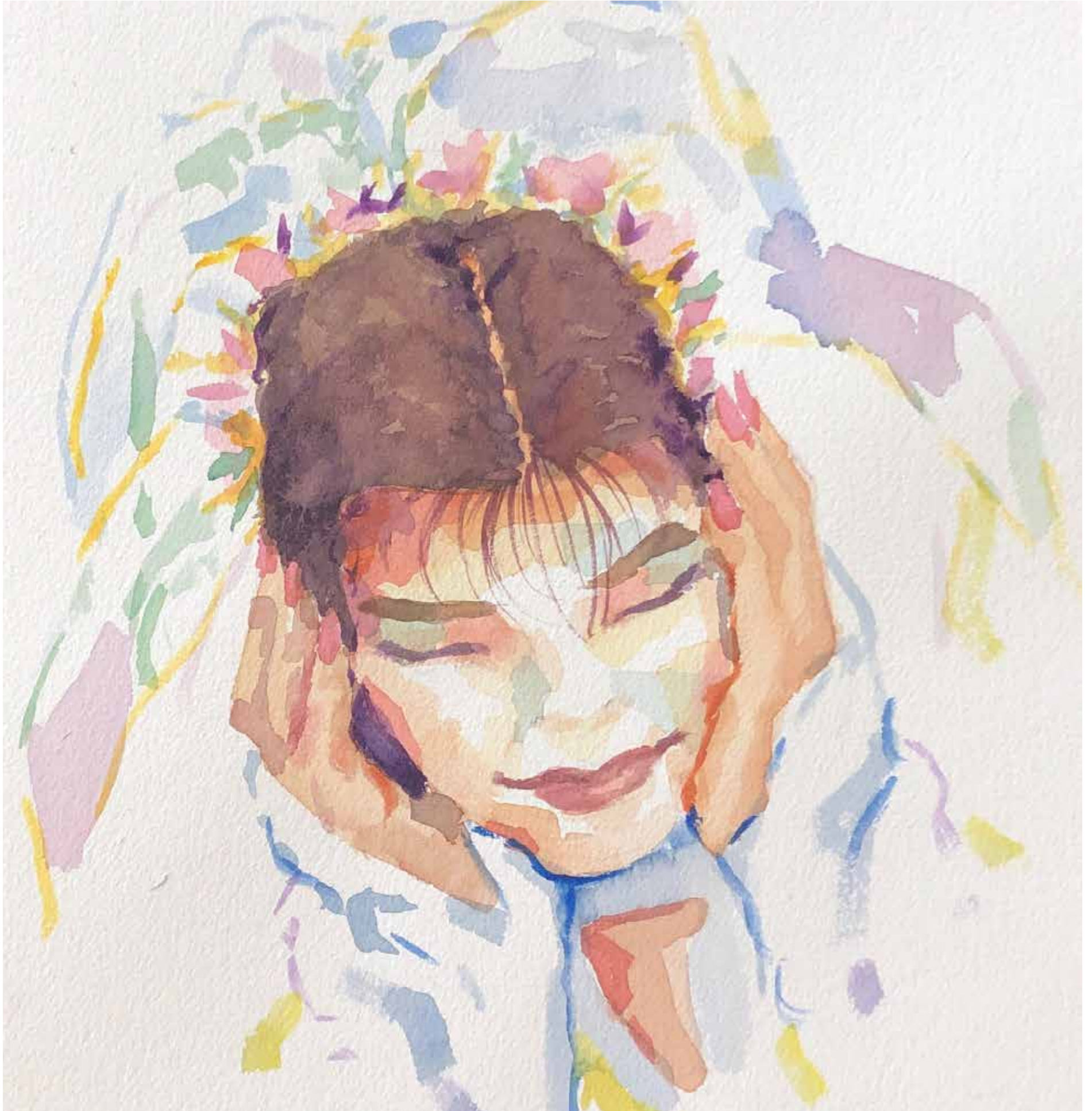


# Honi Soit

Week 5, Semester 1, 2020 / First printed 1929



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# Acknowledgement of Country



*Honi Soit* is published on the stolen land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation. For over 230 years, First Nations people in this country have suffered from the destructive effects of invasion. The editors of this paper recognise that, as a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Bidjigal, Darug, Gadigal, Wangal and Wallumedegal people, we are beneficiaries of these reverberations that followed European settlement. As we strive throughout the year to offer a platform to the voices mainstream media ignores, we cannot meet this goal without providing a space for First Nations people to share their experiences and perspectives. A student paper which does not acknowledge historical and ongoing colonisation and the white supremacy embedded within Australian society can never adequately represent the students of the institution in which it operates. We seek to resist colonial violence and the racist power structures that serve to oppress those who are Indigenous to this land. Sovereignty was never ceded. Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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## Editorial

In light of community concerns surrounding the spread of COVID-19 and reduced numbers of students and staff on campuses, we are reducing our print run for week 5 of semester to 500 copies per week, distributed to stands at Fisher, JFR and outside the Students' Representative Council (SRC). Thereafter, and for the foreseeable future, there will only be 100 copies printed per week.

We will continue to report on the COVID-19 crisis as it affects students and the wider community. We have also begun a live blog which we will be updating frequently.

COVID-19 immediately affects the most vulnerable in our community. Indigenous people, disabled people, the homeless and the elderly are those that will be most severely affected by the spread of the virus. They are also those most impacted by the vein of neoliberalism that receives near bipartisan support within the Federal Government.

The economic effects of our current situation spell a future of uncertainty for many. The loss of work will hit Australia's casual workforce, many of whom are students, particularly hard. These are the same people who, living paycheck to paycheck, are unable to prepare for extended periods of social distancing.

In light of this, *Honi Soit* would like to reiterate that we do not believe in liberal notions of balance and objectivity. Instead, we explicitly support the demands issued by multiple unions and grassroots organisations across the country.

Some of these demands include: an immediate rent freeze by landlords, a repayment amnesty from banks and mortgage holders, a moratorium on rental evictions and an increase to welfare benefits.

We also support the calls to the University of Sydney to cease the austerity measures it has introduced without adequate staff consultation and without respecting the nature of an increasingly casualised tertiary education workforce.

Though we are living through uncertain times, we have hope. Mutual aid groups have been set up across Sydney as those with time, age, or health on their side help strangers. It is this spirit of collectivism and solidarity which will get us through this crisis, and this spirit which will help us in building a more just world.

Yours,  
*Honi Soit*

## Letters

### ...What?

Back in the old normal days of the sensible conservative patriarchal religious world, prior to 2020, people who practised social distancing, who practised lots of hand washing, who practised 14 consecutive days of social isolation, who wore face masks every day to avoid germs, who feared catching deadly diseases from breathing and mixing with the community, who stocked up supermarket items for 14 consecutive rainy days, who found it hard to find toilet paper, who didn't use toilet paper after excretion, who didn't want to socialise at pubs, clubs and churches, who were too afraid to go outside their residence, who hoarded supermarket items, and who wouldn't eat salads, were considered to have the abnormal mental illness of obsessions and compulsions disorder!

These abnormal mentally ill people were sent to psychologists, psychiatrists, student counsellors, alternative medicine practitioners, anxiety clinics, depression clinics and mental hospitals. They also received psychotherapy, mental illness drugs, anti psychotic drugs, anxiety tranquilisers, prozac, mind altering drugs, electroconvulsive therapy, Benzodiazepines drugs, sickness benefits, invalid pensions, disability support pensions, age pensions, valium, lithium drugs, and

mental illness labelling. Political Leaders talk about these abnormal mentally ill people as nuts, and need mental health professionals.

Now in the new normal days of The Coronavirus Covid 19 Virus, the abnormal mental illness psychology of the old world before 2020 has become the normal psychology of the sensible conservative patriarchal religious world. Obsessive and Compulsive Mental Illness disorder has become the normal sensible way of life. The old "abnormal people" have become the "normal people".

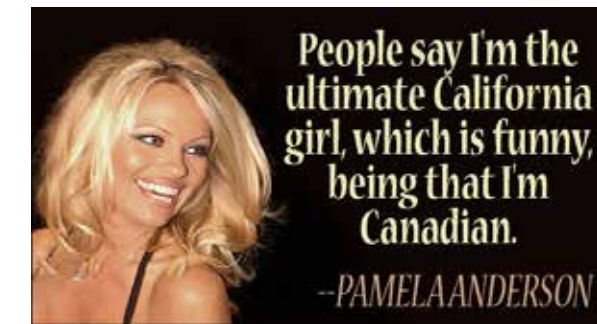
The abnormal mentally ill people are now the normal sensible people of common sense, emotional intelligence, mental intelligence, and general responsibility.

The new Political, Religious, Moral, social and Economic Leaders talk about social distancing, social isolation, incessant hand washing, hoarding, fears, anxieties, terrors, phobias, rituals, and all the old world topics normally associated with the old time abnormal mentally ill people who were fit for drugs, therapies, mental hospitals, and mental health professionals. The new Political, Religious, Moral, social and Economic Leaders are the old world mentally ill people

The new March 2020 Political, Religious, Moral and Economic Leaders talk exactly like the old time abnormal mentally ill people always did before 2020.

Do the political, religious, moral, social and economic leaders get classified as abnormal mentally ill nuts? Do they need mental health professionals?

Yours Maternally,  
- Jane Mary Wallace



Wham, bam,  
thank you  
Pam

- Jane Mary  
Wallace  
(in the same  
email)

### Positive feedback

Hi *Honi*,

I really liked your article Class Act from Jenae Madden. Thanks for covering stuff that's both important and immediately relevant to USYD

students.  
More attention need to be put on USYDs failure to support low SES students.

- Zac Calvin

### To Aiden Magro, with love

What an absolute delight to read your article that featured my book, *Fag Hags, Divas and Moms*. It's hard to know how far a book can reach, but now I can say all the way to Australia. That it has reached college students means even more to me. They've only known HIV/AIDS as a chronic disease, not as the terrifying pandemic of the early days. I know your article will help them understand what a strange and frightening time it was - not unlike the present. I'm particularly pleased that you focused on Nora Burns. My

goal with the book was to concentrate on women whose stories are largely unknown. Everyone's heard of Elizabeth Taylor and how important she was to the AIDS community. It's the women like Nora who deserve the spotlight.

Again, many thanks for sharing my book and the women in it who have made such a difference.

- Victoria Noe

**Nudes, declarations of affection and hate mail may be sent to: [editors@honisoit.com](mailto:editors@honisoit.com)**

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## What's on this week

For those not watching livestreamed DJ sets!

### Being incredibly irritating on social media

**When:** For the foreseeable future  
**Where:** All social media platforms  
**Price:** Free

Wow! Are you working from home? And social distancing? How fun for you! I am really enjoying your constant instagram updates. No really, you should post more. Maybe even something on Twitter!

### Day of Action for Workers' Livelihoods

**When:** 27th March  
**Where:** Everywhere  
**Price:** Free

May 1st Movement has called for (an appropriately distanced) day of action. Why? Because working people are being thoroughly fucked over by our government's response to COVID-19. Take a hard-earned break from virtue signalling your self-isolation routine and support those on the front-lines of the pandemic.

### What's not on this week

#### Day of the Unborn Child

**When:** Never  
**Where:** Nowhere  
**Price:** Nothing

Fear not, brethren! Abortion is not the almighty evil we thought it to be. It is in fact God's will, his almighty means of protecting the innocent unborn from COVID-19. Rejoice, and be thankful.

## Who? Weekly

### Machiavellian Mike

Those of us who were around in 2018 will remember the ill-fated (exactly 100 votes) USU Board campaign of one Mike Mao. People may also remember that he goes by Magic Mike Mao...That's right, he thinks he can dance like Channing Tatum (he can't) and he gave himself his own alliterative nickname. We don't think it's particularly fitting though, and so we bestow "Machiavellian Mike" upon him after it was brought to our attention that he had been selling protective masks at a huge mark up price. Whilst he has since taken down the post, one ghost of stupor told Who? Weekly that they think the masks were being sold for something like \$10 per mask, and that he had a minimum quantity per transaction.

### Our future doctors

Apologies to those with a bad case of FOMO - it seems we might have missed a pretty stellar event in our last What's On section. A source has informed us that around 45 people attended a 'CoronaFest' party last weekend, which was hosted by 3rd year Med students. Those who attended were told to dress as if they were sick or in quarantine. The drink of choice for the night was - and you'll never guess it - Corona. Nice to know we have an influx of medical practitioners who will refer to themselves as "the fun doctor" coming in a few years' time.

### Release the hounds

Another source let us know that Pauls boys have been using their time productively before their college was once more #cancelled. We've heard rumours of last minute "hazing" targeting first years and raucous drinking with the boys

getting very cosy before they were forced to bid adieu to one another. One USyd Rants post claimed that there had been a lock-in drinking night before the closure, and Paul's boys were released back to the rest of the uni population. Lucky us!

### Congratulations, you played yourselves

Our good friends over at the Catholic Society have issued a statement condemning us for being "anti-Semitic," over an image which actually made fun of anti-Semitism. The irony? In doing so, they messed up their syntax and seemingly endorsed the actually anti-Semitic fiction that the Jews did kill Jesus. The direct quote from their statement is below: "This image falsely suggests that the Sydney University Catholic Society advocates for the attack on the Jewish community for killing Jesus, our absolute boy."

## Write, create and produce for *Honi Soit*

Interested in reporting or making art for Australia's only remaining weekly student newspaper? Email us at [editors@honisoit.com](mailto:editors@honisoit.com) or message us over on our Facebook, Twitter or Instagram pages.



# COVID-19 public health alert issued for event held at USYD

*Lara Sonnenschein reports.*

A New South Wales public health alert has been issued for an event held on campus on Saturday 14 March.

Due to a confirmed case of the coronavirus at an event at a Sydney University Football Ground function room from 7.30pm to 10.30pm, everyone who attended the event is

considered a close contact and must immediately self isolate for 14 days.

The event included the University of Sydney (USyd) and University of

Queensland (UQ) rugby teams.

It is unclear whether the person diagnosed is a USyd student.

## University to suspend face-to-face teaching

*Lara Sonnenschein and Robbie Mason report.*

In the wake of a University of Sydney (USyd) student being diagnosed with COVID-19 and rising concerns about the coronavirus across New South Wales, USyd is set to cease face-to-face teaching on campus on Monday 23 March.

With many USyd classes already online, the Crisis Management Committee at the University has officially announced that the university will accelerate this move with this fixed date.

In an email to staff, Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence reports: “For units of study with labs, studios and other practical course components, online or remote arrangements will be put in place or will be suspended to later in the semester, or the year.” But “some clinical placements and workshops will go ahead.” As of yet, it is unclear which placements and workshops these are.

The email continues: “in addition to normal leave entitlements up to 10 days special leave will be available to

staff to support them in dealing with the impacts of COVID-19.”

Facilities, including libraries, computer labs, research and study spaces will remain open to students and staff while increased cleaning protocols continue.

The decision follows weeks of uncertainty regarding campus and the coronavirus, alongside increased student pressure on the University to shut down. At the time of publishing, a student petition to Vice-Chancellor

to Michael Spence calling on the University to close has almost 5000 signatures.

This week has already seen the Students’ Representative Council (SRC) cease in person appointments, the University of Sydney Union (USU) cancel revues, and the unprecedented shift to an online election in May for new Student Directors.

# USU moves elections online, cancels revues citing COVID-19

*Matthew Forbes reports.*

The University of Sydney Union (USU) has shared its official response regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and what has been affected in its wake.

In a statement made by President Connor Wherrett, the USU has declared it will “scale down our face to face campus operations as far as possible, while endeavouring to deliver as many of our services online as is feasible in the short term.”

An online voting system is “reluctantly” planned to be implemented for the union’s 2020 Board Elections, which must take place in May as per the USU Constitution.

The decision is controversial given it was made without a vote by the USU Board. Previous online elections at USyd have resulted in allegations of election breaches and cheating, and stacking of votes.

A trial period for working from home arrangements for some of the Union’s staff will start tomorrow (March 17), and is likely to become the “dominant mode of work” for staff from next Monday (March 23).

Importantly however, this will not include casual staff employed at the

USU’s campus food and drink outlets. Staff at these outlets will be expected to stay on, coming in contact with potentially large numbers of persons in their work.

The USU has also announced that casual staff will be allowed paid sick leave if they are required to self-isolate or are diagnosed with COVID-19, though this will be capped at 10 working days. But that cap could leave many staff without coverage if they are diagnosed. The World Health Organisation estimates it to take 2 weeks to recover from mild variants of the virus, but 3-6 weeks to recover from more serious cases.

Aside from its internal operations, the USU’s course of action in response to this outbreak will see a devastating blow to campus culture and student life.

One of the most significant measures the USU has taken is the cancellation of all 2020 revues. This presumably includes faculty revues, which are traditionally held in August.

Furthermore, the Union has asked that all events hosted by Clubs and Societies be cancelled, echoing the sentiments of Vice-Chancellor Michael Spence in an email sent last Friday, and

is “communicating with Club Execs to discourage gatherings.”

Other cancellations include those made to the Easters and Australs Debating tournaments and their trials, as well as the SSAF-funded Know Your Rights and Racism Sux campaigns and the 2020 Palladian Cup.

Numerous USU-associated locations across campus will shut their doors in the coming days, including tomorrow’s closure of the International Student Lounge (ISL).

Furthermore, the ISL Student Info Hub in Wentworth and Manning House Student Info Hub will also be closed from tomorrow, effectively wiping out all opportunities for face-to-face assistance from the USU.

Both Manning Bar and Hermann’s Bar will cease day trade and gigs from next Monday. The USYD Store at Jane Foss Russell Building will remain open, while the store in Holme Building will be shut.

While USU food outlets such as Courtyard Restaurant & Bar and Carlsaw Kitchen, as well as the food courts in Manning House and Wentworth Building, will remain open,

Engo Grill, Mallett St Cafe and Deck Cafe will be closed from March 23. Additionally, Fisher Kiosk will shutter its doors on weekends.

The USU has promised to keep the Queer, Ethno-Cultural and Wom\*n’s Rooms open, as well as the Incubate Hub, which will operate ‘remotely’.

Wherrett’s statement stated the USU will use the coming months as “an opportunity to rebuild, refocus and reimagine what we provide to the student community.”

Similarly, the university asked for all SSAF contestable projects, including the Know your Rights and Racism Sux campaigns, to be put on hold. Whilst the SRC responded that they were “certainly disappointed with this freeze, and shocked by the abruptness of the decision”, President Liam Donohoe emphasised that their financial situation was stable, meaning that all staff, office bearer stipends, and department funding should remain unaffected.

Nonetheless, with the University preparing for the possibility of a temporary campus closure, it is clear that student life this semester will not operate as usual.

# SRC responds to COVID-19 fears

*Robbie Mason reports.*

Following a meeting with staff this morning, Students’ Representative Council (SRC) President Liam Donohoe announced that the SRC will temporarily close due to the threat of COVID-19 outbreaks. The first case of a University of Sydney student contracting COVID-19 was confirmed yesterday.

In-person visits and consultations between students and casework or legal staff will be temporarily suspended,

but staff will be accessible via phone or Skype. All SRC staff have been strongly encouraged to work from home, for which support has been provided. Those with swipe card access, including student office bearers, Honi Soit editors and members of the Executive, will be allowed to enter the building, but the front door will be locked to the general public.

Donohoe has vowed to “join the USyd branch of the National Tertiary

Education Union in demanding that all employers, including the University and University of Sydney Union, ensure that no employee (including casuals) ends up with less pay or leave due to the COVID-19 outbreak, whether as a result of less shifts, smaller cohorts / less classes, quarantining, future shutdowns, or anything in between.”

As a hub for student activism and protest preparations, some questions remain surrounding the feasibility of the

grassroots organisation of protests. The SRC-convened Autonomous Collective Against Racism cancelled a protest against fascism in India, scheduled for last Sunday, over coronavirus fears. Several collectives have moved meetings online this week.

Donohoe has formed a COVID-19 response team, with a formal review of the situation also planned for Friday.

The SRC closed briefly earlier this year over coronavirus fears.

# USyd investigating lecturer after racist rant

*Angad Roy reports.*

In a recording uploaded to Facebook page “USyd Rants 2.0,” Phill Horne, a lecturer in ‘Project Scope, Time and Cost Management,’ a civil engineering subject, is heard engaging in a Sinophobic rant about the current COVID-19 situation and its origins.

Horne said, “we’re all going to get paid but you know, we’re not going to achieve our deliverables. So who knows what’s gonna happen. So interesting times ahead.” After voicing his concerns

about the supposed administrative issues regarding the University-wide ceasing of face-to-face classes, Mr. Horne’s rant went on a peculiar tangent.

He said that the consumption of “wild Indigenous animals [such as] a tiger, hippopotamus, rhinoceros, cat of any form or sort, pandolin or a bat” had no scientific benefits for sexual prowess. This claim had no relevance to the content of Mr. Horne’s class.

The SRC condemned Mr. Horne’s

rant, saying that “these comments not only hurt Chinese students in the immediate University of Sydney community, but also perpetuate problematic right-wing talking points, which blames ordinary Chinese people for this crisis.”

Horne also commented briefly on the genetics of penis size, suggesting “if you have a small penis, that’s what you got. Accept it. You’re either born with one, or you’re not. Tough luck. Leave our

wildlife alone.”

When asked about the matter, a University spokesperson said, “we are aware of the video and are investigating. The health and welfare of our staff, students and community remains our highest priority. If any of our students have been affected by this video, we urge them to call our helpline on 1900 793 457.”

# 大学就一位教师的种族歧视言论展开调查

Angad Roy 报道/ Zhiquan Gan 翻译

在一份最新被上传到“USyd Rants 2.0” Facebook的录音中，土木工程学科“项目范围，时间和成本管理”的讲师 Phill Horne 被指控为发表了对于近期新型冠状病毒起源的涉华侮辱性言论。Horne 说：“我们都将付出代价，但你知道，我们将不会实现我们的目标成就。所以谁知道会发生什么。这将非常有趣。”在就他表达了对整个悉

尼大学停止面授课程以及相关行政问题的忧虑后，Horne 的抱怨转向了奇怪的方面。

他说，食用“野生土著动物（例如老虎，河马，犀牛，任何形种的猫，以及穿山甲或蝙蝠）”对性能力的提升没有任何科学层面上的帮助。该言论被认为与 Horne 先生的课程内容没有关联。

SRC 谴责了 Horne 的言论，并评论道：“这些评论不仅伤害了悉尼大学里的中国学生，而且其展现了其根深蒂固的右翼观点，这将普通的中国人归咎于这场危机的起因。”

Horne 还从遗传学的角度对阴茎大小作了简短评论，并指出“如果你的阴茎很小，那就是你命中注定的。这是天生的，你必须接受现状。谁叫你倒

霉呢。不要妄想通过食用野生动物达到壮阳的目的。”

当被问及此事时，大学的一位发言人说：“我们注意到了该视频并正在调查。我们的员工，学生和乃至整个大学社区的健康和尊严仍然是我们的重中之重。如果我们中的任何学生受到此视频的冒犯，我们敦促他们致电我们的求助热线 1900 793 457。”

# SRC 回应针对新型冠状病毒的忧虑

Robbie Mason 报道/ Lei Yao 翻译

在今天早上与工作人员举行会议之后，学生代表理事会（SRC）主席 Liam Donohoe 宣布，由于 COVID-19 疫情的威胁，SRC 将暂时关闭。悉尼大学已有学生感染 COVID-19，第一例病例已被证实。

学生与案例研究人员或法律人员之间的亲临访问和咨询将暂时中止，但可以通过电话或 Skype 与员工联系。强烈鼓励所有 SRC 员工在家中工作，并

为此提供了支持。允许刷卡访问的人员，包括学生办公人员，Honi Soit 编辑和执行人员，将被允许进入大楼，但前门将不继续对公众开放。

Donohoe 发誓要“加入美国国家高等教育联盟（National Tertiary Education Union）的 USYD 分支，要求包括雇主大学和悉尼大学联盟在内的所有雇主确保所有员工（包括临时工）都不会因 COVID-19 爆发工资减

少或者不被支付假期工资，无论是由于轮班减少，队列减少/班级减少，隔离，以后的停机，还是介于两者之间的任何事情。”

作为学生行动主义和抗议准备活动的中心，围绕基层抗议组织的可行性仍然存在一些问题。SRC 召集的反对种族主义自治集体组织取消了针对印度法西斯主义的抗议活动，该抗议活动原定上周日举行，原因是担心冠

状病毒。本周有几个团体将会议移动到了线上。

Donohoe 已经组建了 COVID-19 响应小组，并计划在周五对情况进行正式审查。

由于对冠状病毒的担忧，SRC 于今年初短暂关闭。

还有更多新闻将在之后披露。

# 悉尼大学学联（USU）因新型冠状病毒，将进行线上换届选举，并取消戏剧节

Matthew Forbes 报道/ Zhiquan Gan 翻译

悉尼大学学联（USU）发布了了有关 COVID-19 大流行及其影响的官方回应。

在 USU 主席 Connor Wherrett 的声明中，USU 宣布“将尽可能缩小线下校园运营的规模，同时尽最大努力在短期内提供尽可能多的线上服务”。

像往年一样，根据悉尼大学学联章程，在 5 月为了学联 2020 年董事会选举，一个线上投票系统将被“不情愿”的提出并付诸实践。

鉴于该决定是由学联理事会未经表决而作出的，因此具有一定的争议性。此前在悉尼大学进行的线上选举中已经有候选人因违反选举章程以及作弊刷票而被指控。

为学联一些工作人员而安排的在家工作的试用期将于明天（3 月 17 日）开始，很可能从下周一（3 月 23 日）开始成为工作人员的主要工作方式。

但是重要的是，这将不包括在 USU 校园食品和饮料商店雇用的临时人员。预计这些工作点的员工会留下来，并与潜在的大量相关工作人员接触。

USU 还宣布，如果临时员工要求自我隔离或被诊断出患有新型冠状病毒，则将其提供带薪休假，尽管此休假时长被限制在 10 个工作日内。但是，如果员工不幸被诊断出新型冠状病毒，许多员工的休假时长将超过 10 个工作日，他们将无法获得带薪休假。世界卫生组织估计，从较轻度病毒中恢复需要 2 周，而从较严重的病毒中恢复则需要 3-6 周。

除了内部运作之外，USU 为应对这次疫情而采取的行动方案还将给校园文化和学生生活带来毁灭性的影响。USU 采取的最重要措施之一是取消所有 2020 年的校园戏剧节。这大概囊

括每个学院的戏剧节，从往年传统上来说是在 8 月举行。

此外，学联要求取消俱乐部和社团组织的所有活动，同时在上周五发送的电子邮件中回应了副校长 Michael Spence 的观点，并与社团理事们进行沟通以阻止聚会。

其他取消的校园活动包括复活节和澳大利亚辩论锦标赛，以及由每个学生缴纳的服务和设施费（SSAF）所资助的“Know Your Rights”和“Racism Sux”活动以及 2020 年帕拉第奥杯。

在未来几天，校园内与学联有关的许多地点都将关闭，包括在明天关闭国际学生休息室（ISL）。

此外，Wentworth 的 ISL 学生信息中心和 Manning House 学生信息中心也将从明天起关闭，取消了所有 USU 提供面对面援助的机会。

从下周一开始，Manning Bar 和

Hermann’s Bar 将停止日间营运和演出。Jane Foss Russell Building 中的悉尼大学纪念品商店将继续营业，而其在 Holme Building 的店面将关闭。

虽然学联的餐厅，如 Courtyard Restaurant & Bar 和 Carlsaw Kitchen 以及 Manning House 和 Wentworth Building 将保持开放，但 Engo Grill, Mallett St Cafe 和 Deck Cafe 将从 3 月 23 日起关闭。此外，Fisher 图书馆的售货亭将在周末关闭。

学联承诺将保持 Queer, Ethno-Cultural 和 Wom \* n 的房间以及 Incubate Hub 的开放状态，该中心将“远程”运营。

Wherrett 声明说，学联将视接下来的几个月中为“重建，聚焦和重新构想我们为学生社区提供服务的机会。”



# A numbers game: What university rankings don't tell you about the student experience

Jeffrey Khoo on what university rankings conceal about campus life.

A couple of weeks ago, the University of Sydney proudly announced that 31 of its subjects were ranked in the top 50 in the world. According to the QS 2020 Subject Rankings, USyd placed 4th in the world for sport and physical therapy, 13th for law and 1st in Australia (and in the top 20 globally) for performing arts.

University rankings are closely watched by the media and the tertiary education sector. They condense the vague notion of a university's quality into a nice, neat, comparable number. And a good rank is an attractive selling point to employers, students and potential sources of research funding.

However, a closer look at leading university rankings reveals that they tend to ignore criteria which are most relevant and pressing to students, such as teaching quality, overall student experience and graduate outcomes.

The three most high-profile university rankings are the QS World University Rankings (QS), Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE) and Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU). Each system also publishes separate lists for subject areas and geographical regions, as well as more tailored measures regarding, for example, graduate employability or young universities. Their methodologies suffer from two main misidentification problems: firstly, an unbalanced emphasis on research; and secondly, an over-reliance on subjective metrics.

40% of a university's QS ranking is based on a university's reputation among academics. Academics are surveyed annually on which institutions they believe represent the best in teaching and research in their field. THE, similarly, gives teaching and research surveys a combined weight of 34.5%. Granted, these surveys encompass a fair amount of academics across locations and fields,

and prevent academics from voting for their own university. However, critics argue that QS and THE assign too much importance on an essentially subjective measure of sentiment within the academic community.

Recent citations, a proxy for an institution's research impact, make up 30% of THE and 20% of QS rankings. QS also includes research income from grants and industry (8.5% in total), while ARWU evaluates how many highly-cited staff (20%) and papers published in high-profile journals Nature and Science (20%) a university has, in addition to general citations (20%). This is the starkest illustration of these rankings' research-heavy focus.

Unfortunately for students, none of the main rankings involve student surveys. They include, as proxies for teaching, staff-to-student ratios, international staff and student numbers and staff with PhDs.

These flawed methodologies lead to four main problems for students. Firstly, they essentially ignore issues of student satisfaction with teaching and overall campus experience, and substitute easily ascertainable data on labour market outcomes of graduates - such as employment rates, income or promotions per profession or industry - with subjective employer surveys. QS' Graduate Employability Rankings (under which USyd ranked 5th globally in 2019) consider employer surveys (30%), prevalence of high-profile alumni (25%), industry partnerships in placements and research (25%) and frequency of employer visits to universities, framed as "employer-student connections" (10%), with only 10% allocated to graduate employment rates. Not only is this an imprecise assessment of how well a particular degree prepares students for the real world, it indicates that the move

towards "graduate employability" at universities is pushed by employers, not students, reflecting a growing and divisive trend of corporatisation at universities.

Secondly, subjective measures such as teaching reputation surveys, especially from the providers and not the recipients of such teaching, are likely biased towards larger and more established universities, as their work is more visible, meaning that smaller universities producing quality output can find it hard to get recognised. Citations - with all the vagaries and uncertainties of publishing in journals - can also be similarly biased. In particular, ARWU includes as criteria the number of alumni (10%) and staff (20%) with Nobel Prizes or Fields Medals, resulting in a ranking which focuses on prestige at the top of the bell curve and which does not necessarily translate into positive results for the vast majority of students who do not receive instruction or supervision from these laureates.

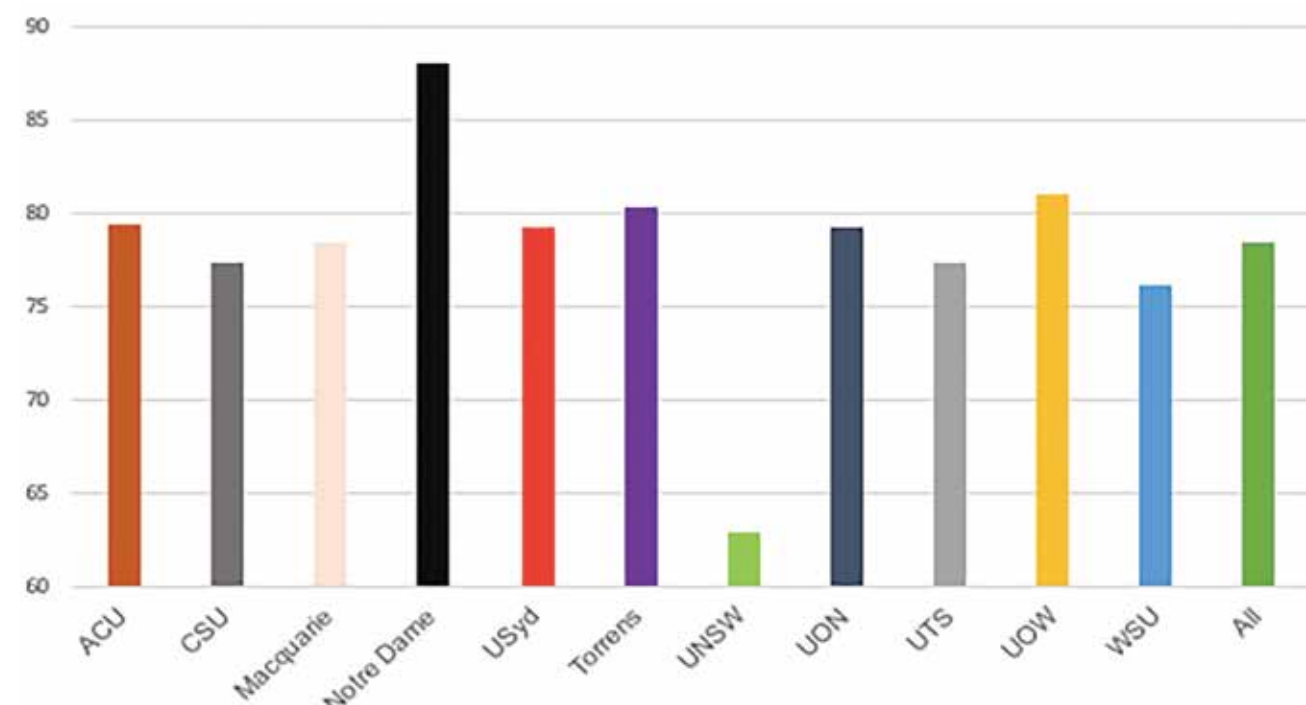
Thirdly, even if rankings are explicitly research-focused, the problem arises when they are so high-profile and used simplistically by media and universities alike to compare institutions and, critically, attract students. Most students at most universities are undergraduate coursework students, for whom the research function of their university is largely unseen and bears little personal relevance to the content they learn, the skills they acquire and the quality of education they receive. For a recent high-school leaver tossing up their options, these rankings are ill-suited to judge whether their future course - the educational environment and the concrete value of the skills and qualifications gained - is one of the best in the world. And finally, focusing too intently on rankings runs the danger

of universities substantially shifting out resources towards research, awards and income-generation, which is acceptable in itself, though not at the expense of teaching.

So how can we fully capture students' experiences or improve existing methodologies? The most obvious answer is to include concrete graduate outcomes and direct surveys of the student body, weighting these components heavily. Student surveys will still be subjective to an extent, but considering the large sample size and the critical financial stake students have in universities, they must be taken seriously to encourage universities to invest in quality teaching, facilities and resources, and make policy decisions in the best interests of students.

The Commonwealth Government recently released the results of the Student Experience Survey for 2019, revealing that USyd students were the second-least satisfied in Australia (behind UNSW, largely due to their unpopular trimester system). And rankings such as the THE University Impact Rankings, which measure universities' research priorities and impact against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, might more accurately reflect a university's contribution to social progress and global issues that students care about.

The headline numbers tell a different story to what is happening on the ground, in classrooms and on campus, leaving student voices ignored and unaccounted for. Ultimately, regardless of whether a university is research- or teaching-focused, students are the main source of revenue for the sector - and are impacted the hardest by ill-thought-out decisions. They should be front and centre in this public forum.



New South Wales universities ranked according to the student experience. Data from the 2019 Student Experience Survey.

# Bullshit: Truth under assault

Juliette Marchant tries to sort the facts from the crap.

Human beings are storytelling animals. We attempt to make sense of the world around us, and our place within it, by subconsciously constructing narratives that are cogent with our own beliefs and biases. However, this process, wherein we form our own version of 'the truth' from the assortment of discourse that surrounds us, often ends up revealing more about the person that constructed the story, than the event or issue that they intended to detail. But in times of global turmoil and crisis, wherein over 7.7 billion people are attempting to narrativise the present in simultaneity, there is a singular narrative that inevitably prevails; bullshit.

In 1986, Princeton philosopher Harry Frankfurt published an academic paper titled 'On Bullshit', wherein he outlined the quiddity of a term that is so ubiquitous in contemporary discourse that we tend to ignore its substance. His theory, centred around a simple dichotomy, separated liars from bullshitters by noting that "the liar cares about the truth and attempts to hide it; [while] the bullshitter doesn't care if what they say is true or false, but rather only cares whether their listener is persuaded". Thus, the most definitive attribute of bullshit, Frankfurt decides, is a complete disregard for the truth.

In view of this, it would not be a stretch to propose that Frankfurt's theory seems almost proleptically respondent to our current political climate. One need only look as far as the White House to see a political model hinged on the capital of bullshit,

and to sense that authority is now, more than ever, built on the foundations of charisma and blind persuasion. But what is most deeply disturbing (not to mention profoundly dangerous) is that in the wake of the global spread of COVID-19, bullshit narratives appear to hold as much currency as a 12-pack of toilet rolls.

In his address to the United States concerning COVID-19, and much of his recent Twitter content, President Donald Trump blatantly ignored the wills of the World Health Organisation, denoting the pandemic as the 'Chinese Virus.' This linguistic choice has served as a justification for countless narratives of hate, centred around xenophobic racial profiling that inextricably attaches the lethal virus to its place of origin, and Asian identity more broadly. However, when faced with facts concerning a spike in racially-targeted violence following his use of the alternative title, Trump claimed that his continued use of the term was 'not racist, not at all, [the virus] comes from China, that's why.' Mere days later, our own Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, responded to the current Australian supermarket crisis by taking on the strategy of a primary-school teacher with a nationalist bent; convincing the population that sharing is caring by painting the act of hoarding as 'ridiculous', and perhaps more importantly, 'un-Australian.'

But perhaps the most insidious bullshit that has emerged from the Corona crisis so far, is that which penetrated the Australian airwaves in

the early hours of the 16th of March. From a self-isolated studio, 78 year-old talk-back radio host Alan Jones stated that "We now seem to be facing the health version of global warming. Exaggeration in almost everything. Certainly in description, and certainly in behaviour." It is timely to note that the famed climate change denialist, along with almost half of his listeners, are in the age category most at risk of death from COVID-19.

These three men are no strangers to bullshit. Trump has produced more alternative than real facts since entering the White House in 2017, Morrison is still coming to terms with the reality of travel bans preventing his ability to flee this crisis and go to Hawaii, and Jones, the so-called 'controversial conservative,' has been so overtly racist, sexist and ignorant on radio that the only thing that is consistently conservative in his arguments is the supply of facts to substantiate them. As such, we have grown used to taking many of their comments with a grain of salt, because whilst genuinely meaningless discourse may be frustrating, it usually isn't taken seriously for all that long. Why then, in the midst of one of the most significant global health crises in recent history, does this attitude change?

Now is a period defined by two significant forces; great uncertainty and media noise. Both are parasitic organisms that not only feed off each other, but are sustained by a sense of anxiety and hysteria. This is where bullshit comes in. Bullshit is the perfect

click and share material. It is the content that gets billions of hits and millions of retweets because we share it in the hope that others will confirm our fury. At a time when people are literally divided, we find unity in our common opinions, and those common opinions are usually rooted in revulsion.

We have been told time and time again to seek the advice and opinions of medical professionals, but the reality is that our updates on COVID-19 are being fed to us second-hand through the mouths of politicians, radio jockeys, journalists, television presenters and celebrities on social media. Although we would like to assume that people with a platform at this time are well informed, we are still storytelling animals, and in view of this, we embellish, and sometimes even avoid the truth, to attract clicks, likes and shares.

Thus, although we have been quick to assign the title of the 'post-truth age' to this present era of communicative abundance, what is in jeopardy at this time is not the existence of truth, but trust.

Frankfurt did not propose the theory of bullshit merely because of a vocational bent to provide a philosophical essence to that which is unimportant. The theory of bullshit is forged on the foundations of the need to question ideas that are posed to us, and what better time is there to ask questions than now?

# This stimulus fails students

Finola Laughren argues Morrison's stimulus fails to recognise that most students are workers.

As I sit at home studying during the coronavirus crisis because I can't go into university, I hear Scott Morrison's voice. His latest announcement is that select welfare recipients will be given an additional \$550 per fortnight for the next 6 months, bringing the total fortnightly payment per recipient to above \$1,000. With industry grinding to a halt and the economic burden already being felt most viciously by precarious workers (who make up a staggering 40% of Australia's workforce) my initial reaction is relief. A closer look at this second stimulus package, however, reveals more of the same pro-capital agenda that the Federal Government has been peddling since their first day in parliament, and it's not good for students.

I could wax lyrical about the billions of dollars the government is directly and indirectly handing over to the big banks (who by all accounts should still be reeling from reputational damage caused by the banking royal commission) to prop up the financial system, but I won't. What I want to focus on is the unjust binary the government has drawn between students and workers, and the way this has been deployed to

deny students economic security in this period of radical uncertainty.

Students who are on Youth Allowance (excluding those on Youth Allowance for Job Seekers), Austudy or ABStudy will not receive the additional payment support. The very term 'student' has been used to obscure the fact that, except for a minority who receive private financial support, students are workers who study.

Let's think about what exclusion from this stimulus package means for most students. Students are much more likely to work in insecure, casual jobs, due to the competing demands of study, and a lack of qualifications. If, because of this crisis, a student is let go from their insecure employment, they will not receive any government support. The government has not ensured that employers of students have any responsibility to support them either. This means that the most that students like me will have left to survive on is \$300 (including the rental assistance payment) per week. This is before rent, which at a conservative estimate costs Sydney students at least \$200 per week. In the context of a necessary transition from face-to-face to online learning,

university fees remain unchanged and it is once again students who are at a loss.

The potential impacts of this crisis on student welfare are hard to overstate. The instability of the coronavirus inherently generates anxiety about the future. Add to this a government that refuses to provide security and you are left with students who are feeling physically and mentally exhausted, and unable to focus on their studies.

What students need now more than ever is security. The government should take this opportunity to provide us with assurance that we are valued, and that our education still matters. The most obvious way to do this would be to double its woefully low student payment schemes. They could also offer free university throughout this period or significantly decrease student fees, but they have chosen not to.

In the absence of student support from the government, the same old message is loud and clear - if we cannot afford to study without working then we are not deserving of the 'privilege' of tertiary education.

## How does (n't) the stimulus affect students?

### Coronavirus Supplement

Students on Youth Allowance won't receive the "Coronavirus Supplement" that will temporarily double the JobSeeker (formerly NewStart payments).

Some students might be able to transfer onto JobSeeker instead, but the supplement won't start for more than a month (27 April) and will have to comply with rigorous job seeking requirements to keep the payment.

### One-off stimulus

Students on Youth Allowance will be eligible for the \$750 one-off supplement, to be paid out on 31 March. Another payment will be paid out in July, but only if you haven't received the "Coronavirus Supplement."

### HECS

The government hasn't announced any changes to fees or payment of HECS debts.



# Christchurch changed nothing

*Daanyal Saeed reflects on the material impacts of last year's tragedy.*

We amble our way through the world, life punctured with world events that have meaning to us. I'm Victorian, so my life's progress is measured, like a metronome, by AFL Grand Finals and Boxing Day Tests. I also grew up Muslim in the West at the turn of the century — and this has a very particular meaning to diaspora Muslims; even more so to those who are visibly Muslim. It means our lives are punctuated by altogether more sombre events and we live in constant anticipation of the next, bracing ourselves for the deluge of hatred that accompanies it. For those of us that are visibly marginalised, by way of hijab or complexion, we have come to terms with the idea that we don't get jobs like white people, or that we date differently, or that we make less money. Many of us in a millennial context have made our peace with that. We never make peace with the loathing; with our categorisation as lesser-than. It is a point of incandescent rage in the Muslim community that we never reconcile — why won't it just fucking stop?

March 15, 2019. Christchurch.

51 dead, and an outpouring of grief and support from voices I'd never heard, unlike anything I'd ever known. Perhaps it was the closeness, compounded by the fact it was an Australian who perpetuated it. There was no shock in the Muslim community — hatred of us is well-documented. It has been encouraged by our elected officials in the name of the fabled marketplace of ideas, as long as I have known. After the attack, we were told the narrative would

change; that it would be different now.

Why then, are my Twitter mentions filled with neo-Nazis, more emboldened than ever? Why is it that we have seen an uptick in Islamophobic hate crimes, even after Christchurch made it unpalatable for even One Nation to go on the attack against Muslim communities? How is it that neo-Nazism is alive and well on campus, an arena that supposedly suffocates free speech with the vice-grip of the do-gooder left? Why am I still on edge, waiting for the next brown terrorist to shatter this façade of calm?

It is because even in the face of death, we never actually confronted Brenton Tarrant's ideology as a nation. When the Prime Minister was taken to task on national television last year for suggesting in 2011 that shadow Cabinet leverage anti-Muslim sentiment in the community, the Prime Minister explicitly rejected addressing any issue of historic Islamophobia in the Government or his Party, and spoke instead at length about his personal reputation in the western suburbs. While ASIO warned of right wing extremism and white supremacy as the most significant emerging threat to security in Australia, we saw the responsible Minister focusing on a confected threat of "left wing Islamist groups"; consistent with his turn away from the specific demonization of Muslims he engaged in pre-Christchurch, in favour of his newfound position as a culture warrior.

It seems an uncomfortable reconciliation for Australians; for white

people — built upon (an obviously problematic) notion that this nation was settled in a similar vein to America, with the aim of freedom of religious pursuit. Therefore, the idea that we can be so explicitly Islamophobic (as if White Australia didn't prohibit Muslim immigration) is at odds with our idealistic construction of Australian identity. It is an ideological dance we are forced into with every Breivik or Tarrant or Jones in this country, and it is rooted in the imperialism Western governments so gleefully engage in. We so deeply and so quickly politicised the role that Muslims have to play in the West since the turn of the century that it became partisan — indeed, the Opposition opposed the decision to enter Iraq, and the government had no majority in the Senate. There is little question of how the War on Terror fed off, encouraged and exacerbated Islamophobia in the West — this much is clear and uncontroversial, whether it was propagated by Bush, Blair or Howard. With unilateral action being taken in Australia to follow the United States into Iraq, there was little opportunity for any degree of cross-chamber or public resistance. Putting aside that the rationales for Iraq were entirely confected of themselves, our course of action in 2003 laid the path for the War to become a partisan issue, and by extension the role that Muslims have to play in this country, and in the War.

We were forced into perpetual apology, or otherwise, a distancing

from our faith. Any public response to the contrary invites a revocation of your right to Australian identity, even if it is so mild as to simply reject the basis for Western neo-imperialism, or one's relation to fundamentalists on the other side of the world. To be with us was to be progressive, and to be against us was not. Such a fundamentally flawed binary model of identity results in what we saw a year ago on Channel Ten — the Prime Minister, presented with a decade of Islamophobic behaviour in his ranks, sought not to address it but to run. He had little choice; commit the grave political sin of throwing his colleagues under the bus in favour of bolstering his own leadership credentials to a substantial portion of "moderate" Australia, or otherwise admit that there is a tension between acknowledging the humanity of Muslims and efficient conservative leadership in this country.

When we shove political issues into partisan boxes, we devalue them. In devaluing the Muslim community in the War on Terror to a partisan "issue", we have failed them. We forfeited our ability to substantively address the Islamophobia we perpetuated for the sake of neo-colonialist wars on the other side of the world. When I ask myself why nothing feels any different since Christchurch, perhaps it's because it is no longer possible to think differently, not as long as the War on Terror rages on.

# We need more law student activists

*Deaundre Espejo thinks law students need to get involved in social movements.*

Social movements have been instrumental in shaping our legal landscape. Yet it seems that the word "activism" has become a dirty word in the law student community. For those in the legal field, activism is often perceived to be an unproductive pursuit, with community and pro bono work or law reform considered the primary means of change. I think that we need to reconsider this rigid view of the relationship between law, politics, and activism. Ultimately, more law students and lawyers should be standing on the front lines of our social movements.

While it is not within the scope of this article to give a detailed account of what activism means, I will address two common misconceptions. Firstly, that activism consists only of public demonstrations or civil disobedience. While these do play an important role, activism also encompasses acts of self-education, lifestyle choices, and conversation, all with a mind to improving the system. Essentially, it's about building a movement of people that care about a particular cause. Secondly, that activism exists in binary; you either devote all your time to it or you don't do anything at all. Such a way of thinking is prohibitive and makes getting involved seem insurmountable. You can support and promote action on social issues while going about your day.

Law students' aversion to activism largely stems from the way we are taught. Because of how curriculums are structured, we tend to view the law with an instrumental, technocratic and

doctrinal mindset. We spend most of our degree focusing on vocational skills, learning to extract legal principles from court decisions and applying them to hypothetical scenarios, leaving very little room to meaningfully discuss policy considerations or normative arguments. In other words, we examine what the law is, but rarely what the law should be. While this equips students with practical and technical skills, it restricts us from asking critical questions about how the law interacts with broader structures of gender, race, and class, and results in an arbitrary distinction between legal problems and societal problems.

Further, the social and political forces that have impacted legal developments are invisible within the law school. We are cautioned against excessive politicisation of the courts and judicial activism, and are instructed to read pages upon pages of landmark court judgements completely devoid of their historical contexts. This skews our collective perspective on the value of activism, leading many to believe that social movements have little to do with the law. On the contrary, many doctrines that now define the Australian legal system were responses to social movements.

The Mabo decision, which overturned the long-standing legal fiction of terra nullius, was a pivotal moment in the Aboriginal land rights movement. It came after decades of protests by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples beginning in the 60s - the Yirrkala Bark Petitions, the Wave

Hill Walk Off - and a subsequent string of legislative reform. The judgement in the Tasmania Dam case, which enabled the Federal Parliament to give effect to Australia's international treaties, was handed down after a blockade by environmental activists and the Hawke government promising to stop the construction of the Franklin Dam.

What, then, should we do as aspiring lawyers to meaningfully contribute to social change? Pro bono and community legal work are an important means of assisting people experiencing disadvantage and the organisations that support them. Further, participating in law reform campaigns will allow you to play a critical role in shaping the development of law in Australia, and is vital to ensuring that legislative changes are backed by consultation and sound research. Many people choose to draw the line here; indeed, there is a growing ideology within the legal community that favours such "practical" forms of action over activism. However, I would argue the natural next step is activism for two reasons.

Firstly, while community legal work can effectively solve individual problems, one must go deeper in order to address broader systemic issues that produce such individual problems in the first place. This is precisely what activism purports to do. A pro bono lawyer will be able to help an Aboriginal person secure housing, whereas an Indigenous rights activist will be able to raise public awareness about discrimination Aboriginal tenants face in the rental market; the starting point for reducing

homelessness in Aboriginal populations altogether.

Secondly, there is only so much we can do by simply changing the law. It is not possible to achieve structural change through a top-down mandate, as entrenched practices do not easily lend themselves to codification and statutory restrictions. Instead, it requires concerted and consistent efforts by citizens, government and corporations to transform our political culture and effectuate such change. Recent efforts to ensure genuine compliance with existing environmental legislation, for example, have all been obstructed by a lack of public and political will to prioritise climate action.

This is not to undermine the importance of community legal work and law reform, but rather to say that service, politics, and activism should not be compartmentalised. Positioning lawyers, judges, or legislators as the primary agents of change ignores valuable opportunities for movement building, tends to disempower affected communities, and makes any prospect of successful collective action impossible.

Law students should aspire to be more than neutral service providers. As gatekeepers of complex legal knowledge, as future lawmakers and as administrators of justice, we hold important institutional power that can radically shape the outcomes of our society. We should use that power to strengthen our social movements, and proactively fight for a more just society alongside our fellow activists.

# Accessibility for everyone: COVID-19 and the power of moral imagination

*Noa Zulman reflects on the ways in which universities fail disabled students, and all students.*

When I first started university, as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed Arts student back in 2016, I did so with hopes that my tertiary education would be a far more accessible experience than my high school one had been. Gone were the stringencies of the HSC, with its archaic Special Provisions system and rigid assessment methods that hadn't changed since the 1950s. I imagined university to be a disabled student's utopia: the freedom to choose my own courses (favouring those without exams, of course!), design my own timetable, and adequate resources to support my learning needs. And yet, when I arrived on campus, I soon found that academic life for disabled students was not as rosy as I had been led to believe by the shiny pamphlets distributed by my school's career counsellor.

What I discovered over the course of my four years at the University of Sydney was a hodgepodge of contradictory policies and procedures

concerning accessible education. There were lecturers who refused to record lectures out of fear that their intellectual property would be stolen, course convenors who believed that uploading class materials to Canvas would encourage laziness amongst the cohort, and tutors who enforced mandatory attendance with an iron fist and very little clemency for those too ill or too busy to attend.

For the most part, I bore the brunt of these ableist policies alone, learning the precise words to include within a Special Considerations application so that your chronic illness doesn't cost you a cool 25% of your grade when you happen to submit that English essay a few days late, mastering the art of sounding forceful — but not too forceful — when you request that your Monday morning, 8am psychology lecture is recorded, and occasionally cutting your losses and copping that Absent Fail because showing up to class when your

debilitating social anxiety flares up just isn't worth the suffering it would entail. Of course, Disability Services exists to support disabled students in navigating this woefully inaccessible system. But what happens when everyone runs the risk of falling ill? How are our educational institutions meant to cope with widespread disease and panic, when they can't even cater to students with on-going, well-documented medical conditions?

Such is the position we find ourselves in with the recent outbreak of COVID-19. As the University scrambles to find online solutions to the novel challenges wrought by the coronavirus, the cracks in its institutional design become glaringly obvious. While we might laugh at the lag times on Zoom classrooms and the absurd alternatives to assessments that some academics have proposed, I believe that this crisis exposes something far more pernicious about the Ivory Tower: that it was never

built to cater to the most vulnerable amongst us. No longer is accessibility a fringe concern for a small number of students, but an urgent principle that we must enact if we wish to survive the coming months with minimal interruptions to our education.

I believe that the coronavirus pandemic presents us with an opportunity to exercise our moral imaginations — to cultivate empathy for those of us who do not share the privileges of good health and economic stability. To demand that our universities do better in redesigning their institutional policies, rather than simply slapping a band-aid on a wound that has been weeping for decades. And to envision what a truly just educational experience — one that caters to all students — looks like and to begin to fight for it. After all, our lives might just depend on it.



# Contain the virus and support the vulnerable

Liam Donohoe, SRC President, on how we should respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Yesterday, the Reserve Bank of Australia announced that it would commence Quantitative Easing (QE), an unconventional monetary policy which hopes to stimulate the economy by printing money and purchasing government bonds. Putting aside technicalities, the commencement of QE — which was first pioneered by America's Federal Reserve in response to the GFC (to questionable effect) — seems a significant indication that the government, or at least the wonks running the bureaucracy, are scared about the economic implications of the COVID-19 outbreak.

They have every reason to be worried. The past few months have already brought about significant economic decline, with the outbreak seriously affecting production and consumption in the People's Republic of China and, thanks to globalisation, the entire world. Alongside declining demand for products and a corresponding decrease in trade, supply decreases have increased costs, particularly of goods essential to global supply chains, which has created a vicious feedback loop where demand and net output have declined in turn. Australia is about to experience a similar dent in production and consumption, with workplaces and shops preparing to close down indefinitely, and an end to our 28 years of uninterrupted economic growth seems certain.

But as bad as general economic malaise may be, words like output and statistics like Gross Domestic Product don't really mean anything. Indeed, what's bad is not the scoreboard, but what it reflects about the lives caught up in the system it tallies. And there are countless people who are now staring down the barrel of a chaotic recession which may well bring about permanent and fatal deteriorations in our quality of life.

I think, in particular, of people who work in demand-driven industries, whose entire business models depend on willing consumers participating in commercial exchanges. I think, in particular, of casual workers, employed by businesses with no reason to roster them on and with neither the savings nor selflessness to compensate them for lost shifts. I think, in particular, of people who do sex work, who work in retail, or hospitality, or who tutor people in-person from time-to-time. I think, therefore, of students, who overwhelmingly work demand-driven, casual jobs, and who are likely to be without income for an indefinite period of time.

Stimulus measures announced so far do little to reassure or provide for these students and workers. Sure, "support for business investment" and "cash flow assistance for businesses" might theoretically trickle down, but, aside from measures to maintain the employment and wages of apprentices, there is nothing in the specific policies which seem all that helpful to those hit hardest by this crisis. Grants to businesses will help their owners stay afloat, but there's nothing requiring them to use the extra money to pay workers' wages. Incentives to invest

make no sense when there's no captive audience willing to spend on and provide a return to investments. And, in general, the failure of trickle down mechanisms is so well-established that I won't bother canvassing them.

Stimulus payments to households also leave a lot to be desired. Putting aside the obvious problem — that a \$750 payment to Newstart recipients already living under the poverty line simply isn't enough — the one-off stimulus payments also aren't going to find their way to many of those who really need it. While the usual Liberal favourites — pensioners and veterans — get a handout, students and casual shift workers have been totally overlooked. The Commonwealth has not announced a single policy so far for those on Youth Allowance, and, even if they do, eligibility is already so constrained that only full-time, domestic students would stand to benefit anyway. The strict eligibility criteria means that very few students even receive Youth Allowance to begin with, and the inherently invasive, bureaucratic, and slow process means it's unlikely payments will be increased or updated in time to make up for decreases in shifts and projected income. And, as if all that weren't enough, students considering dropping to part-time study, or dropping out altogether, will lose this vital income stream, forcing them to decide between an income or being a guinea pig in an overpriced online learning trial.

In sum, the government's "stimulus" provides a lifeline to business owners and pensioners but absolutely nothing for people whose income is at serious threat. Even without the price increases and supply shocks we're likely to see, this spells serious trouble for many. While the impacts this has on study and willingness to undertake higher education may seem distant, an inability to purchase essential goods and services is an obvious and immediate threat. How are shift-less retail workers going to get groceries? How are sex workers going to pay rent? How the fuck are people who work pay cheque to pay cheque going to look their children in the eye to tell them there's no money left?

Without pressure, future stimulus measures won't make much of a difference either. If we're lucky, the keepers of the purse might throw some scraps our way; a one-off payment to Youth Allowance recipients would at least show that they have about the same contempt for students as they do for the elderly and unemployed. But in reality, the Liberal government — like every Labor government since Hawke — cannot move past fallacious neo-liberal economic assumptions, making a genuine response unfathomable. The economic and biological crisis didn't start today, or last week, or even in January; it started decades ago, when the Right won (an element of) the culture war and successfully structured the economy around an obsessive focus on minimising government spending. We have long suffered the consequences of this broken system, but sadly it seems that suffering is about to be more acute

and obvious than ever before.

With some estimating that up to 60 percent of the population might be affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, the impact on hospital resources could well prove catastrophic. We simply don't have the space in our Intensive Care Units, or beds in our wards, to deal with the estimated 5% of those cases which would be critical. We don't have the ventilators to deal with the thousands of people who will be choking on their last breath in waiting rooms. We don't have the staff to manage the chaos. We can talk about flattening the curve as much as we want, but we're going to have to turn the curve into a pancake if we want to keep it within our present capacities, an outcome which seems impossible now that (as of yesterday) NSW is experiencing exponential contagion.

Of course, it didn't have to be this way. Activists have protested and bemoaned every cent cut from health funding, but the government and their monied supporters simply didn't care. Doctors warned the government that our system was already in crisis, that we already were failing the sick and vulnerable, but they simply did not listen. And smart economists, not taken in by the ideological tricks of neoliberalism, told them that they could increase investments in essential services and still have plenty left over to sustain a generous social security system for all who needed it, but they simply choose to do otherwise so they could prioritise their economic agenda and class interests. Indeed, the government certainly has the capacity for a comprehensive and sufficient response to this emergency, for instance by printing money to pay off debts which funds these schemes (or QE, but directed to programs which help people, rather than shareholders).

We still have a chance to reverse this legacy and secure our material and biological interests for the next few months. The University of Sydney Students' Representative Council has started a petition which demands the government implement a number of essential policies and programs; anything short of those policies and programs will lead to either a large outbreak or significant economic decline or both. These demands implore the government to:

- \* Drastically increase funding for hospitals and medical response, including by:

- \* Significantly increasing our supply of essential resources like ventilators, testing kits, and antiviral medications.

- \* Underwriting all staff expenses at hospitals (including significant overtime for doctors, nurses, etc.), so that doctors / hospital directors do not feel constrained by costs and can respond as effectively as possible.

- \* Establishing make-shift testing centres in public areas.

- \* Establishing distribution centres for medicines, masks, soaps, sanitiser, etc.

- \* Developing plans to repurpose hotels and other centres as quarantine and hospital beds.

- \* Immediately commencing construction of new hospitals and expanding existing hospital areas.

- \* Providing free flu shots to all.

- \* Establish distribution centres across the country which provide free food, sanitary items, etc.

- \* Require and subsidise paid special leave for all workers in all industries.

- \* Immediately relax eligibility criteria for Youth Allowance so part-time and deferred students are eligible.

- \* Significantly increase all welfare payments, including Newstart, Youth Allowance, and Rent Assist payments, and devise other strategies for ensuring casuals and other economically precarious people have access to an income, can pay rent / secure accommodation, and acquire essential goods and services.

- \* Undertake urgent reforms to the National Disability Insurance Scheme so that people with disabilities have assurances of care and medical supplies.

- \* Immediately increase funding to tertiary education institutions so they have the liquidity to bear any costs incurred while responding comprehensively to biological concerns, compensating students for displacement, and securing learning quality and staff conditions.

- \* Extend / remove the Census date for semester 1 2020, and waive HECS fees for any students who cancel semester 1 enrollment.

- \* Freeze all rent increases and put a moratorium on rental evictions.

- \* Abandon their commitment to a budget surplus in the next 2-3 years, and undertake significant money printing and borrowing so they can fund significant stimulus and subsistence strategies.

- \* Reallocate all staff and resources in private hospitals to the public system, including by opening access to wards and bed-space in private hospitals.

- \* Deploy significant staff and resources to enable home nursing care, and ensure rural areas, Indigenous communities, and nursing homes have capacity to help the most vulnerable.

- \* Institute social distancing as much as possible, including by closing schools and government workplaces, but without utilising the military, police, or authoritarian / punitive responses in so doing.

*I urge all students to sign the petition and join our broader campaign to achieve these health and economic responses. The fate of countless people depends on us defeating the right-wing belief that people are expendable and that money is a scarce, sacred entity to which only the powerful should have access. This is not a new fact, and this is not a new challenge, but it has never been more stark or critical than now. Rising to this challenge will not only secure our immediate future, but our entire lives, bringing about the paradigm shift needed to solve the myriad existential threats faced by our generation. We don't just have a world to win, we have a world to save.*



## Chinese attitudes towards marriage: Past and present

Words by Lei Yao, Zhiquan Gan and Nina Dillon Britton  
Cover art by Ash Duncan



In 2019, China reported its lowest rate of marriage ever, indicating increasing numbers of young Chinese people are choosing to delay marriage, or not get married at all. That change is more broadly indicative of the important social transformations in contemporary Chinese society: growing financial insecurity, acceptance of non-marital sex and increased independence of young people, especially young women, from their parents. Views of marriage have changed drastically over the last few decades, and many of today's young people see marriage as far less important than their parents' generation. We interviewed young Chinese young people from diverse socio-economic and geographical backgrounds, and found that the concept of marriage differs from person to person.

### “The Right Age”

For the young people we spoke to, about half said there was no “right age” to get married, and the other half said less than 25 years old. The average age of marriage has increased as more young people prioritise their careers. Over the past decade, Chinese media has increasingly talked about the “problem” of “leftover women” (剩女), provoking increased anxieties over women who marry late, or choose not to marry at all. But many women face the “double burden” of meeting the expectation of getting married by a certain age and succeeding in their careers. For some young men, getting married earlier was seen as a career benefit: “Getting married early may be better for an individual to focus on his future career but early marriage is just a personal choice,” a male undergraduate tells us.

In Ying Yue's small hometown, there was a significant pressure to get married in your twenties. “If you miss the best age for marriage, it will not be easy to find a husband to marry. I have an elder sister who is not married and is in her thirties. In the end, she can only choose those who are going to have their second marriage, or a less attractive partner.”

Getting married in this age range is more strongly expected of women, particularly in poorer areas. One study indicates that most surveyed mothers prioritised having their daughters marry early over them having successful careers.

But the burden of a needing a wedding before you're 25 doesn't only fall on women. For young people of any gender, particularly those living in competitive larger cities, getting married at the “right age” clashes with expectations of getting married when you're financially secure. That



problem has only grown in recent years. Since the 2008 financial crisis, increasing numbers of Chinese people have begun to perceive their jobs as precarious, and therefore feel unequipped to start a family. But many Chinese young people try to meet those expectations in novel ways: increasing numbers of young people, for example, have “naked marriages” (裸婚) where they get married with the “four nos” — no house, no ring, no car and no ceremony — in order to save on costs and wed earlier.

Yet, many of the young people we spoke to rejected the expectation completely. “My family is a remarried family, which has experienced both fragmentation and happiness,” Nian Zhen\* tells us. “In my experience, a late marriage will be more stable because it has a certain material basis.” Many of the women we spoke to also expressed that they weren't sure if they wanted to get married at all, and they were fine with that. “Even if I do not marry, it will not have a negative impact on my personal values,” a woman undergraduate told us.

### Changing sexual relationships

Increasing acceptance of sexual relationships outside of marriage has also changed marriage trends. “China is not as conservative as it used to be, especially in China's big cities, such as Guangzhou and Shanghai, where the sexual cultures are very open,” Zhi Ruo\*, a recent high school graduate tells us. Almost all the young people we spoke to said they approved of sex before marriage. “Eastern and Western cultures are gradually approaching each other,” one male student told us. “It is more and more acceptable to have sexual relationships or physical contact outside of serious romantic relationships.” Several people suggested that this change has been particularly significant for women: “More Chinese women are abandoning their sexual preconceptions and feel free to have sex outside a relationship,” a different male student says.

But acceptance is not universal, differing along generational and geographic lines. As Zhi notes, “China is a very large country, the degree of tolerance and openness to sexual behavior varies by region.” One study indicates that young people

from rural areas and from cities report having sex at similar rates (about 20% from each group described themselves as “sexually experienced”), but young people in rural areas can feel the judgement of small towns much more harshly. “In a relatively small city like Wenzhou, everyone's thinking is more traditional,” Ying Yue\*, a 23 year old mother, says. “Few people now blame girls for having a private sexual life, especially in big cities. But here, if a girl has many boyfriends, or she has a lot of sexual experience, this may still be discussed behind the scenes.”

“The topic of sex is a very grey area,” Zhi agrees. “It is not necessarily true that the backward places are more conservative, but you will face greater public pressure in these places and, therefore, you may not be able to accept open marriages or relationships.”

“Slut-shaming remains deeply embedded in Chinese culture,” Jingjing Zhang, who runs the Chinese feminist *Wo Men Podcast*, argues. “But



Art by Alex Mcleay

recent high profile cases of sexual assault, [such as that of Liu Jingyao] have caused many to discuss this shaming.”

Many of the young people we spoke to condemned the shaming. “Many people use the term ‘slut’ to humiliate and attack women,” a young male Commerce student tells us, “but I hope these voices will become less and less prominent.”

“It is contemptible to use the word “slut” to humiliate women, and it is a personal humiliation,” another male student told us. For some, sexual experience implied a woman was straying from traditional Chinese values. “If a girl takes contraceptive pills, the first impression is that the girl's mind is more westernised, that she's psychologically lacking in love or is more lonely.”

Several people surveyed described casual sex as “westernised” forms of relationships, carrying particular stigmas. “I feel Western dating culture is too casual for me,” Feng Mian, a second-year Arts student, tells us. “Men are attacked because of their lack of sexual experience, and women are attacked because they have too much sexual experience, reflecting the inequality between men and women.”

Despite hope that views are changing, most of the young people we spoke to believed a woman's value remained dictated by her sexual experience. “Boys will use the good-looking girls they have had as a display of capital, just like how many people show off their game rankings,” an IT Masters student tells us.

That sad fact is particularly important for young women looking to get married. “At the age of marriage,” a different male student tells us, “men are more likely to choose long-term partners with more traditional values, and will look down on girls who are ‘slutty’ or sexually attractive.”

A wife who is a virgin remains highly prized by many people. “The Chinese are still very traditional,” Zhi concurs. “They will hope to have a partner with less sexual experience, and even a virgin complex.” “I think the virgin complex is really sick,” Feng agrees.

### Family Expectations

Much of the social pressure around marriage relates to ensuring your family is supported. “There is still a social pressure that requires the care of the elderly,” Zhi tells us, “and that means you need to find another person to share the pressure of this care, as well as provide for the psychological needs of parents.” Several respondents also referred to marriage as a “social responsibility.” Though arranged marriages have been banned since the Communist Party passed the Marriage Law of 1950 (a progressive piece of legislation that also legalised divorce), Yin tells us that many parents were still

heavily involved in match-making for their children. In her hometown “after graduation, [many young people] will marry through the arrangement of parents or a blind date,” she says. One study indicates that, though arranged marriages have decreased over the past several decades, they remain relatively common, particular in rural areas.

But as such arrangements become increasingly uncommon for Chinese young people, their experiences of marriage become more different from their parents'.

“My grandparents lived in an environment where marriage between members of the proletariat was distributed by the state and the couple would only know each other after marriage,” Zhi tells us. “I think this new era will be a lot more free, and most people choose their partners based on their feelings.”

Having parents that had an arranged marriage was a common experience for the people we talked to. “My parents were arranged to marry since they were born,” Ying says. “The first time they met each other was on their wedding day. My father sold a pig, and then married my mother as a gift. My mother felt like she was being sold.” Her own marriage feels very different to her mothers, echoing Zhi's sentiment that the era has “a lot more freedom.”

“I feel that my current marriage is very happy. My mother often tells me to be content and cherish my current marriage.”

Despite Shanghai's Marriage Market (where parents advertise their unwed children on umbrellas in People's Park) attracting recurring exposés in Western media, the young people we spoke to indicated their parents were less involved in their love lives than in the past. Though some of the people we spoke to mentioned parental involvement in match-making and pressure, none told us that their parents had arranged for them to meet their current partners. Instead, unmarried people in relationships had largely met their partners alone and had begun honest conversations with their partners about their futures together.

“I already have a boyfriend and we want to get married and have a future together,” second-year Arts student Feng Mian\* tells us. “Marriage can only be based on the fact that we like each other so much.”

Young people have increasing independence from their parents in making decisions about their partners, particularly those studying overseas away from home. “The acceptance of sex education is increasing, and more and more people have the

ability to think independently,” an undergraduate studying in Australia tells us. More broadly, it's increasingly common for children to leave the home before getting married, and gaining independence in doing so.

Many of the young people we spoke also highlighted the importance of an equal power balance in heterosexual marriage. “Only by feeling equal can you respect yourself and the other person peacefully,” Yin advised us. “A strong power imbalance will gradually erode a relationship.”

“In my parent's marriage, men and women are also equal. They disagree with the traditional gender roles that suggest ‘men are outside working, females are inside raising children.’”

Everyone we spoke to emphasised the importance of knowing and loving their partners deeply before considering marriage. “Marriage requires a deep understanding of the other party before marrying,” one male student told us. “Go out and travel together, live together for a year!”

“Love is a necessary premise for marriage,” a different student told us. “It is impossible to imagine living with a person who one does not love for a long period of time.”

But many people also emphasised that marriage was a serious material transaction. “The issue of property needs to be taken into consideration,” Zhi tells us. “From a historical perspective, marriage itself is a model of legally effective property protection.”

### What does getting married mean today?

Young Chinese people navigate complex social trends of increasing financial insecurity, independence of women, sexual liberation and less involvement of their parents in their love lives. Marriage remains highly valued as important to family and community, with young people and especially women often facing rigid expectations about the appropriate times to marry. But many young people are rejecting, or at least questioning, the social expectations and redefining marriage as a celebration of individual agency, maturity and love of your partner. As one respondent put it, “Most people haven't grown up and don't know how to be a mature and responsible person. Only when one has the ability to love and understands the art of love can one truly love.”

\*All names have been changed.



A young Chinese couple. Photo: Sherry Wang and Leo



## My magnum opus

Shania O'Brien has something to say about the concept of great works.

I am full of so many wants. Too many to prioritise; and so they all feel desperate. Most of all, I always thought I wanted to write. But that wasn't enough; I wanted everything I wrote to be better than the last. I wanted it to be more intellectual, more engaging, more professional. These expectations were a given, because what is the point of doing anything if I know I have created something better in the past? That, of course, is the worst thought I have ever had. It stifled my growth, prevented me from writing for months, kept me from doing something I believed I enjoyed so much because there was no chance of it being perfect.

The concept of the magnum opus, the masterpiece, dates back to the seventeenth century. It is considered to be a creative's greatest work, the best thing they will ever produce. This status is bestowed upon said piece of work based on critical acclaim and appeal to the masses. There are many archetypal masterpieces: Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Ecstasy of Saint Teresa, Sandro Botticelli's The Birth of Venus, George Eliot's Middlemarch.

In a way, those artists are immortalised in their respective great works, defined forever in relation to a sculpture, a painting, a novel. In alchemy, the ultimate goal is known as the magnum opus. It is the process of using prima materia to create the philosopher's stone, the elixir of life. The concept is used as a model for the individuation process and as a device in art and literature. The aim is to attain self-realization, communion with divinity, and spiritual immortality. Or, better verbalised by Donna Tartt in *The Secret History*, to live forever.

The term has been misused so often

recently that the gravity of it is almost lost. I see people tweeting about a TikTok being their magnum opus, posting about a loaf of baked bread being their magnum opus, boasting about a 3D-printed frog being their magnum opus. My first thought was: who are you to decide this is your great work? I



just accepted that it was commonplace to have someone else determine what the best thing I ever do will be. I was so focused on ticking off imaginary boxes, waiting to be seen, wanting to be recog-

nised. My second thought was: who am I to decide you can do better?

My creative process is a strange one. The pressure to create is ever-present, clinging to me like acrylic paint on a white t-shirt. But writing is never as easy as finding something I am interested in and putting it on paper; I have to obsess,

pass. The only questions I ask myself during this are: is it better? Is it worth it? Is this the best you can do? Idea after idea came to me, begging, blossoming, beseeching. I have abandoned hundreds of stories because I thought of something better, hundreds of concepts I didn't bother enough to develop because I saw something slightly similar, hundreds of drawings left unfinished because I couldn't get the perspective right.

There are more things we create than art. Forming relationships with other people, and building a healthy one with myself will always be the thing I am most proud of. There are so many nuances of creation, of bringing things into existence, and most of them have nothing to do with museum displays and bestseller lists.

My magnum opus will never be something I write, or draw, or paint, because neither of those things is the best I have to offer. I am not, nor will I ever be, the sum of art I produce to entertain other people. The concept of being worth what you can offer is a neoliberal idea that shouldn't have any place in the world of art. The only reason I write, the only reason I am able to write is because of the people around me. I need to let go of my magnum opus, and come to terms with the fact that truly great things aren't quantifiable. I don't need to be prodigious, better, more. I don't need to concede agency over my work and let other people decide what is most valuable. The relationships I have chosen are the best of me.

Art by Claire Ollivain.

## Review: Room 2 Radio's online nightclub

Chuyi Wang thinks you should probably listen to your Soundcloud playlist instead.

Propelled to a kind of frenzied hype by the novelty of self-isolation, Room 2 Radio's virtual nightclub experience premiered last Friday on Twitch.tv to an audience of supposedly 11,000 unique viewers. Proudly claiming in their Facebook description to be 'Sydney's first online nightclub,' the event was meant to provide a digital space to relax and socialise with other passionate party-goers in the wake of the coronavirus crisis. Indeed, in such troubled times, what could be better than a spot of dance music?

Yet, it was immediately obvious at around 8:15pm, mere minutes after the virtual doors had opened, that something was very wrong in God's CDJ kingdom. Marred by technical issues that were never resolved, flooded by one of the most cringeworthy chatrooms I've ever been a part of, and topped off by generic setlists that could only rival those of SASS balls, last Friday night congealed all the lamest parts of Sydney club culture into one embarrassing and heady cybertrip.

If Room 2 Radio's goal for the night

was to 'bring the club to you,' it seems they only succeeded in bringing the left half - throughout the broadcast, audio from the right channel was mysteriously missing, leaving headphoned attendees like myself feeling quite disappointed. The funny bugs didn't stop there though - the volume of the MCing was bizarrely loud compared to the music, which would have been somewhat tolerable had there not been a shirtless host shouting 'let's go' like a Travis Scott hype-man directly into the microphone every few seconds.

yungalbatross: can I politely suggest less frequent interjections from old mate? or at least give him some reverb so it doesn't sound like a drink guy yelling in my ear?

The music selection was also questionable at best. Consisting of what I can only imagine were the top results on Google upon searching 'best DJ songs,' the atmosphere evoked by the playlist was not one of tense celebration and release, but rather a Year 6 line dance

- featuring underrated, exhilarating classics as... 'Barbara Streisand' mixed into 'Sandstorm' mixed into 'Rhythm of the Night.'

But maybe the music isn't the point. Maybe we don't go to nightclubs to hear fresh DnB bangers all the time. Sometimes, it's just fun to go out and meet new people... right? Room 2 Radio proves that the people you meet at the club are only capable of making exactly the same jokes as one another. The Twitch chatroom, scrolling with several messages a second, was full of upcoming comedians claiming they had lost their phones, wanting to order a drink, asking about cover costs, or cracking absolutely hilarious coronavirus puns

Yet, perhaps most frustratingly of

JorrRL: 1 quarantini please

alittlebitfrank: @frodothegrey vodka redbull thanks

seflord11: wut

BartEnderRoom2: @frodothegrey I'll pop the moet

maddyannas: nice

delmos\_unrated: 1 bloody mary

all, Room 2 Radio seems to have totally misunderstood the point of framing their event as a contactless nightclub in response to COVID-19. Their live video feed showed a room crammed full of no less than six or seven at any given time, drinking and talking in close proximity with one another. The impression this gives the viewer is not only that the organisers are a little tone-deaf when it comes to self-isolation, but also that you're simply looking onto a house party in an expensive inner-west rental property that you - stupid, lonely, stay-at-home loser - were never invited to.

The next time I want to watch mostly white strangers dancing to boring music, I'll go on the Boiler Room Youtube channel instead.



## In conversation with Jeremy Neale

Madeline Ward chats with the Velociraptor frontman.

In the 8 years since Velociraptor released their first album, frontman Jeremy Neale has been busy — and not just with music. Beyond his two solo albums, Neale has also found time to write a comic book (*T-Rax: the dinosaur DJ who is also a billionaire*) and an anti-capitalist musical. With the release of his latest album, *We Were Trying to Make It Out*, we sat down to chat synths, socialism and Bernie Sanders.

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**Madeline Ward:** You wrote this album in Brisbane and New York — as such an important figure of the Brisbane music scene, was it nice to get out and write music in another city?

**Jeremy Neale:** Yeah, I think so. It was like — when you're in your life, you're very reactive, and you're reacting to things as they're coming at you and making decisions based on that. So then when you're getting away you get an objective bird's eye perspective on your own life. So it was like — oh this is what I've been doing for the last 10 years, now I can see what its been in a story context and what the trials have been of that. Getting away led to writing a record that was encapsulating a large period of time in a lot of ways, because of having that bird's eye perspective on it.

**MW:** The first half of *We Were Trying to Make it Out* reminds me very much of the jangly guitar driven indie rock that had a moment in the early 2010's, bands like Hungry Kids of Hungary, Last Dinosaurs, Ball Park Music and (obviously) Velociraptor — to what degree would you say this period of music/these bands are an influence on the music you're currently making?

**JN:** It's hard to escape — it gets embedded in your DNA. I just can't get away from guitar music, as much as I appreciate listening to other types. I just naturally write on guitar and then I write from those influences. It was always the same things which underpinned my core, which is that I love The Ramones, I love 60's pop melodies. I guess that music did have its time, but for me it's like an all-time songwriting kind of thing, with what constitutes a good song. So that's what I end up doing, and then I grab a few more influences as I go along. I had a lot of static influences, but then I had a few things enter that DNA in the last few years. They end up being bands that have been from decades gone anyway (laughs) so it doesn't add anything ground-breaking to the sound, but I find these bands like Prefab Sprout, which is this 80's band I've become totally obsessed with in the

past few years, and that's entered its way in, and that's what the title track of the album is heavily influenced by.

**MW:** The latter half seems to be strongly influenced by a lot of the sounds we'd associate with the 1980's, particularly *Still Want You Around Me*. What I find really interesting about this is that the album is also dealing with a lot of the personal effects of living in a capitalist society, which is something that a lot of the music of the 80's was engaging with as well. Is lyrical depth something that you're more interested in exploring these days?

that felt as good as the Toploader song *Dancing in the Moonlight*.

**MW:** Something I find really interesting about the album is that it seems to very much be engaging with the nature of the music industry and making music in Australia. With so many Australian success stories we tend to focus on what it's like to *Make It*, rather than how hard it can be as a band or a musician trying to forge a career — how important was it for you to engage with this?

**JN:** In a broad sense, I think I've been



sense of peace in just doing what you want to do. But that takes ages — that took me ages too, because I really wanted for a long time to just be a musician. But then I found a much nicer balance by having a day job and then doing exactly what I want to do. The highs are still there, but the lows aren't so low, because you have that balance. It's like having these spheres in your life, and you have lots of them being full, so if one's not particularly working at that time it's okay, because you still have a great time playing tennis at the tennis court. You love your reality TV and that sphere's always there for you.

**MW:** *We Were Trying to Make it Out* engages with mental health, particularly the strains that working people are under. Was it important to you in writing that you linked the personal effects of the political?

**JN:** I think it's an important thing to touch on. I think the main thing that I wanted to say is that the record isn't me having a whinge, it's me trying to say that if this is how you're feeling, someone else is feeling it too. It's supposed to be an empathetic warm hug. The main message, and why I made the title of the album *We Were Trying to Make It Out*, is that I thought that best encapsulated self kindness, which is that if things don't work out, just still find a way to be kind to yourself. Because self talk is the most important thing. If you can control that, you can at least have a chance against the rest of it. That and cardio.

**MW:** By bringing these themes of anticapitalism together with catchy melodies and anthemic, danceable tunes, do you feel like you're helping make them accessible to people that otherwise wouldn't engage with them that much?

**JN:** I hope so — but then I do wonder what value things are enjoyed at as well. Whether there are lines that people grab on to, or if there's an overarching theme. If it's like (laughs) "ah great, finally. A record for the working class."

**MW:** An indie-pop record for the working class.

**JN:** Endorsed by Bernie Sanders!

*We Were Trying To Make It Out* is now available on all major streaming platforms. With the advent of COVID-19, Jeremy Neale has cancelled his upcoming tour dates. He's been live streaming shows on his Facebook page in the meantime, and his record is available for purchase from *Bandcamp*.



# Where is Australia's best nightlife?

## The Obvious Choice: Melbourne

*Liam Armstrong-Carrigan argues Melbourne is the place for sesh lovers.*

Writing an impassioned argument for the supremacy of Melbourne nightlife during this extremely unclear time of social distancing has taken me on a very dark journey. Although, I suppose being confronted with the reality that the best nights of my life are on hold whilst we try to avoid pandemic-induced collapse can also be seen as further proof of my case.

So whilst the clubs are closing, raves are being rescheduled and the house parties are being placed in the freezer, I'll take a moment to spell it out for you all: if you like to sesh this is the place to do it in Australia.

I'm well positioned to compare notes as a member of what my crew in Melbourne ironically and problematically call the Sydney diaspora. I started going out exactly a year before the lockdowns hit. I developed my drinking problem in the heterosexual horror shows of Bar Century and SOHO in the Cross, burst out of the closet with TBD hookups on the sticky floors of Arq and thankfully eventually graduated to the much more #truetome turns of the Inner West scene.

Whilst I don't think it was a misspent youth, the rising statism and inability to get a drink on a weekend anywhere bar the Star Casino past midnight (the dogs once didn't let me in after Grassroots class of 2017 got an Uber XL from the Royal on a Tuesday) took me regularly to the Sunken Place. Every good night seemed to involve a very STRESSFUL pattern of the ticketed event taking you to 3:30am latest, before you had to endure an hour in the deadzone. If you're a Sydney clubhead of my generation you know what I'm talking about — the Witching Hour of 4am to 5am during which our options consisted of a brief kick ons or chaining cigs in a park over a hidden goon sack before we could finally burst into Club 77 for the morning shift from 5am onwards.

By the time I'd finished one half of a double degree I'd had enough of dark fascist bouncers refusing me entry when I was barely lit and regularly passing out on the B1 Bus back to Narrabeen. I bought a one-way ticket to Melbourne even though my initial accommodation was a bone-chilling 12 person hostel room. At first, the main thing I noticed was that irrespective of my smaller social circle, my Facebook events were quickly more diverse and varied than it ever was in Sydney — even more so when I started connecting with Melburnians. People here have less of the attitude that when you go out you stick like superglue to your mates. I can attest to this — I made my best friends at a 24-hour rave at the incomparable Hugs&Kisses when we witnessed a GHB head fall three stories onto the pavement at 6am. No one said being a club rat was all roses!

If I had to pick one reason why this is the city that's such a playground for adult children it wouldn't be the relaxed attitude — I regularly key ketamine in front of bouncers — or how the longer trading hours mean the team doesn't have to head out till 2am and still have a club to turn in if the riot police shut down the illegal park party. It's the fact the music scene is so superb it easily holds its own worldwide, from Paris to Berlin, in every disco I've been in. When I asked a veteran party queen why, she provided a pretty compelling reason: in Europe, DJs can fly from city to city in often under an hour. Every weekend one can pretty much expect someone decent to be playing. In isolated Australia, we aren't so lucky, so Melbourne developed arguably the best DIY scene in the world. The creativity, hard work and passion that has gone into creating such a vibrant self sustaining scene is something we should fight for harder than ever in the time of corona-



*Hugs and Kisses, Melbourne. Photo: Alan Weedon for LNYW.*

induced disruption and devastation.

I'm not worried because I believe in our community — if the underground scene can survive the recent spate of traumatic venue closures we can keep the lights on through a world war. Because really, it doesn't matter what city you're in. You can have the best night in the world in a small town bar with the right friends. Melbourne does make having a good time easier, but the reason it passes the vibe check is because of the people that I've shared these perfect nights with, little slices of time that felt so perfect I felt nostalgic about them as I lived them.



*Photo: Orbit at Mr Wolf, Canberra.*

## The Underdog: Canberra

*Nina Dillon Britton thinks Canberra has the best club in Australia.*

There's a lot not to love about Canberra nightlife: the city's population is largely divided between public servants (many of whom have to report illegal drug taking to their employers) and newly arrived 18-year-old ANU college kids, whose idea of a good night out is fingering someone in the bathrooms of Mooseheads.

But somehow, a small, dedicated and incredibly welcoming nightlife scene has flourished in a city largely known for its roundabouts. "In most capital cities with huge nightlives, you can stumble from party to club to rave in a constant search for something better," a friend, relocated from Sydney to Canberra tells me. "But in Canberra, there's one really good event on every weekend night, and that's just where everyone is."

At the moment, that party's to be found at 1-year-old SideWay (now closed due to COVID-19 but which just launched a new Club Virtual online). "I would say that [it's] the most intentional club space I have ever been in in my whole life," artist and DJ Julia Harris says. Owners Fin and Tim are DJ's themselves, and the bar has quickly become central to the Canberra underground DJ scene.

But the smallness of the scene means the bar hosts everything from underground DJ collectives and experimental live electronic music, to drum and bass or disco nights. Music subcultures that might be siloed off from one another in bigger cities begin to merge. "The audience for each and every event is supportive and open to a diverse pallet of sound, which creates a very inclusive environment within the city," Jesse Odom, organiser of perhaps Canberra's hottest party, Box Cutter, tells me. "There's intense cross-pollination between scenes here," Canberra based DJ, Blanket, says.

That smallness, in a scene filled with awful people, could quickly become claustrophobic and incestuous. Sydney bars attracting a clique of just-graduated Eastern Suburbs or North Shore private school kids are the third circle of hell. But instead, it's incredibly welcoming. One night out with strangers (I ended up there with a friend's ex that I'd met once, three years ago), involved being introduced to every new arrival at the club, strangers buying rounds and passing around bumps — a world away from Sydney nights out, where you stick to a ring of friends, anonymous, in a club crowd.

Perhaps more importantly, that creates a supportive space for artists in what can be a cut-throat industry. "It's so encouraging!" Canberra-based artist, DJ Genie, tells me. "When I'm DJing it feels like I'm playing for my best friends. We all music share, music critique and you usually know at least 50 - 70% of people on the dance floor." Vessel Collective (organised by Blanket, Niamh McCool, dot mason and Steph David), for example, provides a supportive space for women, people of colour and queer students to learn how to DJ and hone their skills. Though barriers to artists outside the scene remain, there's an openness that's unique. "In terms of

how Canberra is different, the music scene is really small which I love. It's very much 'the more the merrier'. People want more DJs playing, more parties to go to, more people making music.

Unlike other major cities, it's artists themselves, rather than aloof club-owners and booking agents, who shape the nightlife. It's a largely DIY scene. "No one I know has a booking agent, most people are part of a collective of some kind," Blanket says.

When I tell people back in Sydney that the best club in Australia might just be in Canberra, I'm met with disbelief and accusations of being facetious. But take the 4 fourhour bus down, and you might just be surprised. A vibrant arts scene is flourishing there, like blue-green algae in Lake Burley Griffin.

## The Unexpected: Brisbane

*Lachlan Redman loves Brisbane's diversity.*

Not sleepy, definitely not hollow. Brisbane's nightlife is best described as vibrant, diverse and evolving. On the surface, it's easy to assume it's second rate compared to the neighbouring nightlife mecca of the Gold Coast. This might have been true a decade ago, but Brisbane has been going through a period of unseen growth for quite some time now. There has been a plethora of new, innovative and original bars open up around the CBD, often in places that require neighbouring businesses to pick up their game too.

Split across a very compact CBD, Brisbane has a few main nightlife districts in places like Fortitude Valley, Eagle Street Pier, South Brisbane and the inner city. While these districts all have their own unique feel, you won't ever feel like you don't fit the mould; people aren't arrogant about where they go, it's open and friendly. Because Brisbane is so compact compared to major cities like Sydney and Melbourne, you don't ever feel like it's a mission to get between these spots. The temperate climate in Brisbane is another major bonus for its nightlife scene - it allows for confidence when you're going out. At its coldest, Brisbane is still completely t-shirt friendly and at its hottest, I think you appreciate ice-cold refreshments even more.

If you're chasing the dance music scene then Fortitude Valley, "The Valley" as it is known as by the locals, is the way to go. With some trap caves and dance clubs like Prohibition open past the normal 3am lockout time, regardless of where you started, chances are you'll end up here. Brisbane does relaxed bars really well too; South Brisbane neighbourhoods are a hotspot for microbreweries and locally-owned bars, all with their own gimmicks. Inner-city Brisbane is your best bet for a night out if rooftop bars, back alley dive bars, and whiskey bars all tickle your fancy. Eagle Street runs along the river offering up dressy cocktail bars and more multicultural venues that are all treated to the city view.

You might be wondering what's not so hot about Brisbane, it can't be perfect? Well, it's not, and in a funny twist most of the biggest pros end up being the biggest cons. The fact is most venues have a single type of target audience or vibe, so you have to keep moving in order to keep the night fresh. Going out in Brisbane really relies on keeping an open mind and following what's in sight. The new infrastructure that's promoting this surge of growth has come in the form of redeveloped alleys, arcades, and former hotspots, and while I'm not complaining that this is finally happening, it's still very much in progress. It's not uncommon to find your favourite hangout change hands and be replaced by something completely different without any announcements.

If you can look past the "Under Construction" sign that Brisbane currently has hanging around its neck, you'll find more than just a fine night out, you'll have a collection of experiences. Or in the case of a really good night, possibly none at all.



*Warehouse rave in Sydney, 2018. Photo by Chris McClymont.*

## The Underground: Sydney

*Robbie Mason claims Sydney is more than lockout laws and empty clubs.*

Julia — a DJ (Guilia), artist and party curator (Tactic) along with D-Grade — sits on a white chair. Behind her graffiti and rusty sports equipment populate the space. We are within the skeleton of an abandoned stadium in Sydney's south-west — an occasional rave location — recording a film interview, guerrilla style. The interview is part of a documentary on Sydney's DIY rave scene. When I ask her if Sydney is stereotyped too often as being dead, she answers quickly and emphatically: "In short, yes."

"Every time I went back and visited Sydney while I was living in Melbourne I would have an incredible experience. A lot of what I was experiencing at these [underground] parties were reasons why I moved back to Sydney... Sydney is definitely thriving. There are multiple events every weekend that I have the choice to go to. I often want to go to 2 or 3 things in a single night. To be perfectly honest, we are spoilt for choice. A lot of people don't realise that."

In New South Wales, lockout laws, red tape legislation, sky-rocketing policing fees for festivals, invasive strip searching, excessive enforcement of noise complaints and an atmosphere of uncertainty have smothered the entertainment industry like a fire blanket, extinguishing numerous music festivals including Defqon and Psyfari. The flight of creatives from Sydney to Melbourne is well documented. Stories like Julia's rarely reach the media spotlight. But those artists who have stayed in Sydney or returned are definitely proud of Sydney's nightlife.

When I interview Thorsten (aka Thick Owens) — one of the founders of Okra, Haus of the Rising Sun, Soft Centre and record and fashion label Ultravirus — I ask him the same question. His response: "I think Sydney has one of the best underground dance scenes in the world, and I lived in Amsterdam for 6 months." Promoters in Sydney's underground scene regularly echo these sentiments — both on and off record. Often they are simply repeating the words of international DJs who have performed in Sydney's illegal "venues."

While Kings Cross has become a yuppie-filled wasteland, bogged in a mire of gymnasiums and bougie cafes, drenched by the torrent of Sydney clubs which have closed since the introduction of the Liquor Amendment Act (2014), Sydney's nightlife has not so much died as relocated. From rooftop bars in the CBD to heaving pubs in Newtown, queer venues in Erskineville and raves under motorways and within the ramshackle remains of old World War Two bunkers, Sydney has it good.

Sydney certainly does not possess a better bar or club culture than Melbourne. However, with lockout laws (only recently repealed) and severely underfunded creative industries, young Sydneysiders have self-mobilised to rescue the city's nightlife. The punk, rave and experimental art scenes especially have embraced alternative events spaces. Warehouse raves, squat parties and free park gigs have sustained Sydney's culture. The frequency and scales of these illegal events far, far exceeds those in any other Australian city.

According to Thorsten, these alternative clubbing cultures are "a stepping stone" for early career artists, musicians and party curators as well as "a pedestal in some way" because they are also "the ultimate destination" for any performer. "I couldn't imagine a better gig than playing at a packed warehouse. Sure, you can go to the next level and play at a big bush festival in Australia or even go the European festival circuit. But it doesn't have the same level of consistency or encouragement for radical experimentation."

Throwing illegal, outdoor raves and warehouse parties with little pre-existing infrastructure has forced organisers to build and curate spaces literally from the ground up. Promoters have increasingly moved towards multi-disciplinary events involving performance art, video, décor and more — a skill and mindset Thorsten now uses for more legal adventures, such as the experimental music and art festival Soft Centre, which has fast developed a cult following.

Julia explains that when people visit Sydney and she takes them along to underground raves, they are "blown away" and "taken aback". However, due to the illegality embedded in many events and the lack of health and safety, Sydney's rave scene is not easily visible to an untrained eye. "If you don't know someone who engages in them you're never going to know about them."

Just as the design and curation of underground parties are creative and boundary-pushing, so too the music. If Sydney has a distinctive sound, it's its diversity.

Julia tells me: "Sydney is generally a lot freer musically... I do compare my experiences in Sydney to my experiences when I was living in Melbourne. Generally in Sydney there is a trend where you can play whatever genre you want weaved into a set. It's making things really exciting. I think that artists in Sydney feel like they can push boundaries a little bit more than they can in more regimented spaces or cities that are really well-known for one genre."

"A lot of the underground DJs are pushing harder and faster sounds. It's exciting especially for someone like me. My introduction to this scene was very much house music and 4/4 techno. It is rare that I actually hear that anymore."

Thorsten, meanwhile, describes the resurgence of hard dance and the burgeoning IDM and glitch scene, while still niche, as "a retaliation and protest against the huge saturation of vanilla-boom-clap club music that dominates Australia."

So yes, if you want the best clubs and tech-house, go to Melbourne. But Sydney's nightlife scene is Australia's worst kept secret. Whole communities only step inside a licenced venue for a dance once every six months, but go out once, if not twice, every weekend to dance and connect.

In Sydney we go harder, faster, grittier and weirder in our music, and you don't need to worry about noise restrictions or security guards constantly hovering over your shoulder. Alternative clubbing cultures are entering the mainstream. Just be prepared to get your shoes a little dirty.



# How to fall in love with an image

Victor Zhou asks: how do we love an image? By becoming-image.

Digital photographs are now used for attracting others. Taken at dizzying speeds, the heap of images keep piling higher and higher, contributing to, and fuelling the fiery cores of social media and dating apps. Entombed in these images are the flesh of bodies, which have been flattened and then expunged into the digital and virtual realm. Donna Haraway would be pleased to know that the body does not end at the skin anymore: identities, bodies, and personas spill out and beyond the skin of the body, intertwining and overlapping in psychic, digital spaces, such as our fantasies, or Tinder. Flicking left, flicking right, we reveal layers upon layers of digital body-images that never seem to end or die, and as Hito Steyerl has noted, this digital wreckage piles sky-high. But as we flick and scroll, we come across that one Image. Our eyes slowly trace its beautiful form, we increasingly become infatuated by its allure. How then do we approach this beautiful Image, let alone fall in love? I offer a step-by-step guide.

## Step 1: Preparation

The Image currently exists within the phone screen as code, energy, and light. As we are now just flesh and blood, we cannot talk to the Image, they cannot even see us. If we were to approach the Image, as we are now, we would destroy our own phones. The glass of the screen would shatter, and our flesh would become bruised. So, the very first step is to open the camera on our phone. With this, we can begin our transformation

into an image.

## Step 2: Create your own image

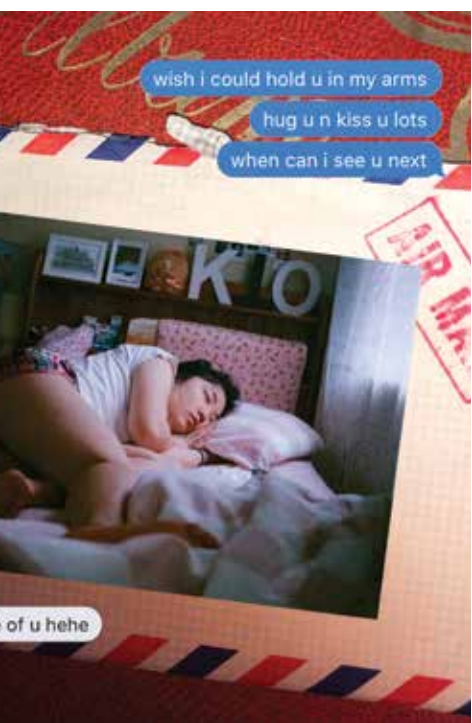
Just like how a peacock performs a courtship display, we too must ruffle and flaunt our feathers for the lens of the camera. Start the photographic courtship ritual by sourcing the best kinds of lighting, perhaps during the



rare Golden Hour, and then pose and mould your body into a form. Maybe tilt your head down and at an angle. And then take the picture. As the camera shutters, the traces of this performance will be frozen in time and then flattened into pixels. Edit, Facetune, or use filters. Carefully trim, cultivate, and care for your image. Sometimes the mass of

pixels does not look like your flesh, but this is normal. The machine of the camera is not supposed to capture material flesh. Instead, as Rosalind Krauss argues, the lens mediates and usurps, it reflects and refracts reality. It is of you, but not you. Repeat as many times as you want. Curate the best images for your digital persona.

## Step 3: Woo the Image



Now that we are Images, we should try and make contact with the Image you have a crush on. Log on via Tinder, Instagram, or whatever, and touch the keys on the phone, woo the Image with your way with words.

## Step 4: Have Sex with the Image

Risqué and sexy images, or nudes, are perceived as sexualised flesh and body, rather than light and pixels behind the material screen. Roland Barthes said that love erases the weight and the material of the image. But now, so too do nudes. The nude is not a body, but in the age of sexting and internet pornography, the image has a heart-pink and soft-mist lustre that glows intoxicatingly. When exposed to this hallucinatory succubus cloud, the nude image is perceived as no longer material, but pure sexual body and energy. It is a real spectre. The nude image continues to live on within psychic and digital realms, floating in the mind or caged into the phone, until it is of use.

So, consensually, receive a nude image from your beloved Image, and then send your own nude back to them.

## Step 5: Becoming Image-Flesh

As you continue to fall in love with the Image, we should alter our bodies to become our digital image selves.

If we want to look like our online personas, Facetuned images, fashion models, Instagram Bratz filters, Kim Kardashian, or K-POP idols, we can do so with technology and cosmetic surgery. Cut incisions, where you please, and slide silicone or fat into the holes. The flesh-silicone cyborg body develops a semi-holographic patina which acts as a magical projector to externalise our desired image. Our flesh is becoming-image, we are made image-flesh.

## Step 6: Make an Image-Baby

Go to <http://www.morphthing.com/>. At the top of the website it asks, "What will my baby look like with a celebrity parent?". The website answers their own question by telling us to use their software to find out. However, if you have a beloved Image that you care about, then you should reproduce with them.

Once you have gotten to that point in the relationship, merge your image with the Image you love. You will be able to reproduce an image-baby with your beloved.

## Last step: Becoming-Image

This step-by-step guide is circular. It is a continuous process of becoming-image. Becoming-image is a gerund, the noun form of the verb, "to become an image." Becoming-image, therefore, has no end — it is a continuous process of curation, transformation, manipulation, hallucination, but becoming-real nonetheless.

Art by Karen Okuda.



# Uber Driving in the Time of COVID-19

Words by Will Solomon

He opens the door and says my name. It's louder than a marching band. I ask, "you're heading to Surry Hills?" He nods. I am looking at him in the rear-view mirror. He wears a forget-me-not surgical mask, which forms the bottom half of a frame around his eyes — the upper part composed of his hair, dark and falling softly in two curtains. The eyes themselves are quite unique, large with disproportionately small irises. They're damp too, like his clothes. It's good to feel the rain again, two weeks in isolation will make any person mad.

I pull away from the curb and set off toward the city, glancing once again at the man sitting in the back. Why did he choose the back?

He is glancing into his phone, raising his eyes every-now-and-then to check how far we've come. The glint of the screen is reflecting in his eyes and I am trying, failing, to see what lies inside them. Ashfield Park.

He takes the phone to his ear and I look away to listen closely. "10:30... No. I'm not on the train... Yes... You can't be too careful..." Surely, that's why he sat in the back. He's scared of the virus. He's got nothing to fear from me. I lock eyes with him as he hangs up, I couldn't help but look. His small pupils dart out the window and mine drift out the back windscreen. The Empire Hotel.

"It's pretty crazy, huh?" I need to hear him speak again.

"Oh, the coronavirus? Yeah, it's crazy. My uhh, manager's sister has it. You can't be too careful..."

"Well, I just got out of two weeks in isolation," I laugh, "you've got nothing to fear from me."

He's looking out the window again. It's a lovely voice. Low, like a baritone, but he inflects his vowels with a climb toward the end of sentences. The university.

I'm getting greedy. He's stuck to his phone, leaning into the corner as if he doesn't want me to see. In the reflection in his eyes I see the colour of flesh. Are those breasts or freshly turned bowls of clay?

His curtains part as he looks upward. I turn away before he catches me. Did he see me looking? I imagine what would have occurred if he did catch me, if he caught me and liked it. I imagine what would have happened if he sat in the passenger seat instead of the back. He coughs into his mask quietly. Prince Alfred Park.

My phone reminds me I don't have much time. Two minutes to his

destination. I take every chance that I can to look at him. I can't let him go, are there any detours I can take? I try to imagine the face under the mask. If he had stubble, would it scratch? I lock eyes with him again and smile. This time his stare lingers.

"Thanks dude, have a good night." Oh, I've stopped the car. And he is gone.

I confirm another trip and pick them up on Oxford St. A pair of women in their mid-thirties stumble into the back.

good lung."

"He'll be okay."

"She really loves him, I reckon. Won't acknowledge it, though."

"You think?"

"I think she loves him so much she'd want him to infect her, so that they could be sick together."

I interrupt their conversation, wishing I didn't have to, "We're here."

They thank me. I confirm another trip and whistle Young Americans to

and yet it's become a stock conversation — like the weather,

unimportant to most, but to farmers and those with one good lung, everything. Fuck. What was his name? I never checked his name. I'll go back through my trips when I'm done.

It's raining heavily by the early morning when I pick up Grace, who gets into the car with a man. As soon as the door closes and the light goes off, she places her hand on his knee. He whispers something in her ear and she laughs quietly. They're sopping wet, which almost masks the smell of what they've been drinking. As they begin to kiss, I look away. I know better than to watch. I'll listen.

There's the distinct sound of denim rubbing on denim and then a frustrated "No." They stay quiet until I drop them off.

I think about that denim sound and squeeze some Dettol onto my hand, the smell of wetness and alcohol I rub into my jeans between the thighs. I wonder if he's somewhere drunk and wet.

I pick up Andrew, whose destination is close to home. Perfect, I'm getting tired. He, like Grace and that man, is soaked from head to toe.

We drive in silence for a time. He coughs into his elbow and I offer him a tissue, which he takes, smiling gratefully, and uses. The university. The Empire Hotel. Ashfield Park. Quarantined or not, I am still indentured.

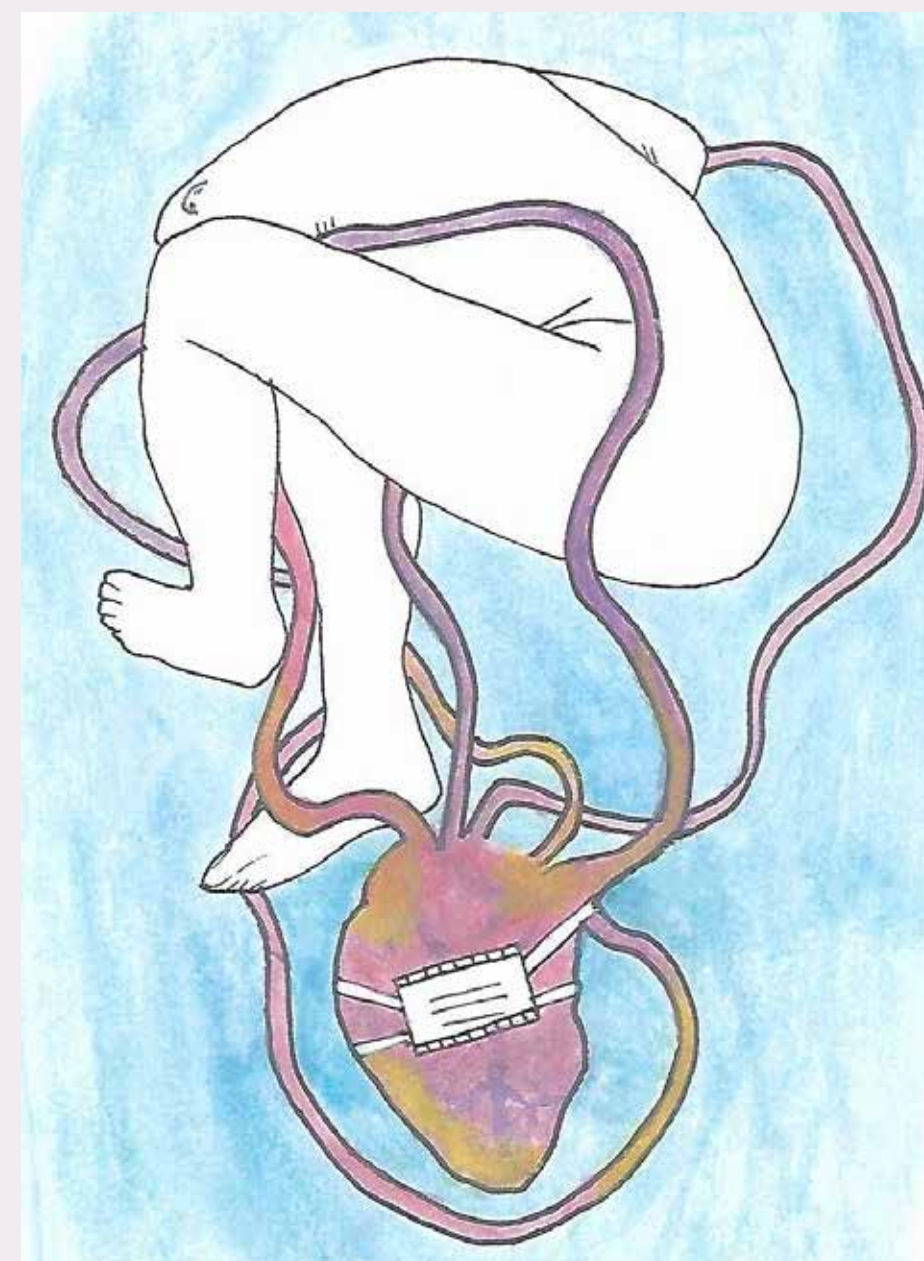
I begin to imagine again. I imagine him back in my car. He's in the front seat, his mask off. I imagine him not wanting our trip to end. I imagine him inviting me into his home, he promises me a tip if I come. I turn and see that I'm parked somewhere I recognise.

"Thanks dude, twice in one night, huh? Crazy how that happens." I see his slick wet hair fall in front of those eyes, his baritone echoing in me. Where had his mask gone? Fuck. No. He shuts the door.

I drive the long five minutes home and park. Frantically, I search the back of the car for some remnant of him. I find the tissue crumpled shyly behind the passenger seat.

I take the tissue into my mouth and suck on it until it turns to pulp. Words from earlier rebound: "I think she loves him so much she'd want him to infect her, so that they could be sick together."

Art by Sophia Calvo y Perez.



I drift back to the moment he first said my name. After a few minutes lived in his life, I tune into the conversation behind me.

"Do you think she has coronavirus?" "No, she swears she was only in southern Italy and they quarantined the north."

"Isn't Palermo in the north?"

"No."

"What about her boyfriend? He's staying for the month, isn't he?"

"Yeah, and she's worried about him.

One of his lungs collapsed when he was in high school, so if he catches it, his chances won't be good, only having one

carry me there.

"Eugene?"

"Yes. Aiden? Going to Pyrmont?"

The trips continue as they always do and I get lucky with several around the CBD. I speak to Aiden about music. I speak to Isabella about wine, Tasha about WestConnex. Many of the passengers are silent. Some sit in the front, others in the back. Some wear masks, others don't. I want to kiss the forget-me-not mask, feel its pleated centre folds under my tongue.

Of those that do speak, the conversations always breach that one topic. The virus is causing mass panic,



## President

**Liam Donohoe**

Like many other elements of society, the Students' Representative Council has spent the week retreating into the refuge of private accommodation, with increasing concern around transmission of COVID-19 necessitating the implementation of a "work from home" policy. With the Offices locked to everyone bar those with swipe card access, appointments and consultations taking place over the phone / VoIP, and all other physical activities / processes suspended, the SRC has taken a more virtual form, but is still as active in its work for Undergraduate students as ever.

The University of Sydney, in contrast, has only just announced a belated and partial suspension of in-person activity, with tutorials and lectures finally cancelled but some medical placements and small-scale interactions still permitted. Amidst the stillness of an almost-entirely but nonetheless unofficially abandoned campus, I attended the University's Student Life and Student Consultative Committee meetings on Wednesday and Thursday, respectively. While these are ordinarily more exciting meetings, which invite the possibility to discuss forward-thinking initiatives and improvements to the student experience, the COVID-19 outbreak dominated all discussion. All future initiatives and funding opportunities have either been halted

## Vice Presidents

**Charlotte Bullock and Felix Faber**

In the wake of the rapidly escalating Covid-19 pandemic, we've been working hard to ensure that students are adequately supported in an obviously trying time. In meetings with the University, we have voiced our concerns that students are particularly vulnerable during this crisis as so many of us support ourselves from casual jobs in industries which are on the brink of collapse, and many students are now facing the prospect of unemployment, leading to housing issues and struggling to source day to day supplies while hoarding increases. Further, we raised

issues such as how this semester will be presented on our transcripts and whether it will be included in our WAM, given that we, as well as staff, are adapting to new forms of assessment. We also raised the possibility of a compulsory reading week for all students prior to the transition proper.

The SRC has set up a Covid-19 Response Group with a number of office bearers. While it is still very early days, and the government's approach is rapidly changing, we are hoping to organise on a number of levels through this group. On a local level, we are

or are difficult to action amidst the unpredictability and increased workload created by the outbreak. Nonetheless, it was a good opportunity to ask questions of Dr. Phillipa Pattison, Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Education), and Susanna Scarparo, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Student Life), who both chair these committees and have played a significant role in the University's response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

To that end, the SRC has been working hard to put pressure on the University, government, and other institutions to respond thoroughly, swiftly, and fairly to the adversity and injustice that is rapidly emerging in the chaos of the outbreak. We have created a petition making a number of demands of the government, designed a number of posters (featuring QR codes linking to those petitions), and undertaken late-night poster of key destinations in the inner west. In addition, we have played an active (and perhaps even leading) role in the response of the National Union of Students and student unions across the country, helping to motivate a coordinated student response which has cohered the movement around radical economic demands.

These radical economic demands ensure that people will be able to access essential resources and housing. Without rental amnesties, expansions of welfare policies, and paid special

leave, there is no hope for millions, particularly students and those who work casual shifts in demand-based industries. Similarly, these demands will ensure the tertiary education weathers the immediate crisis, avoiding mass job losses, an irreversible deterioration in University quality, and an enormous injustice to the young people who depend on them for their future. And finally, accommodations around census date, HECS repayments, and visas would be the least the government could do to allay the significant stress this period is causing for students.

We welcome the NUS' latest statement and set of demands on the matter, and look forward to working with them and student unions across the country to build a campaign which brings the issues students are facing to the forefront of the national conversation. Moreover, we will continue to pressure the University to provide appropriate course fee discounts, grants to affected students, and total, unconditional support for all staff, even if that requires increased borrowing and liquidation of assets.

Beyond this political advocacy, the SRC hopes to play a leading role in mutual aid and community solidarity efforts. We are looking into how our resources, space, and labour power can be used to respond to the specific needs and requests of the most vulnerable in

hoping to work with other organisations to deliver staple goods to students and vulnerable members of the community. Further, we have been developing a set of demands on the government, to ensure that every sector of society, not just students, is supported during this time. In conjunction with student representatives from campuses across the country, we've worked to translate these demands to a national campaign, run by the National Union of Students, which we are also actively participating in.

Finally, we've been working with



our community. If you would like to join these efforts, please let me know at [president@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:president@src.usyd.edu.au). With any luck these short-term measures will help contain the immediate harms of the crisis, while our broader political advocacy will help create the thorough, long-term response needed to ensure the basic survival of our economy, our institutions, and the vulnerable.

faculty society presidents to share information and ensure a coordinated response from all student representatives.

These are trying times, but we hope that as a community we can work together to care for each other. We encourage you to be responsible, practise social distancing as much as possible, and support those who are bearing the brunt of this crisis. In times like this, compassion and solidarity are not merely luxuries - they are necessities.

# COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR CASUAL WORKERS

Though the SRC offices are closed, the casework and legal service are still in operation. Email [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au) for assistance.

COVID-19 has revealed the fragility of capitalism in an immediate, brutal way. In short: shit's fucked, especially for casual workers. Expected to risk their health to continue working through COVID-19, casual workers are

now losing their jobs en masse.

What's the government doing? Fuck all. Many casuals, most of whom have lost their work in the last four days, are now left at a loss to pay rent and afford the essentials.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of immediate support available for those who have been well and truly fucked over by Australian capitalism.



Newstart has been replaced by Jobseeker and, from 27 April, the payment will double to \$1100 per fortnight. Unsurprisingly, there's little love for students in the new stimulus package: no announcements have been made that Youth Allowance will be raised. In addition to this, the assets test and waiting period has been waived (also from 27 April) — but income tests still apply. Apply even if your shifts have been cut, rather than totally lost: casuals earnings less than \$1075 a fortnight are still eligible to receive the full supplement. Make sure you're signed up before 31 March to get the \$750 stimulus package, that's also available if you're on Youth Allowance.

Casuals who have lost more than 20% of their income will be eligible for early access of up to \$10,000 from their superannuation, tax free. You can apply through an online application with a declaration to the tax office.



The Addi Road Food Pantry in Marrickville remains open for its usual hours; Tuesday: 2pm – 5pm, Wednesday: 10am – 2pm, Thursday: 2pm – 7pm and Friday: 12pm – 3pm. The Pantry has seen a 35% increase in reliance on its services due to coronavirus insecurity, so if you've stocked up on fruit and veg in panic you can donate to the pantry and to the vulnerable people who need it most (see their website for their wishlist of high demand items).

Multiple mutual aid groups are being created across the greater Sydney region. Email the Inner West group at [covid19innerwestsydney@gmail.com](mailto:covid19innerwestsydney@gmail.com) to request assistance or volunteer your time.

## General Secretaries

**Liam Thomas and Abbey Shi** did not submit a report this week. They are paid a combined stipend of \$27, 820 per year.

## Welfare Officers

**Charlotte Ainsworth, Yilun Ma and Madeleine Clarke** did not submit a report this week.

## Refugee Rights

**Alex Mcleay and Cooper Forsyth** did not submit a report this week.

## Residential College

**Charlotte Ainsworth, Winny Li, Joseph Yang and Kiran Gupta** did not submit a report this week.



Though the government has hinted at measures being taken to protect renters, nothing concrete has been announced (as of publication). New announcements are being made every day, so it's important to keep an eye out for what will affect your situation. If you aren't able to make rent, your landlord can't evict you immediately. In NSW, they can only evict when you are two weeks behind on rent. In the meantime, affected renters can contact the Tenants Union of NSW for advice. Their advice line is staffed on Mondays from 10am - 1pm, and can be reached at 1800 251 101.

Words by Madeline Ward, graphics by Ellie Wilson.



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL, UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY



**Do you need help with CENTRELINK? Ask the SRC!**

The SRC has qualified caseworkers who can assist Sydney University undergraduates with Centrelink questions and issues, including: your income, parents' income, qualifying as independent, relationships, over-payments and more.

Check out the Centrelink articles on our website or book an appointment if you need more help.

[srcusyd.net.au/src-help/](http://srcusyd.net.au/src-help/)

Students' Representative Council, University of Sydney  
 Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006  
 PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007  
 p: 02 9660 5222  
 e: [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au)  
 w: [srcusyd.net.au/src-help](http://srcusyd.net.au/src-help)

[/usydsrc](https://www.facebook.com/usydsrc)  
[@src\\_usyd](https://www.instagram.com/src_usyd)



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL LEGAL SERVICE



**Did you know Sydney Uni undergraduate students\* can get FREE advice from our registered Migration Agent? Ask the SRC Legal Service!**

\*USyd undergraduates only. SUPRA offers assistance to USyd postgraduate students

SRC Legal Service  
 Level 1, Wentworth Building (G01), University of Sydney NSW 2006  
 PO Box 794 Broadway NSW 2007  
 p: 02 9660 5222 int: 12871  
 e: [solicitor@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:solicitor@src.usyd.edu.au)  
 w: [srcusyd.net.au](http://srcusyd.net.au)

[/usydsrc](https://www.facebook.com/usydsrc)  
[@src\\_usyd](https://www.instagram.com/src_usyd)



# ! SRC Services Still Available to Students

The SRC has suspended all face to face interactions to protect the health of all students and staff. However, almost all of our services are still available to you.

**Tenancy**

We know that this is a very difficult time for students, especially whose income is affected by COVID-19. We are currently campaigning together with other community groups, to stop evictions during this time. There are a few other measures that we might be able to take, if you find yourself at risk of homelessness. We are, of course, still answering any other tenancy and accommodation questions that you might have.

**Centrelink**

Caseworkers can advise on Centrelink payments, including Youth Allowance, Austudy, Abstudy, NewStart, and the Disability Support Pension. Remember to keep a record of any receipt numbers from conversations with Centrelink, and do not ignore their correspondence.

**Visa**

The SRC Legal Service can offer advice about visas. Call for an appointment to speak to our migration solicitor.

**Academic matters**

As usual we can give advice on Show Good Cause, appealing a grade, applying for DCs, academic honesty, enrolments, and any other academic issues. The threat of COVID-19 has brought a lot of uncertainty around academic matters, including, the online delivery of classes, particularly ones with a practical component; the possible extension of the DC deadline; and how exams will be conducted. The SRC is in regular contact with various decision makers at the University and will continue to advocate for the rights of the student body. SRC Caseworkers will also continue to provide advice to students on any academic matters.

**SRC Caseworkers**

The SRC's caseworkers are independent of the University, and provide a professional, free, and confidential service to Usyd undergraduates. Postgraduates should contact SUPRA for a similar service.

**Contact**

You can call, Skype, or email Caseworkers to get advice about your situation. If you would like a phone or Skype appointment call 9660 5222 during office hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Alternatively send your question together with any supporting documents to [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au).

## Ask Abe

*SRC caseworker help Q&A*



### Ask Abe – COVID 19 fear

Dear Abe,

I'm really stressed. I don't really know what's happening, and I am getting some conflicting information from the Uni. The threat of covid is big enough for the uni to change to online classes only, but nobody from the government is stopping us from going out. I've seen lots of conflicting articles on Facebook, and frankly I don't know what to do to protect myself. Please help.

*Fearful*

Dear Fearful,

I am sorry to hear that you are stressed; it is completely understandable. There is always going to be conflicting information in social media and even on the news. It is probably best to listen to "trusted sources", like the NSW Health Department, and ABC News. They have clear information on how to do "social distancing", and what to do if you feel unwell.

If you can keep up with your studies, that might help to keep your mind busy. Email your subject coordinator about what arrangements have been made for your subjects, especially if there are practical components. If you feel too distressed to maintain your studies talk to an SRC Caseworker about it by emailing [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au).

Take the time to have online meetings with friends. You could meet on Skype or zoom or messenger, and you could have a meal, watch a movie (e.g., Netflix Party), or do a virtual tour of a zoo or museum. If you are feeling distressed, and don't find it helpful to talk to a friend, try talking to a counsellor. There are plenty available through the telephone (Lifeline 131 114) or online (Head-space).

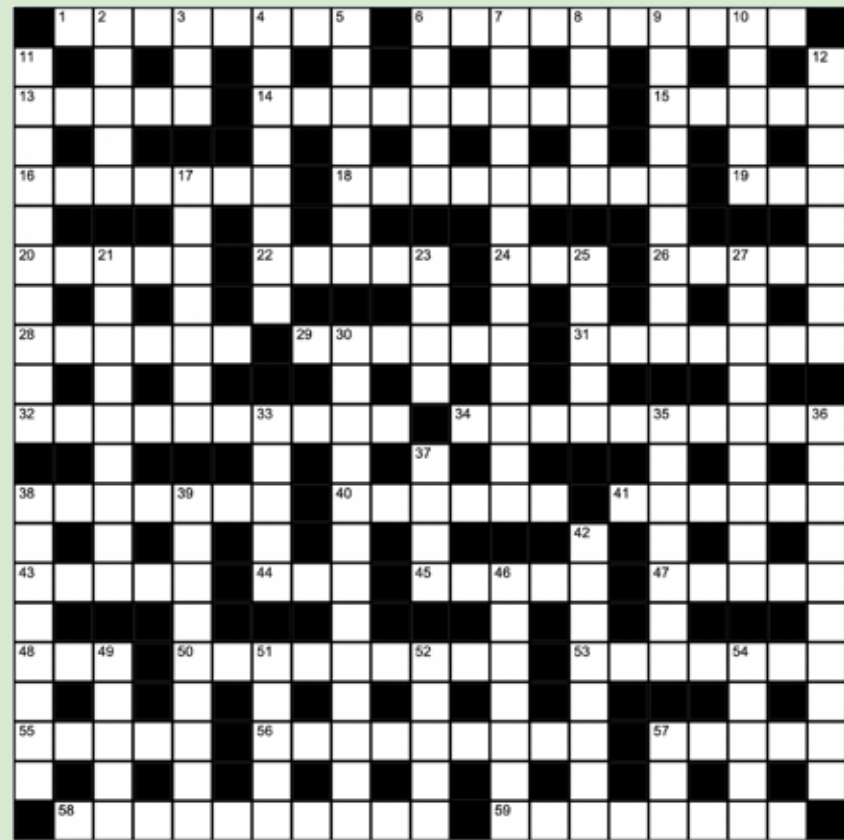
Most of all look after yourself and your friends.

*Abe.*

Contact an SRC Caseworker on 02 9660 5222 or email [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au)



# Omega



Note: ? denotes a cryptic clue

**ACROSS**

- 24 Across for whom Picture A ask our sympathy (3,5)
- 6 ? Like firm Mother Superior with Bible story (10)
- 13 Useful (5)
- 14 Church overseen by a bishop (9)
- 15 Picture A as a group, or what each member does (5)
- 16 Picture B plus four of his brothers (7)
- 18 Impromptu, disorganised (9)
- 19 Dunny (3)
- 20 Matter (5)
- 22 Remarkably fat (5)
- 24 Demon (3)
- 26 ? Playwright arranged bins around stage right (5)
- 28 Bin chickens (6)
- 29 Girl to whom Picture C say 'hey there!' (6)
- 31 Rats with wings (7)
- 32 ? Unfit tart has fit fit (10)
- 34 Sponges with wings (5,5)
- 38 Burma, alternatively (7)
- 40 Thief (of a lost ark, perhaps) (6)
- 41 Nobleman whom Picture D asks aller, venir (6)
- 43 Permitted by Islam (5)
- 44 Friend of Picture B (3)
- 45 Soft tablet (5)
- 47 First word in the title of a song by Picture A or Picture E (5)
- 48 ? Face attack (3)
- 50 Alert, competent (2,3,4)
- 53 Go away (4,3)
- 55 Love, to Picture D, for example (5)
- 56 Trader of paintings and sculptures (3,6)
- 57 ? Robe sounds like a song (5)
- 58 Carrots, capsicums, cucumbers, etc (10)
- 59 Brand of greeting cards (8)

**DOWN**

- 2 Indian language (5)
- 3 Twenty-four hours (3)
- 4 Holiday (8)
- 5 Rapunzel, rocket, or romaine (7)
- 6 Inexpensive (5)
- 7 Frequency at which people die (9,4)
- 8 Type of key (5)
- 9 Making (a story) shorter (9)
- 10 ? Laugh about California native (5)
- 11 Young lady whom Picture E implore to try once more like she did before (10)
- 12 Amazes (8)
- 17 ? May screw the arse (7)
- 21 Namesake of London's 14 Across (5,4)
- 23 ? Deserve a vase apparently (4)
- 25 Origami equipment (5)
- 27 Archipelago in which Picture E worked (9)
- 30 Relating to the natural world (13)
- 33 Pulsate (5)
- 35 Winsces at awkwardness (7)
- 36 Unintended consequence (4,6)
- 37 Surname of Picture D (4)
- 38 ? Greek character sits atop pig with angry prophet (8)
- 39 Hometown of Picture C (9)
- 42 Relating to time (8)
- 46 Disloyal lover to whom Picture F cries 'why, why, why?' (7)
- 49 Proverbially well-fitting garment (5)
- 51 ? Disney princess swaps neglected crown for royal diadem (5)
- 52 Regions (5)
- 54 Possessor (5)
- 57 Forename of Picture F (3)

## Week 4 Edition Solutions

Target: Hypnotism

**Sudoku**

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

**Quick**

S	K	E	W	E	D	S	U	B	U	R	B	I	A
E	P	A	E	M	C	O	L	O	M	N	N		
E	P	I	L	O	Q	U	E	C	O	L	O	M	N
T	B	R	E	A	K	I	N	G					
A	E	E	O	W	E								
O	M	N	I	T	Y	I	T						
A	N	T	Y	I	T								
O	L	I	G	A	R	C	H						
G													
B	A	C	O	N	A	N	D	E	G	G	S		
M	P	S	E	E	C	I							
X	A	N	A	D	U	V	A	N	G	U	A	R	D
T	E	L	E	R	I	D	E	L					
S	I	E	A	S	H	E	L	L	A	V	I	E	R

**This Way That Way**

F	A	D	E
A	W	A	Y
D	A	Z	E
E	Y	E	S



## Find the connection

What word unites these six images?



## Target

10 words: This  
20 words: That  
30 words: The Other

S	T	N
E	O	H
M	I	G

Puzzles by Tournesol

Solutions next week.

# THE RODENT REVIEW

Fierce, independent journalists controlled by the rats on our heads!

## How you, an Australian, can keep being Australian during a pandemic

Matthew Forbes, Throw Another Shrimp On the Barbie Editor

Prime Minister and noted crisis-handling expert Scott Morrison graced us with his divine wisdom last week regarding coronavirus and its effects on the day-to-day lives of the Australian public.

In a live address, Morrison assured viewers: "So long as Australians keep being Australians, we'll get through this together."

You might think this is a hollow attempt at comforting a nation at the brink of mass hysteria, but patriotism might just be that last spark of hope to guide you through the long, awful-smelling tunnel that is 2020.

Here's the Rodent's top tips for staying Australian during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak!

- Watch the footy!
- Shield yourself in a fort made of Australian flags!
- Make the leap from casual racism to full-time racism!
- Keep watching the footy!
- Go to the beach!
- Blast Packed to the Rafters: The Soundtrack Volume 2 as you stand half-naked on your balcony, but also wear a face mask!
- Tell your son that he coughs like a girl!
- Drink yourself into a state of total numbness to erase any anxiety you had about the societal collapse the virus has already initiated!
- Get into a fist-fight with someone about the footy!
- Or just sit back and relax with an ice cold Coron – sorry, VB



**In this issue:**

Your wealthy vegan aunt: "Maybe we're the virus" / p. 72

PERSPECTIVE: At least the lockout laws got lifted, right? / p. 34

Gal Gadot enlists celebrities to sing Death Grip's 'Guillotine' line-by-line / p. 24

Where are they now? The Rodent catches up with the SRC Vice Presidents, months after anyone has seen them! / p.19

You won't believe what's on page 12! / p. 12

An apology for the Peter Dutton colonoscopy photos on page 12 / p. 13

## World Vision announces "sponsor a World Vision intern" campaign

Nina Dillon Britton, Whoops!! Editor



World Vision has announced a campaign to fight underpayment of its own staff, following revelations it had reported itself to the Fair Work Ombudsman.

"For just one dollar a day, you can double what we're currently paying interns," one new campaign ad reads.

As part of the campaign, donors can exchange letters with an intern.

Stephanie, a barely-paid intern who'd started in as an unpaid intern, told The Rodent that she'd found the letter process strange.

"Lots of people have asked for progress reports of how I'm doing, or got angry when I wasn't 'sufficiently adoring. There were lots of requests for feet pics too."

The campaign is considered a breakthrough in the non-profit sector which largely relies on unpaid or underpaid staff.

"We aim by 2050 for 50% of our staff to be able to pay for 10% of their rent on the salaries we provide," a World Vision spokesperson said.

## Dr Chris Brown to put down everyone who went to Bondi on Friday

Matthew Forbes, Woof Editor

Thousands of beachgoers are to be 'put to sleep' after flocking to Bondi last Friday, ignoring calls for social distancing amid the current COVID-19 outbreak.

Dr Chris Brown is set to take some time off from wandering aimlessly around the Network Ten studio to help provide mass euthanasia as part of a live 48-hour telethon edition of Bondi Vet.

"I'm pretty used to handling filthy, slobbering animals, both on Bondi Vet and I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here, so this is just a typical day at the office for me."

Despite initial concerns wide-scale force would have to be employed to round up the beachgoers, almost all of them have willingly turned themselves in, excited at the prospects of getting to be on TV.

"I've always wanted to die on the telly. Was hoping it'd be getting shot in a home invasion on Gogglebox, but this'll do."



## THE FESTIVAL OF ACTUALLY DANGEROUS IDEAS

Following the cancellation of this year's foremost event for middle aged conservatives pretending to be open minded, we're proud to announce the program for a new event, celebrating actually dangerous ideas.

**9AM: COUGH ON OLD PEOPLE**

Boris Johnson on the fun, dangerous and new policy at the centre of the UK's coronavirus response. Fuck 'em they're old!

**11AM: RIDE A BICYCLE WITHOUT A HELMET**

In this lecture, Academy Award winning scientist, Professor Streep, argues they're ugly and fuck with your hair.

**12PM: GIVE ALCOHOL TO BABIES**

Have you ever seen a drunk baby? This panel discussion argues it's funny as fuck.

**1PM: IT'S TIME TO RESPECT RELIGION**

The Taliban calls for a return to civility and respect for religion in our public discourse.

**3PM: HOW TO FUCK A PENGALIN AND A BAT**

This talk reveals all, including why protection isn't needed.

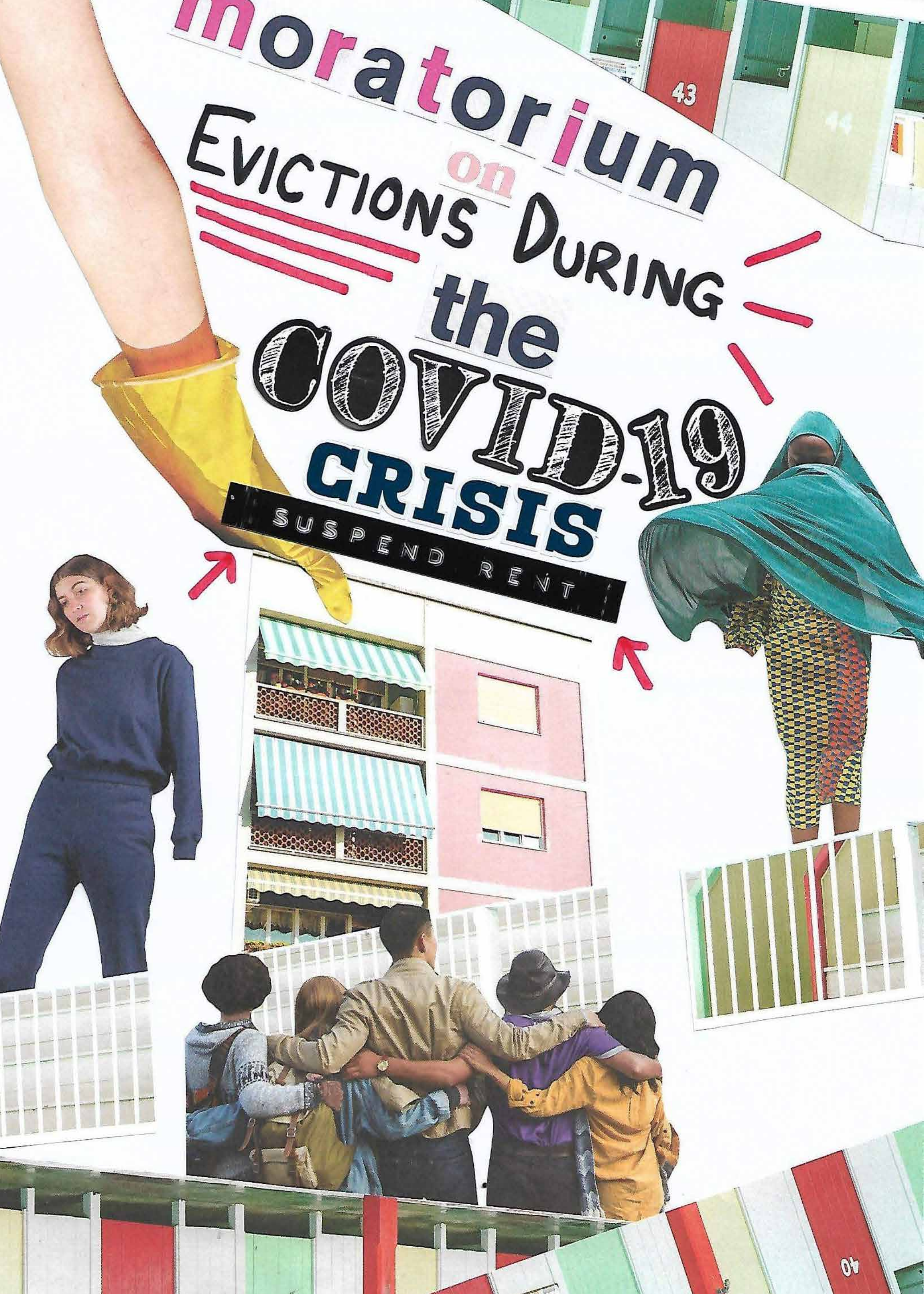


moratorium

on  
EVICTIONS DURING

the  
COVID-19  
CRISIS

SUSPEND RENT



43

40