that the crown was understood to have the first option, rather than the exclusive right, to buy Maori land.

The treaties are in fact preceded by an earlier, stronger document: The Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (the Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand).

Signed in 1835 by a coalition of 34 Northern Maori chiefs, the Declaration of Independence declared the country to be an independent state known as The United Tribes of New Zealand. It declared that "all sovereign power and authority in the land should reside entirely and exclusively in the hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes in their collective capacity." It also declared that no government would exist aside from those appointed by the coalition of Chiefs. It is now broadly considered to be a historical document without any constitutional relevance in contemporary Aotearoa.

That He Wakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni would eventually give way to a decidedly weaker counterpart is unsurprising. There is a clear pattern that emerges when the Te Tiriti and the Treaty are considered in comparison to one another, where the language of the former diverges from its English counterpart in regard to crucial areas such as governance and land rights. It is telling that these two treaties, that are so fundamentally incompatible to have diluted Maori sovereignty, are considered to be the founding documents of contemporary Aotearoa over an altogether more comprehensive document.

# MATT SOLOMON: MOTORSPORTS MAN

Andrew Rickert interviews USyd's very own motorsports athlete.

Imagine Grand Prix weekend in Melbourne. The city is full – the only hotel rooms left are \$4,000 per night Airbnb rentals. On Sunday, 20 drivers compete for the inaugural Formula One victory of the year. They're not the only drivers there; around 100 drivers will take place in different categories over the race weekend, and thousands of hopefuls are littered through the crowd, dreaming that they will make it.

"There are only 20 drivers in the world that are doing it, and a lot of guys who are as good, if not better...are doing other things because maybe timing, or luck, or something – the stars didn't quite line up."

**"There are only 20 drivers in the world that are doing it, and a lot of guys who are as good are doing other things – the stars didn't quite line up."**

22-year-old Matt Solomon knows the feeling exceptionally well, having raced at the Grand Prix in the Australian GT series. He finished first in race 3 and received line honours in race 4 at the 2016 event. His win was the team's first ever victory in the Australian GT category, and only the second win globally for the Mercedes-AMG GT3 car.

It's O Week, and Matt Solomon is at Courtyard. He's undertaking a Bachelor of Arts at USyd, and was at a uni gym when his hat attracted the attention of a staff member.

"I was wearing one of the hats from one of the teams I've raced for, and [he] was like, 'Are you a fan?' I'm like 'I'm actually a driver'".

Quickly, Solomon became the first SUSF Elite Athlete Program Member for Motorsport.

Solomon first tried a go-kart at age six and was competing by the age of eleven. His father, from Geelong, had a massive interest in cars, which Matt inherited.

"He used to do hill climbs, was President of the MG car club and all that sort of stuff."

Matt was born in Australia, living in Melbourne for three years before moving to Hong Kong. "Every year, November, we'd go to the Macau Grand Prix with dad, and back in the day where it was...relatively easy to get in to the pits," he says.

The Macau Grand Prix is a world-renowned motorsport event. In places, the track is tiny, and prone to blockages. Combined with the youthful exuberance of many drivers, it is always a fast-paced and dangerous race.

"[I] met a lot of drivers when I was young, like sat on Nico Rosberg's lap and [have] a pretty cool photo with him...so it was always, always had that background, and one of our mates [who raced]... said there was a kart track opening up."

Solomon moved through karts, dominating in Asia as Hong Kong Junior Champion for two years in a row. He moved into open-wheel racing at seventeen, competing in Formula Masters China. It was in his first year in cars that he "got picked up by Mercedes-AMG to do a race with Mika Häkkinen," a two-time Formula One World Champion.

The duo won their first race, propelling Solomon into the eyes of the motorsport world. Mercedes facilitated a move to Europe for the European Formula Three Championship.

When he returned, his family encouraged him to go to university and finish his education before further pushing his racing career. "At first, definitely, [I] really felt very detached from the sport and felt like I was drifting away a little bit."

When pushed on these lapses of motivation, Solomon looked at the success of some of his peers from Formula Three. "Lance Stoll who's in Formula One... guys like that who you see signing for certain teams or doing certain series – the grass always looks greener on the other side."

At these times he was frustrated, with a nagging thought that "as much as I'm enjoying here, and as good as the opportunities are that I'm getting, it's not quite what it was" being enhanced by social media.

Solomon's former teammate Matheus Leist will contest IndyCar this year, the highest level of open-wheel racing in the US. "I beat him on track in every session we raced together."

For now, Solomon's focus is GT racing. "Just getting back into the scene and try and tick all the boxes that AMG need me to do, and hopefully when the time comes try and step up when I can."

Solomon races in the GT3 category, which is emerging as a leading motorsport series across the world. Cars must be based on production road car models currently being mass-produced. This means that most major brands are represented, including Ferrari, Mercedes-AMG, Toyota, Honda, and Porsche. A lot of the teams are 'customers' of these brands, where "individuals buy the car [and] they want to go racing."

"It's turned into a very professional series, where these guys are hiring some of the best ex-Formula One drivers and V8 Supercar drivers to jump in with them and teach them and bring them closer to a more respectable lap time," Solomon says.

Late last year he was welcomed back into Mercedes-AMG Customer Sports China and is awaiting a seat with a customer team. He says, given his half-Chinese background and upbringing in Hong Kong, "It'd be stupid for me to ignore [Asia] and go somewhere else."

**"If I had to give a goal it'd be to an official GT driver, and I think I'm on the right track, but I have more bucket-list items than a specific roadmap."**

Solomon is keen to get back onto the open road: "If I had to give a goal it'd be to an official [Mercedes-AMG] GT driver, and I think I'm on the right track, but I have more bucket-list items than a specific roadmap, so like Le Mans 24h, Spa 24h, Nürburgring, the big races".

As for his time at USyd, "it's been a really character-building couple of years".

**MAN'S HORIZONS**  
A UNIVERSAL PERSPECTIVE ON MANKIND THROUGH THE AGES

**MARK PARDINI**

The Global Community of Nations heads to the future without common objectives, goals or 'Raison d'être'. The path followed is unsustainable, inviting disaster and tempting extinction for all life on Earth.

**Every intelligent person ponders the questions:-**

- Where have I come from? Why am I here?
- Where am I going and where is the human species heading?
- How did our Planet come into being?
- What should I know about the Universe and its origin?

**If you blunder through a jungle without knowing its workings or the path to your destination, you will struggle to survive, let alone succeed and thrive.**

**The same applies to your path through life!**

**You live in a world that is changing more rapidly now than ever before. This presents your generation with many great challenges. In twenty years time very few of the work opportunities that are available today will continue to exist!**

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# STRENGTHENING THE TIES: UNIVERSITIES AND THE ARMS INDUSTRY

Lara Sonnenschein investigates the relationship between USyd and the arms industry.

Our Federal government is engaging in the biggest defence build-up since the Second World War. In the 2016 Defence White Paper, the Australian government outlined an 81 per cent increase in the defence budget over the next decade, translating to an additional \$29.9 billion and the hiring of 4400 new Australian Defence Force employees. Recently, Prime Minister Turnbull announced his government will invest \$3.8 billion into the arms manufacturing industry, in the hopes that Australia will break into the top ten weapons exporters worldwide. At the same time, Turnbull is slashing \$2.2 billion from higher education.

## Research partnerships

Amid cuts to higher education and broader corporatisation, universities have turned to research partnerships to make up the revenue lost from public funding. And with Australia's newfound embracing of the arms industry, weapons companies are proving attractive bedfellows.

For example, Lockheed Martin (the largest arms manufacturer worldwide) established its first Centre for Research outside the US at the University of Melbourne. UK arms manufacturer BAE Systems is set to follow in Lockheed's footsteps after signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with UniMelb in February this year for the construction of a technology hub at Fishermans Bend, Victoria.

Similarly, Adelaide University, Flinders University and the University of South Australia form part of the Joint Open Innovation Network (JOIN), funded by BAE Systems, which aims to offer new engineering scholarships, internships, and industry placements for undergraduate students. This \$10 million initiative will also see the introduction of defence-focused courses, research and development.

Closer to home, in late 2017 USyd along with six other New South Wales universities founded a defence research network. With \$1.25 million in State government funding, the network aims to increase collaboration across universities and

bolster connections between government, industry and academia in the defence sector. As part of the scheme, the seven founding universities will each provide two PhD scholarships for defence-related research projects.

The University of Sydney also has links with weapon manufacturers in its own right. Our chancellor, Belinda Hutchinson, is the chairwoman of weapons company Thales Australia. Last year, USyd signed an MOU with Thales so the two can collaborate more closely over the next five years.

When I questioned the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) Duncan Ivison about this, he assured me that all conflicts of interest had been resolved. He downplayed the MOU by emphasising that communication lines between the University and the company were simply "open", whilst refusing to reveal any ongoing projects with Thales.

The head of the School of Aerospace, Mechanical and Mechatronic Engineering, Stefan Williams, however, revealed that the School has entered into ongoing programmes with Thales, but that they are "confidential".

The School hosts the Sydney Industry Placement Scholarship (SIPS) as an optional part of their honours programme which effectively doubles as an internship, with \$18,000 paid to selected students who then spend six months working for various aerospace, mechanical and mechatronics companies. The School is also in talks with large weapons companies including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Northrop Grumman and Honeywell who seek to expand the SIPS programme for fourth year engineering students.

## Investments

Aside from research partnerships, the University also has investments in several arms manufacturing companies. Documents obtained under freedom of information laws show that USyd holds short term investment positions in several arms manufacturers worldwide. A number of these are ASX top 100 companies, including Boeing, Lockheed Martin, General Dynamics, Raytheon, Northrop Grumman, General Electric, Rockwell Collins, Hewlett Packard Enterprise Company.

At the end of 2017, the total amount invested was \$15,173,20. More sinister is the list of the university's long term investment positions when cross referenced with the top 100 arms manufacturers worldwide. Companies included are CSRA, DynCorp International, Fluor Corp, Engility, Rolls-Royce, ThyssenKrupp, United

**USyd's chancellor, Belinda Hutchinson, is the chairwoman of weapons company Thales.**

Technologies Corp and Honeywell International amounting to a total of \$4,035,416.72 as at the end of 2017.

Of that figure, \$3,353,084.84 was invested in Honeywell. Interestingly, Honeywell has repeatedly surfaced in the the USyd Engineering Faculty's promotional material. USyd also sponsors a Honeywell summer school programme for senior high school students. This programme is an opportunity for students to learn the fundamentals of engineering and includes site visits and talks from private corporations.

Honeywell is the company that developed cluster bombs during the Vietnam War which have killed over 20,000 people since. They are also part of the consortium that operates the Pantex plant, where all the United States' nuclear bombs are assembled. Honeywell provides the engine for the MQ-9 drone, the world's deadliest UAV, which is responsible for civilian deaths in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia. New Zealand Super Fund recently divested from Honeywell, citing ethical concerns.

The University also opts into Vanguard's International Shares Select Exclusions Index Fund, which holds investments in over 1500 different companies. While promoting itself as an 'ethical' fund, it maintains significant investments in Raytheon (\$452,535.49), Rolls Royce (\$133,333.90), ThyssenKrupp (\$102,069.92) and Thales (\$100,896.14), as at the 18th of March this year.

## Universities as anti-war institutions

It is unsurprising that universities are strengthening their links with arms companies: our Chancellor sits on the board of a weapons manufacturer and our Vice-Chancellor's salary is \$1.44 million. Universities are operating under a neoliberal framework which ultimately comes from the highest echelons of government. With the Turnbull government motivated by this agenda, and the Labor party offering ineffective opposition, this is unlikely to change in the near term.

There is also disturbing bipartisan support for Australia's 'defence' and 'security', whether through maintaining the US-Australia alliance or our torturous refugee policy that sees innocent people languishing in offshore island gulags in the name of border security.

Students, the most important stakeholder in the education debate, should demand that they be anti-war institutions. In fact, as universities are increasingly active in broader society than they have ever been, we need to demand that USyd not fund death and destruction via research and investments.

It's time to revive the anti-war sentiment of the 60s on our campuses. The University must divest from corporations like Honeywell, and instead fund research which improves lives, rather than destroys them. So while universities might be strengthening their ties, it is we students who hold the collective power to sever them and disarm USyd.

# DESPERANTO HOUSE

James Sherriff dives into the noble intentions of an invented language.

You step out into the morning rush.

At the entrance hall of Redfern station, a dozen conversations blend into white noise and the crowd shuffles forward towards uni.

Caught in a stream of commuters, you cross the road, resisting a tempting waft from the coffee shop. Uncompromising, the herd has little time for ponderous laggards, yet a brief glimpse of the green flag of Esperanto House leaves you curious.

What is 'Esperanto', and why does it need its own house?

Described by Wikipedia as the "most successful constructed language in the world", Esperanto began in 1887 as the humble pet project of Dr Ludwig Zamenhof. His intentions were noble: not a fan of conflict, he created a language which, he hoped, could become international.

Easy to learn and readily adaptable, Esperanto was meant to leave us all speaking at least two tongues, understanding one another better, and avoiding intercultural conflict. Unfortunately, Esperanto's creation was followed almost immediately by two world wars.

Despite this setback, its popularity is once again on the rise; in fact, Esperanto is the most popular constructed language in the world. Around one million people speak it as a second language and this number is growing as technology facilitates its diffusion. Its simplicity is key. While a capable English-speaker knows around 10,000 words, Esperantists can achieve the same complexity with only 2000. This is thanks to a highly malleable morphology, which allows speakers to coin words

from comparatively few grammatical roots. Dr Rainer Kulz, former President of the German Esperanto Association, notes that he has "dozens of friends in dozens of countries using Esperanto", and that it now exists in over 100 countries worldwide.

Across Europe, the Americas, Australia, and Asia, enthusiasts use the internet to learn the language and organise local events. A huge array of Esperanto resources can be found online, from beginners' guides to discussion forums for the most experienced speakers; there's even an Airbnb-style app allowing Esperantists to stay with other speakers when they travel. Dr Kulz says in a week, he would be able to stay with "at least 10 different people in different countries" in places he has no personal connections.

In our hyper-connected digital age, it seems anomalous for a globally diffuse language group to have its own fixed address. Yet, in one of the most expensive parts of Sydney, Esperanto House has stood as a local meeting place for nearly 60 years.

The House has two main roles. It is an administrative centre, the headquarters of the Esperanto Federation of NSW and a repository for archive material. And it's a cultural hub, regularly hosting information sessions, meet ups, and pizza nights. Importantly, it also offers Esperanto-speaking guests fourteen days of free accommodation.

This isn't just charitable; it promotes the kind of cultural integration Dr Zamenhof originally envisaged. Where natural languages have specific geographic and cultural roots, Esperanto is global, facilitating the interaction of otherwise unconnected peoples.

Through repeated inter-cultural exchange, Esperanto has developed its own unique identity—the House itself contains a small library of original and translated books, the language has a burgeoning music scene, and around a thousand people consider Esperanto their native tongue.

But for a global language, Esperanto seems remarkably localised. Its membership is introspective, focused primarily on maintaining the existing community rather than converting the general populace. Its size has indeed been growing—it's one of the only minority languages in recent decades to

have seen an increase in usage. But in the absence of any coordinated or substantial advertising, this is likely due to the passion of enthusiastic linguists taking it upon themselves to learn the language.

Though it has failed to cement itself as the 'global second language', Esperanto has had a positive influence on other minority languages. Esper-entrepreneur Richard Delamore has, in developing an app to connect Esperanto speakers, created a PG-rated Tinder for polyglots. Delamore notes that in everyday life, most people "don't know who speaks Esperanto ... who speaks French [or] German," most people simply revert to English—"that's the default."

This default preference for English is a major factor in the decline of minority or indigenous languages, and innovations like Delamore's can be used to help preserve dying languages. But some might question Esperanto's goal of simply replacing English as the new lingua franca. In the melting pot of the modern global city, the promotion of another Eurocentric language may not be the best way to slow the cultural steamroller of Westernisation.

In many ways, the renewed popularity of Esperanto may stem from a sense of social guilt. For many people it is a struggle trying to learn English, ranked as the 33rd "weirdest" language by the World Atlas of Linguistic Structures.

Esperanto, as a simpler, more approachable equivalent to English offers an alternative. In Dr Kulz's experience, for example, the language was his only means of communication while on an exchange program in Japan, and while not everyone speaks Esperanto in Japan, he found that it was actually "the only common language with most of the people". By the end of a month's travel he was asked to give a lecture on satellite navigation at Tokyo University—in Esperanto.

The key idea of Esperanto is that of shared difficulty. In agreeing to speak an invented language, all parties place themselves at an equal but reasonable disadvantage. With English becoming one of the great homogenising forces of the modern era, anglophiles in the West could learn a lot from the inclusive linguistic community that is Esperanto.

So next time you're bitter about those darned international students not speaking English properly, consider a visit to Esperanto House before you message the USyd Rants Facebook page.

Esperanto House on 143 Lawston Street, Redfern.



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## Testing the limits of language

*There's something rotten in the state of standardised language assessment, says Jessica Syed.*

Intelligence manifests in different forms. This was made obvious to me in primary school when I completed the mandatory Howard Gardener multiple-choice test designed to measure the “nine-types-of-intelligence”. My result stated I had a mix of “intra-personal” and “linguistic” intelligence. In other words, I was a pretentious, bookish introvert with no friends. The test also found I had no ounce of “bodily-kinesthetic” intelligence: my inability to participate in the beep test without having an asthma attack. But at least the test demonstrated intelligence is multi-pronged, and that we can't rely on a standardised model to determine competence.

Apparently this mindset doesn't apply when it comes to language.

For decades, the Coalition Government has pushed for higher standards of English language requirements for migrants. Just this month, Citizenship Minister Alan Tudge called for formal requirements “that encourage English proficiency”.

Minister Tudge's conception of ‘proficiency’ is no doubt drawn from stipulations of the different competency levels within the five standardised English language tests accepted by the Department of Home Affairs, including the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). This kind of testing is not only common for English, competency in many European languages is measured by the Common European Framework of Languages (CEFR), a comparable language-proficiency test.

European nations, along with Australia, have either entertained, or even implemented methods of standardised language testing in vetting migrant intake.

If you're learning a European language at Usyd, each of your classes probably aims for students to reach certain CEFR level by the end of the semester. Dr Carolyn Stott of the University's French Department told Honi that demonstrating one's competence according to the CEFR can be useful in terms of applying for exchange or even general employability.

The use of the CEFR is held in quite high esteem; it is an international standard used for an international standard held in fourty different languages. The CEFR encompasses six levels of competence: from breakthrough (A1) to mastery (C2). Like IELTS, the CEFR tests different aspects of language learning such as reading, writing, listening and speaking.

Yet its usage is still problematic. The idea that the CEFR provides a holistic assessment of a person's ability in language is a fallacy. When you really scrutinise the specifications of the six levels of competence, the pedantic differences between them becomes clear. For example, the differences between a C1 (Effective Operational Efficiency) and C2 (Mastery) level in reading are so subtle that their diagnoses seem only to paraphrase each other.

This raises questions about the way people are assessed in their competencies when the criteria

appears so interchangeable. Philia Thalgott, head of the Education Policy Division at the Council of Europe, maintains “the CEFR is descriptive—not normative—and must be adapted for migration contexts”.

Author Jean-Jacques Weber, in his 2015 book *Language Racism* goes even further and suggests the use of the CEFR within Europe developed from the residual influence of eugenic theory, where only migrants who are able to reach the highest plateau of what is supposedly an ‘objective’ and ‘scientific’ standardised language test are the ones who could possibly integrate themselves into a civilised European society.

This idea isn't all too far fetched. In the parliamentary debate leading up to a vote on new citizenship laws in Luxembourg in 2008, the A1 level threshold proposed for migrants by left-leaning parties was chastised by the more conservative parties as not constituting high enough an intellectual hurdle.

It's possible that the CEFR guidelines are helpful for students when it comes to getting a job, or going on exchange. But it's evident that standardised language tests of its kind are increasingly being used as a tool to curb migrant intake under an agenda that merits individuals only on the basis of their ability to speak a foreign language. The danger lies in the dubious nature of these tests, and the authority they carry.

## Queering the Church

*Wilson Huang questions the value of religious fundamentalism.*

Christianity and queer affirmation are often thought of as incompatible. Many Christians claim religious belief prevents them from affirming same-sex marriage. They might proclaim inclusivity but insist queer people should remain celibate, marry a person of the opposite gender, or conform to their assigned sex.

This view is based on religious fundamentalism, which focuses on literal readings of sacred texts considered inerrant. Needless to say, fundamentalist belief is not wholly logical. Consider this from Psalm 93:1 (NRSV): “[The Lord] has established the world; it shall never be moved.” When read literally, it means the Earth does not move.

In Genesis 5:5, Adam is said to have died at 930 years. However, as he ate the forbidden fruit, he should have already died, as stated in Genesis 2:17 (NRSV): “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die.”

While I believe most fundamentalists would not claim the Earth is still, as fundamentalist belief is diverse with varying degrees of literalism, there are still many fundamentalists who by insisting some parts of the Bible should be taken literally, pioneer

practices harmful to queer people. By doing this, they ignore biblical context and scientific research confirming diverse sexual orientations and gender identities are natural. Biblical scholarship has shown some things were customs rather than enduring moral truths.

Research has shown children of same-sex parents are not worse off due to their parents' sexuality. Discrimination, though, negatively impacts children. Yet despite the clear repercussions of queer exclusion, many churches hold non-affirming positions. These churches often care more about maintaining traditional beliefs, than admitting their ignorance. Instead of helping eliminate suicide, they give legitimacy to disparaging narratives about queer people. They may not engage in conversion therapy, but they perpetuate the harmful ideas behind it.

In Sydney, leaders of the Sydney Anglicans and Hillsong hold conservative beliefs about homosexuality and marriage.

Brian Houston, the Senior Pastor of Hillsong, stated in response to the yes vote, “My personal belief in the Bible's teachings on marriage will not change.” He continues, “Jesus taught us that holding firm to our convictions, and respecting and appreciating other people who hold different views,

are not mutually exclusive.”

The Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, Glenn Davies said in a media response to the yes vote, “this won't prevent me from continuing to teach that marriage, in God's good design, is between a man and a woman – an exclusive and permanent union.”

Anglicans have differing views though. The Anglican Archbishop of Perth, Kay Goldsworthy, told ABC Radio National she voted yes in the same-sex marriage postal survey. The Scottish and United States Episcopal Churches and some dioceses in the Canadian Anglican Church also perform same-sex marriages.

Inspiringly, many Christians have openly affirmed queer people in spite of non-affirming positions. In 2014 the United Church of Christ and its co-plaintiffs successfully challenged North Carolina's ban on same-sex marriage. The Christians United statement affirmed queer people in response to the Nashville Statement.

Reverend Adrian Sukumar-White who is the Uniting Church Chaplain at USyd and works with Christian Students Uniting stated in an email to me:

“The Uniting Church holds a diverse range of theological perspectives. Among them are many members, congregations and ministers (like myself) who affirm and celebrate the full participation of LGBTIQ Christians within the life of the Church. The Bible is the basis for our affirming position.”

Unfortunately for many queer people, myself included, some Christian churches remain places we could never see ourselves affirmed. These places like to proclaim extravagant love but are still causers of harm to queer people. Despite this, affirming churches have taken a stand for equality and we can be proud they are moving forward.

## DISSENT IN AN UNLIKELY PLACE

*Kida Lin explains why you're thinking the wrong way about Chinese political oppression.*

For those concerned about human rights in China, the past few years can be demoralising.

Since Xi Jinping's rise to power in 2013, China has gone backwards on practically all human rights issues. In 2016, the government passed a new counter terror law to legitimise the infringement of religious freedom in Xinjiang and Tibet. In 2017, with the help of Apple and Google, the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology cracked down on the use of Virtual Private Networks (VPNs), a technology allowing citizens to bypass internet censorship and access banned websites like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Also in 2017, homosexuality was labelled an “abnormal sexual lifestyle” and all depictions of it were eradicated from the internet. And in March this year, China's rubber-stamp congress abolished constitutional term limits on the president, effectively allowing Xi to rule for life.

Looking at things this way, the situation seems dismal. But adopting a top-down approach—that is, analysing China by looking at its laws, party leadership and political structures—is a misleading way to understand Chinese politics. Doing

so glosses over important nuances and overlooks the actual driving forces of human rights progress in authoritarian places like China: courageous individuals. These are human rights activists, lawyers and political dissidents, who are standing up to an oppressive regime to demand freedom and equality, in the face of pressure from the government and considerable personal risk.

That helps explain why cracking down on critics has been routine for the government. In 2015, five women's rights activists (Li Tingting, Wang Man, Wei Tingting, Wu Rongrong and Zheng Churan—it is important to say their names) were detained for distributing leaflets that highlighted the issue of sexual harassment on public transport. Their arrests came days before International Women's Day and coincided with the 20th anniversary of the World Conference on Women in Beijing (the conference where the then-first lady Hillary Clinton pronounced “women's rights are human rights”). The arrests sparked outcry at home and abroad. For days, a social media campaign, #freethefive, was trending on Twitter. And remarkably, women,

students and workers' organizations from mainland China openly advocated for the release of the five. Students and graduates from Sun Yat-sen University (a public university in southern China) signed a petition in support of the imprisoned activists, in spite of opposition from school officials and the government.

On 9 July the same year, hundreds of human rights lawyers and activists were arrested overnight—an incident came to be known as the ‘709 crackdown’. According to Human Rights Watch, many of the detainees were tortured and in some cases coerced to confess their ‘crimes’ on state television. China Human Rights Lawyers Concern Group, a Hong Kong-based rights organisation, estimated that at least 321 lawyers, law firm staff, human right activists and their family members were arrested or are still missing. Since then some have been sentenced to long jail terms, while most are still awaiting a sentence.

There is only so long activists can wait. In July last year, one of the most high-profile Chinese dissidents and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo died while serving an 11-year prison sentence for ‘inciting subversion’. In November, Yang Tongyan, a veteran Chinese dissident who had nearly completed a 12-year prison sentence for ‘subversion’ has died on medical parole.



Artwork by Katie Thorburn

A SIMPLE EXTENSION PLEASE

Fully aware of what might be awaiting them, more and more people are resolutely joining the fight. They fight for the release of those unlawfully arrested during the 709 crackdown and they fight for political freedom and minority rights. They are ready to let the government know dissent is alive and thriving.

This also highlights another danger of buying into the top-down approach to Chinese politics. It often gives rise to pessimism, the feeling that there is nothing we can do. This will eventually result in political apathy. It is undeniable that there is little citizens of the West can do to change the trajectory of Chinese leadership. There is, however, a lot that can be done once we view these

issues through a bottom-up lens.

We can support the individuals fighting for change on the ground. Days after the constitutional change was announced, Chinese diasporas and students overseas organised the #notmypresident campaign, which condemns the removal of presidential term limits. The organisers encourage people, Chinese or otherwise, to download posters with the text “Not my president” and “I disagree”, and then put them up on university campuses.

We can also lobby western governments to exert more pressure on China when it comes to human rights issues. Reports have consistently shown that international pressure does improve the conditions of political prisoners in China. Last year, China walked away from the scheduled Australia-China Human Rights Dialogue—an annual human rights forum between senior government officials. Regrettably, the Australian government has so far failed to protest China's departure from the bilateral talks.

Most importantly, we should support a frank discussion on China that moves away from the current trade-first approach to instead focus on human rights and political freedom. We also need to create an environment where people feel comfortable pointing out the failures of foreign government. It is perhaps worth remembering that the Chinese

government—which is quick to play the race card, cry McCarthyism and Sinophobia overseas—is the same government that stifles political discourses on race and minority rights at home. And the task of fostering a free discussion on China has never been more urgent. Last year, Chongyi Feng, a UTS Professor on China Studies and an Australian permanent resident, was detained in China for his critical views.

I shall conclude with a passage from a heartbreaking letter, written by a family member of one of the lawyers arrested during the 709 crackdown:

“You said you didn't want to think about it, otherwise you would be overwhelmed by sadness. So instead of sitting there, you stood up, took action, stopped thinking about it, and took the risk of getting arrested. I think you are lucky, because you said everybody being arrested made you feel guilty and you couldn't sleep. When you finally got arrested, I understood, in my overwhelming pain, that you felt no more guilt and had your peace.”

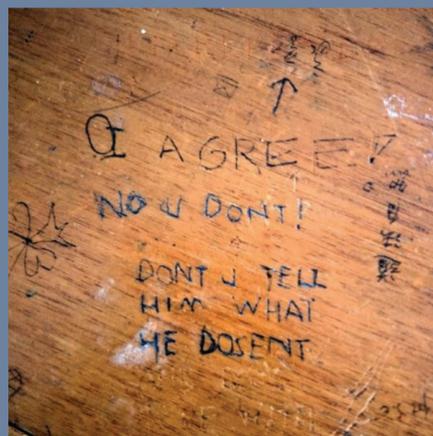
# Intergenerational drawfare

James Sherriff turns a critical eye on USyd's rich history of carved communication.

Away from the cold 21st Century steel of ABS and the Nanoscience Hub, the University of Sydney is a living museum. Nearly a century old, the desks of Woolley, Merewether, and the Quad have been sponges for four generations of student boredom.

Amid the babble of peace signs, anarchist symbols, and many (so many) poorly-drawn dicks, there are some genuine works of art. From the classic desk debate to the highest echelons of philosophical enquiry, here are three of the best graffiti around.

## Desktop Warfare



The classic. A feature of wooden desks worldwide, the multi-layered graffito discussion is at once familiar and original.

Though immediately recognisable, no two examples are the same. Like a confused snowflake, this timeless (and pointless) narrative weaves its way around the very grain of the wood it is written on. Individual authors are distinguished by both ink colour and ideology, and the reader is led on a wild rhetorical rollercoaster ride.

What begins as a passionate outpouring of affirmation is followed by bitter dissent: the discourse is immediately polarised. Caught in a moment of uncompromisingly vehement opposition, the author spared no time even for spelling or grammar, carving out their rebuttal with maximum efficiency.

But from the philosophical hinterland springs an unexpected compromise. Striking a firm middle-of-the-road position, the voice of reason calls into question the very basis of the argument. In one fell swoop, pretence is swept away and artifice laid bare upon the benchtop.

If only all academic debates were this transparent.

The mind of an uninterested student is unrivalled in its philosophical capacity. Impenetrably complex, this piece is a window into such a mind, one cast in the interrogative mood.

Etched deep into the timber, with no markings to betray its age, the text is unbound by temporal restrictions. Where the text peers inwards into the mind of the author, it also looks outward across the USyd student population—past, present and well into the future.

The question can be read in two ways: as a legitimate intellectual concern, or a biting work of satire. Treating it seriously, the author poses an interesting problem. Not simply asking whether the notion of ethics itself is 'wrong', the author wonders if we even know what it means to ask the question (and so on...). Clearly, whatever lecture had them scrawling on the desk in weary ennui also inspired some serious contemplation.

But read satirically, the lines become a series of meaningless tautologies, turning a genuine concern into an exaggerated caricature of postmodern philosophy. The reader's point of reference becomes obscured—nothing is certain, and nothing valuable can be learnt.

Yet however you choose to understand it, the act of reading is itself transcendent. The language of boredom is universal.

## Inscription Inception



## Man in the Mahogany



Tucked into a dark corner of the Quad, the Philosophy Room has over the years been slowly accruing culture like a forgotten tub of yoghurt.

One piece of art, barely perceptible, has sunk right into the battered and beaten benchtop, locked in conflict with the very canvas from which it is borne.

The man in the desk is complex, a work singular both in style and form, with its own nuanced understanding of art and the world. Where some would write the whole desk off as one giant, shitty graffito, the unknown artist behind this work chose this chaos as the backdrop for something greater.

While some markings are carved deep into the timber, this artist's use of ballpoint pen gives the work an aura of ethereality. It is at once consumed by and separate from its surrounding milieu—like the university student who feels just as unique as everyone else.

The real question is of course, who is the man in the desk? A hatless caricature of the great Abe Lincoln? Your average gentleman with astronomically high eyebrows? Or is he all of us, the everyman?

These questions challenge us all. Just like the man in the desk, we tend to face them with a dazed expression.



Artwork by Victor Lee

**THE RISE OF THE MONO-CULTURAL CHURCH**

# TAKE ME TO CHURCH

Rhea Cai speaks chapter and verse on the spiritual life of Asian Australia.

There were only two major Chinese churches in Sydney during the 1960s—the Chinese Presbyterian Church and the Chinese Christian Church. The first ethnic Korean church opened in 1974. Around the same time, in small but increasing numbers, Vietnamese, Indian, Filipino, and Japanese congregations began to emerge. Now, the reach of Asian Australian Christianity is extensive, with what was once a sprinkling of mono-cultural churches spreading to become a fixture of most Sydney suburbs.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of mono-cultural religious communities is the strong presence of young second and third-generation Asian Australians. Often, they are the ones most active in this space. Youth initiatives such as Student Outreach to the World (SOW) and the Renewal & Inter-Church Evangelism Movement (RICE) are well-established in these communities. SOW, a ministry targeted towards university students over four campuses (USyd, UTS, Macquarie, and UNSW), runs a weekly bible study event called Uchap, or University Chapel.

RICE is well-known for its eponymous RICE Rally, where thousands of young Christians come to enjoy a night of song, dance and conversation. Both attract a membership of mostly Asian Australian adolescents and young adults. But why? If you're born and raised here, well-versed in Bunnings sausage sizzles and cracking open a cold one, what drives you to identify with a non-Anglo religious community—a mono-cultural community that, by definition, sets itself apart? And isn't one of the core teachings of the gospel that believers should spread the word to every nation, tribe, people and language?

I have been a stubborn atheist for most of my adolescent and adult life, and have only recently begun critically questioning my beliefs. When talking to my Christian friends and family, I noticed a strange trend: cultural and religious identity are very much conflated. I had a friend confide in me that he only went to church because of the deep friendships and cultural connections he had forged within the Asian Australian community—a demographic that he had previously not had much exposure to. He confessed that he often had doubts about the validity of his faith. Like my friend, many

of the religious people I know go to mono-ethnic or mono-cultural churches, often because they identify with the cultural or ethnic background of that church. Cultural values and belief end up inextricably connected. And the more I interrogate my own faith (or lack thereof), the more I also interrogate aspects of my cultural identity.



**"I believe we are in danger of being swamped by Asians ... they have their own culture and religion, form ghettos and do not assimilate."**

In Australia, the archetypal Christian has long been the white, suburban Churchgoer—two kids, probably Protestant, latterly Catholic. But increasingly, the religious are found not in the suburbs of white Australia but in immigrant communities. For some, it's a scary prospect, and there are bound to be voices of opposition seeking to discredit Asian Australian religiosity. Wherever there are large, cohesive groupings of people of colour, the tenor of white Australia seems to change from that of acceptance



Rice Rally 2014

to fear of racial usurpation.

The main argument is that mono-cultural churches are insular and exclusive. They detract from Australia's multicultural mission, instead preventing their members from assimilating into Anglo society. Fair enough, the word 'mono-cultural' doesn't exactly conjure harmonious stock photos of multiracial groups lunching on the USyd Law Lawns. But for many Asian immigrants, the architecture of white, dominant institutions does not make assimilation easy. So what happens when Asian Australians do venture into a 'multicultural' church? What happens if they lack the support of culturally resonant spirituality?

Struggle is the usual outcome, according to fourth-year law student Rebecca\*. "My parents came to Australia in the eighties as pretty devout Chinese Catholics, and they weren't exactly the most welcomed bunch—definitely not in China, and even after they immigrated," she says. For Rebecca's parents, racial tensions were high: the White Australia Policy had only recently been dismantled; the opposition Liberal Party, led by John Howard, had just released its 1988 One Australia race platform, which sought to cut rates of Asian immigration. "They felt isolated and alienated by their local church," Rebecca recalls. "It was hard because they wanted to be true to their faith, but they also didn't want to lose their culture." After her parents relocated to a Chinese-Australian church, Rebecca followed them, becoming heavily involved in youth camps and bible study groups. "I suppose when you're always in an environment that's mostly white, Protestant, and middle class, and no one looks or sounds like you, you might feel compelled to seek out those with similar backgrounds and experiences."

Given their role as cultural support networks, it's no surprise that monocultural religious groups exist outside church: they're often semi-social groups too, providing members with a sense of identity beyond the sermon and spiritual. On campus, the

**Instead of celebrating minority groups, multiculturalism is often weaponised against them, allowing racist agendas to be pursued as though part of a reasoned, acceptable discourse.**

Asian-Australian Christian Evangelical Students (ACES) is a 'faculty' or subset of the Sydney University Evangelical Union. On its website, ACES says it aims to "faithfully present and encourage Asian-Australian students with the Christian gospel, and enable them to mature in their faith and love for the Lord Jesus Christ." ACES stresses openness and diversity, marketing itself as "culture-based" rather than ethnicity-based. It's unclear, however, whether non-Asian Australian identifying Christians can join.

Oliver\*, a member of ACES, argues that multiculturalism is embedded deep in the Christian message, but in a form that recognises the roles of individual cultural identities. "Multicultural societies like Australia are not a homogenous group, so individual cultures still exist. It's not as if you stop practising your own culture," he notes. "Of course, transcending difference should be the end goal. We should be able to relate well with and do life with other cultures." In theory, preserving and

**Mono-cultural churches have become sites of cultural solidarity for those unable to engage in the Anglo-centric discourse**

respecting one's cultural heritage, and upholding the universality of Christ's message should not collide.

Of the five members that I talked to, four of them heard about ACES "from a friend". Word often travels by mouth; perhaps a testament to the close-knit community of young Asian Australian Christians. But as with all close-knit communities, there comes a risk of insularity. "We do not assimilate."

But that argument is flawed. When taken at its best, removed from racist rhetoric and hate, this argument relies on the multicultural ideal. That ideal requires that diversity should be interactive: society should open its institutions to all, with each cultural grouping bringing their worldview. Targeted evangelism in the form of Asian Australian churches runs counter to that ideal.

But the ideal itself, at least in Australia, is just that—a fiction. Far from involving migrant groups in a project of uncritical cultural osmosis, our society upholds the racism of White Australia. Our media and politicians treat Asians as a homogenous threat. The language of immigration is martial—immigrants are an invading 'force', we need to 'protect' our borders. Tragically, it's not just rhetorical: Australia's illegal immigration policy embraces the concentration camp, and the 'war on terror' involves the violent policing of Muslim communities. Other non-white minorities, such as Indigenous Australians, tend to be ignored all together.

In this context, the concept of 'multiculturalism' no longer serves its purpose: instead of celebrating minority groups, it is often weaponised against them, allowing racist agendas to be pursued as though part of a reasoned, acceptable discourse. So when mainstream politicians criticise migrants for 'ghettoising' or panic over the 'rise' of sharia law, their touchstone is multiculturalism: cultural openness is necessarily good and those who close themselves off should be blamed. For liberals, multiculturalism is often accepted uncritically. After all, if you're against multiculturalism, you're a racist right? There is scant time to think about why migrants might need to put up barriers—how their own sense of self can stand to benefit.

In fact, the true intention of multiculturalism may be better served by cultural enclaves such as the church. Mono-cultural communities give people of colour a sense of solidarity and pride. They are safe spaces in which migrants and their children in particular can develop their identity, tempered by but resistant to the pressures of dominant racism. From these safe spaces, migrant communities can later reach out, and gradually reveal that non-dominant perspectives have existed all along. The existence of mono-cultural communities are crucial in challenging the normalised, Anglo-centric narrative.

On a personal level, the safety these 'cultural bubbles' provide is deeply meaningful. Many Asian Australians find respite in the mono-culture of their churches, where their

bodies and faces are no longer thought of as different. For some, it can be a space of hiding, when engaging with hostile dialogue become too confronting. It doesn't need to be said that self-confidence can grow in a community where everyone shares similar experiences, difficulties, and challenges—where your beliefs aren't challenged.

Esther Shim, a USyd student who used to attend a Korean community church, notes a problematic side to this environment. There's a tendency, she argues, for monocultural churches to promote certain cultural values through the vehicle of religion. "Some of my frustration for my old church came from the fact that Christianity and Korean culture became deeply intertwined," she says. "I think the general cultural conservatism of traditional Korean values definitely have a role to play in the conservatism we see in mono-cultural churches." This sentiment is echoed by individuals who do not fit the 'good Asian Christian' mould—particularly those who are queer, sexually active, or critical of some of its teachings.

On the other hand, every space has its own problematic narratives and power structures, and the dynamics of race are likely to be just as oppressive as church traditionalism. And for many young second generation migrants, the sense of self and cultural connection that church provides is an important bulwark against racist society.

It's by providing a shared, intergenerational sense of identity that monocultural churches can play this role. Rachel Kim, a Korean American now serving as a missionary in Australia, emphasises how cultural

**But what if Babel wasn't a punishment? What if Pentecost let us embrace human diversity?**

and language barriers exist not only between the Korean American diaspora and the rest of the US, but within the Korean community as well. "There were definitely cultural misunderstandings between my parents and I, but in a religious setting, we finally had this unspoken common background," she notes. Having attended a high school where Asians were a racial minority, Kim explained the cultural anguish of the second generation migrant—an outsider in their country of birth, yet unable to fully connect with their ancestral roots.

"There was a deep-down shame that I felt came along with not knowing about Korean-Americans," she says. Like many Asian Americans, the church community provided a sense of mutual trust and friendship that brought Kim towards sense of what it means to be Korean-American.

Shim also identifies with the positive impact

mono-cultural communities have on cultural identity. While she was growing up, her family opened their home to Korean migrants who were struggling to adjust to life in Sydney, especially young students on working visas. "I think that mono-cultural churches are really effective in providing a sense of purpose, belonging and community for different cultural groups within Sydney," she says.

But underneath it all, is the mono-cultural church really just an expression of the desire for connection? Is faith a distant second, or in fact artificial—a convenient focal point for a sense of community? For many Christians, religion and people are interconnected. The community is a product of their faith, and the desire to engage with people of the same worldview is just another way to serve the Lord.

Over time, mono-cultural churches have acquired a function that goes beyond just nurturing faith. They have become sites of cultural solidarity for those unable to engage in the Anglo-centric discourse of modern Australia. Sermons delivered in languages other than English offer spiritual and linguistic familiarity. They provide a forum where culture-specific issues, not just those limited to religion, can be addressed. These churches have morphed into a safe haven for those grappling with the cultural and personal identity crises which face many people of colour.

In the New Testament, 49 days after Christ ascended to heaven, the Holy Spirit entered into his apostles, bringing them redemption and inspiring them with the unifying love of God. This day is known as the Pentecost. It is sometimes interpreted as a reversal of Babel, the Old Testament story where God confounds humanity with multiple languages, scattering them over the face of the earth. Babel stands for division and is bad, so the interpretation goes; Pentecost stands for unity and is good.

In the New Testament, it is written: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (Acts 2:1-4)

But what if Babel wasn't a punishment? What if Pentecost was the moment where we embraced human diversity? Dismantling the dominance of one, universal language and allowing difference to flourish, even if in utter confusion, is to be celebrated. Like the inspired apostles, each talking in a different tongue, united in a shared division. Mono-cultural churches may confuse cross-cultural dialogue. Equally, it caters for the unique needs of immigrant communities. They allow those groups to find their identity and engage from a place of confidence with the grand multicultural project. Ultimately, they are a glorious, messy example of human diversity. And for this questioning atheist, I have my hopes that a modern-day Pentecost may be on the horizon.

\*Names have been changed.



The Pentecost

# God is dead

*Emmanuel Jacob tries to divide the crucifix from the culture.*

“I never had any significant religious experiences. Since becoming irreligious, I haven’t given the idea of ‘God’ or religion much thought. I’m definitely better without it.”

My sister tells me all this over coffee. At 20, she now identifies as an agnostic, five years after she first turned to atheism during high school. “It was definitely tough,” she says. “I had to hide it from everyone because I was afraid of what people would’ve thought. Many people think, as a Middle Eastern [person], religion is inextricably linked to your identity. That’s simply not true [for me].”

My sister and I were brought up by Iraqi-Assyrian parents, passionate followers of the Assyrian Church. Few other ethnic groups are as dedicated to preserving their ethno-religious identity as the Assyrians. Assyrians descend from the ancient Aramaic-speaking population of Northern Mesopotamia (modern day Northern Iraq), which adopted Christianity in the 1st century and pioneered the religion in the Near East. In the modern day, Assyrians have been relentlessly persecuted as a Christian group since the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

“Assyrians see themselves as a crucifix,” says a friend. The crucifix at once combines death, sacrifice, and the Christian faith – ideas symbiotically related in the Assyrian self-imagination. He says the Assyrian identity is tied to the persecution of Syriac Christianity, than in the egos of a specific homeland or nation.

“Assyrians have been convinced and have convinced themselves that churches are sources of legitimacy, continuity and guidance in a fundamentally hostile world,” says Mardean Isaac, a British Assyrian journalist. “And that has rendered them susceptible to the partisanship, narrow-mindedness, subservience, and personal stultification that all of our churches inflict.”

## Gendered language

*Madhuraa Prakash analyses how gendered language erases agender and genderqueer identities.*

Many languages that were derived from Latin, otherwise known as ‘romance languages’, have adopted the language’s triple gender distinction. Many of these, however, have dropped the neuter gender, using explicitly masculine and feminine modes of defining words. While this concept is intrinsic to the grammatical principles of these languages, it has exclusionary and erasive implications for agender and genderqueer.

The group that has the hardest time expressing their identity through languages that are built around a gender binary are those who are agender or genderqueer. These individuals are quite literally left with without the resources to express who they are to others, and even to themselves. And while this is hard enough in non-gendered languages, many of those who do not identify within the gender binary are forced to undertake lengthy explanations of their language choices, are constantly misgendered, or are perceived as lacking intellectual credibility in virtue of their violation of grammatical rules.

The French language exemplifies this. Even the word ‘personne’ (person) is assigned the feminine gender, so even attempting to refer to oneself in the most general sense carries a gendered connotation. Beginners in French learn that some verbs and nouns that they use must be altered in order to fit the gender of the person being described. As with English, pronouns are broken down into ‘le’, ‘la’,

Declaring disbelief in God in Middle Eastern cultures is already difficult but somehow, as an Assyrian, it is so much worse.

My sister and I have had to unlearn the deep seated fallacy that religion makes you a better person, while also convincing ourselves rejecting God is not rejecting our culture. Atheism is a deliberate choice, religiosity is the norm and default. Our community not only expects us to believe in a divine spirit, but also shields us from science.

I was raised an Orthodox. I felt very strongly about religion when I was a kid, an easy feat considering it was all I really knew.

But high school was very, very different. My sister told me she was an atheist and was my entry point to New Atheism. I started listening to talks from Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris, and by the end of my first year, I had a playlist of Youtube debates between leading church figures and prominent atheists. I argued, or ‘debated’, with my sister about atheism all the time. I still believed in a God, but I was slowly losing faith.

Entering university, new friendships and secular professors intensified the doubt. One day a close friend, also of Middle Eastern descent, suddenly confessed he was an atheist. He said his religious belief was based on little more than fear and guilt, and as he aged, it became harder for him to reconcile his values with the conservatism he’d experience at Church and in school.

“It [religion] was about traditions and rules,” my friend said. “Not a personal relationship with God – and certainly not about any ‘interrogations.’ What was previously acceptable took on new meanings. The hypocrisy of Christianity seemed so obvious, so stark.

Without my parents knowing, I threw out all

and ‘les’, sometimes used as an equivalent to ‘he’, ‘she’ and ‘they’. However, unlike, English ‘les’ or other alternative pronouns for non-binary people have not been accepted into use. There is no way to refer to a person who identifies outside the gender binary. When speaking in ‘passé compose’ (about someone in the past) one is limited to two gender-oriented ways of splitting the verb. ‘She entered the library’ is written as ‘elle est entrée dans la bibliothèque’ while ‘he entered the library is ‘il est entré dans la bibliothèque’. Using ‘they’, a pronoun used by some non-binary people in English, does not function in French as the first three words in that sentence would need to be changed. In accepted French grammar the sentence would then change to the plural form, a move that would alter the entire meaning of the sentence. Therefore, any way of referring to a non-binary person entering a library in passé compose is difficult, if not impossible.

Some queer activists who speak gendered languages have taken to using an asterisk or ‘@’ sign at the places in words where a gender distinction may be. While these symbols of defiance against the limits of their language have helped queer communities express themselves better, there is still the issue of spoken language.

In an effort to deal with this, scholars, teachers and those of queer communities have attempted to pioneer gender-neutral movements that call for a more fundamental reassessment of language rules. In French, these efforts have culminated in

my religious texts and distanced myself from the Assyrian community by refusing to mingle with people I feared would judge me. What emerged was a new commitment to scientific and secular thinking, accompanied by an explicit rejection of the supernatural. I found no compelling reason to believe in God. My atheist identity was constructed in terms of what was not.

Yet I still have only told a few friends I am an atheist. Not because of my own shame, but rather anxiety about the repercussions from my community. There remains a deeply ingrained and problematic idea that one must be Christian in order to be Assyrian.

Before writing this piece, I asked my sister and friends if I should remain anonymous. I worried about being ostracised by my family and my community. How would my fellow Assyrians view me if they read this article?

“I understand the social cost,” Mardean says, when I tell him what I’m writing. “But as an aspiring Assyrian journalist, you have the chance to strike a significant blow against these merchants of ignorance by being bold.”

“It is ridiculous and terrible (and embarrassing) that declaring an intellectually critical/independent stance should result in persecution, but given that’s the situation we’re in, we have to respond with courage.”

Ivan Kakovitch, an Iranian-Assyrian author and journalist, wrote extensively about the need to separate the Assyrian identity from religion. In 1974, he wrote the Assyrian manifesto, in which he proclaimed that an Assyrian is an Assyrian, “whether such a person be a monarchist, Marxist, socialist, Ba’atist, capitalist or atheist, Evangelist, Catholic Jacobite or Nestorian.”

There are Assyrian atheists. I am one of them.

the written style known as ‘écriture inclusive’, which has been met with unrelenting outrage. The Académie Française, the main authority on the French language in France, has come out strongly against these movements, referring to them as aberrations that put the language in ‘mortal peril’.

It is important to note that there can be some flexibility within gendered languages. In Russia, there are circumstances where a woman can refer to herself in the masculine form and vice versa. (Although, in those cases agender people are still forced to choose which gendered pronoun to use). Of course, the idea of gender being on a spectrum isn’t widely discussed in Russia anyway.

Sadly, when faced with something as intellectually ingrained as language, the easiest resolution is often not to fight. The same system that perpetuates these norms and legitimises them through the education system may socialise non-binary people into using a mix of masculine and feminine.

For now, as you would do in English, the best way to accommodate people is to ask. Asking a person who is genderqueer how they would prefer to be referred to in their language is a small but significant way you can allow them to truly embrace their own identity while signifying that you embrace it too. And, on a broader scale, its worth questioning whether grammatical laws—designed first and foremost to make communicating relevant facts easier—deserve revision when they do exactly the opposite.

# Easter Eggs Four Ways

*Laura de Feyter explores the different connotations of Easter for clubs and societies on campus.*

Easter time: we think free hot cross buns on Eastern Avenue, chocolate from that oddly generous tutor, and the childhood nostalgia of bunnies and egg hunts. We think religious imagery of Jesus dying on the cross and rising from the grave. We think that come the 30th of March, we’re off for a week to dive into a sugar-induced coma.

Jesus is an historical figure with varying statuses in different groups. For some, he is the Saviour. For others, a prophet, messianic poser or a person who carries no religious weight in our secular society whatsoever.

But why ‘egg-sactly’ does anyone care about Easter if it is merely one big party? Do USyd students share more opinions than ‘finally, I can sleep in’? Following USU’s Interfaith Week, Easter could be the perfect time to start a discourse and move beyond linear, oversimplified views of its celebration.

In an attempt to obtain a better grasp of how different groups and individuals on campus perceive the public holiday, I spoke to four different societies: the Evangelical Union (EU), the Australian Union of Jewish Students (AUJS), the Bahá’í Society, and ChocSoc\*.

### Evangelical Union

For the EU, Easter is no trivial matter, nor its historical and religious basis a childhood story. President Declan Twigg said that most society members would see it as the central point of their faith—even of human existence.

“Why it is so significant is that Christians believe we’re all by nature sinful and separated from God, and that Jesus’ death on the cross...pays for sin,” Declan explained.

“His resurrection shows that he is King of the world, but also that we can have a resurrection of our own, by faith in him.”

The EU plans to commemorate Easter by handing out hot cross buns on Eastern Avenue and holding Easter-associated public talks throughout the week, with locations and times on their Facebook page.

However, Declan suggested such symbols carry far more meaning for the EU than their conventionally tokenistic connotations. The society construes them as helpful reminders of the truths that members reflect on at Easter time, rather than the focus of celebrations in themselves.

“For example, the hot cross bun reminds us that Jesus died on the cross and rose again three days later, and that by his death and resurrection we can be saved.”

The president was also concerned there remains an emphasis on commercial aspects of the event, leading to widespread misunderstanding of why Easter matters so deeply to the EU.

“Alongside the holiday, it would be great to see people reflect more on what Easter is about, and whether the claim that Jesus rose from the dead and is king, is true and matters.”

### Australasian University Jewish Society

They may not be eating chocolate eggs or sweet buns, but the AUJS have their own symbolic (and delicious) traditions to enjoy.

They’ll be giving away chocolate matzah on Eastern Avenue this week, sharing dinners and wine with family and friends, and singing traditional songs.

That’s because their members don’t celebrate Easter—they hold an eight day festival called Passover, featuring a diet free of the raising agents that mainstream Easter foods include.

AUJS President Ben Ezzes said the occasion is significant for Jewish people as it marks their exodus from Egypt and journey towards the Promised Land of Israel.

“Passover is about the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery, and the start of a new beginning which would culminate in... our homeland,” Ben explained.

However, Easter also reminds the AUJS of deep grief, as they recall past slavery and modern Anti-Semitism—including discrimination that Ben worries adherents at USyd still face today.

“Anti-Semitism and Holocaust denial are a persistent issue on campus, so it’s important for [USyd] to be a really open and safe space for Jewish students.”

Ben hoped that encouraging a more diverse observance of Easter time on campus would assist in acknowledging a difficult history, and making AUJS members more comfortable at university.

He suggested having interfaith gatherings around the event, expressing his desire for it to be a more inclusive celebration.

So, that expectation that every student will be scoffing Easter foods on Eastern Avenue this week is... false?

‘I’ve actually never eaten a hot cross bun,’ Ben admitted. “I know the song, but that’s about it!”

### Bahá’í Society

For Bahá’í, Easter is not really about the death of Jesus, but encouraging discussions around spirituality more broadly.

“There’d be a lot of Bahá’í going if there was a big Easter event. We’d love to...support it,” said Bahá’í society secretary, James Wood.

A smaller religious group on campus, James described the Bahá’í as an open minded community which aims to discuss important topics with people of both religious and non-religious backgrounds.

Members believe Jesus was a manifestation of God and a prophet of a major religion they respect, but view the resurrection as a symbolic event.

“We see it as a time where Christ died,” James said when asked about Easter’s historical basis. “We don’t see it as ‘Christ died and redeemed humanity’”.

Nonetheless, followers of Bahá’í hold their own celebrations near Easter which deserve equal recognition. These include Naw-Rúz, which marks the beginning of the Bahá’í calendar on the 21st of March, and Ridván in mid-April.

James also raised a concern that USyd students are apathetic toward spirituality. “We’d love to see a bit more respect for the legacy of people like Christ in society.”

He revealed that the heads of major religious groups at USyd had recently met to discuss holding regular events together, an initiative the Bahá’í are passionate about.

“We’re trying to renew this interfaith movement on campus,” James said. “Easter could form a large part of that.”

### ChocSoc

There is one group, however, which feels its message is being shared accurately with students at Easter.

ChocSoc’s Facebook page promises to delivers “widespread chocolatey love”—a vision evident in its sugar-centric practices on campus.

President David Danguyen said Easter is a special time of year for them, highlighting its capacity to unite families and stimulate nostalgia.

It carries particular weight for ChocSoc as they “enjoy delicious Easter eggs and bunnies”, a core objective of the dairy-based society.

“Easter eggs bring back a lot of memories from my childhood so they’re definitely special to me!”, David said.

However, the president admitted he prefers chocolate bunnies to their spherical counterparts—presumably due to the greater cocoa:air ratio that rabbits contain—and described them as “definitely underrated”.

Alongside weekly events planned around enjoying chocolate and desserts, the society will celebrate Easter through their annual egg hunt, with details being finalised for location and time.

David also praised USyd for observing the group’s customary Easter break, and believes they are doing more than enough to mark the occasion.

In fact, contrasting to faith-based groups, ChocSoc does feel adequately represented on campus.

“Who doesn’t know about the Chocolate Society?”

Each group expressed an enthusiasm to chat to students interested in their views of Easter and their core beliefs. All hoped for greater acknowledgement of their presence on campus in the process.

So while not all Australians celebrate Easter, and both conflicting and complementary perspectives remain on the historical person of Jesus, it may be time to expand our linear vision and encourage discourse on how diverse this occasion could be.

\*Honi also reached out to Sydney University Catholic Society (CathSoc), Sydney University AhlulBayt Islamic Society (ABSOC) and Sydney University Muslim Students’ Association (SUMSA), who declined to contribute or did not respond.

# Make ‘em laugh

*Alison Xiao needs to sit back and enjoy the show.*

It’s the most disconcerting feeling in the world. You’re sitting in a packed shoebox theatre, a cacophony of laughter bounces off the walls, audience members guffawing in sheer mirth. You sit there stony-faced, letting out a half-hearted chuckle here and there in an effort to blend in, signalling to the people around you that you ‘get it’ too.

Ask anybody and they’d tell you I’m a giggler. Funny GIF? I’ll cackle. Someone says something remotely amusing at brunch? I’ll keel over laughing. It’s uncontrollable and joyous, but vanishes once the actual ‘comedy formula’ is added into the equation.

I’m actively trying to develop a sense of humour to avoid these moments of alienation—I want to go to local stand up shows, improv sketch theatre and fringe festivals, and actually find things funny.

In my pursuit of laughter, I consulted Dr Rodney Taveria, a comedy scholar at the University, who assures me that it’s not uncommon to laugh more in day-to-day life than when consuming comedy products.

“There’s a live theatrical aspect of stand up. Part of the reason you’re laughing is that other people are laughing,” he says.

“There’s a rhythm and an expected bodily behaviour... as an audience member. What leads to a lot of laughter is the expectation that you’re supposed to, and this person...has said the thing that passes the level of funniness that is appropriate for me to laugh.”

Though I respect the wit and intelligence it

takes a comedian to craft each individual joke, they just don’t do it for me. When it comes to sitcoms, comedy movies or stand up shows, hard as I’ve tried, I just can’t understand what makes it that funny. The type of funny that incapacitates people, body convulsing and mouth open.

Dr Taveira points me towards one theory of humour, that laughter is a tension relief and release of pent-up nervous energy.

“You are consenting to what the comedian is saying when you laugh.”

“If the whole room’s not having it, what do you do now? There could be some sort of over compensation, and that allows the people who go ‘nup’ to ride the wave.”

Laughing is a way of building intimacy, a sympathetic and binding response that can bind a community. One big sticking point in my pursuit of self-improvement is a confusion as to how to develop my taste in humour. Was it just that I wasn’t exposed to anything ‘funny’ as a kid, and now I’m stuck with warped tastebuds?

While a lot of comedy depends on one’s previous viewing habits or even a person’s identity, Dr Taveira says taste is really just about status.

“If you find something dorky like slapstick funny, it’s kind of saying something about you, so I think that’s where a lot of taste comes from in comedy...you feel this pressure because it’s revealing in some way,” he says.

“Some people say ‘I don’t laugh in Hollywood comedy, I only like HBO or improv’. I just think it’s people building their camps.”

Highbrow vs. lowbrow comedy is an understandable and simple explanation of my

Artwork by  
Matthew Fisher



humour disconnect. It could just be that my subconscious steers away from comedy’s intellectual functions of satire and lampooning.

This “comedy as commentary” is far removed from the laughter at the lower forms, which Dr Taveira describes as “more powerful and more intense and less able to be helped”.

“It’s more enjoyable when you say something hits you in the guts...When someone falls over and you laugh, that’s the more human aspect of it,” he says.

“[But] when you start having arcane references to 17th century literature...”

He warns me not to try educate myself in the technical, lest I figure out the constructions and patterns, in turn making the jokes less funny than they already are.

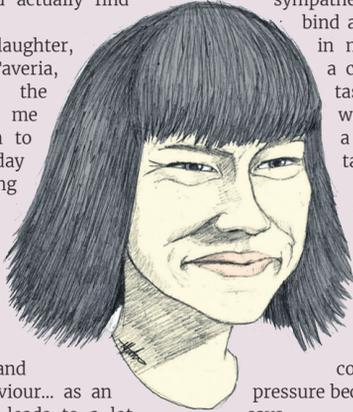
“If you’re not laughing, it’s not funny,” he says reassuringly. “If you haven’t had moments where you weren’t conscious of laughing in support, maybe they’ve got to keep working on it.”

“[But] there’s something to be said for having a nice social interaction with a group of people, where everyone comes out smiling.”

As I watch on with envy as others around me shed tears of laughter, I think of a quote Jimmy Carr hails as his favourite of all time: “Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.” I want to be enjoying this subpar live show as much as they are—is there something wrong with me and my sense of humour that I’m not reacting properly?

I asked Dr Taveira for some parting words of advice.

“Think less, laugh more.”



# Filo dough and filotimo

*Nicolette PT is your friendly neighbourhood Greek-Australian.*

The smell of oregano-covered lamb, fresh off the spit, wafts in the summer breeze. Hearty laughter of old men playing backgammon can be heard over the light strumming of a bouzouki. In the backdrop of this dreamscape are wide-eyed tourists weaving between ancient ruins and unhurried locals sipping coffee outside their white-walled, blue-domed houses overlooking the caldera.

Greece is more than just a name on map. It has the power to instantly transport you to a vibrant country rich in culture, language, and history some fifteen thousand kilometers away. A country that many of our migrant grandparents carried with them to Australia when they arrived in the aftermath of World War II and the Greek Civil War.

This idea of Greeks—our family-oriented values, bottomless appetites and boundless desire to dance—is as true in 2018 Australia as it was in 1950s Greece. As a third-generation Greek-Australian, I can attest to being as loud and over-gesticulated when I speak, as enamored by traditional home-cooked meals, and as passionate about a Padelis Padelidis song as my cousins in the motherland.

But time has passed. It would be remiss to forget that the Greek-Australians who came before us were tasked with the overwhelming responsibility of creating a community where the Greek culture could flourish in a non-Greek environment.

Their establishment of language and dance

schools, parishes, tertiary education studies, and commemorative celebrations like Greek Independence Day in Martin Place, molded the culture into an entity in its own right—that of the friendly-neighbourhood Greek-Australian you know and love.

And if there is one value that we have inherited from our parents and grandparents, it is our filotimo. Based on a quick web browse, it is untranslatable. I guess Yahoo Answers never asked my Yiayia and Pappou, because for them it is the simplest thing in the world to explain.

## While we assimilate as Greek-Australians more and more, the values that brought us together stay the same

Filotimo is offering a helping hand without having to be asked. It’s welcoming a person into your circle as if they were already a friend. It’s treating others like long-lost family members. It’s allowing another person to feel at home.

This instinctual virtue has stood the test of time in Australia, and we have our antecedents to thank for this.

But how to thank them? With only our parents’

hazy memories of their university days and limited archives on Facebook, we ironically know more about the history of Greece than our history as Greek-Australians.

Along with the aim of fostering enthusiasm for Greek culture and language amongst students, the Sydney University Greek Society (SUGS) aims to recognise past members and committees.

“As SUGS reaches its 60th year, we find ourselves at a crossroads,” says Gabriella Piperides, President of SUGS. “The more we move forward, the more important it becomes for us to look back at where we came from. While we assimilate as Greek-Australians more and more, the values that brought us together stay the same.”

The dual challenge the current generation of Greek-Australian youth face is in not only ensuring the longevity of our Greek culture, but keeping the Greek-Australian subculture thriving and connecting to its history. It is a task many years in the making, faced by many children from migrant families.

But in salvaging the past and recording our present now, the hope is to give those Greek-Australians who come after us, an understanding of how their identities came to be and why we’ll instinctually offer you a seat next to us in class, invite you for gyros on Manning Lawn or share our patriotism with you by flooding your Insta feed with photos of Santorini every July.

# What's in a (weed) word?

Katie Thorburn gets you up to speed with all the lingo you need to survive your next 'sesh'.

Drugs are complex business: you need to know your science if you want to produce them, know your economics if you want to sell them, and know your sociology to figure out why anyone even bothers with it all in the first place. But perhaps no facet of the trade is as complex or overwhelming for first timers as the words used to pick out drug-related phenomena. Too often the humble act of getting high descends into a jargonistic barrage, as new terms like 'gato' and 'kief' are introduced alongside radical revisions to the mainstream usage of terms like 'billy' and 'cone'. So if you're one of the undergrads engaging in the time honoured tradition of 'experimentation', then read carefully if you want to sort the weed from the choof.

It's no coincidence that cannabis vernacular is so verbose. For most of the 20th and 21st century cannabis usage has been driven to the underground by the criminal justice system and by the court of public opinion. This has necessitated the development of a lingua franca that manages to both provide reference and avoid giving referents away to people who may have qualms with the activity implied by it. As part of this process, words from other languages have frequently been (mal) appropriated. With increasing police surveillance powers and abilities, as well as the growth in internet drug commerce, this need has never been more pressing. But it's not all structural dynamics—stoners will be the first to admit they're a creative and humorous lot; coining new terms for things is a regular feature of the pastime. And with so much media dealing with drugs, pop culture has done its bit to expand these terms to new audiences while social media has accelerated the rate at which new terms are adopted into subcultures across the world.

Despite earnest attempts at crypticism, some words have an intuitive etymology. Cannabis is a plant, is green, and often gets 'chopped' into granular pieces. As such terms like 'weed', 'grass', 'broccoli', 'lettuce', 'green', 'chop', and the like follow simply enough. Moreover, when the plant flowers it grows compact knob-like 'buds' (hence the term), and—as any aficionado will tell you—one should inspect their product to ensure there is a high ratio of these 'nugs/nuggets' to leaf. 'Gunja',

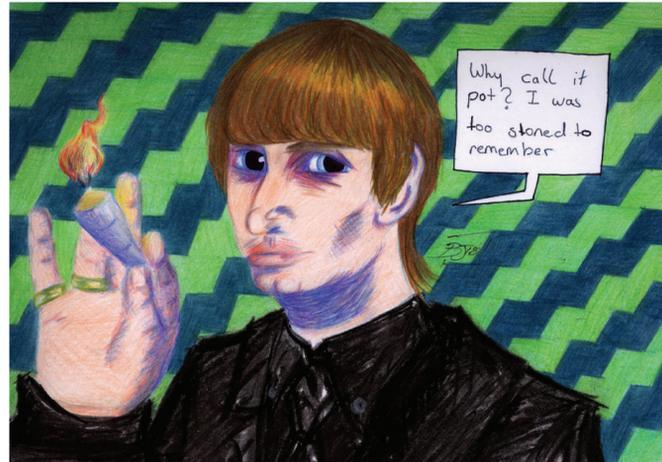
**Don't go asking for 'dope' if you've recently read a Thomas Pynchon novel!**

a term often used by Indigenous communities in Australia, is often mistakenly attributed to Jamaica. It is however a close relative of the term 'ganja', itself borrowed from the Sanskrit word for the drug via Bengali and Hindi. Similarly, the term 'pot' is

allegedly a shortened version of the Spanish potiguaya, a wine in which buds would be seeped.

Adjectives have also been added to these plant descriptors to express the effect of consumption, such as 'giggle lettuce' or 'wacky-tabacky'. Some of these terms have been reclaimed by stoners after having entered the lexicon via conservatives, for instance 'devil's lettuce' and 'Satan's spinach'. Some have since been affectionately claimed by the smoking community, however, who ironically use it to describe their beloved practice. And the phenomenon of making light of the stigmatisation and punitive approach to weed is not limited to the english language or the western world. The term for getting 'high' in Arabic is 'zina'—to get stoned.

Perhaps the most auspicious example of the intersection between politicisation and term usage though can be seen in the word 'marijuana'



itself, however. The term began to be used by the US government during the 'war on drugs' in an attempt to frame the drug as a problem associated with Latin America, no doubt playing to America's racist underbelly in the process. In a move that roughly inverts this, some terms that once referred to weed now mean something more hardcore—don't go asking for 'dope' if you've recently read a Thomas Pynchon novel!

So now that you know what to call your desired product when you post on Vegetables Australia the next step is working out how you want to make use of it. These days there are

lots of options. The 'joint' is by far the most romantic way to consume, and though like many terms originating in the underground its etymology is blurry, the first use of the word in this context appeared in a 1938 New Yorker article detailing this concerning new

trend among Harlem's hippest. These days though, the term 'joint' isn't all that hip. If you want to be especially cool you could call it a 'jazz cigarette', a term originating in the 1920s Jazz era by singers and trumpeters. Some especially trendy circles have been known to use the term 'spicy durry' as well. Other common terms include 'doob', for which there is no known history, a 'zoot', which is largely used in the United Kingdom (again with little background on why), and a 'spliff', although that term normally only refers to joints that are 'spun' (have tobacco added in). In Western Australia (and, according to folklore, Newcastle) one might 'have a choff'.

At the end of a joint is a 'filter',

before bringing it into your lungs fast and not quite as temperate as you'd hoped. The term was allegedly introduced to the American Hippie / pro-drug movement in the 60s via Vietnam War veterans, who had heard the term 'baung' used to refer to the same thing in the Thai language.

Perhaps no object has more synonyms or related terminology than the 'bong' though, and stoners often compete to see who has the funnier / more creative label.

Some call it a 'billy', noting its similarity to the traditional camping device used by a swagman. Others call it a 'buge' (short for bugel), noting that the embouchure required to properly inhale the product is similar to that required to play the Last Post. More modern variations of that formula see the 'bong' called a 'plastic saxophone' and / or 'glass clarinet', depending on the material involved.

What's more important than calling a bong the right thing is smoking it the right way. 'Ripping cones' is a uniquely Australian method, where one attempts to inhale the entirety of the plant matter contained within the cone piece (or 'cone') in a single breath. That it is often alternately referred to as 'punching cones' does nothing to dampen the rather masculine imagery associated with this methodology. In countries with a larger market, like the US, hitting 'dabs' is more common, where one uses a specially designed bong to inhale cannabis in a purified, resinous wax / oil form.

And when to get blazed / light up? Why, 4.20 of course! (PM if you're a normie, AM if you're hardcore). And while it's easy to appreciate the funniest string of numerals in the set of real numbers nowadays, it was not always so well known. Legend has it that the term emerged from the ritualistic daily seshing of students at a Californian high school in the 70s, at that exact time.

Whatever you call it and how/ whenever you do it, make sure to know your limits. Consuming too much may result in your 'greening out', so called because one's outward green appearance betrays a commensurately nauseous, dizzy, and tired feeling on the inside. So there you have it, a (partial) guide to navigating the politics and humorous intricacies of weed smoking. Now feel free to get stoned without fear of faux pas, though if you want another rabbit hole to direct your paranoia towards then the question of the origins of the word 'stoned' is still a live area of research. Better get smoking!

**Some of these terms have been reclaimed by stoners, for instance 'devil's lettuce' and 'Satan's spinach'.**

# The mathematics of music

Lena Wang reckons the arts and sciences should get along better.

The divide between USyd arts and STEM students is both literal and metaphorical. Engo grill and PNR Hub, the cornerstones of the engineering faculty, lie far away from the light-filled, wooden interiors of Courtyard. The metaphorical divide, however, manifests itself as a subtle, simmering contempt, grounded in stereotypes. Science and engineering students bemoan the relative freedom and relaxation of arts students while dragging their feet to 20+ contact hours a week. Arts students bemoan the starting salaries of chemical engineers.

But this divide is a superficial one. Arts and sciences are just two fields of study, each hoping to accomplish the same simple thing with differing methodologies: to understand the mechanisms of the world. Arts and the humanities do this by interrogating culture, using language. Science does this by modelling the world, using mathematics. Jupiter, then, is a gaseous giant and also a mythological giant. Metaphysics and physics parallel each other in thought, if not in practice. And both reveal facets of the same phenomena.

Richard Feynman, one of the most famous theoretical physicists of the 20th century, once said that "if we look in a glass of wine closely enough we see the entire universe". He describes the physics it revealed—the fluid mechanics of the liquid, the reflections in the wine. It revealed geology, for glass is from the earth, and its materials can be traced back to their formations in the cores of stars. It revealed chemistry in the fermentation of the wine. Hence all there is to know about the universe is in this humble glass.

It is easy to see STEM, with its mathematical

**[The] divide is a superficial one. Arts and sciences are just two fields of study, each hoping to accomplish the same simple thing with differing methodologies.**

symbolism and inscrutable proofs as cold, technical, and removed from the everyday. But to view it in this way is to ignore the romance of the extra dimension it adds to the everyday, to glasses of wine, to arts and the humanities.

Music, for example, is a human creation that relies heavily on emotion, and subjective preferences concerning sonic aesthetics. And yet underlying music is physics and mathematics. Sound is perceived when vibrations in the air, themselves initiated by a string vibrating from a struck guitar chord or air blown through a series of tubes, propagates to your eardrums as waves,

causing them to vibrate similarly. This then sends signals to your brain that allow you to perceive sound. The frequency (rate of vibration) affects pitch and the amplitude (how much it vibrates) affects loudness. Notes all have unique frequencies: an E's frequency, and therefore pitch, is higher than a C's. C and E are separated by four semitones and when played together make a major third, a chord known for its 'happy' sound. Meanwhile, C and E flat are separated by three semitones, and as a minor third, together make a 'sad' sound. This difference of one semitone has implications—physical distinctions in the properties of soundwaves and their relations with each other trigger a subjective, emotional response.

**Learning science does not remove one from the world—it adds to one's understanding of it.**

Mathematics is hidden not just in our aesthetic sensibilities, but the very ways in which evolution has progressed. The fibonacci sequence, 1 1 2 3 5 8 13 21..., is formed by simply adding the previous two numbers for the next number in the sequence, a mathematical concept reflected in plant growth, for instance. Flowers often have a number of petals corresponding to numbers on the fibonacci sequence, and this extends to the number of leaves on plants, the number of spirals on the inside of a sunflower, a pineapple, a pinecone. To appreciate the beauty of a flower is to appreciate its mathematical origins, the patterns that shape nature itself.

And yet not only are there mathematical underpinnings to beauty—there are beautiful, romantic implications of mathematics and science itself. Chaos theory explicates the randomness of the world, and how wildly divergent outcomes can arise from one system, giving rise to

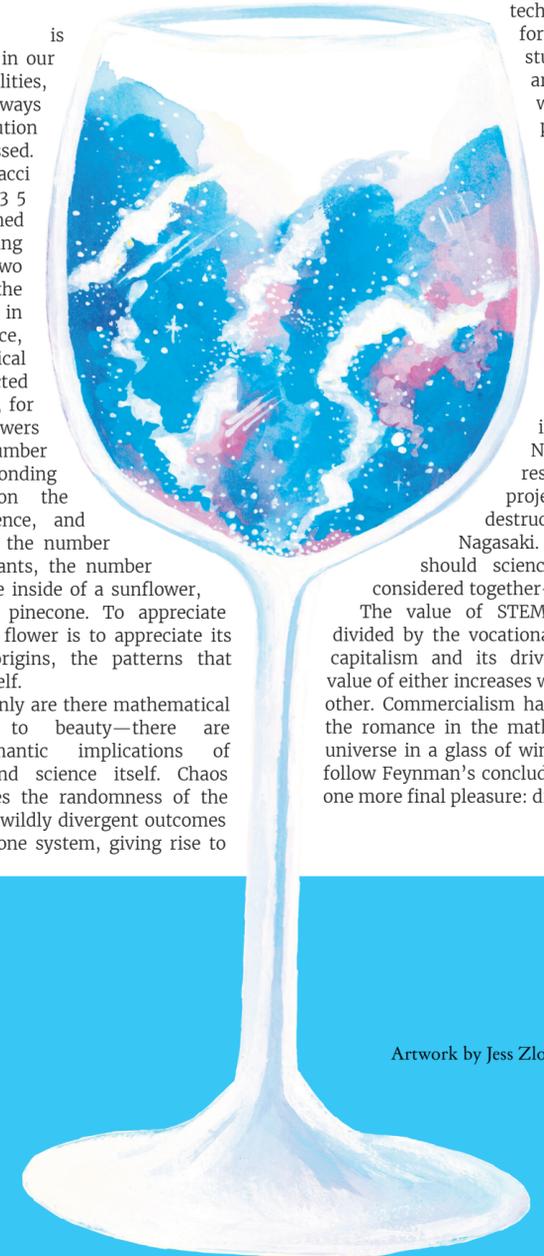
the idiom of The Butterfly Effect (and its terrible film counterpart). This leads to the second law of thermodynamics: entropy can never decrease, and hence our world must always tend towards disorder. This terrifying certainty, hidden in functions of energy and temperature, offers startling insight into our contemporary political climate. Perhaps a bit less pessimistic is the concept of quantum entanglement: two quantum particles, once entangled, will both exist in a state of superposition until one is disturbed—the other particle, no matter how far, will immediately respond to this disturbance. Quantum entanglement is the only example of faster-than-light information transfer we have witnessed, and hints at some esoteric, romantic reading of intrinsic connection, bridging insurmountable gaps and distances.

Science and mathematics reveal a world that is weird, uncertain, and inextricably tied to the ways in which we live and experience our environment. Learning science does not remove one from the world—it adds to one's understanding of

it. Any perceived coldness or technicality results from forgetting to augment our study of science with the arts, with humanities, with philosophy and politics, literature and language, and music.

That this is lost in the way we think about and approach science is not surprising given its relationship with the development of technology and related industrial pressures. Darwin's theory of evolution came as a result of imperialist expansion. Nuclear energy was a result of the Manhattan project that saw the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore not only should science and philosophy be considered together—they have to be.

The value of STEM and arts cannot be divided by the vocational value they offer late capitalism and its drive for production. The value of either increases when combined with the other. Commercialism has shrouded the beauty, the romance in the mathematics of music, the universe in a glass of wine. Perhaps it is best to follow Feynman's concluding advice: "let us give one more final pleasure: drink it and forget it all!"



Artwork by Jess Zlotnick

# DREAMING SONGLINES

Jeffrey Khoo explores our continental songlines.

On a rainy Thursday afternoon at university, I'm being transported to hazy, sunburnt Central Australia. Elizabeth and Simon are from the Warlpiri nation, a place where red sand stretches for miles. In order to navigate long distances across this landscape, the Warlpiri people sing a song about the Ngapa spirit at the time of the Dreaming. In this song, the Ngapa spirit manifests as a cloud, bringing rain to the people. As the cloud moves west, over the Ngalikirlangu landforms and into the Tanami Desert, it builds in strength. To Elizabeth, this story tells her "how this land came to be ... It is also who I am."

All over Australia, Indigenous people have created songs, tracing the tracks forged by ancestral spirits and creator-beings as they moved across the land. The paths they followed are called songlines.

Piecing together the songlines of different locales gives you a complete picture of the parables which form the Dreaming along with an uninterrupted network of stories and transit across the continent, stretching as far as the sea and as high as the night sky. "You can't cut off any of those stories," Elizabeth tells me, "because they go right across the land." When you divide the land, you sever the continuity of these stories, and you infringe on the rich history that Indigenous people have maintained for millennia.

These songlines represent far more than just

**All over Australia, Indigenous people have created songs, tracing the tracks forged by ancestral spirits and creator-beings as they moved across the land.**

tradition. Dr Åse Ottosson, an anthropologist at the University of Sydney who specialises in Indigenous Australia, likens songlines to "a library, a repository of knowledge in the land." As you progress with the song, you learn what plants can cure ailments, and those that you should avoid; how to fish; which places hold spiritual importance; how to welcome visitors to your country; and how to understand the health of the local ecosystem.

"Some songlines tell you what birds and insects and plants go together. So if [the landscape] is missing one of those, something is not right." Contrary to the Western tendency to classify knowledge into strict disciplines, the lyrics of different songlines and the places to which they lead contain information about topics as vast as the natural sciences, Indigenous philosophy and the Creative Arts.

It is in this sense that songlines are distinct from Western or Eastern myths and legends. Where Greek or Roman myths would give moral lessons through otherworldly tales, songlines are grounded

in everyday knowledge that is vital to survive. In songlines, the land we inhabit is elevated from merely a setting in story to a central component of that story. "The landscape itself is seen as a sentient being, because the ancestral forces themselves still sit in that landscape," explains Ottosson.

In order to faithfully animate the grandeur and terror of the natural world, performers must also re-enact the movements of the ancestral beings as they sing. Some songlines can only be performed by particular persons, depending on their gender, their country and their place within the kinship system. It's the combination of people and their roles within the performance which gives the words meaning.

It's unusual, from a Western perspective, that art and music can be so practical and necessary to live on the land. Songlines, like most music, have the ability to connect people across generations and language groups as a stronghold of shared social and political memory.

"In an oral culture," where tradition is passed down through spoken and not written mediums, "songlines are where this knowledge sits," explains Dr Ottosson. Songlines didn't just narrate the law at the time—they instructed people in creating the law. Even today, they remain the law to the extent they're still adhered to and the still function as a robust guide to the natural world, even after thousands of years and countless change.

Songlines represent one of the oldest forms of oral storytelling; because of its geographical scale and musical quality, it's difficult to preserve in written form. Simply following where the song leads can provide a wealth of insight. Importantly, the knowledge passed down forms a bridge between generations. For Elizabeth, the songlines of her country "were a really strong thing my father gave to us ... he didn't record it, but I keep it in my heart."

But in today's world, where all forms of communication are being largely superseded by modern technology, and which is moving increasingly towards the global and away from strong connections to a single place, is the tradition of songlines hard to preserve?

Ottosson believes that in an Australia where Indigenous languages are not taught in the curriculum, the passing down of songs becomes a "fragile" endeavour.

"If they are not transferred in the Indigenous language, the meaning becomes empty. So if you lose the knowledge of how to use your own language, the knowledge is gone."

In 2017, the National Museum of Australia launched an exhibition on the Seven Sisters songlines. The project, which combines audiovisual and virtual reality technology with Indigenous art and spoken word, was initiated and directed by senior custodians from across the central and western deserts. For Dr Georgia Curran, an academic at USyd, it's heartening to see Indigenous creatives being given a platform to tell their history on their own terms. "There's a lot of distraction in the modern world, but ... young people absorb [these traditions] and, by practicing singing their

songs, gain confidence to carry it on."

Dr Jakelin Troy, also an academic at USyd, agrees: "The way I see it, you do absorb [knowledge] by being around people ... But more than anything, you learn to look." You look for small wonders, and you look to nature to guide your philosophy, and once you've mastered that, the songline is within you.

But Ottosson advances the idea that people, particularly outsiders, do not have an inherent

**You look for small wonders, and you look to nature to guide your philosophy, and once you've mastered that, the songline is within you.**

right to take this knowledge from nature—you have to earn it and then pass it on to the right people. "We have this idea in Western culture that the more you share knowledge with each other, the better you understand each other. I had to rethink that completely... You wait until you're ready to be taught."

For some of the songs Ottosson records as part of her oral history research, the performers sit in a soundproofed room. Ottosson can never hear those songs. "They sit in an archive at the Conservatorium, and only people who have given me that information already can access it."

She tells the story of an 83-year-old Indigenous man, who refused to pass on a treasured songline to his 58-year-old son, even on his deathbed. "He was saying, 'It's not my responsibility. He's not ready to receive it. The songs will sit in the landscape, so maybe in the future someone will learn it.' They trust this whole ancestral force in the landscape—it's always there." It's an act of faith.

But Elizabeth is optimistic that if older Indigenous people want to tell these stories, the young ones will listen. "I use the example of my son. Old people say, 'scuse me Elizabeth, only your son listens to us! All the other kids go off but your son sits and listens. He ask a lot of questions, he ask about his own culture too. That's why we want him to stand up for these young people—taking a leadership role in the community.' That's when I feel proud when they told me. I really was feeling happy. I was crying inside me."

## Somewhere only we know: Places of worship

Cynthia Feng

Growing up, my family was part of a bible study group. We met monthly, rotating around each other's houses. Looking back, I'm particularly fond of one garage that we children were relegated to. Brought along because we couldn't be trusted to be left alone at home, but not yet able to participate as adults, the garage became our place.

Going to this house was an event that lined the quiet cul-de-sac with vehicles unfamiliar to the locals. I remember pulling up in the family car after dinner on a Saturday night, my brother armed with his green Nintendo DS, me with a book. We'd quietly greet other families on their way in too, carrying their bibles, bible study notes, and cling-wrapped dishes for the supper the night would end on. One mum might've even brought along a bag of hand-me-downs for another of the kids there; between the lot of us, we covered every grade in primary school. As shoes came off and we entered

the house, we refamiliarised ourselves with each other: kids we only saw on the weekend, friendships kept within church walls and garage doors.

**I remember pulling up in the family car after dinner on a Saturday night, my brother armed with his green Nintendo DS, me with a book.**

The garage was spotless and furnished mainly with sporting paraphernalia: a mini trampoline, hula hoops, a punching bag, a gym ball. Through the walls, we'd hear the dozen or so middle-aged

people singing out-of-tune hymns in the living room throughout the night. Some of us killed time playing Mario Kart on whatever devices we'd brought along. Others spent the night walking the fine line between entertaining ourselves and being a nuisance: balls were bounced loudly against the garage door, games were played that squeezed squeals out of us in excitement, tempting, willing one of the grown-ups to visit us.

Let out of the garage again, those nights would always close with supper. I remember the fruit, the snacks and the sweet water that would accompany the conversations that steadily grew in volume and the dogs we only got to pat at the end of the night because they'd been banished to the backyard. Often unwilling to leave, our parents would remind us that we'd all see each other again at church the next morning.

Pranay Jha

We pull into the parking lot of the temple in Westmead. My cousin and I are sitting in the back seat of the car, playing made up games and cooking up mischief. In the front, my grandmother looks out the window with a rather solemn expression on her face. She occasionally makes small talk with my mother and I overhear their conversations, which mention my grandfather (nana).

As we leave the car, my cousin and I race up the stairs, seeing who can get to the entrance of the temple first. My mum and aunt both make



futile attempts to tell us to slow down but both of us are far too excited to care. We wait impatiently while the rest of our family to makes their way over, taking off our shoes at the front. The temple is huge; pandits move throughout, carrying plates

**Soon, my favourite part of the trip arrives: my mother is walking over carrying a box of Indian sweets.**

of fruit, essence and other miscellaneous items. I accidentally make eye contact with one of them, and feel my heart race as he looks back at me blankly.

As we enter, the heated floors of the temple warm our feet. It's enormous, and all the children are raring for a game of tip. We start running

Andrew Rickert

My parents tell me that before I got there, they had to fight to keep my primary school open.

St Francis of Assisi in Paddington was home to only around 80 students in total before the 2000s, when Paddington exploded in popularity and size.

It was my home for seven years, from Kindergarten to Year 6, and it was a fairly sedate introduction to Catholicism. We had mass every week with Father Peter, who understood his audience and kept things at a Primary School level. The church, next to our school and sharing its name, was massive and familiar and mass had just been a part of life.

This was worlds away from life in Vincentia, on the South Coast of New South Wales.

**His sermons were full-on fire and brimstone, reminding the congregation of their original sin and their need for repentance.**

We'd go down the coast every holiday, including Easter and Christmas. The only thing tying us to religion was my parents' upbringing and the school my sister and I happened to attend, but each Easter Sunday and Christmas Day, our family was always compelled to find a mass, to maintain our loosely-practiced faith.

Holy Spirit Catholic Church Vincentia was polar opposites from the ornate Franciscan chapel we were used to in the Eastern Suburbs.

A one-storey brown brick building with a green colourbond roof, Holy Spirit was on a residential street, backing onto bush. Next door were the baptists, who could never draw the same crowds Holy Spirit would attract.

Holy Spirit attracted families from all around Jervis Bay, filling the limited pews and spilling out of the angular walls and into the glass-walled nave.

There was a projector screen next to the chancel, which would host PowerPoint presentations of the hymns. Led by the local choir and old female choir master, the average member was post-retirement.

I wish I could remember the Priest's name, but this story will stand without it. I think I've blocked it out.

Father Peter had always seemed much older, standing over the kindergarten classes with his

white hair. The Priest was much younger and had thinning dark hair.

His sermons were full-on fire and brimstone, reminding the congregation of their original sin and their need for repentance. For a child counting away the minutes until an Easter egg hunt or opening Christmas presents, the mood could not have been darker.

We left St Francis but continued attending Holy Spirit for a couple more years. This continued until the penny finally dropped and we realised how grimly effective it was.



## Taste is shit

Max Davy wants you to stimulate the local food economy.

Last week I walked past Taste, avoiding a flock of white, noisy baguette-eating parasites and the ibises accompanying them. My stomach was growling, but I did not grab a baguette, wisely recalling its dry guinness, along with the recent warning in USyd Rants that Taste staff do not wear gloves during food preparation.

I recalled the many restaurants and cafes near main campus which hit the sweet spot: excellent kilojoules per dollar spent, but slightly better quality than fast food. Next time you decide to venture outside the university's borders, I hope this article comes in useful.

### STEAKS

Broadway dominates in the steak department. Landsdowne Hotel's steaks come with a pesto or butter sauce, and surprise with their quality. The chips are thin and none-too greasy—think Maccas' chips, but good. Alternatively, the Royal Hotel, near the ABS building, offers larger and tougher steaks, along with college students and stupor hacks.

That said, nothing can bring the hallowed Manning steak back from the dead. A \$10 meal of juicy, beefy goodness and refreshing carbonated sugar, the deal was recently taken off the menu, to the sorrow of carnivores everywhere.



### INDIAN

What warms the heart more than a Newtown meal deal? If you're craving Indian and can't go back to Wentworth food court one more time, Newtown North Indian Diner is only a short walk up King Street. A bowl of curry with rice or naan will leave your wallet only \$8 lighter, while a choice of 1-3 curries with rice & a can of drink comes less than \$12. If you want to settle in for a feast, this writer recommends the masala dosa with pani puri and a rose lassi.

### THAI

When researching this article, I found a surprising amount of people who didn't know about Thai La-Ong, a favourite of many clubs due to its incredibly low prices and free BYO. You get what you pay for here, with the Pad Thai more than a bit greasy, but the sheer quantity of food provided for \$10 makes up for this. Charles' Thai, also on King St, has \$7.80 lunches.

### ON CAMPUS

I began this article attacking those who would eat at Taste rather than venture outside USyd, but there are a few underrated options on campus. The original Ralph's Café, down the bottom of Physics Rd and below the tennis courts, is crowded with college students who know a good café when they see one. The Medical School uses Ralph's for its catering, suggesting that it's the best money can buy, but it remains very good value. Its breakfasts are generous, especially the omelettes, and the hidden surprise is the array of toastable sandwiches, which are very large and very tasty indeed.

If any of your classes are in ABS, you might already be aware of the spring roll deal offered by the cafe at its base, where you can get 4 spring rolls for \$5.50, and even less with Access. Last but definitely not least, Carlslaw Kitchen's lamb boxes and falafel wraps are both filling and nutritious, costing only around \$8.



### PIZZA

It's a bit of a walk, but Newtown Hotel (not the one next to the train station) has handmade pizzas for \$4 between 7-9 pm, with a surprising variety of options. You're meant to buy a lot of beer so the place can actually turn a profit. But my friends and I have aggressively exploited this tactic to acquire hauls of pizza for stupendously small amounts of money.

Broadway's entry, Bondi Pizza, has respectable value, with two-for-one deals for those with Access membership, with a final cost of about \$12 per pizza. While less impressive in terms of value, these pizzas are available during lunchtime and are quite fancy (think Crust).

### PHO

It wouldn't be Newtown without a little bit of veganism. If the thought of mock meats and vegetable stock gives you shivers, take comfort in the knowledge that Golden Knowledge will shepherd you safely into the realm of veganism. For under \$15 you can score yourself a delish bowl of vegan chicken pho. This gem was such a hit that in 2017, they expanded into the store next door.

## Deep Tea Diving

Artwork by  
Jess Zlotnick



### The kids want the inheritance

This little mermaid's been in the job just four weeks and already there's talk of our successors. Grassroots Councillor Pranay Jha (Arts/Law III), Joe Verity (Arts/Law II) and Jamie Weiss (Arts III) are rumoured to be putting together an *Honi* ticket. All three write for this rag and have wide bases of support: Jha will rely on Grassroots and the debating society, where he's an active member. Weiss's campaigners will have a kink for IR roleplay, since they'll probably be sourced from Weiss's beloved Model UN Society. The trio's ticket will likely play the part of arts-y, law-y debater-y 'face of the establishment' in the tired annual contest between *Honi*

insider vs *Honi* outsider.

Of course, it takes two to squabble over the family fortune. Jha, Verity and Weiss are rumpured to already have a contender. Supposedly, they're worried they might be "too inexperienced" to run for *Honi*, and approached a USU Board Director for advice. There's plenty of time for CV padding—the election's not until September!

### A challenger appears

The love's just not coming this little mermaid's way recently, with an upstart publication appearing on campus. This grease rag even left their inferior copy on *Honi* stands. No other on-campus publications would ever stoop that low!



# SPOKEN WORD WITHOUT THE SPOKEN WORD

Robin Eames appreciates the kinetic beauty of Deaf poetry slam.

Slam poetry, in very broad terms, is a movement of competitive poetry recital that began in the US in the 1980s, founded by socialist poet Marc Smith. At its inception, the poetry slam was intended to be a revolt against the ivory tower, bringing poetry out of academic spaces and into the Chicago underground.

The poetry slam didn't arise out of a vacuum; stylistically it borrows from the Beat Generation, the Harlem Renaissance, rap, hip-hop, and punk rock. Slam poetry was disenfranchised youth speaking out. Smith said that "slam gave [poetry] back to the people". He has been critical of the contemporary slam scene's attempts to televise or commercialise the poetry slam, for example *Def Poetry Jam*, an HBO television programme in the early 2000s. With *Def Poetry*, the revolutionary poetics of the poetry slam became mainstream and conformist. The slam served as an arena to pit young poets against each other for the purposes of commercial entertainment, rather than as a positive and passionate space for marginalised people to express themselves.

Even if you don't understand the language, you can still understand the beauty of movement and expression present in Deaf poetics.

In some ways the poetry slam provides a unique opportunity for marginalised groups to perform, and in other ways it is self-limiting, insisting that marginalised people express themselves only in certain stratified, simplistic, permissible formats.

Enter the ASL Slam, a regular event founded in 2005, documented in *Deaf Jam*, a 2011 documentary about a teenager's introduction to the New York ASL (American Sign Language) performance poetry scene. ASL poetry didn't begin with the poetry slam; in fact it has been around longer than we have had the technology to record it, since ASL is a visual language without a written form. In the 1910s the National Association of the Deaf compiled video recordings of a number of ASL poems, songs, stories, and lectures.

The National Theatre of the Deaf is the oldest theatre company in the US. The Australian Theatre of the Deaf has been around since the 1970s. Deaf poetics are nothing new. And yet something about the rhythm and vibrancy of the poetry slam thrived in the Deaf poetry community, finding a home in the beating heart of Deaf performance poetry. Today the ASL Slam has monthly events in New York, Boston, and Denver. In Australia, Deaf poetry slam has featured at the Melbourne Fringe Festival, and Arts Access Victoria has presented Deaf poetry slam workshops for young people learning Auslan poetics.

The Deaf poetry slam escapes many of the failings of the poetry slam simply by virtue of the form. The growing uniformity of 'slam voice' (what *Vice* calls an "affected vocal delivery... [comprising of] mournful tone, stilted, Shatneresque pacing, and long crescendos deployed to show us just How. Fucking. Intense. Everything is") doesn't exist in the Deaf slam, because the medium is sign language. Perhaps it is still vulnerable

to fetishisation, but honestly it's fucking revolutionary to see a Deaf artist on stage at all, and the Deaf poetry slam is performed by Deaf people, for Deaf people. Which isn't to say that it can't be enjoyed by hearing people too. The great thing about sign language poetry is that even if you don't understand the language, you can still understand the beauty of movement and expression in Deaf poetics. Many signs are already intuitive (for example the Auslan sign for 'bird' involves tapping your fingers together in front of your mouth like a beak) and Deaf poetics often involve further exaggerated gestures and facial expressions. Deaf poetics also often make use of Visual Vernacular, a highly physical theatrical artform primarily practised by Deaf artists, based around body movements, iconic signs, gestures, and facial expressions, with elements of poetry and mime. The poetry slam is a space of heightened emotion, and the Deaf poetry slam takes this to the next level, using the whole body as a conduit.

Deaf poetry slam hasn't quite made its way to Sydney yet, but if you're looking for a place to start, I highly recommend Word in Hand, a monthly series of performance poetry nights held at the Red Rattler on the first Tuesday of every month.

A note on language: in the Deaf community, capitalisation is used to denote cultural identity (Deafness), while the audiological condition is referred to with a lowercase d (deafness). Not everyone who is deaf is part of the Deaf community; people are Deaf if they identify as Deaf and are accepted by other Deaf folks as Deaf. The broader community of people with hearing loss is often referred to as the D/deaf and hard of hearing community. Deaf people take pride in Deaf identity and often do not consider their Deafness to be a disability.

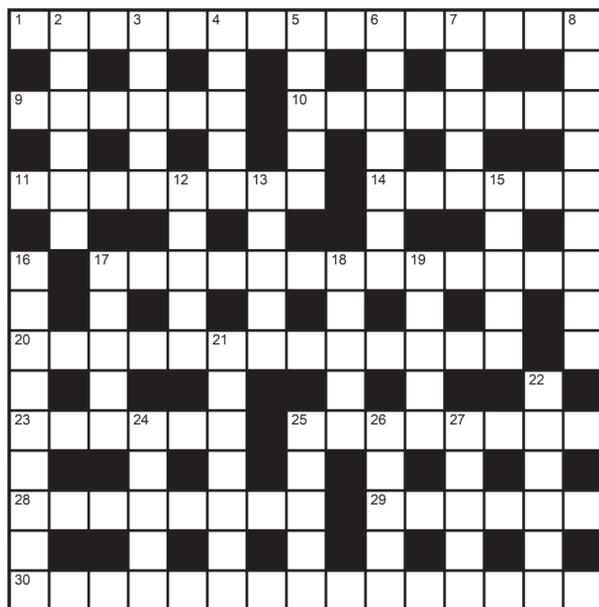
The contemporary poetry slam scene has garnered (sometimes virulent) criticism from published poets. Harold Bloom, writing in *The Paris Review*, called slam poetics "rant and nonsense". Rebecca Watts recently wrote a scathing article for *PN Review* describing what she calls the "cult of the noble amateur". Some of the criticism is deserved; some of it is excessive; some of it is academic backlash against a growing anti-elitist poetic culture. The conversation is further complicated by the fact that many of the brightest stars of the poetry slam are young women of colour. The backlash against the poetry slam has undoubtedly been fuelled in part by racism and misogyny. And yet the scene's popularity has also been fuelled in part by a kind of fetishisation of marginalisation, by exotification, by a cultural fascination with marginalised identity and art coupled with a reluctance to engage deeply with the work of marginalised artists.



Artwork by  
Robin Eames

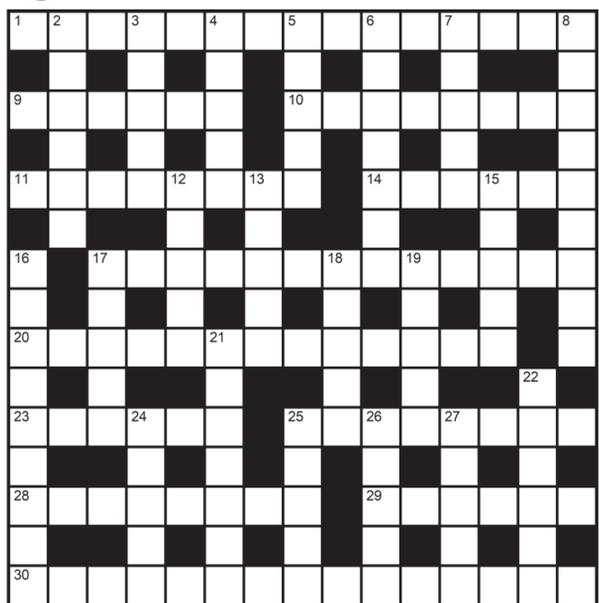
# CRYPTIC

Puzzles by El Snake



- Across**
- 1 Examination tool badly botched moot after penalty? (4-7,4)
  - 9 Beginning of the End is final act, as it happens (2,4)
  - 10 Rapper chooses mountaineering equipment (8)
  - 11 Offer wit for car crash consequence? (5-3)
  - 14 A Current Affair follows party animal (6)
  - 17 Fling handset, noting damage (3-5,5)
  - 20 Deal with McManus about certain hoard (8,5)
  - 23 Mysterious bosses haunt? (6)
  - 25 Green light for calculator function (3,5)
  - 28 Single, very bookish, missing Elizabeth (8)
  - 29 Spoil spirit space (6)
  - 30 Destitution cancelled for the destitute (7-8)
- Down**
- 2 Disregard weird groin energy (6)
  - 3 Praise Pacino in Extension (5)
  - 4 Top dated hairstyle? (5)
  - 5 Bandit leader gave 100 for tea (5)
  - 6 The Spanish agent? Oddly stylish (7)
  - 7 Gene-editing technology unfinished, brittle (5)
  - 8 Observer has mess back-to-front, admitted band Queen (9)
  - 12 He's never content going up levels (5)
  - 13 Brother sounds like a cook (5)
  - 15 Common era/period saying (5)
  - 16 It is the turn of Thomas, the androidólet's drink! (7,2)
  - 17 12-down gets love for drug cookers (5)
  - 18 Resting place for fiery god (5)
  - 19 Scot and I awkwardly unmoved (5)
  - 21 Social climber had it the other way around in new business (7)
  - 22 State weary mockery (6)
  - 24 Ban energy-returning elixir ingredients (5)
  - 25 University building contains a generation's bottomless hell (5)
  - 26 The French drink backwardsóthey like to move it (5)
  - 27 Learner yankee Eric scratches beginning to go for a kind of poetry? (5)

# QUICK



- Across**
- 1 Crude (15)
  - 9 Wealthy family in Medieval Italy (6)
  - 10 E.S., for me (8)
  - 11 Decorate, often with diamantes (8)
  - 14 Sample (6)
  - 17 Treat containing dairy and cocoa (4,9)
  - 20 Where the drums are (6,7)
  - 23 He handles the financials? (6)
  - 25 When two men are very good friends (8)
  - 28 Drive (8)
  - 29 You put your camera on it (6)
  - 30 The (8,7)
- Down**
- 2 Required (6)
  - 3 Spooky board (5)
  - 4 They sell beans (5)
  - 5 French river (5)
  - 6 Stupid (7)
  - 7 Other name (5)
  - 8 Confuse (9)
  - 12 Nothing (5)
  - 13 Scottish lakes (5)
  - 15 Hey, Soul Sister band (5)
  - 16 It's good for catching waves (9)
  - 17 Clover Moore, for one (5)
  - 18 Type of Sydney Trains train (5)
  - 19 Two wars were fought over this! (5)
  - 21 You can have it shaken or stirred? (7)
  - 22 What we all do on our Facebook feeds, endlessly (6)
  - 24 Robot genre (3-2)
  - 25 Overdo (5)
  - 26 Water mammal (5)
  - 27 Excuse (5)

# TARGET

Target Rules:

Minimum 4 letters per word. 5 words: who, 10 words: whom, 20 words: whomst, 30 words: whomst'd've'ly'yaint'nt'ed'ies's'y'es



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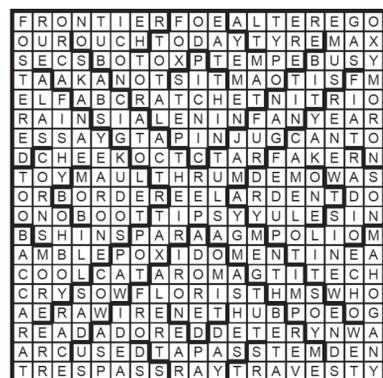
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# ANSWERS



## DID YOU KNOW?

### Withdrawing from a subject before 31st March SEM 1 avoids a FAIL on your transcript & HECS\* August SEM 2

\*International students will need special permission to reduce their study load and should seek advice about their fees from the International Office or the SRC.

Need help or advice? Your SRC is here to assist you. Phone for an appointment. The service is FREE, independent and confidential. We are located at: Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney (02) 9660 5222 | help@src.usyd.edu.au | src.usyd.edu.au | facebook.com/srchelp

## IN A PICKLE?

**If You Have a Legal Problem, We Can Help for FREE!**

**SRC Legal Service**  
法律諮詢 法律アドバイス

We have a solicitor who speaks Cantonese, Mandarin & Japanese

Level 1, Wentworth Bldg, University of Sydney  
p: 02 9660 5222 | w: src.usyd.edu.au  
e: solicitor@src.usyd.edu.au  
ACN 146 653 143 | MARN 1276171

Likely funded by a scheme approved under Professional Standards Regulation

This service is provided by the Student Representative Council, University of Sydney

# Ask Abe



SRC caseworker HELP Q&A

## HECS Census Date

Hi Abe,  
At the beginning of the year I enrolled in 4 subjects but I've had some family stuff happen and now I don't think I can cope with that workload. What should I do?

Overwhelmed

Dear Overwhelmed,

The HECS census date is Saturday, 31<sup>st</sup> March in semester one. This means that you can drop any subject before then, without any academic or financial\* penalty. Before dropping

any subject, make sure that you understand the impact it will have on Centrelink payments, visas, and travel concession cards. Dropping from 4 to 3 subjects will not affect your full time enrollment status, but if you are an international student you may be in breach of your visa. International students require faculty approval to reduce their study load. Contact International Services by emailing international.support@sydney.edu.au.

Abe

\*International students have an administration fee deducted from any refund.

## Tenancy - Unpaid rent

Hi Abe,

My housemate doesn't pay rent. Can I break into his room and sell his stuff to make the money that he owes?

Practical

Dear Practical,

No. That would be illegal, and leave you vulnerable to being prosecuted. Your choices for action are dependent on whether he is on the lease and whether you are on the lease. Start by asking him to pay his rent. This is by far the best solution.

If that doesn't work, and you are not on the lease, you could notify the landlord of your situation and see if you are able to pay your rent separately. Chances are the landlord will not care who is not paying rent, and take you all to the tribunal, but as you are not on the lease you are not financially liable, and can find

somewhere else to live. Keep receipts of you paying rent just in case.

If you are on the lease and he is not on the lease you could have him move out. If he has no written contract he has no rights, and you can ask him to move out immediately. If you gave him a written contract, he is considered a sub-tenant, and you would be the head tenant, meaning that he is covered by the Residential Tenancy Act. To get him to move out will require you to be compliant to the law, and you should seek legal advice (e.g., from the SRC Legal Service) to do this properly.

If you are on the lease and he is too, you are co-tenants. The easiest thing to do here is to leave the tenancy. Bear in mind that you are financially liable for whatever debts are incurred both as an individual, and as a group. Again seek legal advice to ensure that you get the best possible outcome.

Abe

**The SRC's guide to living on little money is available here:**

srcusyd.net.au/src-help/money



The Ask Abe column runs in every edition of Honi Soit. It allows you to ask whatever question you might have that affects you as a student, gaining the best advice that a very worldly mutt can give.

# President

*Imogen Grant*

The student movement is experiencing an exciting revival across the world, particularly in the UK where over twenty campuses are striking in solidarity with the UCU strike. We've seen a reinvigoration of the trade union movement in the education sector, as UCU branches voted overwhelmingly in favour of continuing industrial action to save their pensions, under the slogan #NoCapitulation. More and more Vice-Chancellors have been forced to change their position on pension cuts due to the pressure effective student-staff solidarity has exerted on them.

This is what we should be inspired by as we experience severe attacks on students THIS WEEK with the introduction of the Higher Education Support Legislation Amendment (Student Loan Sustainability) Bill 2018 in the Senate.

The proposed legislation would introduce a new

minimum repayment threshold of \$45,000 (before tax). A yearly income of \$45,000 is just over half the average full-time wage of an adult in Australia, and is only marginally higher than the national full-time minimum wage. I think it is shocking that the amendment targets the most vulnerable graduates.

The Liberal Government is also introducing a cap on the HECS-HELP debt you can accrue over your lifetime. So when a student reaches their loan limit, they must pay their fees upfront. This will especially hurt students studying a combination of Commonwealth supported and full-fee paying degrees, which typically occurs under a "Melbourne model" style of education. This restricts students' ability to access certain higher status degrees, such as postgraduate law, unless they can cough up tens of thousands of dollars (or more) upfront.

The Liberals have just cut \$2.2 billion from universities, and now they are seeking to further rip money from students who are barely earning above the minimum wage.

We had an incredible National Day of Action last week, but we must continue that anger, bury the

bill and fight for better quality education.

Join the Education Action Group and urge these Senators to not vote through the bill --

Stirling Griff (senator.griff@aph.gov.au), Rex Patrick (senator.patrick@aph.gov.au), Peter Georgiou (senator.georgiou@aph.gov.au), Derryn Hinch (senator.hinch@aph.gov.au), Fraser Anning (senator.anning@aph.gov.au), Steve Martin (senator.martin@aph.gov.au), and Timothy Storer (senator.storer@aph.gov.au).

Feel free to email me at president@src.usyd.edu.au if you have any concerns or wish to get involved with the SRC. If you are experiencing any academic, personal or legal issues and wish to seek the advice of an SRC caseworker or solicitor, contact us at 9660 5222 or help@src.usyd.edu.au.

# General Secretaries

*Nina Dillon Britton and Yuxuan Yang*

It's been one month since university started. Do you think you are still on holiday? But we don't think so, because we did a lot in the past 4 weeks.

We achieved amazing goals during O-week!  
 • Got 1500 SRC bags into the hands of students which is the largest ever amount the SRC has done. This will hopefully get more students than ever before

• Counter-Course was into Chinese for the first time in the SRC's history thanks to all translators, thanks to Imogen and publication managers' support, thanks to Nina and Yuxuan, which will help us reach out to more international students

than ever before. We also contacted lots of society and other organization publication and asked them to forward, let more student know us and help them.

• We signed up more than 400 students to our new newsletter in order to get a back which will help us reach out more consistently to students than we have in the past.

• We've put up a prize to follow us on Facebook to stay in the loop with the SRC's activities. We advertised this through O-Week and will also do again so with our newsletter.

• The SRC Caseworkers had their own stall at O-Week which allowed them to reach out to more students and make them aware of our services.

We have held and will hold more off-line event

• Set stall on Eastern avenue on 3.13, to come deep into the student community, took the initiative to let student know SRC and what SRC relative to them (personally and collectively). In addition, we listened their ideas to uni and some specific

motions and collected it (do some investigate to truly represent student). We plan to do it regularly, twice a month, and you will discover us outside ABS and eastern avenue, you are welcome to come and say "hi" to us.

• We also co-held a lecture talking about finding caseworker and legal solicitor for help with some society on 3.8, to let more student know SRC help and help student personally.

We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who helped out at the stall / event and/or handed out our bags and other materials as well as everyone who helped pack the bags.

We also held a meeting with USU and SUPRA, with student representatives from UNSW and western Sydney university to talk about student issue, like campus safety, education issue, international student opal concession card and so on. Once again, we have united all the forces to protect students' own right, and you could see specific implementation scheme soon in their report.

# Wom\*n's Officers

*Jessica Syed and Madeline Ward*

This past week we have held our counter protest to the pro life "Day Of The Unborn Child" event. It was important for us to non-platform rhetoric such as this which is violent towards people accessing abortion: pro life groups are demeaning, shame people and their tradition stems from a misogynistic and patriarchal idealisation of the nuclear family. We notified police of our intent to protest but our peaceful and legal assembly was

thwarted by the riot squad and mounted police nonetheless. Some resisted and were arrested; protestors were pushed, shoved and, as video footage has shown, assaulted. WOCO officially hates cops and we wonder why they have such huge ego complexes when the majority of them look like jumbo white Lego bricks. Sad.

Our system of ushering patients into the Surry Hills abortion clinic is continuing and the pro-life protestors are not happy. They continue to send bulky cop-like male reinforcement rosary wielders to stand in front of us and intimidate us into not reappearing and providing the ushering service. Maddy has been christened the "principal deathscort of the abortion mill". We have responded to this weird crusade-like behaviour by loudly discussing Marxist ideology and our respective sex

lives. It is heartwarming to see them flinch and grip their rosary beads just that little bit harder.

We are trying to organise an internal roster to help the Martin Street Kitchen. Homelessness affects women in a profound way, particularly women who have been marginalised most by class, white supremacy, a disability, or by domestic violence.

We find it interesting that Liz Broderick would apologise for the nature of her review into college culture yet still not disclose the contents of a secret report. Spence and Liz, we'll be on you shortly, manipulating FOIs to get the dirt. Beware.

Speaking of Spence, we will be meeting with him just as this edition rolls onto stands. Should be an interesting chat. Promise we won't be too mean.

# International Officers

*Mengwei Yuan, Yi Man, Zimiao Gao and Zhuonan Li*

Welcome the new students to our big university family! The international department will focus on the international students' experience at university this year. To achieve the better interaction both

among international students themselves and with local students, we will continue to work on the development and growth of our International Students Collective. On the O-week, many international students have shown their interest about the university community. The increase of the involvement of university community and the participation in campus activities among international students will be the trend for 2018.

We are also running an opal concession campaign currently, which aims to provide international students right to use the concession opal card. On the orientation week, we have gathered more

than 300 signatures for petition. We will continue to gather the signature through the semester. The petition could be signed in the SRC stall which will be set in front of the Carslaw building weekly.

We are planning for the activities this year and they will come soon! Wish you have a wonderful semester!

# Vice President

*Adriana Malavis*

With all SRC departments working hard to ensure a great welcome to Uni for first years and any new collective members, it's been a busy time for all of us. Some of the keen readers may be aware of an initiative I'm working on tentatively titled Services Week. Breaking ground on the "Services Week" has

been a rewarding struggle. Over the past few weeks I've been engaging the departments and getting them involved. There's a lot to be done, but there are also many more OB's and councillors behind the initiative. I've been working on this because the services at the university are subpar, and accessing them should not be as difficult as it currently is. I'm dedicated to this project, and more broadly, I'm dedicated to ensuring students are receiving the help they require, whatever it may be.

## Notice of Council Meeting

90th Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney

**DATE:** Wed April 4th

**TIME:** 6–8pm

**LOCATION:**

New Law Annex, Seminar Room 340



w: src.usyd.edu.au  
p: 02 9660 5222

## SUDOKU

	6			4		1		
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# Welfare Officers

The Welfare Officers did not submit a report.

## Local Dad's Life Advice Begins and Ends with "You Should Eat More Muesli"

Nick Harriott Breakfast Sceptic

He's lived a full life. He's known the struggle of being a young man trying to land a good job. He's known the pain of falling in and out love more times than he could count on one hand. He's moved from city to city, job to job, welcomed people into his life and watched them leave. He has a wealth of experiences from a life well lived, three times the length of my own. So why then, when I come to him for advice, is his only suggestion I eat more fucking muesli?

I mean, I can see why he's so keen on muesli. It's the perfect breakfast for a man of his age. It's easy to make, easy on the wallet and easy to chew; but I know for a fact he didn't always eat muesli. Surely, when he was staring down the barrel of his first break-up, he didn't drown his sorrows with a fresh bowl of Morning Sun Apricot & Almond.

Even in my lifetime he didn't always eat muesli. I've seen the man eat toast, eggs—hell, even a full English Breakfast in his leaner years—so why on God's green Earth have all his senses abandoned him, all his memories washed away, and left him with no frame of reference for self-

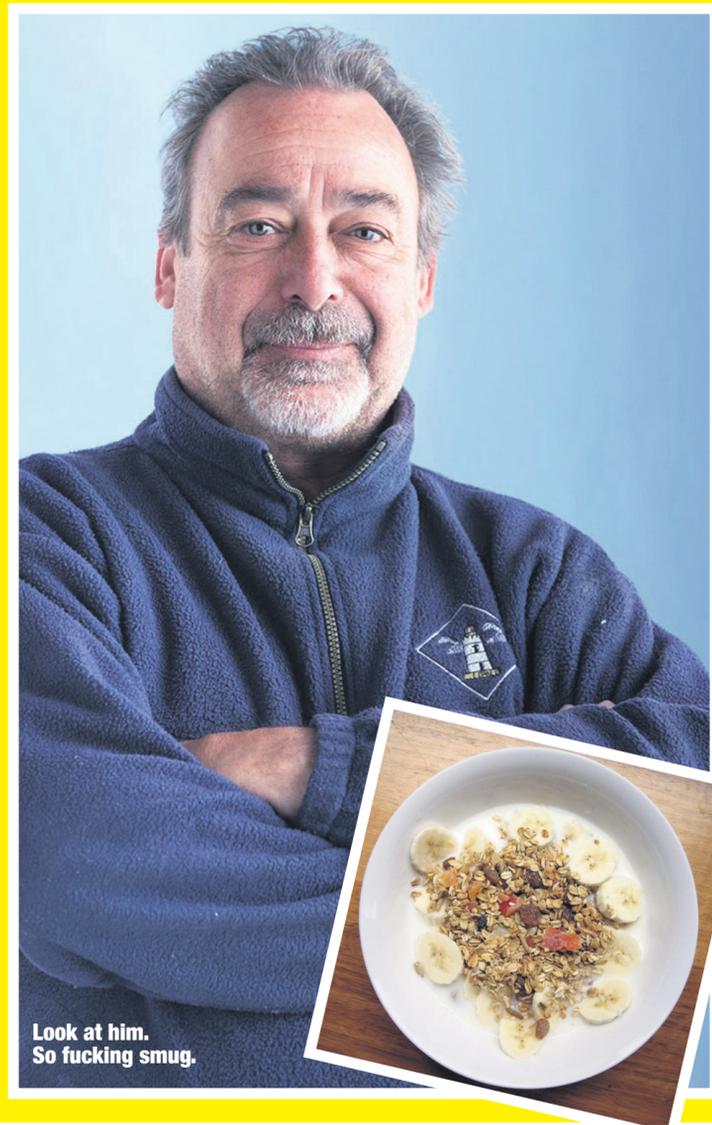
care other than a cold bowl of milk mixed with shredded fucking grains.

That's not to say I don't understand its benefits. He makes a good point when he says I might be less irritable if I started the day off with a meal jam-packed with slow release energy.

However, when I come home at night, my heart heavy from the revelation that someone I love does not love me back. When I enter the living room, my mind frantic with worry about how I'll ever be able to balance work and study and still make time for friends. When I fall at the feet of the man who brought me into this world, desperate for guidance—he cannot supply it.

No. All he has for me is that cursed word. Those six unique letters, as distinct as the six seeds and grains comprising his specialty mix.

"Muesli," he says, extending out his arms and holding my hands in his. "Maybe you should eat more muesli."



Look at him. So fucking smug.



He's got to have a good photo somewhere...

## Study Confirms New Crush is Way More Attractive in Person, I Swear

Alisha Brown Right-Swiper

A year-long study has revealed that your crush does, in fact, look better in person and, trust me, this is just a weird photo. The study, conducted by Tinder, confirmed that your crush appears an entire 35% less attractive online than in the flesh.

Eloise Waterman, a participant in the study, confessed to *hunny* that she hates nothing more than being asked to hand over photographic evidence so people can judge her latest crush, but was willing to do it for science.

"I swear he's so much hotter in person," she pleaded as she showed us one of her crush's more flattering selfies. "You barely notice the size of his forehead if you're looking at him

from below."

Looking bad in a photo when you actually look okay—even good—in real life is a phenomenon that does not discriminate, affecting even the most attractive of crushes.

Dr. Robert Brown, Head Researcher at Tinder, explains, "If you randomly sample 100 people from the general population, you'll get an average attractiveness rating of six out of ten or higher. But if you take a sample of recently tagged Facebook photos, that rating quickly plummets."

The study concluded that while some participants were objectively ugly, with "several fours and an unfortunate two", others were merely

misrepresented online through poor lighting choices, bad camera angles, the inclusion of an ex-partner, or a combination of all three.

Even some profile pictures, traditionally the safest bet when proving your crush is reasonably attractive, can fail to deliver the necessary validation. "Okay, so, his hair looks weird here but he's got a different haircut now and it looks a lot better," clarified Waterman, but when we asked if we could swipe to more recent photos she drew her phone back to her chest and told us she'd find a good one for us.

At time of print, she is still looking.

## WILD WEATHER

### Fleetwood Mac Claim

### "Thunder Only Happens When It's Raining"

### But Experts Disagree!

"Thunder only happens when it's raining," says Stevie Nicks, songstress and iconic lead singer of soft-rock outfit Fleetwood Mac—but falser lyrics have never been sung, and never ones as damaging to the meteorological community.

What concerns me, as a scientist, is that a layperson might hear this lyric and, combined with their own anecdotal evidence and the authoritative tone of Nicks' voice, be lead to think, "Stevie Nicks is right. Thunder does only happen when it's raining. I have no reason to believe otherwise. I guess that closes the book on that question."

What a shame. What an awful shame.

For Stevie and her Macs, it probably doesn't even matter that a whole generation of rock-n-rollers, teenyboppers and trendsetters will live their whole lives not knowing that thunder occasionally occurs independently of rain. But it does to me. I've dedicated my entire adult life to educating the public on how weather works; but it seems no amount of light-hearted Channel Ten

broadcasts can undo the damage that Fleetwood Mac did with just one 1977 chart-topper. My soul weeps.

She might as well sing, "Thanks to the east coast low, we can expect predominantly sunny skies and mild to warm temperatures" which, as I'm sure you know, is a completely false meteorological prediction and an equally egregious statement to make.

I understand scientifically accurate descriptions of weather patterns may not be as "catchy" as a Fleetwood Mac lyric, but I'm not a songwriter. Much like Stevie Nicks is NOT a meteorologist. However, the longer she seems to think she is, the more damage she does to meteorology as a profession, a passion, and an art.

Stevie Nicks, Fleetwood Mac, I have but one thing to say: STAY IN YOUR LANE.

I'm Tim Bailey for Channel Ten Eyewitness News.



An Exclusive Report by Channel Ten Eyewitness News Weatherman

## Get Active!



## If I Had Started Doing 10 Push-Ups a Day, 3 Months Ago, I Could Have Given Up By Now

Nick Harriott Sedentary Reporter

People often ask me when is the best time to start exercising. Should I commit to a New Year's Resolution, or should I wait until a few weeks into the year when I have a regular schedule? Should I start in the winter so my body's in shape for summer, or start in summer when I'm motivated to get out in the sunshine?

My answer is simple: the best time to start exercising is, and always will be, the past. Because if you had already been

exercising, you could feasibly give up by now.

Just think about it. If you had started jogging on January 1, you would have been jogging regularly for several months by now—and you could stop doing it. Clearly a great option. By comparison, if you start jogging today you have to start jogging today, and why would you ever want to do that.

My personal goal is to do ten push-ups a day for three

months straight. Currently, the only obstacle between me and achieving my goal is that whenever I go to do a push-up I hate every second of it and also I can't do a push-up. So, not too bad. However, I think the best way for me to overcome that obstacle would be to have started doing those push-ups in the past, so I could have already done them and not need to do them now.

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