

Honi Soit

WEEK 2, SEMESTER 1, 2021

FIRST PRINTED 1929



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Acknowledgement of Country



Honi Soit is published on the sovereign land of the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation, who were amongst the first to resist against and survive the violence of colonisation. This land was taken without consent and sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and extend that respect to all Indigenous students and staff at the University.

As a team of settlers occupying the lands of the Gadigal, Dharug, Wangal, Bidjegal, Kuringgai and Wallumedegal

people, we are the beneficiaries of ongoing colonial dispossession. The settler-colonial project of 'Australia' and all its institutions, including the University, are built on the exclusion of First Nations peoples and the devaluation of Indigenous knowledge systems. Beneath the sandstone buildings of USyd lie thousands of years of Aboriginal history.

Colonialism is not a one-time event that occurred in the distant past; it is an ongoing structure. The genocide of First Nations people is perpetuated

and enabled by the government, who push ahead with the forced removals of Aboriginal children from their families, their Country, and their cultures. Aboriginal peoples are the most incarcerated on earth, and there have been nearly 450 documented Indigenous deaths in custody since the 1991 Royal Commission.

We pledge to actively stand in solidarity with First Nations movements towards decolonisation through our editorial decisions, and to be reflective when we fail to do so.

We commit to being a counterpoint to mainstream media's silencing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We remain cognisant that Honi's writers and readership are predominantly made up of settlers, and aim to platform Indigenous voices in our paper.

There is no justice without Indigenous justice.

Always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

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Editorial

There is very little of value that one can write after midnight in the Honi office (see p 3). Nevertheless, column space demands I provide the following poorly thought out indulgence.

Almost exactly one year ago, face-to-face teaching stopped at Sydney Uni. Last week, wax Taylor Swift, surrounded by a beefy security detail, gazed over the quadrangle lawns as thousands of first year students made a beeline for the *Honi Soit* Welcome Week stall.

Despite my SRC Server-induced sleep deprivation, it was immensely gratifying to once again see people milling about on campus. Under the gentle autumn sun, everything seemed to be comfortingly normal.

However, despite the return of some in-person classes, it will be far from rosy for those eager first years: they will face increased fees (p 5), shortened teaching periods (p 5), severe concussion from falling

objects (p 5) and puddles of piss in the Peter Nicol Russell building (p 11).

Now that COVID is over, it is incumbent on all students to re-engage with campus life, to prevent University management using COVID as a cover to pull sneaky moves like 12 week semesters or permanently online lectures.

The first step in this praxis is to read and write for *Honi Soit: Australia's only remaining weekly student newspaper*.

This humble editor cannot think (at 2am) of any publication with the range and diversity of *Honi*. And it's free!

On page 4, there is an update on Professor Wojciech Sadurski's free speech battle in an increasingly authoritarian Poland. In his excellent feature on page 11, Noah Corbett praises the poignant poetry of German Marxist Bertolt Brecht. I highly recommend sitting down to read with a cup of tea and some sad

music.

On page 16, Angelique Minas critiques "celestial sexism and space racism" while Ariana Haghighi profiles Sydney's town crier (p 14).

The last time I played golf, I hit an Audi and was stung for a grand. Tom Wark (p 10) does a stirring job of extolling the virtues of golf at a time when the sport is under attack — even if he might not convince me.

Last, and certainly not least, my profound thanks to Dylan Newling for his brilliant cover art, drawing on Brecht's "awareness that we are the makers of our problems, but also the fixers."

As Brecht himself wrote, "First comes eating, then comes morality." I am very hungry, so here endeth the editorial and this edition of *Honi*.

See you all 6.30 Wednesday @ the rose

Maxim Shanahan

Letters

Marlowwww!!

In response to 'The double edged sword of Marvel's monopoly' by Marlow Hurst.

I think this is buying too much into the idea that making big bucks on conventional films allows studios to innovate or take risks on different content. This show has gotten a lot of marketing and I don't think it's borne out of innovation, it's borne out of Disney wanting people to pay for their stagnating streaming service as well as trying to promote less popular characters so they can pivot into their next phase. I've watched a few episodes of it and it just seems like a fairly generic character drama to me and I personally hated the writing. I don't think it's much more innovative than, say, Thor: Ragnarok which got a huge amount of praise for essentially just being a normal marvel film with more colour and more funny New Zealand people. Marvels next phase of films as well look especially generic. I think this is buying too much into the idea that making big bucks on conventional films allows studios to innovate or take risks on different content. This show has gotten a lot of marketing and I don't think it's borne out of innovation, it's borne out of Disney wanting people to pay for their stagnating streaming service as well as trying to promote less popular characters so they can pivot into their next phase. I've watched a few episodes of it and it just seems like a fairly generic character drama to me and I personally hated the writing. I don't think it's much more innovative than, say, Thor: Ragnarok which got a huge amount of praise for essentially just being a normal marvel film with more colour and more funny New Zealand people. Marvels next phase of films as well look especially generic. Also

starring less popular characters isn't an uncommon thing for the MCU. It relied on that from the beginning bc Marvel sold away all their profitable IPs to film studios in the 90s like Spider-Man and X-Men and all. Iron Man was a massive success but like, it was a film about one of the least popular Avengers ever and starred a dude who was most famous at that point for being a crackhead in the 90s.

Ig Gy

The Chaser running low on content?

Hey there,

Was hoping we at *The Chaser* could shamelessly republish the comedy headline about the Liberal Party banning women to address the rape problem.

Thanks

The Chaser

Not dazzled!

Dear *Honi Soit*,

I write in response to your headline on page 23 of last week's edition, entitled 'DIY: Bedazzle your skid mark for Mardi Gras!' I sent this photo to one of your team members in confidence, and I was shocked to see it reproduced in Australia's only remaining weekly student newspaper. My skid mark is

sacred and . I kindly request that you remove this edition from stands immediately, or my lawyer will be in contact! And let's not forget, I have photos of 's

Regards,

SG

Ask Abe

Dear Abe,

I urgently need your advice. I was messing around one stormy night in the Anderson Stuart Building (ASB) when a lightning bolt struck my laboratory, enlivening the cadaver I was working on. The monstrous zombie has been wandering around campus for the last month and is now demanding I create him a mate. He has threatened to kill my family if I don't! What do I do? I await your response eagerly.

PS. Could you please sign my petition? Save ASB!

Cheers,

Vic

Corrections Notice

In last week's edition, Miss Soit reported that Interfaith Officer Jayfel Tulabing was running for the executive of the Women in STEM Society despite being in a different faculty. Tulabing has since informed *Honi* editors that she is, indeed, doing an Applied Science major. Determined to clear her name, Tulabing went so far as to send us screenshots of her units of study!

We sincerely apologise to Ms Tulabing for our reckless reporting!

Send letters to editors@honisoit.com



Miss Soit

Sydney Uni's SAUCIEST socialite!

Dear plumptious beauties,

These are just some of the sordid secrets I am privy to...

PULP: dom top?

PULP's newest masters have been quick to assert their dominance over *Honi's* pathetic editors. In response to our article on the USU, one Erogenous PULP Editor slipped into *Honi's* DMs insisting they were not 'apolitical' as claimed. "I am a member of the greens just not in stupol," they said. This *humiliation* has certainly got Miss Soit's loins frothing. We love *erectoral* politics!

Wax play

Miss Soit's little moles have reported that the Taylor Swift wax figure cost the USU \$250,000! For a company that's *pounding* its staff on the daily, the USU certainly has very expensive taste. Miss Soit wonders what our devilish Board Directors will do with all of that leftover wax...

It is rumoured that Horny Hines was spotted alone with wax Taylor Swift after shaking off her Madame Tussauds guards at sunset. He was overheard singing "You look like my next mistake. Love's a game, wanna play?" Miss Soit has heard through an anonymous tip that Sexy Swift will now join Receding Rigby as the second wax figure on USU Board.

Stinky farce!

In a now-deleted Facebook post, Irate Iris (of FIT fame and fortune) certainly let the SRC *have it*. Calling her fellow councillors a "stinky farce of Janus-faced troublemakers stirring up a nonsensical clash of clans," Miss Soit wonders what "farce" has gotten Iris' knickers in a knot...

Table tennis tryst

Two (un)likely lovers were spotted having a bit of *on the table action* during Welcome Fest! Members of NLS and the Liberals were *bouncing balls* at the table tennis courts outside the re-opened Hermanns Bar. Could this be a one-time affair? Or could these studs be seeding a *succulent* stupol deal?

#80GinAndTonicsADay

After voting against the SRC's #80aDay motion, Sydney's sexiest Young Liberal, Matthew Harte, admitted to being a little tipsy at last Wednesday's Council meeting. Miss Soit loves a loose **[REDACTED ON LEGAL ADVICE]** ... Call me!

What's on this week

<p>Honi Soit Welcome Party</p> <p>6:30pm Wednesday 10 March The Rose Hotel</p> <p>News back on Facebook! Students back on campus! Honi back at the Rose! Join the editors and esteemed journalists for a drink to ring in the new semester - whether you're a reporter, avid reader or old hack. Food and a bar tab will be provided. Miss Soit is waiting for you...</p>	<p>Welfare Speak-Out</p> <p>12pm Wednesday 10 March Fisher Library</p> <p>USyd's Welfare Action Group is holding a speak-out on Wednesday for students to take the mic and speak on welfare issues, or just listen. The event plans to highlight student issues such as cuts to JobSeeker and JobKeeper, public housing near USyd being sold to developers, and attacks to unemployed and casual workers.</p>	<p>SASS x MineSoc Virtual Games Night</p> <p>7pm Thursday 11 March Online - see event for details</p> <p>SASS and MineSoc are teaming up to host a fun filled Virtual Games Night! Hosted on the SASS discord, it promises to be a great way to meet new people and have some fun (regardless of the distance).</p>	<p>Film Screening: David Lynch's Eraserhead</p> <p>5pm Thursday 11 March Heydon Laurence Lecture Theatre</p> <p>Join FilmSoc at 5PM for FREE PIZZA, drinks, and delightful conversation before the screening, and all are welcome to the post-screening Filmsoc Forest Lodge Hotel pilgrimage.</p>	<p>Does your society have an event coming up?</p> <p>Email editors@honisoit.com to be featured in <i>Honi's</i> What's On section!</p>
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6:30pm Wednesday 10 March @ the rose

HONI PARTY!!

Students demand an end to sexual assault on campus

Iggy Boyd reports.

This afternoon, student activists gathered outside of the Quadrangle before marching to F23 to condemn the inaction of University management in response to the proliferation of sexual assault across campus and the colleges. The action, organised by the Women's Collective and chaired by Women's Officers Kimberley Dibben and Amelia Mertha, was organised during Welcome Week in order to call attention to the fact that 1 in 8 of all instances of sexual violence at university campuses across Australia occur during Orientation Weeks.

Dibben provided an Acknowledgement of Country, noting the connection between carceral politics and sexual violence and the need for prison abolition. Mertha followed by calling for the abolition of the colleges.

"Report after report recites that colleges are beyond reform. Misogyny is built into its [sic] sandstone walls, and it is the fragile reputations of soon-to-be politicians, businessmen, and lawyers who are valued over those they assault. College students are eight times more likely to be assaulted

than non-college students. Survivors need action, not excuses. Abolish the colleges now!"

Mehreen Faruqi, Greens Senator



Photography by Aman Kapoor

for NSW, called for justice for Brittany Higgins and all current and future survivors of sexual assault and urged

action rather than just words from fellow politicians. Brittany Higgins is the former political staffer who alleges she was raped in a government

enthusiastic consent as a requirement in all sexual activity.

"A large part of our collective work centres on fighting for reproductive justice which includes broadening and deepening the scope of bodily autonomy taught in sex education," said Mertha. "WoCo recognises that sex education is a health issue and that there is a severe lack of effective consent education in school curriculums, as highlighted by the petition started by Kambala alumni Chanel Contos last month." That petition includes more than 3,000 testimonies of sexual violence by women largely from private schools and has more than 22,000 signatures.

After a short march to F23, Mertha read out a statement from Education Officer Tom Williams, former resident of St Pauls College, describing his own experience with hazing at the college and the culture of sexual assault among wealthy college students.

This rally is one in a long history of student activists, particularly members of the USyd Women's Collective, campaigning to end sexual violence on university campuses.

minister's office by a male workmate in March 2019. Jenny Leong, NSW Greens Member for Newtown, announced she was writing a bill to legislate



USyd law professor not guilty; legal battles continue

Maxim Shanahan reports.

Professor Wojciech Sadurski, the Challis Chair of Jurisprudence at the University of Sydney, was found not guilty of criminal defamation in a Warsaw district court on Friday night (AEDT).

TVP will appeal the verdict. Two other civil defamation charges, one brought by TVP and the other by Poland's ruling Law and Justice Party (PiS), remain ongoing. In the PiS case, Professor Sadurski received a final judgment in his favour late last, but PiS has applied for 'cassation' — an extraordinary appeal to the Supreme Court.

Sadurski was charged with criminal defamation, which carries a maximum sentence of one year's imprisonment, after he described Polish state media as "Goebbelsian," and linked the assassination of a prominent opposition politician to continued inflammatory state media coverage.

In a statement to *Honi*, Professor Sadurski praised the judge's "courageous and impartial decision" and said that — given the judgment's extensive reference to the Polish Constitution and the European Convention on Human Rights — the case would "go down in the legal history of Poland."

In a statement, TVP described the verdict as "scandalous" and "constituting a manifestation of statutory lawlessness." A spokesperson continued: "the elites...in a fight to maintain their influence, are doing everything possible to discredit TVP... the voice of the overlooked, silent majority."

Simon Bronnitt, the Dean of Sydney Law School, told *Honi* that "Professor Sadurski's case will likely be long-running, notwithstanding the first victory at the criminal trial. The importance of upholding free speech knows no bounds, and the Law

School 'Stands with Woj' as this legal marathon to uphold human rights continues through the Polish courts, and possibly onto the European Court of Human Rights."

The defamation suits come against a background of attacks on the free press and judiciary under the increasingly authoritarian PiS government. In January 2016, the Polish Sejm legislated to take control of TVP and fired all 118 of its senior management staff, replacing them with direct political appointees. Many journalists critical of the government have since been removed from their positions at public broadcasts or subject to legal harassment by PiS. In 2020, Poland fell to its lowest ever ranking of 62nd in the Press Freedom Index. In 2016, the year in which PiS was elected, it ranked 18th. Professor Sadurski told *Honi* that "the fact the media is suing its opponents for defamation is either ironic or perverted."

Extensive attacks have been made against the independence of the Polish judiciary. In December 2019, legislation was passed to establish a new Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court, with powers to fine or sack judges that engage in "political activity" or question the independence of the politically appointed Chamber. Furthermore, the National Council of the Judiciary, which oversees judges' appointments, has been overhauled to allow for political appointments to the Council, effectively granting the government control over judicial appointments. These sustained attacks on the rule of law prompted the EU, for the first time in its history, to invoke Article 7 proceedings against a member state for persistent breaches of "EU values," which can result in the suspension of that country's EU voting rights. The proceedings are ongoing.

Current students hit with higher fees if they transfer degrees

Jeffrey Khoo, Marlow Hurst and Alice Trenoweth-Creswell report.

USyd students face higher fees if they transfer into a different course this year, despite government guarantees that "no current student would be worse off" under their fee hikes legislation.

Several students who have entered affected courses, including law, commerce and arts, have seen the price of their degrees double, with many saying they were caught out by a lack of information from the government or the university.

The change affects students who have transferred from a single to a double degree, a double to a single degree or who have changed one degree in their double degree (e.g. from Commerce/Law to Arts/Law).

For example, one student who transferred from Arts to Arts/Law found that the cost of their Arts subjects doubled, even though they had been studying the same major in Arts for one-and-a-half years. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that UNSW students have faced similar price hikes.

The legislation applies price changes on a subject-by-subject basis, not by degree. It also does not discriminate between students who undertook an 'allowable' internal

transfer, or those who made a more rigorous internal course application.

One student who transferred from Arts/Law (majoring in Economics) to Economics/Law, without any change in the subjects they would have taken, saw per-unit prices rise to approximately \$1800, compared to \$1000 last year.

The change does not affect students entering Honours, either through USyd's Bachelor of Advanced Studies program - including students in a double degree, who had to suspend one degree and re-enrol in Advanced Studies - or a traditional appended Honours degree for students who commenced pre-2018.

Under the legislation, current students are 'grandfathered', avoiding fee increases. In June 2020, then-Education Minister Dan Tehan promised students that "no current student will pay an increased student contribution".

But that only applies if students remain in their current course configuration (including those who commence Honours in the same field).

USyd is not able to modify how much they charge for degrees, and has limited scope to code their degrees to avoid the changes.

Students have told *Honi* that USyd provided little to no notice in the transfer process, including on Sydney Student, that they would be affected, with many expressing that they would not have transferred had they known.

One student said that it was only through "following the fee hikes closely" by themselves could they calculate that changing from Arts/Law to Visual Arts would cost them \$15,000 more, and that only received important information about the cost of their major "after I enrolled and got my financial statement, which was frustrating."

A USyd spokesperson said that as the fee hikes legislation was "rolled out quickly late last year", they updated their webpages and "link[ed] directly to Government advice to ensure any impacted students were receiving accurate and up-to-date information."

USyd was against the changes last year. In a September submission to a Senate Inquiry, USyd said the Bill proposed "rushed, highly complex and radically disruptive surgery" to existing arrangements, and would "entrench a new set of perverse incentives" that would degrade the quality of education at Australian universities.

Third time lucky? University tries for twelve week semesters again

Maxim Shanahan reports.

University of Sydney management will again propose to the Academic Board that semesters be shortened to twelve weeks of teaching, down from the current thirteen.

Similar proposals were defeated at Academic Board in 2017 and in 2020. Last year's proposal related only to Semester One of 2021, and the University indicated at the time that they would push for a permanent shift at the beginning of this year.

A University spokesperson told *Honi* that the shortened semester "is in line with many other universities, and we believe it creates more opportunities for intensive teaching between semesters including internships, placements... and learning experiences that involve travel and cross-university collaboration."

Despite the proposed reduction in teaching hours, the University maintains that "course content and learning outcomes will not be compromised, as the changes

largely involve removing the light introductory and course guidance week in the semester."

Somewhat ominously, the spokesperson said "we plan to make better use of online resources."

Students' Representative Council President Swapnik Sanagavarapu told *Honi* that the SRC is "strongly opposed" to the proposal, and that the move "would seriously compromise on the quality of learning."

Sanagavarapu said that the extra week was critical to preventing students from falling irreparably behind in their studies, and that "the most affected students will be those with unavoidable commitments such as work or carer's commitments, structurally disadvantaged students, and those with disabilities."

National Union of Students President Zoe Ranganathan told *Honi* that the

University's attempt to cut semester lengths "shows transparently that the University only thinks of students in dollar amounts...A 12 week semester is a step down the path to trimesterisation and the further commercialisation of our universities."

A number of Australian universities have shortened semesters in recent years. UNSW moved down to 12 weeks before instituting trimesters. Other universities with 12 week semesters include Monash, Melbourne, ANU and Adelaide.

Sanagavarapu told *Honi* that "unis such as ANU have seen increasing fail rates since the adoption of 12 week semesters."

The NTEU, which has previously opposed 12 week semesters, was contacted for comment but failed to reply before publication.



Door closing mechanism falls off Susan Wakil Building; one student hospitalised

Jeffrey Khoo and Shania O'Brien report.

One student has suffered a concussion after being hit by a piece of infrastructure which fell off the new Susan Wakil Building.

A witness says that around 4:30pm on Wednesday, the student was trying to close a door when the automatic closing mechanism, weighing roughly 2kg, fell onto their head.

The student blacked out and received a minor concussion, after which she was attended to by a first aid team and was taken to the nearby Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. The student has returned to campus and is still suffering from dizziness.

The new Susan Wakil Building, located on Western Avenue, was opened for the first time on February 26. The 8-storey building brings together USyd nursing, health sciences and medicine students onto the Camperdown campus.

Students in some Masters of Nursing lectures were briefly informed of the incident on Wednesday, with lecturers being asked to check if their students were okay.

Staff members have been asked to remind students that it was a new building, and to therefore take care and report faults.

However, the University responded with a comment stating the following:

"On Tuesday, a door closing mechanism on one of the doors in the Susan Wakil Health Building was dislodged from its mounting, and unfortunately fell onto a student."

The student was provided with first aid and then taken to hospital where they were given a CT scan; we understand no issues were found and they student did not suffer a concussion. They rested at home the following day, and we are continuing to check in and provide any support as needed.

Our subsequent examinations found that the door had been previously over-opened, pulling the mechanism mostly out of the door; this allowed a small action to completely dislodge it.

The mechanism has since been reinstalled, thoroughly inspected, and a door stopper drilled into the floor to prevent over-opening in future.

All other doors in the building have also since been inspected; this door was found to be unique to the building — it is a fire/emergency exit door that opens outward rather than into the seminar room — and so no other similar doors were found to have the same issue."

Mardi Gras protest granted exemption by NSW Health in ‘massive win’

Deaundre Espejo reports.

NSW Health has granted an exemption for Pride in Protest’s Mardi Gras march on Saturday, allowing the event to have up to 1500 people and exceed the current political gatherings limit of 500.

More than 1100 people have RSVPed for the march, with over 3200 interested.

This is the first protest to be granted an exemption by NSW Health. As a result, NSW Police have withdrawn Supreme Court proceedings against organisers.

The approval comes after significant community pressure, including letters of support from Greens, Labor and Independent Members of Parliament, as well as 78ers — a group of activists who marched in the first Mardi Gras in 1978.

“This is a massive win for not only the right to protest, but for the

queer community to say that the fight against transphobia and homophobia cannot wait,” an official statement by Pride in Protest read. “The police will not stand in the way of our community demanding our rights this Mardi Gras.”

Under the exemption, attendees will be broken up into groups of 500 — similar conditions to the Invasion Day rally on January 26th. There will be rigorous COVID-19 safety measures including contact tracing, social distancing, wearing of face masks, and dispensing of hand sanitiser.

Pride in Protest organiser Toby Walmsley told *Honi* that there has been “very high compliance at past protests,” noting that Invasion Day’s rally saw over 8,000 QR code signups. Walmsley also noted that there have been no transmissions as a result of rallies in Australia thus far due to the careful planning of organisers.

Unlike the Invasion Day rally, however, organisers confirmed that a march and occupancy of the road will proceed at tomorrow’s event. It is unknown whether police will intervene or how large the police presence will be.

“We’ve sought all of the appropriate exemptions. There’s no case that NSW Police have to bring,” Evan Gray, another Pride in Protest organiser, told *Honi*. “If they do come in numbers, then that’ll be because they’ve decided to bring trouble for no legal basis.”

“We know that we can make it safe if we’re given the ability to work with the crowds effectively,” Walmsley added.

Despite the exemption, organisers stressed that ongoing restrictions on the right to protest must be lifted: “It shouldn’t have to get to the point where the Health Minister has to

give an exemption to allow people to protest,” said Joel MacKay of Amnesty International.

“The NSW Government needs to review the COVID guidelines as soon as possible to expand the cap of how many people can attend a peaceful protest. Last weekend, we had up to 5,000 people participating in a triathlon in the South Coast.”

Oscar Chaffey and Honey Christensen, Queer Officers at the University of Sydney Students’ Representative Council told *Honi* that “this is a win for queer liberation against a system that is structured to oppress and silence us.”

“Tomorrow, the streets will be, as they always have been, ours. Mardi Gras will show that our community is beautiful, resilient and can not be silenced by the NSW police. Not 43 years ago, not now.”

Mardi Gras protest takes over Oxford Street

Khanh Tran reports.

Approximately 3000 people attended Pride in Protest’s (PIP) Mardi Gras March on Saturday on Oxford Street.

It was the first demonstration granted an exemption from Public Health Orders by NSW Health, at the 11th hour.

Leading up to the rally, organisers and COVID-19 marshals were deployed to register participants, distribute hand sanitiser, and issue advice concerning masks and social distancing.

Once the event began at 2pm, several contingents ranging from the Socialist Alliance, Leichardt Uniting Church, and university queer collectives occupied the pedestrian crossing between the Courthouse Hotel and National Art School — leading to traffic disruption and a dramatic increase in police presence.

At 2:06pm, various speakers curated by Pride in Protest took turns to address PiP’s grievances against the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) organisation, and government policies which negatively impact the queer community. Aunty Rhonda delivered an Acknowledgement of Country, emphasising the intersection between Indigenous and LGBTQ+ justice.

“To LGBTQIA people, I want you to know that you are all we need. It’s so important that you be your true selves and your authentic selves”.

Rhonda’s speech was followed by an address from Charlie Murphy from Pride in Protest. Afterwards, Greens MP Jenny Leong took the stage in an impassioned address to excoriate

contentious religious freedom and curriculum reforms being considered by Federal and State governments.

“... when it comes to the trans community whether it is the Religious Freedom Bill federally or at the state level, whether it is the so-called Education Bill, we say: get away, you bully.” Leong remarked, referring to trans-exclusionary provisions in One Nation MLC Mark Latham’s Parental Rights Bill which has been strongly condemned by university campaigners, PiP, and the National Union of Students as a threat to trans inclusion and queer equality.

“We are not interested in you attacking trans young people and trans people in the community.”

Mark Gillespie, a member of the 1978 generation and a former anthropologist at U Syd, passionately echoed protestors’ ire against NSW’s highly restrictive protest laws from his own experience.

“Civil liberties have been swept under the carpet,” Gillespie continued and referenced allegations of sexual assault against the former Attorney-General Christian Porter: “Look at the gender issue in our federal body politics...women are still attacked. Where is justice for the women of Australia?”

Protestors then assembled at Oxford Street at 2.45pm while police cordoned off Oxford Street and diverted traffic from Flinders Street using horses. As they walked, protestors chanted a multitude of demands to the NSW and Federal Parliaments, such as echoing ongoing sexual assault controversies

in the Federal Parliament: “Christian Porter, Alan Tudge, sexist homophobic thugs.”

Amongst some of the more notable moments was when Jazzlyn Breen, former SRC Education Officer, stopped and led the crowd in an energised chant highlighting PiP’s demands for an end to Latham’s bill, religious freedom legislations and discriminatory policies against LGBTQ+ people more broadly: “5...6...7...8, no right to discriminate!”

These chants culminated in a large gathering at 3.17pm between the intersections of Oxford, College and Wentworth. Here, marchers rallied against SGLMG. “Mardi Gras is not for profit!” protestors cried, echoing allegations that Mardi Gras has become corporatised.

Shortly thereafter, PiP was issued with move-on orders from police

officers with members of the force forming a coordinated line behind protestors on Oxford Street. Seeing this, demonstrators denounced the increasingly heavy police presence by referencing the defunding movement that accompanied June 2020’s Black Lives Matter movement.

As the afternoon drew to a close at 3.40pm, protestors assembled near Hyde Park’s War Memorial to celebrate Mardi Gras with a selection of popular, queer-themed songs ranging from Diana Ross’ I’m Coming Out, Chic’s C’est Chic and Madonna’s Like a Prayer.

The demonstration came to an end at 4pm, closing with an Acknowledgement of Country delivered by PiP organiser Russel: “Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.”



Photography by Aman Kapoor

Environment Minister delays destruction of Wahluu sacred site in 11th hour reprieve

Elizabeth Noonan reports.

Federal Environment Minister Sussan Ley on Friday issued an emergency declaration to Bathurst Regional Council after a rally yesterday afternoon called for Wahluu to be saved from Council’s planned go kart track. The order will prevent work on Wahluu for 30 days, but there is no guarantee of continued protection after the expiry of that period.

On Thursday in Martin Place, a rally led by the UNSW, UTS and University of Sydney Enviro Collectives called for Wahluu to be saved from Bathurst Regional Council’s planned go kart track.

Wahluu, otherwise known as Mount Panorama, is a site of huge cultural significance to the Wiradjuri people in Bathurst. It is a bora ring site, and a women’s sacred site sits on the shoulder of the mountain. The construction of the go kart track was set to begin on March 8th, International Women’s Day.

Uncle David Bell, a Wiradjuri man from Cootamundra, gave the Welcome to Country, followed by Lungok Wekina, a member of UNSW Enviro Collective, who shared a message from Wiradjuri

elders. The elders said that neither they nor any traditional owners had been consulted throughout the development process and that their suggestions for alternative sites for the track had been ignored. They said that “it is clear the ability of a select few to profit off an exclusive club is worth more to the council than tens of thousands of years of culture.”

“Wahluu, otherwise known as Mount Panorama, is a site of huge cultural significance to the Wiradjuri people in Bathurst.”

Brydie Zorz, a Wiradjuri woman and UNSW student spoke next, giving some context to what is occurring at Wahluu. She said that elders and community members had been fighting against Bathurst Regional Council’s plans for the go kart track for seven years.

Zorz said that “Bathurst Regional Council rejoices at the chance to assist the colonial regime of the Australian state.” She also noted that she and other Wiradjuri people “are not opposed to a go kart track in Bathurst... what we oppose is the destruction of Indigenous sites to allow this track to be built.” Zorz compared Wahluu to Juukan Gorge, telling the rally that “what is happening at Wahluu is reminiscent of what is happening nation-wide: we see cultural sites being destroyed while a select few profit.”

Zorz called for the Environment Minister, Sussan Ley, “to put an immediate stop to the construction of this track until proper consultation with elders can occur and an alternate location can be found.”

David Shoebridge, NSW Parliament Greens MP and First Nations Justice Spokesperson, was also a speaker at the rally. He condemned Bathurst councillors, saying that the planned destruction of Wahluu “is a deep reflection of Bathurst Regional Council who seem to think that First Nations culture is of so little value

to them and their community that they’re willing to destroy it for a go kart track.”

Shoebridge ended his speech with a challenge; “if they go in on the 8th of March, on International Women’s Day, and try and damage that site, we need to have as many of us there as we can, to stand in solidarity and protect First Nations culture, because the laws aren’t doing it, the parliaments aren’t doing it, the council’s not doing it, the environment minister’s not doing it. It is up to us to save Wahluu.”

Throughout the rally, Sarah Ho, UNSW Environment Officer, led chants such as “When Wiradjuri land is under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!”, and “What do we want? Lands back. When do we want it? Now. What are we going to do? Fight for it.”

Brydie Zorz ended the rally with a call for continued support, with a picnic scheduled for this Sunday, March 7th, at Mount Panorama, protesting the construction. She also shared a petition created by Susan Douglas, which calls for Mount Panorama to be saved. At the time of writing it has over 10 000 signatures.

Community groups call on NSW Government to extend eviction moratorium

Claire Ollivain reports.

In an open letter published on Friday, community advocacy groups called on the State Government to extend the NSW Eviction Moratorium and provide stronger financial support for tenants.

The NSW Government introduced the moratorium last March to support renting households that were struggling during the pandemic. It was originally due to end in October 2020, but was extended by six months due to the ongoing impacts of COVID.

Under the moratorium, landlords considering an eviction must first negotiate a rent reduction ‘in good faith’ with tenants who have fallen behind in rent and meet the income-loss threshold of 25%.

It also extends the notice period for most evictions to 90 days and protects tenants from being listed on databases for rent arrears accumulated during the moratorium period.

On Thursday, Minister for Better Regulation Kevin Anderson announced a six-month ‘transition period’ for tenants to negotiate repayment plans for arrears owed to landlords following the end of the moratorium on March 26th.

Advocates welcomed the proposal in the open letter but expressed concern that it would fall short of the support needed to ensure security

for low-income renters who are continually impacted by COVID, some of whom are facing homelessness.

The additional support community groups are calling for include: a stronger framework around rent reduction negotiations, incorporation of other types of evictions under a moratorium, implementation of No Interest Loan Schemes or targeted COVID rent relief payments for tenants struggling with rent, and additional funding for services supporting tenants.

“Even with the proposed ‘transition’ measures, we are very concerned about the moratorium protections ending on 26 March, just as COVID-19 income supports drop away.”

Households reliant on income support may soon be facing heightened financial insecurity, as JobKeeper and the JobSeeker coronavirus supplement are set to expire in the same week as the moratorium.

“In addition to the immediate risk of evictions and possible homelessness we are deeply concerned about the medium and long-term

financial impacts of COVID on renting households.”

Housing and homelessness advocates are seeing a crisis in regional NSW and Outer Sydney, with tenants struggling to secure housing in the face of mass rent increases and vacancy rates of less than 1 per cent.

“Renters in regional NSW and in outer Sydney will be hit the hardest by the moratorium ending,” the letter states.

Some renters have been forced to move into their cars or tents after being evicted for alternative reasons, and advocates worry that there will be a surge in homelessness if the eviction moratorium isn’t extended.

“The balance here has certainly tipped in the landlord’s favour, and exploitation is rife,” said the coordinator of a regional NSW tenants’ advice service.

One renter who will be impacted by the end to the moratorium told *Honi* that “As a family who is about to be forced out of our home by a rogue landlord and a constantly rising housing market, in a country so rich we

have to ask ourselves is this all there is for our future?”

Community organisations have also raised concerns about the inordinate risk of housing stress and homelessness that women — particularly older women and single mothers — will experience when the moratorium ends.

Manager of the Older Women’s Network, Yumi Lee, said that “The stress this causes is horrendous, and it’s being inflicted on a group of older people whose health is particularly compromised. It’s just cruel.”

The open letter has been endorsed by 40 community groups including the Students’ Representative Council at the University of Sydney.

“Students are one of the many vulnerable groups that would be affected if this moratorium was not extended... After all of the strife and difficulties that students have been inflicted with over the past year, a mass wave of evictions would be devastating,” SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu told *Honi*.

Lia Perkins, Welfare Officer of the SRC, said that “People should never be evicted from their homes, especially not during the ongoing pandemic and recession.”

Advocates worry that there will be a surge in homelessness if the eviction moratorium isn’t extended.

Changes to not-for-profit laws may silence activists and advocacy groups

The changes may have a 'chilling effect' on advocacy in the sector, writes Jeffrey Khoo.

In February 2021, the Treasury released an Exposure Draft of a law that would change how not-for-profit organisations are regulated in Australia. These changes, which have so far escaped widespread attention, could significantly stifle activist organisations and advocacy groups more broadly.

As a brief overview, all Australian not-for-profits (except for "basic religious charities") must comply with certain minimum standards of behaviour in order to remain a "registered entity" and receive tax concessions. These Governance Standards have been administered and enforced by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) since late 2012.

Governance Standard 3 empowers the ACNC to investigate registered entities which act unlawfully. At present, the ACNC can only look into serious matters - either indictable criminal offences, or offences which carry civil penalties of \$12,600 or more. But under the Draft, the ACNC would be able to investigate - and potentially deregister or revoke tax concessions from - entities who have been involved in certain lower-level summary offences. According to the Explanatory Statement to the Draft, this would include "unlawfully gathering or remaining on land or in a building", which would affect organisations which undertake direct action or physical acts of civil disobedience.

This concern isn't unfounded. In a media release last year, then-Assistant Minister for Charities Zed Seselja clearly expressed the government's intent to target activists, stating: "Late night break-ins. Illegal blockades. Damage to property and theft of stock. These are the types of unlawful behaviours promoted and engaged in by activist organisations masquerading as charities that will no longer be tolerated under strengthened rules to be implemented by the Morrison Government."

Michael Sukkar MP, the current Minister in charge of charities, did not respond to Honi's request to specify instances of activist organisations engaging in the behaviour Seselja described, or why deregistration or removing tax concessions, which several not-for-profit organisations heavily rely on, would be a proportionate response.

As such, without further proof, the government's insinuation that activist organisations regularly engage in violent illegal behaviour - including "malicious damage, vandalism or theft of personal property" and "common assault or threatening violence against an individual", as mentioned in the Explanatory Statement - seems misleading and unfounded.

Even regarding peaceful, lawful protests - which are where the majority of activists and members of the public get involved - recent decisions to reject COVID-safe plans for protests

at the last minute and violently shut down student protests pursuant to public health orders have shown how a "lawful" protest can quickly tip towards an "unlawful" gathering, as deemed by police. It's not hard to see how not-for-profit organisations that organise protests and public demonstrations could decide to reduce or limit their organising activity for fear of deregistration, with worrying implications for democracy and freedom of assembly.

Not-for-profit organisations, including the USyd SRC, have criticised the proposal. "A large part of our organisational mandate includes advocacy, which by extension involves protest," says SRC President Swapnik Sanagavarapu. "It is clear that the Government finds dissent intolerable and seeks to prevent the exercise of the legitimate right to protest and political speech." Advocacy group GetUp's National Director Paul Oosting stated to Honi that "[t]he government is trying to quell the rising tide of community activism ... [through] a politically motivated attack on charities designed to undermine their right to peaceful protest".

While the work of some activists may be hindered, several activist networks are not registered with the ACNC, and so would not be subject to this change. More worryingly, on a sector-wide level, a blunt application of the new Governance Standard 3 could cover any charity or not-for-profit that engages in advocacy, no matter how much or how little.

This is because it requires registered entities to take "reasonable steps" to ensure that their "resources" are not used to "promote and support" unlawful activities. The wide scope of "resources" - including an organisation's funds, their responsible entities and employees, and their websites, social media accounts and other publications - severely limits their ability to advocate on sensitive or controversial political matters. And the lack of guidance around what constitutes "reasonable steps" and "promotion and support" has left not-for-profits uncertain about whether they are complying with the legislation, with Sanagavarapu concerned about the prospect of liability if someone attending an SRC-organised protest commits an offence, which the SRC cannot control.

If this Standard was in force this time last year, it could mean that organisations that encouraged their Facebook followers or members on a mailing list to attend last June's Black Lives Matter protests, at the time they were outlawed, could face deregistration. It could mean that community legal centres that provided legal assistance to protestors and observed breaches of power by police, such as the Aboriginal Legal Service, could be viewed as having "supported"

the protests. It could also mean that not-for-profits which donate to or share funds with registered organisations that organise protests could be caught up in this law.

"The infractions which could spark deregistration are so minor in nature that they could easily be weaponised against charities who raise genuine concerns about government policies in order to silence dissent," says Greenpeace Australia Pacific General Counsel Katrina Bullock. And considering Seselja's anti-activist rhetoric, it would not be surprising if any of those outcomes occurred; the Explanatory Statement indicated that deregistration could be pursued "in all cases".

The unclear wording of this Draft leaves advocacy groups and not-for-profits in the lurch. It does not adequately clarify their compliance obligations, which well-constructed Governance Standards should aim to do. Despite the Charities Act 2013 stating that "promoting or opposing a change" to any Australian law or policy on social issues is within the charitable purpose of a charity, the Draft may instead increase uncertainty and discourage charities from advocacy, with Greenpeace's Bullock signaling

that it would "have a chilling effect on freedom of speech in Australia". "The SRC is clearly a charitable organisation insofar as it provides free resources and services to students, but we have never hidden the fact that we advocate for political and legislative changes to benefit our members," adds Sanagavarapu.

The proposed Standard is of such concern that corporate law firm Gilbert + Tobin has warned that instead of "upholding public trust in our charities", as Seselja asserted, it would "erode advocacy and activism" led by not-for-profits, which "threatens the effectiveness and impact of the charity sector as a whole".

Not-for-profit organisations lead some of the most critical social movements in this country. As Seselja accepted, the vast majority of charities are "doing the right thing", and they should be treated as such. Keeping their advocacy function intact, and ensuring they are not exposed to unnecessary liability or threats of deregistration, is vital for their core purpose of social justice and charity.

The Government is accepting responses to the Draft until 14 March 2021.

The future of clubs and societies on campus

Chiara Bragato assesses the fate of clubs and societies.

Young adults are often told that the years they spend at university will be some of the best of their lives. But given that Clubs and Societies (C&S) are losing funding, COVID has restricted events, and campus life is slowly degrading, does this statement still ring true?

On February 15th, just two weeks before Semester 1 began, the USU called a snap meeting on the future of C&S funding. The new model of funding, which has changed three times in just as many years, is a grants based system that provides lump sums according to the membership of each society. Previously, clubs were reimbursed 50% of the costs of on-campus events, and were given \$1 for every attending USU member. This system allowed clubs to run regular events and provide members with unique experiences, sustained by the purchases of new items for their use, or the arrangement of other services. Whilst the new model provides more freedom with how funds are used, the lesser amount available illustrates the diminishing campus life.

The new model limits the functioning ability of C&S as they have a restricted budget for the semester, and makes it extremely difficult for smaller societies to grow

their membership. This means less in-person events (which are additionally restricted by new COVID guidelines), as well as mounting pressure on the long-term plans of many societies.

Due to the mix of remote and on-campus classes, life at university is unlikely to return to its former glory any time soon. The closure of Manning Bar as a public venue, and its conversion to operating on an as-needed basis, demonstrated the shift of university life away from campus. Students are increasingly enjoying their time off-campus, in many of the surrounding suburbs and venues. Additionally, COVID restrictions instituted by the USU, whilst essential to maintaining the health and safety of students and staff, were only provided to executives a week before semester began, despite the impact it may have had on Welcome Week activities planned by Clubs and Societies.

In an attempt to support C&S during welcome week, Societies were allocated additional funding of \$100 in USU Dollars for Welcome Fest. This funding, while welcome, establishes a system of promotion for the USU themselves, as the items available within outlets are limited to food or Sydney Uni merchandise, whereas previously these funds were

allocated to reimburse societies for any (reasonable) purchases. Whilst any additional funding is welcome, the reliance on membership numbers for funding places increased pressure on smaller C&S. The ability to invest and grow their membership base is limited, particularly as funding is no longer provided through subsidies of events. This inability to grow or sustain membership may lead to a decrease or amalgamate of clubs, providing students with less opportunities to socialise and explore new interests.

Many executives understand the predicament of USU, acknowledging that "the USU is trying their best in a bad situation" (Nancy Luo, MADSOC Event Coordinator). However, considering that the cost of many degrees have increased, staff numbers have decreased, and many courses are now delivered online or in a hybrid fashion, the ever shrinking support for on-campus events is simply another blow to dying campus life.

Similarly to funding cuts, the USU also changed Welcome Fest from the, sometimes overwhelming yet always entertaining, extravaganza, to a gated section of the Front Lawns, where each society only had one day to run their stall. This set-up forced students

to either commute to campus every day of the week in order to meet many of the societies in-person, or miss out on the in-person experience and research other C&S independently. New and returning students alike may be simply unaware of the existence of many C&S, or may be unmotivated to reach out for themselves. Alongside the decision to run Welcome Week parallel to the commencement of classes, the USU may have further forced students to choose between the two. Changes such as these, whilst understood within the context of COVID, are cementing the loss of a social university experience.

Following a year of awkward Zoom catch-ups, socially distanced classes comprised of a few souls who braved the commute to campus, and an endless news cycle of "unprecedented times", 2021 was looked to as a refreshing start. Funding cuts to C&S are simply one aspect of a multi-faceted problem. Whilst the past years have seen ever-increasing numbers of university students, these cuts are just another sign that campus life isn't what it used to be. The lack of events, venues, and university support is shifting student attention away from campus, and it is unlikely to ever fully return.

To all the chick flicks I've loved before

Lara Braga reflects on her favourite chick flicks.

What's your favorite movie? is a very standard question, but one I have always answered with some hesitation. My favorite movies were traditionally considered 'girly', not cult or smart enough. *Legally Blonde* or *Twilight* or *Mean Girls*, I had always said in a joking tone. Most of the movies that I've genuinely enjoyed and have been able to relate to on some personal level had a specific detail about them; they were made by women for women, generally a much younger audience of women, and all the movies, no matter how intrinsically funny, well-constructed or popular they were, were dismissed, the same way I was when told a group of friends that I thought *Mean Girls* was a great showcase of power and social dynamics. Someone just misexplained that I was just overthinking and the conversation moved on.

A specific term for such movies, first coined by Brian Callaghan in the early 1970s, is 'chick flicks'. The term, originally meaning a sexually explicit movie, is often used in a derogatory and reductionist manner. Chick-flicks don't use women as the punchline of the joke but are catered towards their perspectives.

Author Natalia Thompson expresses her opinion on the term 'chick flick,' asserting that it's a mere "attempt to lump together an entire gender's interests into one genre."

Thompson raises a valid point. Why are there so many genres and subgenres when a movie is aimed at a male audience? In the sense that the *Fast and Furious*, *Bond* and *Star Wars* franchises are all different movies with their own appropriate genres, even though they all have a similarly strong, male lead righting a villain's wrongdoings.

This is different for 'chick flicks.' *The Devil Wears Prada*, a movie about a powerful, talented businesswoman and an overachieving intern, is placed in the same category as a film about four best friends, interconnected by a pair of jeans that fit all their body types in *The Sisterhood of Travelling Pants* (2005 - 2008). These films are all slammed together in one category for their one shared trait: the screenplay is exclusively written by women with an all-female main cast, and is catered to young women.

Shockingly, female directors such as Nora Ephron, (the director of *Sleepless in Seattle* and *You've Got Mail*), and Nancy Meyers (who has grossed more than \$1 billion in the American domestic box office alone) are not household names. They are dismissed for being chick flick directors when they have consistently created successful, entertaining, and charismatic films. This observation accentuates the rooted sexism in how audiences view the genre. It fails to acknowledge that most chick flicks

are incredibly interesting, politically-fuelled movies that depict teenage drama or career ambition. Tina Fey, the screenwriter of *Mean Girls*, told the Boston Globe that she wanted teenage girls to feel that "someone made this for me, not at me." That's the reason why chick flicks are so triumphant.

They bring comfort to so many young women who grew up seeing male stories in the majority of critically-acclaimed, Oscar-winning films. Whereas when films about their reality, perspective, and lifetime were seen as shallow and inane.

When a 'chick flick' comes out, it is not a surprise when it's a huge success. However, the stigma surrounding chick flicks propagates negative consequences for women in the film industry. Such stigma leads to an unfair decline in opportunities and respect. Although women make up half the film school graduates, they only directed 1.9% of the top-grossing films made in 2013-2014.

The best way to support female directors and casts is with your money and respect. Perhaps it's the recent *Promising Young Woman*, which tells the story of a sexual assault survivor seeking vengeance, or even Amy Poehler's brand new *Moxie*. Either way, catching the latest chick flick is a good way to start supporting women for all their multifaceted and complex lives.

Art by Juliette Marchant



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In defence of golf

Tom Wark tees off.

Golf is losing a war against its own image. The prominence of elite private clubs is hurting the chances of public courses defending their worth in a society that is ageing and increasingly obsessed with finding the best return on investment.

At the end of 2020, Councillor Clover Moore, Lord Mayor of Sydney, announced plans to halve the length of the famous public golf course at Moore Park from eighteen to nine holes to create more parkland space for local residents. Somewhat unfortunately, the loudest voice in opposition came from a Liberal Councillor — Christine Forster — arguably more famous as younger sister to Tony Abbott.

This war over golf is often characterised as pitting the needs of the many for open space against the luxury leisure pursuit of the few. It is true that there is a long history of private clubs excluding female or culturally diverse members. Indeed, many today continue to exclude those of low socio-economic status through fees into the tens of thousands of dollars — clearly uninterested in providing for the greater community.

However, the portrayal of public golf courses as land that is somehow not as accessible as any other sporting facility is absurd. Sydney's 58 public

golf courses are open all year, weather permitting, to anyone who wants to play. They are far more accessible than cricket grounds with turf wickets where the large pitch square in the centre of the field is roped off to prevent public use. Some public courses such as Marrickville are open to the public for walking, a proposal now considered for Moore Park.

Another common criticism of golf is that the great expense of playing makes it a game only able to be enjoyed by a wealthy few. While new golf equipment can be very expensive, a full set of used golf clubs can cost considerably less than a new cricket bat — which can go for up to \$1500. Even football, Australia's most popular participation sport, can cost upwards of \$350 a year for registration plus football boots and other expenses for only an hour and a half a week. The typical round of golf takes about four hours and costs around \$30 at many public courses.

Also absurd is the belief among many that golf is exclusively enjoyed by white upper and middle-class Australians. As a keen golfer who plays at many of Western Sydney's public offerings, any casual observation will show that golf is extremely culturally diverse. Golf is particularly

popular with migrants from an East Asian background. In terms of socio-economic background, most of the golfers I play with are retired public servants or small business owners and staff.

Amateur golf by its nature is a sport that equalises the playing field between participants. The handicap system means that disadvantages such as time spent working rather than playing or even slightly inadequate equipment

compared with those who have the means to access it does not diminish the value of the competition. For many working-class retirees there are few public resources available for sporting activity. The typical round of golf will involve walking around six kilometres over four hours. For many older people, they will play at least three times a week. This level of exercise and social cohesion is extraordinarily important for a generation that becomes increasingly sedentary.

But it's not only old people

who benefit from golf. Even if you don't play, golf clubs are incredibly important economically for young people. Golf clubhouses attached to both public and private courses employ hundreds of young people across the state and are important fundraising entities. There are over 20,000 greenkeepers in Australia who benefit from public infrastructure such as golf courses to remain employed.

The key issue with Councillor Moore's argument is that she is making a distinction between golf courses and parkland in terms of public accessibility. Yes, there is a small fee associated with using a public golf course and golf courses are not big money-spinners for a local council. But, perhaps she should have worried about planning green space for her growing communities before they had built them, rather than trying to take away a vital publicly owned asset so important to Australia's growing working-class elderly.



Art by Ellie Stephenson

Brown Dog: Why the tension between India and Australia extends well beyond the SCG

Kiran Gupta looks into cricket's latest allegations of racism and the structures that underpin them.

When play was suspended at the SCG test earlier this year, it seemed as though a familiar scene was replaying itself before our eyes. As Australia was accelerating towards a win, Indian fast bowler Mohammad Siraj walked up to the umpires to halt play. He claimed he was called a "brown dog" by Australian fans while fielding on the boundary line, and play was suspended while the umpires investigated. It later emerged that Siraj and teammate Jasprit Bumrah had also reported racist abuse the day before, but as it was well after play had finished, nothing could be done.

As swiftly as security removed the alleged perpetrators, the social media backlash started. Cricket hashtags were flooded with people saying how the Indians simply cried racism because they were losing the match, how they couldn't take a joke, how nothing was actually said and of course, that if they didn't like it, they should go back to where they came from. This was a scene we had seen many times in Australian sport, from Adam Goodes to Lance Franklin.

Most striking was the press coverage, which often negated the racist abuse in the headline but linked a video where the words "brown dog" could clearly be heard. Editors often pointed to accounts suggesting that nothing racist was actually said, without mentioning first-hand

accounts suggesting the opposite.

Following this, the media coverage of the Indian cricket team changed in Australia. Articles appeared about how the Indian team were unhappy with their quarantine in Brisbane and wanted to return home. There was little mention of the fact that the team had been on the road for almost four months, or that Siraj stayed in Australia to make his test debut, despite his father passing away during the series. The most fervent anti-vax COVID deniers suddenly became the biggest supporters of restrictions the country had ever seen. The team was portrayed as ungrateful and all the while, the racist taunts continued.

This was not the first Australia-India racism furore. In 2008, Harbhajan Singh was suspended for allegedly calling Andrew Symonds a "monkey." Eventually, the allegations were dropped — but not before tension between the teams reached a boiling point, with India threatening to return home.

But there's another dimension to this story which must be considered, and which mainstream media has so far ignored. Cricket Australia immediately released a strong statement condemning racism which was backed up by many former players. The media interpreted this as a purely altruistic gesture. Without wanting to

question intentions, it should be noted that India is the global powerhouse of cricket. The strength and size of their Board means that they essentially control the International Cricket Council (ICC). Indeed, the first words of Lord Woolf's independent review into the governance of the ICC said "Cricket is a great game. It deserves to have governance, including management and ethics, worthy of the sport. This is not the position at the present time." When any board has that level of power there are always going to be problems.

In addition, international players flock to the Indian Premier League. The money is astronomical. In 2021, South African Chris Morris (who is not a regular in their national team) will be paid \$2.88 million for six weeks of work. Given the ICC does not operate on an equitable funding model — and TV rights and money directly determine the financial stability of international cricket boards — no one wants to anger India's cricket board.

India's tour was like gold for Cricket Australia, which was struggling with COVID-related financial issues, as well as a lawsuit from Channel 7. The TV revenue that an Indian series brings into any country is astounding. For the Indian Premier League (a domestic competition), Star Sports India bought the rights to the tournament for over half a billion dollars annually.

India's tour went a long way towards financially saving Australian cricket — therefore there was no way that Cricket Australia was going to do anything to displease India.

So we can't definitively view Cricket Australia's statement as proof that Australian cricket owns up to racism. We certainly can't look to the media for that either. So what did that incident really show? The most obvious thing is that Australia still has a long way to go in confronting racism in sport. One look at Indian media will also tell a completely different story to Australian media. But there's more at play than simply racism. At the end of the day, money talks in cricket and the strength of financial motives will obscure any desire for real social change. In doing so, racism will be forgotten in Australian cricket and seen to be resolved. To summarise, we should look to Waleed Aly's words about Adam Goodes:

"There is no mystery about this at all. And it's not as simple as it being about race ...

It's about the fact that Australia is generally a very tolerant society until its minorities demonstrate that they don't know their place. And at that moment, the minute someone in a minority position acts as though they're not a mere supplicant, then we lose our minds."

Australia's worst museum

Oliver Pether examines the Australian War Memorial's political influence.

There was once a time when politicians cared little for war commemoration. Former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, for example, reflected that "In my time as prime minister if I'd gone to Anzac Cove for Anzac Day, people would have said 'What on earth is Fraser doing?'"

Nowadays of course, it is a completely different story. Politicians on both sides routinely get emotional about our military history, subscribe wholeheartedly to the Anzac legend and pour millions of taxpayer dollars into the Australian War Memorial (AWM).

This perhaps explains why the AWM has so much cultural capital. Indeed, the museum's director, Matt Anderson, describes the building as the "soul of the nation." Prime Minister Scott Morrison also has the audacity to say "Australians will always be Australian so long as they remember this place."

Unfortunately, the AWM is not using its political influence for good. Instead of educating us on our military history like it is supposed to, its primary objectives seem to be to glorify recent conflicts and minimise the fallout from the Brereton report.

Under the current board, the AWM's role has changed from museum, shrine and archive to public relations firm for disgraced soldiers.

The AWM is about to construct a new exhibition centre dedicated entirely to Australia's recent conflicts. The institution is set to receive \$500 million dollars of government funding to do so, at a time when other museums are having their funding cut. According to billionaire AWM Chairman Kerry Stokes, this project is in the "national interest."

Stokes has also taken the liberty

to cover the legal costs of all nineteen soldiers implicated in the Brereton report. With prosecutors already facing the difficult task of proving that the soldiers knew the Afghans were non-combatants before deciding to kill them anyway, Stokes' intervention will likely help the defendants escape conviction.

Stokes is also financing alleged war criminal Ben Roberts-Smith's defamation lawsuit against Nine newspapers. Roberts-Smith was reported as being one of the worst offending soldiers implicated in the Brereton Report, with an investigation by Nine newspapers alleging he killed seven non-combatants.

Less Roberts-Smith is found



innocent, which a litany of evidence suggests otherwise, this lawsuit is a brazen act of intimidation against a free press. Roberts-Smith wrongly claimed a media tip-off led to his criminal investigation, when he was actually referred to the police by the Australian Defence Force.

The Brereton Report was a four-year inquiry led by Army Reserve Major-General and NSW Court of Appeal judge Paul Brereton. It investigated alleged

war crimes committed by Australian soldiers in Afghanistan and interviewed over 400 people. The report concluded that members of the Australian Special Air Service Regiment committed 39 potential murders from 2005-2016.

Now, why the AWM board thinks it's appropriate to make a museum exhibit on an ongoing conflict, especially in light of such a controversy, is beyond me.

Even if the redevelopment is driven by the noble intention of commemorating the service of living veterans, the current AWM board cannot be the ones entrusted to educate us on our military history. They have clear agendas.

For example, board member a n d

former prime-minister Tony Abbot, was a staunch enthusiast for Australia's involvement in the Middle East. He also saw the war in Afghanistan entirely as a matter of good versus evil. Additionally, AWM director Matt Anderson was the former Australian ambassador to Afghanistan. Both these men featured prominently in the conflict and are inclined to twist the narrative. The rest of the AWM board, which consists mainly of former defence personnel,

will likely do the same. I say this because already, the board has shown a complete lack of taste and a blatantly partisan agenda. One example is the proposed redevelopment including a display on Operation Sovereign Borders, hardly a military campaign and one of Tony Abbot's own policies.

Matt Anderson has also indicated he wants the Brereton report to be thought of as a minor blimp in an otherwise honourable campaign. Finally there is Kerry Stokes, who seems to be doing everything in his power to ensure none of the Brereton report's findings are ever proven true. It's like he wants future generations to think it never happened. Commemorating Afghanistan in its rightful historical context is a mammoth task. It should not be entrusted to a group of ardent right wingers and former armed-force personnel with no historical background.

The sacrifice of the Australians who served needs to be told in the context of the American-led coalition failing to defeat the Taliban after twenty years of fighting. It needs to be told in light of the fact that for much of the war, elements of the unit at the forefront of the Australian campaign, the SASR, exhibited a toxic warrior culture fixated on demonstrating power and bending the rules. It needs to be told in light of the fact that we struggled to win hearts and minds. When contacted for comment, the AWM said it "always has been, and will remain, an apolitical institution." This legacy is in jeopardy. If the current board gets its way, we will end up with an overfunded propaganda centre disguised as a museum.

Pissgate: the abysmal state of the engineering faculty

Riley Vaughan is sick of seeing piss in PNR.

The Peter Nicol Russel library, usually occupied by students from the Faculty of Engineering, became a biohazard drenched in human urine on Wednesday night.



It may come as a surprise to some readers that facilities could reach such a decrepit and unsafe state within The University of Sydney, a higher education institution that regularly ranks among the greatest in the world. To engineering students, it isn't a

surprise at all — but why is this?

Because it's not the first time. The engineering precinct is regularly neglected by Campus Infrastructure Services (CIS). They were previously alerted to problems with the restrooms on the 10th of November 2020, the 13th of January 2021, and the 22nd of February 2021. On one occasion, every single male urinal and cubicle overflowed with discharge. On each of those occasions, no serious improvements or renovations were made to the restroom facilities.

These incidents speak to a more significant issue: the dilapidation of an entire precinct that is in dire need of renovation. Air-conditioners regularly leak fluid upon students. Doors to enter the library have been broken for months at a time and continue to fail when CIS sends staff to fix them. Additionally, after being 'fixed' by CIS, one door began oscillating between open and closed on a whim of its own, creating disruptively loud sounds for hours on end.

Over the most recent holiday period, a corridor along the library was closed for asbestos removal. A University of Sydney spokesperson assured Honi that "the University had every possible aspect in place to

ensure that the material from the ETP site was removed safely." Students were not notified that they had been in the presence of asbestos for years.

When asked why no long-term improvements had been made to the facilities, the University claimed that buildings were inspected on "a regular program" and that "where safety issues are identified [they] are rectified according to risk assessment." The University's spokesperson also blamed the issue upon hand wipes that had been flushed down the toilet pans, claiming that additional signage has been placed in the area.

The library was closed immediately



due to the overwhelming smell and safety risk. A team of plumbers and cleaners were deployed overnight, and the library re-opened the next morning.

This incident cannot be allowed to become normalised, humorous, or unimportant. It is unsafe for students to be allowed to stew in the fumes of human waste. The fact that the Peter Nicol Russel building is invisible from the majority of the campus, and always 'broken anyway' as many students seem to claim — to the extent that there is a large Facebook page documenting breakages — cannot trivialise this warm, yellow, bubbling Watergate.

“Then who in such a world could fell the oppressor – You”

In Praise of Bertolt Brecht, by Noah Corbett.

Bertolt Brecht, the German modernist best known for his theatrical works, avant-garde dramatic theory and avowed Marxism, might not seem immediately relevant to an Australian audience in 2021. His poetry, difficult to translate and underappreciated in the English-speaking world, might seem even less topical, especially at a time when poetry as a medium appears to have fallen generally out of favour.

Nonetheless, I would contend that Brecht's poems, especially those composed in his exile during the 1930s and 40s, and published in the *Svendborg Poems* (1939), have a lot to say to us. For one, they are immensely enjoyable to read. Beyond this, they also encourage an estrangement from the familiar and seemingly inevitable social, economic and political institutions of our society, allowing us to historicise our own social role and act on the grim reality that confronts us without falling into despair. Brecht encourages us to reflect, even in times of crisis, on how people have created the circumstances in which we live and thus, how we as people can transform them. At a time of global pandemic, reactionary political trends and a global economy characterised by inequality and instability, Brecht's poems suggest a valuable mode of thinking.

I

Brecht's language is sharp, condensed and uniquely his own. He avoids the formal register and lyrical artifice that one finds in many other German poets (think Rilke), instead imitating the rhythm and feeling of spoken German, but without writing as any German would actually communicate. Brecht mixes this everyday German with archaic terms, commonplace sayings and bureaucratic jargon to create a unique poetic idiom. Perhaps the closest comparison, and what Brecht himself considered his greatest literary inspiration, is the vigorous language of Luther's bible.



His language and the unsentimental sharpness of Brecht's ideas makes him very enjoyable to read, even for those who are generally sceptical of poetry. There is a reason why lines such as 'Erst kommt das fressen, dann kommt die Moral' [First comes eating, then comes morality] were so popular with audiences in 1930s Berlin. Brecht slices through the reader, presenting didactic political statements and unresolved contradictions in even measure, laying bare the contradictions at the heart of our social, political and economic institutions. In 'Questions of a Worker who Reads' he asks:

*'Who built the seven gates of Thebes?
In books you will read the names of kings.
Was it the kings who dragged the stones into place?
And Babylon, so often destroyed
Who rebuilt it so many times? In which of the houses
Of gold-gleaming Lima did the construction workers
live?*

*Where, on that evening when the Chinese Wall was
finished
Did the masons go? The great city of rome
Is full of triumphal arches. Who set them up? Over
whom
Did the Caesars triumph? Did Byzantium, so much
praised in song
Have only palaces for its inhabitants? Even in fabled
Atlantis
That night when the ocean engulfed it, the drowning
Roared out for their slaves.*

*Young Alexander conquered India.
Was he alone?
Caesar defeated the Gauls.
Did he not have so much as a cook with him?
Philip of Spain wept when his armada
Went down. Did no one else weep?
Frederick the Second was victorious in the Seven
Years' War. Who else
Prevailed?*

*On every page a victory.
Who cooked the victory banquet?
Every ten years a great man.
Who paid the bills?*

*So many report
So many questions.*

Antiquity and the middle ages, sitting at a comfortable distance from the present, throw into sharp relief the inequalities and oppression that Brecht sees all around him. The simple rhetorical questions force a reconsideration of historical narratives, but more importantly they suggest a reconsideration of contemporary narratives which are, Brecht suggests, themselves historical and hence changeable. 'Who built the gates of Thebes?' can quickly become 'Who built the immense wealth enjoyed by our elites?' The answer is much the same.

In this way, Brecht carries over into his poetry the famous *Verfremdungseffekt* that is so central to his plays. This is, as Fredric Jameson explores, the 'estrangement' or 'distancing' effect whereby the natural and habitual are shown to be historical, constructed by human beings, and hence able to be transformed by human beings. This process distances

his audience, including a contemporary one, from their assumed social, political and economic relations, and allows them to reflect on how they could and should be changed. The purpose is to instil what Brecht calls the 'most beautiful of all doubts':

*'When the downtrodden and despondent raise their
heads and
No longer believe
In the might of their oppressors!'*

It must be acknowledged that his particular use of language also makes Brecht difficult to translate. Idiosyncratic simplicity and clarity of form at times comes off as banality. His setting of idioms and archaisms in unfamiliar settings can appear clichéd. Meaning is often lost when the form is necessarily changed. The result is that, as Martin Esslin says, 'the champions of Brecht in the English-speaking world often appear to be overstating their case.'

Brecht himself used this to his benefit when, in 1947, he was hauled before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, accused of being a Hollywood communist. Having fled Hitler in the 1930s and moved to Los Angeles, Brecht insisted that he had written literature on the side of the workers and in the fight against fascism but had never been a member of the Communist Party. Brecht was telling the truth about his non-membership of the Communist Party. However, his ideological sympathies were clear, and his defence seemed to be faltering, when HUAC began to cite translations of his more revolutionary works. Brecht, however, simply objected to the translation, to the consternation of the Committee members and the amusement of the crowd.

'Mr Stripling: Did you write that Mr Brecht?
Mr Brecht: No. I wrote a German poem, but that is very different from this [Laughter].'

Despite these difficulties, there is still much to be gained from reading Brecht in English. For the purposes of this article, I have relied largely on the translation of Brecht's complete poetic works by David Constantine and Thomas Kuhn, published in 2018. These faithful renderings of the poems allow the *Svendborg Poems* to maintain a lot of their original power.

II

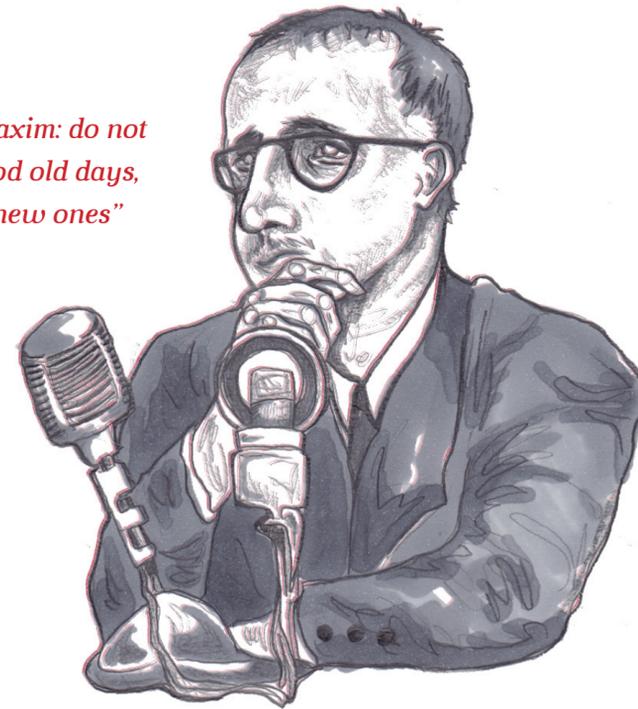
*'From under my Danish thatch, my friends
I follow your struggle. In these pages I send you
As I have before, a few words ...'*

The *Svendborg Poems* begin with a prefatory address from Brecht to his friends and comrades from his exile in Denmark. This sets the tone of the collection: reports from a time of struggle and despair from a man who has fled his homeland, addressed to his friends and comrades, as well as the next generations.

This launches into the 'German War-Primer'. These short poems address the people of Germany on the eve of the Second World War and are written in Brecht's version of the classical 'lapidary' style — poems made to be inscribed into stone. Like a latter-day Horace, Brecht is minimalistic and punchy. These poems seem almost inevitable.

*'A Brechtian Maxim: do not
build on the good old days,
but on the bad new ones'*

Walter Benjamin



*'The war that is coming
Is not the first. Before it
There were other wars.
When the last one was over
There were victors and vanquished.
Amongst the vanquished the lowly folk
Went hungry. Among the victors
The lowly folk went hungry also.'*

As Brecht's friend, the critic and philosopher Walter Benjamin noted, these are slogans to be scrawled in chalk on concrete by a partisan who, by the time we are reading their lines 'has already fallen.' The language is simple, the satire sharp. The elites are 'Die Oberen' (The High-Ups) who live decadently while the vast majority starve. The war that the fascists are planning appears, for Brecht, to be eerily related to their peace—it will kill those who their peace has left over.

Brecht soon moves from pithy slogans into slightly more ambiguous territory:

*'In the dark times
Will there be singing?
There will be singing
Of the dark times.'*

Brecht's question seems poignant, his answer is jarring. At a time of deep human suffering, we tend to wonder whether there is still a place for singing, for beauty, for human creativity. This is an understandable sentiment. Yet in posing the question and then immediately answering that there will be singing of the dark times, Brecht estranges us from the tendency to lament the loss of beauty and instead encourages us towards action. Not only should we, the reader, be singing of the dark times as they occur, but we should act on the knowledge that, once the dark times have passed, others will sing of them. This view to the future turns the present into a historical moment, it leads us to historicise ourselves. In knowing that the eyes of those who come after will be trained upon us, we (hopefully) cannot help but see ourselves as active participants in a world that is being created as we speak. In two brief sentences we see the *Verfremdungseffekt* at work.

Brecht's emphasis on the future, and on seeing ourselves as historical actors, is emphasised further in a series of Children's Songs with titles such as 'The child that wouldn't wash' and 'Little begging song'. Brecht, in response to Walter Benjamin questioning the inclusion of these juvenile songs in the supposedly

poems about the coming war, insisted that they remain. His reason was that 'In the fight against them [the fascists], we must leave nothing out. They don't have anything small in mind. They are planning three-thousand years of horror ... For that reason we cannot forget anybody.' Grandiose as it may seem, Brecht was writing for the children to be born after the dark times in which he was living, for the possibility of new life itself.

Moving from the war primer through a series of ballads and songs, Brecht comes to the third section of the *Svendborg Poems*, titled 'Chronicles'. Brecht's subject here shifts. It is no longer the coming war, at least not directly. Instead, he presents a series of slightly longer poems, dealing with historical and philosophical themes. The aforementioned 'Questions of a worker who reads' establishes the tone, and Brecht continues in like fashion, contradicting expectations and unsettling the reader.

In a dream he visits the 'exiled poets', and in the middle of an amusing conversation with Dante, Ovid, Tu Fu, and Heine, among others, a question comes from the darkest corner of the room:

*"Hey you, do they know
Your verses by heart? And those who know them
Will they prevail and escape persecution?"—"Those
Are the forgotten ones", Dante said quietly
"In their case, not only their bodies, their works too
were destroyed."
The laughter broke off. No one dared look over. The
newcomer
Had turned pale.'*

In this matter, likely closer to Brecht's heart than most of his readers, he still produces a valuable tension. An idea is presented or a question is asked. It is then contradicted or answered so as to cast it in a strange light. The poem ends without a satisfactory conclusion, and the reader is left discomfited.

At times this constant tension and sharpness can make Brecht feel unrelenting, cold and even dehumanising to read. Brecht doesn't just deflate his reader, he punctures them. Addressing those who waver in the face of fascism, asking 'On whom can we rely? ... Is it luck that we need?' Brecht answers contemptuously 'So you ask. Await/No other answer than your own!'. But this is, to borrow from Benjamin again, part of Brecht's satirical brilliance as he 'strips the conditions in which we live...Naked as it will

be when it reaches posterity, their human content emerges. Unfortunately it looks dehumanised, but that is not the satirist's fault.' Brecht makes the reader tense, but it is a productive tension.

The *Svendborg Poems* end with 'To Those Born After', one of Brecht's best-known works. It is both a condensed recapitulation on the primary themes of the collection, and uncharacteristically personal. 'Really, I live in dark times!' it begins, and Brecht proceeds to lament his own hypocrisy:

*'They say to me: eat and drink! Be glad that you have
the means!
But how can I eat and drink when
It is from the starving that I wrest my food and
My glass of water is snatched from the thirsty?
Yet I do eat and I drink.'*

Proceeding through an almost biblical description of how he passed the days 'Granted to me on this earth' in doomed struggle against the oppressors, Brecht veers towards a confessional style. He even comes dangerously close to the cathartic purging of emotions through art that, in his polemics against Aristotelian poetics, Brecht argued vociferously against. But catharsis never arrives, as the poem ends with an ambiguous appeal to those who will 'emerge again from the flood/In which we have gone under'. Brecht asks merely that:

*'You, however, when the time comes
When mankind is a helper unto mankind
Think on us
With forbearance.'*

Again, Brecht's audience in 1939 is encouraged to historicise, to see themselves in the eyes of posterity, and to try and transform their world. But we, those who live in the world following the Second World War, one where humanity is not a helper to humanity, sit in an even more interesting position. We are those born after. We live in the world after the flood, a world that we have and continue to create. What have we made of it? The call to understanding from Brecht, is a call also to learn from the mistakes of his time. We should read Brecht, understand him, and begin to see ourselves as agents of historical change.

III

'Poetry makes nothing happen' in the words of Auden, 'however, it survives/A way of happening, a mouth.' This is the value of Brecht's *Svendborg Poems* which, as Brecht intended are poems 'expressing the disharmonies of society.' They set up a series of questions with unsatisfactory answers, prompting a tension which leaves us unsettled but encourages us to look at our circumstances from the estranged perspective of history.

This allows us to conceive of a response to times of crisis that goes beyond both despair and naivete, a clear-eyed questioning of social conditions and an unwavering commitment to our political principles, even as the world seems to descend ever further into darkness. As Brecht himself puts it in a poem titled simply 'Questions and Answers':

*"Can truth be mortal, lies eternal?"—"Without a
doubt."
"Where on earth does injustice go unrecognised?"—"Here."
"Who knows anybody who has ever achieved fortune
through violence."—"Who doesn't?"
"Then who in such a world could fell the oppressor?"—"You."*

Art by Eleanor Curran

Hear ye, Hear ye!: In conversation with Graham Keating

Ariyana Haghighi examines the role of a town crier with Sydney's very own.

If I asked you to imagine a town crier, you would conjure a Medieval-esque image. A British man proclaiming feudal titles and taxation schemes, his face covered with a long scroll of parchment, his audience a host of disgruntled, illiterate citizens. Town crying was a radio in an ancient world where print media was light-years away and education a privilege only afforded to the nobility.

Considering the extent of technological developments since then, it appears the need for a town crier has dissolved just like the structures of feudalism itself. Unbeknownst to many, a dedicated guild on Australian soil keeps the town crier memory alive and aims to revolutionise its role to cater to modern audiences.

I spoke to Graham Keating, the town crier currently employed by the City of Sydney to perform civic duties. Keating, a lover of his craft and a five-time Town Crier World Champion, discussed the crucial modernisation of his role, his approach to political sensitivity and his desire to garner public interest in the venerable art consigned to Medieval caricatures.

Ariyana Haghighi: Could you tell our audience about your career path that led to the unique role of town crier?

Graham Keating: I got into theatre and the ABC. Then, I got involved with a theme park called Old Sydney Town (which no longer operates) and became the entertainment producer. When their resident town crier went away, I fell into the role. I became the official town crier for the City of Sydney in 1976, and have travelled overseas and participated in competitions since. I am really thrilled at being a town crier because you are engaging with the people so strongly.

AH: What does modern town crying entail, and how is it different from the Medieval form?

GK: In feudal times, the town crier was employed by the Lord of the manor. As most people could not read, the town crier's role was to impart messages and be the government's voice. I was instead appointed by the Council as indeed are all town criers. The main reason for the town crier's existence [now] is to promote tourism and encourage people to come to the village or town. Each town crier extols the virtues of their particular community. All town criers' uniforms or costumes actually reflect the village they represent in terms of colour or symbolic references. Now, town crying is also more theatrical and a form of entertainment. You perform at certain ceremonies such as the Olympics, and it has to be dynamic — almost epic. You're not just talking to the audience in front of you, your town crying echoes the annals of time.

AH: How do you think town

crying has changed during your work?

GK: I began town crying in 1975. There is a growing awareness of our multiculturalism and harmony. The purpose of town crying is to further the bonds of friendship and understanding between nations and people. A town crier needs to be aware of the nature of the audience to whom they are performing. I find this pertinent when I perform at citizenship ceremonies. A town crier nowadays has to rise above their original colonial image. In Australia, many recognise colonisation as a form of invasion, so one has to be quite sensitive about how they appear. I perform a lot with Aboriginal people and they call me 'brother.' Also, I have cried in Japanese and in Polish so there is an international dimension now. You have to be a sympathetic citizen of the world.

AH: Some may believe your role is a vestige of British colonialism. How would you respond?

GK: I can understand that, believe you me I've encountered that. In Malaysia, I have to play an Australian stockman role as they do not want the image of British imperialism. The way I am able to cope with controversy and to transform it is by emphasising the fact that criers are aware of the needs of modern Australians. We acknowledge a multicultural society. We cry with phrases from different languages. I am also associated with Aboriginal dance troupes and perform at smoking ceremonies to present Aboriginal elders. What is key is acknowledging the Indigenous land on which we stand, and elders past, present and emerging. So you behave in a way that is contrary to how the colonists would have to the

Aboriginal populace and counteract their attitudes by being genuinely harmonious.

AH: Why do you think town crying is becoming more popular in Australia?

GK: Town criers are theatrical people and it is a functional role. Whenever there is a festival, the town crier will lead the parade. It is also very dignified as it is very ceremonial. It is also entertaining — one of your greatest joys as a performer is to see the instantaneous joy in the audience. It is a very rewarding profession as you get the instant satisfaction of knowing you are making people happy.

AH: What is one thing you would like the general public to know about your role?

GK: That we are here to serve. It is an honourable and ancient occupation. Town criers date back to the Grecian wars. I would like people to realise that the town crier is the servant to the community, even with their theatrical presence. Their duty is to serve, promote and extol. With an office of duty comes a certain kind of responsibility. There is a responsibility to do a lot of work for charity, and being involved with the homeless and those less fortunate than you. You have a duty of care for society, and I mean that very sincerely.

The Honourable Australian Guild of Town Criers formed in 1989 boasts crying aficionados from countless Councils. They are always keen for apprentices. Like Keating, you may encounter the chance to represent soccer star Pele or Bill Gates! You can contact the Guild at bugle.corp@bigpond.com.

“Serve, promote and extol”

“It has to be dynamic - almost epic”

“You have a duty of care for society”

Art by Angela Xu

You're an introvert?

Olivia Cen investigates the divide between introvert and extrovert.

You're an introvert? I responded with shock and surprise whilst having dinner with two of my good friends. They were the type of people I would have described as outgoing, sociable in big groups, and intently engaged when there is company. I confidently assumed that they would feel energised in a stimulating social environment, rather than being alone.

As a disclaimer, I am an extrovert, and I think I could easily tell you who my extroverted friends are. Yet, it dawned upon me that I did not know many people who openly and willingly proclaimed themselves as introverts unless prompted. This got me thinking: why did I act so confused that my friends were introverts? Did I even implicitly see extroverts as superior?

One of the most common misconceptions of introverts (which I subconsciously held) is that they're reserved and are not usually outgoing in social situations. In her book *Quiet*, the leading academic Susan Cain defines an introvert as someone who prefers a “quieter, more minimally

stimulating environment.” Introverts definitely feel comfortable in solitude, as it allows them to recharge their energy, whilst extroverts require stimulation, which produces energy for them — but it's not about how energetic you are, but where you get your energy from.

In fact, the traits of introversion and extroversion lie on a spectrum, and very few people are ever extreme introverts — quiet and antisocial — or extroverts — very loud and rely heavily on social interaction. However, popular culture portrays these labels as a strict binary. The introverts are the studious, lonely and quiet Sheldon Coopers, Alex Dunphys and Rory Gilmores of the world, while the extroverts tend to be the popular and outgoing characters like Blair Wardolf, Phoebe Buffay and Michael Scott. However, in reality, introverts are not confined to these stereotypes. A range of celebrities, such as Emma Watson, Bill Gates, Meryl Steep and Barack Obama all identify as introverts. The binary ignores that many people can be found somewhere around the centre

(as an “ambivert”), and that people can identify as an outgoing introvert or a more reserved extrovert.

The spectrum challenges the stereotype that all introverts have a fear of social judgment. Shyness is not synonymous with an individual preferring to work independently or be in solitude. Introverts can still enjoy being surrounded by others, and have the same ease as extroverts when it comes to high-intensity social situations, and this does not make them any less of an introvert.

At the end of the day, introverts value their time in a more minimally stimulating environment to feel grounded. It helps them be more creative and reflective, giving themselves time to ponder and be comfortable with just themselves. According to Susan Cain's *Quiet*, an estimated 50% of Americans identify as being introverted — and according to an informal poll I conducted, up to 49% of my friends on Instagram would too, many of whom I would not have identified as introverts based on their personality. This is exactly why I think the introvert-extrovert

spectrum is an incredible tool to understand people. It celebrates that people gain their energy in different ways, through solitude or company, and within varying degrees.

Ultimately, we live in a society where we are constantly stimulated. As students, we are regularly pushed to demonstrate extroverted traits, such as being awarded participation marks. Introverted traits are considered less valuable in society, which further the undesirable characterisation of introverts — for example, that they can't be inspiring leaders, popular entertainers or decisive characters. The stereotype we have around introverts is narrow and harmful, because it fails to value the power of being in a quieter, calmer environment. Having friends who gain energy in different ways and value solitude creates the very traits of reflection and creativity that makes them interesting and fun to hang out with. I hope that more people will appreciate and value the importance of introversion for themselves and others.

Threads that bind

Victoria Vu Tang spins us a yarn about the value of homemade gifts.



I am a sucker for handmade gifts. The thought of them makes me feel like a star collapsing in on itself, vibrating with a kind of longing that can create new worlds from its abundance of nervous energy. This applies to both the act of receiving and giving, though I personally feel more of a rush when partaking in the latter; as it is one of the states at which I feel most vulnerable.

In the past, I have gifted loved ones necklaces made out of shell and craft-store leather cord, woven bracelets and embroidery, innocently rotund stuffed toys, scarves fumbled over, knotted and unravelled again and again. I have chipped off pieces of myself and woven them into the fibres of these finished products, bled, from needles digging into my fingertips, viscera wiped across the back of my hand so it doesn't stain the efforts I cradle in my hands. I have worked

into the late hours of the morning, dark spots of vision crawling across my vision like vermin that I don't quite understand aren't real until I realise I've been swatting fruitlessly at the projections of them across my work desk, to no avail. Maybe the exhaustion was unavoidable, because I've never been one for exemplary time management skills. But it's not a process that is ever truly scrutinised. Rather, it's the effect that is focused on, the ceremony. It's the light in someone else's eyes bursting like fireworks and sunrises and red lights that turn green just as you drive up to them, as you tuck your bandaged hands into your pockets, bashful and warm. The act of creation has always been one of the most celebrated ways to bleed for someone.

It's kind of creepy, when you think about it. The intensity that goes into creating fugly, misshapen shapes

that are meant to adorn the bodies and abodes of others. Saccharinely unsettling to the point it's been picked up on by generations of those subscribed to the art of knitting. They say — well, about fifteen percent of them say, really — that to gift a loved one a sweater, or to even have the intention to, means that loved one will leave them, cold and bitter and broken and alone and cursing the memory of the lovers that were once their muses. Or something like that. It's been dubbed the “sweater curse.”

Knitted goods, bringers of curses, breakers of hearts.

I don't think I have the sweater curse. I've never made a sweater, since I don't have the patience for them. I guess I've still been cursed, though. Not many of the people I've given handmade gifts have stayed in my life, to the point that I've started giving them out as means of farewell. Final goodbyes, vessels for hopes and dreams, of what-could-have-beens, as I think of those I care for, softly. I sit there with thread knotted in my hands, trying too hard to make the stitches even and then I sit there for several hours more, numb, as I wonder for how long the little homunculus I'm piecing together will sit in a bottom-shelf drawer, stagnant and unloved, until it is taken out for the first and last time to be discarded. I package the monstrosity that I've pulled out of my chest, bleeding, and try to keep the gore from seeping out into the packaging, or into my expression. I

hand it over. I watch my loved one's face, desperate for approval. I breathe out in relief at the twitch of a smile. *Look at me, I want to say, Look at me and miss me and think of me and please come back to me one day.*

And then I remember they owe me nothing, so I turn away and curl in on myself and I wait for the next burst of inspiration, and I convince myself that the smile I have been honoured with is enough for me. They are worth a whole world, and I have never forgotten a single one; I hold a galaxy in myself, mine alone, and in this moment I am God.

To all those I have given handmade gifts to: take part of my heart with you, and do what you will with it. Let it sit on your shelf beside your childhood toys, or in your bed to watch over you whilst you sleep, a guardian over you at your most vulnerable. Wear it like armour, like chainmail. Throw it away, use it as a washrag. Give it to your children, and tell them stories about the person you once knew. Know I loved you with everything, and this is the evidence, and allowing you to do what you will with what I gave you does not make me weak. I'll just miss you forever, and that's okay.

It's not that sweaters knit the most twisted of curses, really. I think it's all to do with love. Love, love, love. That's all that we're left with, really. That's all that there ever really is.

Art by Shania O'Brien

Celestial sexism and space racism

Angelique Minas discusses the politics of astrology.

Whether it be a credit to my Capricorn stellium or a well-developed sense of critical observation, my recent social media consumption has been overwhelmed by heated scepticism and baseless insults towards the online astrology community. An increasingly large group of sceptics have coined and weaponised the term ‘space racism’ against astrologers. While the phrase has garnered significant attention, a justification for its emergence and use is lacking. What kind of treatment had this coterie of critics endured for such a polarising, politically weighted term to have emerged? And why has it so easily slipped into the vernacular of spiritual cynics without critique? To quell these concerns, I conducted interviews with various peers, who identified anywhere on a scale of “militant opposer” to avid practitioner of astrology. In these interviews, we discussed the nature of ‘space racism’ and the anger propagated throughout online mediums and social platforms against this community.

But what is astrology, and why is its practice attracting so much contention? An assortment of answers paints a distorted image, defining the practice as “a hobby” or “a religion”, even an ideological system. Officially, the western zodiac popularised across social media is recognised as a spiritual practise. Neither a mindless activity to fill space and time between more productive efforts nor a formal institution, it is a way of interpreting one’s place in the world and connecting to a higher form of self. In this regard, astrology respects a natural balance of good and bad energies, appreciating the complex layers of strengths and shortcomings which constitute each

individual. Hence, with no inherent biases for one sign over the other, but all exhibiting an organic combination of positive and negative energy, astrology is fundamentally unable to propagate celestial absolutes or cosmic (zodiac) stereotypes.

Unawareness of the true nature of astrology means that many people view the practice solely in light of its recent commodification, characterising it as a “cultish” crutch for broken, “lost”, or “sad” individuals who need a “sense of direction” to give their lives purpose. The fervent scepticism towards astrology is part of a larger history of hypercriticism against areas of interest marketed towards and primarily occupied by a female or queer demographic. Reflecting a growing anger at perceived unfair ‘prejudice’ of character, based on something no one can control; a birth date.

So, where does ‘space racism’ fit in this discussion? Celia Connolly speculates, “it could be a term calling out the white spheres of the discourse”. ‘Space racism’ invites avid astrologers and sceptics alike to participate in a conversation to become more aware of the cultural and spiritual astrological differences of eastern and western zodiac systems. Broadly, the proliferation of commercial astrology has seen astrology adulterated into a commodity for mass consumption. Furthermore, the phrase might have been productive if it expanded discourses to the dismissal of PoC astrologers by their white counterparts, a commentary on the colonisation of spiritual identity. However, the term ‘space racism’ proved “overwhelmingly disappoint[ing]” in its intended context. It is deployed as a vehicle of unsolicited, unwarranted

criticism that minimises “the experiences of people of colour and endorses a neoliberal worldview where discrimination is individual bad actors rather than a broad systemic issue”.

After talking with my interviewees about the terminology of ‘space racism’, they were justifiably confused; Bella Henderson encapsulated these concerns by saying, “I feel like I’m missing something. I don’t understand where the connection to racism is”. And ultimately, that’s because there isn’t one. Connolly argues that the term “reduces discrimination to bad actors bullying or degrading people for natural traits they perceive as undesirable”. This disproportionately male group of opposers expound, ‘space racism’ in fact acts as a defence mechanism against fears that women will reject their romantic proposals or offers of friendship based on their sun sign. To be clear, this avoidance has not been physically actualised, only threatened, nor have potential romantic partners perpetuated actions of hostility, but instead expressed an underlying connotation of disgust. There is no connection between constellations and racism. There is no cosmic institution perpetuating racist structures and norms, enabling racial discrimination. In a nutshell, the term ‘space racism’ encompasses a personal dissatisfaction with the stereotypes surrounding a star sign and a rejection of a projection of these qualities’ onto an individual. Sceptics justify its use as a rebellious cry from beneath the weight of systematic astronomical oppression. Inarguably, this term is inappropriate and offensive. It trivialises the realities of racial discrimination experiences and turns them into a satirised metaphor, with

which the (mostly female and LGBTQ+ populated) astrology community is shamed out of rejecting romantic pursuits or offers of friendship. While birth dates cannot be changed, it is not akin to experiences of racism. Connolly articulates that racism is “far more institutionalised...culturally entrenched and [the] caus[e of] great human suffering,” while astrology fails to execute any discriminatory behaviour institutionally and perpetuates negligible social harm.

Contrary to common misconceptions, astrology allows us to map out the intricate experiences and characteristics that make us human. It provides a vessel for us to understand ourselves and each other better. Astrology does not subscribe to absolutism; like many spiritual practises, it focuses on a balance of advantages and weaknesses. This balance of flaws and strengths is exhibited through the drawing and interpretation of birth charts. Human beings are layered and complex; subjecting their entire identity to a single zodiac sign would be inaccurate and superficial. Instead, a whole chart is constructed to understand where the constellations lay in the planetary system and the corresponding houses, impacting a person’s possible life experiences or character. They depict celestial imagery of one’s life.

At the end of the day, the sentiment of zodiac sign preference is unfounded among most dedicated astrologers. Still, ‘sign preference’ can be easily equated to male dating preferences, which are similarly satirised by groups of women subjected to them. Henderson confirms, “she wouldn’t consider [the nature of ‘sign preference’] as different to general dating preference”. However, the women subjected to the impossible heights of these normalised ‘dating preferences’, have not invented polarising terminology, reducing centuries of social, political and economic activism for racial equality to an inadequate caricature of racial discrimination. Henderson iterates that the etymology of ‘space racism’ is an “assumption [that] is inherently racist”.

Astrology is not for everyone, and non-participation and disbelief are valid and respectable; however, the aggressively tone-deaf and insensitive critiques of the community are deplorable. The term ‘space racism’ is belittling and disrespectful to people who suffer racial injustice, rooted in patriarchal entitlement and bigoted ignorance, unfairly criticising an area of interest marketed towards and predominantly occupied by women and queer individuals.

Art by Zara Paleologos



The embarrassing cost of crypto-art

Chuyi Wang interrogates the pitfalls of attaching currency to digital art.

With every new technological breakthrough comes innovations ranging from revolutionary to deeply flawed. With the ‘Network of Things’ concept springing up over the past decade, we’ve seen the release of both internet-connected devices that have greatly improved our lives, and ‘Smart’ gadgets that are either questionably useless like Bluetooth water bottles, or dystopically intrusive like Amazon’s Echo. No-one can deny that one of the most exciting new technologies to emerge recently is that of the blockchain, which de-centralised and community-based foundations have the power to wrench financial and informational control out of the hands of corporations and place them back into the hands of the people. While our understanding of the possible implementations of blockchain technology is still very much in its early infancy, one of the most unjustifiably detrimental and explosively popular applications of crypto techniques is that of crypto-art.

The concept is simple: digital art, because it is comprised entirely of data which can be endlessly copied and shared without degradation, has no inherent value. Crypto-art presents a ‘solution’ to this seemingly unavoidable nature of data: by minting a unique token on a chosen crypto-currency’s blockchain that is attached to a unique piece of art, artists can create value for any piece of digital art through artificial scarcity, since there is now

a distinction between an original and a copy. Artists can then auction this off on crypto-art sites like Zora, with winners receiving either a symbolic or legal ownership over the auctioned piece of data. However, the widening gulf between the noble goals of crypto-art and its actual practical effects are abundantly clear.

First, crypto-art seems to fundamentally misplace the blame on the nature of data itself rather than the disappointing contemporary culture surrounding paying artists



for their work. Outside of mere aesthetic similarities, digital works bear no real resemblance to their physical counterparts in either their distribution or their enjoyment. To listen to a song or look at a digital artwork is to already own a copy of it somewhere on your device: this fact has been responsible for a level of informational and artistic freedom and democratisation unlike the world has ever seen. Artists are able to reach audiences wide beyond their physical

networking capabilities. As such, the lack of financial compensation for these artistic experiences should not be the fault of the medium itself, but rather the forces that have shaped its toxic culture up to today: streaming services, the over-policing of pirating, the industry’s heavy reliance on outdated label deals and publishing houses, and copyright law.

Moreover, crypto-art threatens to re-engage a deeply harmful part of the traditional art market that digital

art proposed to abandon long ago: the speculative investment element that comes hand-in-hand with scarcity. Though crypto-currencies are decentralised now, its not hard to imagine the possibility that one day the blockchain could be policed by governments or other bodies in order to protect against scams or fraud – the ATO’s recent actions into identity verification already demonstrate that such a future is likely. If so, digital art will fall into the same pit of inaccessible elitism that the medium

so inherently resists. If Mark Cuban is getting in, that should be a clear-enough sign that something is ripe for exploitation.

Perhaps most concerning, however, is the massive environmental impact crypto-art has. Minting unique tokens and auctions on blockchains such as Ethereum have a massive electrical cost, since all servers hosting the blockchain must be constantly refreshed and updated with the relevant transactions and movements. A recent investigation done by Turkish computer scientist Memo Atken revealed that running an auction on Ethereum for ten seconds generated more CO2 than powering a large electronic music studio for two years. And for a largely symbolic act of ownership, such an ecological cost seems absurdly unjustifiable.

The fundamental motivation for crypto-art’s inception is understandable. The exploitation of data’s malleability by companies and labels, like streaming service mega-giant Spotify, has made it almost impossible to survive as an independent artist in 2021. The overwhelmingly capitalistic sponging of surplus value by these corporations desperately calls for an alternative system of remuneration for artists. Crypto-art is a possible solution, but one that is embarrassingly detrimental. One simple look at pay-what-you-want and donation-based models, like Bandcamp’s massively successful revenue-waiving Fridays promotion, shows us that another world is not only possible, but on the verge of arriving.

Dealing with the very human end of Daft Punk

Josh Hohne farewells the theatrics and fiction of Daft Punk.

In case you haven’t heard, my old friends Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo and Thomas Bangalter, better known as The Silver One and The Gold One, have called it quits. The post-mortem tier lists have been drafted; the Wikipedia verbs have been quietly transmuted to past tense. Daft Punk is over, and in shockingly mundane fashion. Their video farewell Epilogue had an undeniably poetic quality, but the fact that it reused both video and music from their older work made it feel much more like a budget AMV than a parting gift from our most serene Digital Frenchmen. No final parting track? No heartfelt goodbye? Is this really it?

Call me a tragic, but I can’t help but wish that their break-up had the same compulsive mystique as their career. Daft Punk thrived on theatrics. Many artists who shun the spotlight end up reaping the rewards with a kind of Streisand effect (see Frank Ocean or the

late MF DOOM). But Daft Punk didn’t just reject the media, they rejected the appearance of humanity, adopting instead the likeness of the android. Since 2007, you can count their number of live appearances on one hand, and their career is naturally brimming with apocryphal stories.

In 2012, shortly before the commercial release of Random Access Memories, there was just one single copy of the album’s master in existence. It needed to get from the studio in New York to the Label headquarters in L.A but owing to the fractional chance that X-Rays from airport security could decay the priceless album, air travel was deemed impossible. Two Columbia Records interns were instead tasked with driving cannonball across the entire country, and told to deliver the precious cargo by hand. Doesn’t this story just ooze with screenplay bait, crafted to hype up eager fans?

Or, take the torch-passing

encounter shared by Australian disco outfit Parcels in 2016. Embarking upon their pilgrimage first to Melbourne, then Berlin, the youthful Parcels came face to face with our heroes one night while performing in a Paris club. As they prepared backstage, whispered rumours from the crowd came through to them: “the Robots are coming.” As Daft Punk later appeared in the crowd (incognito of course), they judged the group worthy of an invitation to their studio. There they would produce the group’s breakout single Overnight, ushering in Parcels’ career as loyal servants of The Funk.

Since I was a kid, these legends of Daft Punk kept me hanging on every scrap of information. To date, the greatest betrayal of my life was believing a fake teaser for a 2017 Alive Tour – complete with ersatz coordinates promising an Australian leg. Last week Daft Punk announced their split, and it seems that Pitchfork were the only media outlet in

the world with the phone number of the duo’s publicist, Kathryn Frazier. The news could not have been more banal: “Kathryn Frazier confirmed the news to Pitchfork but gave no reason for the breakup.”

With all of that said, if you’re struggling to cope with the disappointment, allow me to recommend a treatment: forget their fiction and just enjoy the music. Take a walk in the City and inhabit the world of Homework. Relive the sublime heights of Discovery over drinks with friends. Or lie back with headphones and subject yourself fully to the technical mastery of the peerless, the flawless, and the ruthlessly funky Random Access Memories. After these three albums and all the rest of their discography, it’s hard to wish for much more. Their personas may have retired with more of a whimper than a bang, but their music will speak for itself again, and again, and again.

Connection and play at Parramatta Artist-Run Initiative

Nandini Dhir talks to Fei Gao about his work 'Is dad still not back?'

Visiting art galleries and attending openings of local artists is often focused within Sydney's Inner-West and CBD, but with emerging artists all over the map, spaces for Western Sydney creators have been growing.

With the shift in demographics to first and second generation migrants, ethnic clusters, and cultural groups, art in Western Sydney often explores the artist's culture, family and heritage.

Parramatta Artist-Run Initiative (PARI) is a small art space in Western Sydney, where local artists come together to create art, organise workshops, talks, screenings and shows. I spoke to Fei Gao who has volunteered at a number of galleries, but found a strong connection with the community at PARI. "Everyone really puts their work into PARI to make a better space for local artists," he said.

Fei is currently completing his Masters in Early Childhood Education, which alongside his childhood memories of an absent father, ignited the idea for an interactive work that uses the Brio Marble Maze with Chinese text reading "is dad still not back?"

"My dad and I were pretty distant growing up and he was always absent and busy with work... So because my dad wasn't very expressive with his feelings he didn't play with me as much. But now that I'm older, we've connected more. My dad and I email each other." Fei said.

Fei thinks the difference between

emailing, texting and video calling is that the process of creating a message is much more strategic and premeditated. He parallels this in his artwork *Is dad still not back?*.

"When you play the game, you place the ball at the beginning of the sentence and roll it around without the ball falling in the hole. I feel like that's how I write emails to him - 'should I delete this, or say something else?', that was pretty much the inspiration."

As an only child, Fei kept himself



occupied with single player games and toys, like the marble maze.

"The sentence, 'Is dad still not back?' is me saying to my mum, 'Where is he?'. But it's also saying 'hey dad, I want you in my life, I want to connect with you, I want you to play with me.' It's making the effort to love and to

connect."

Fei grew up in China and moved to Australia when he was 19 to study at UNSW. He didn't expect to learn art theory and history at university. He had been trained to focus on the technical skills of his practice and hadn't yet been exposed to conceptual art making. After coming from Beijing and being rejected by numerous shows, Fei felt humbled. "I then attended shows to see the art there, meet people, and make connections,"

from this world.

"I'm trying to take serious issues, like chronic pain and family problems, and put them in a light-hearted gaming style... People go to games to escape an issue, but what if the game is a representation of that issue?"

Moving away from home, Fei had a hard time making connections with people in the arts. He knew one of the directors at PARI and got involved after a working bee call-out for volunteers. "I had a lot of fun with the directors there and started to get to know more people. I really liked the vibe and it felt like a space that I belonged in."

"This work [*Is dad still not back?*] was basically made in PARI, using their resources, tools and advice from the people there... Being in the space you see how things work; how the walls are built, how artworks are installed. You just learn so many skills."

"It's important to focus on your style of art while also getting inspiration from other artists. I find that it's most important to have your own practice. I'm really grateful for PARI and the opportunities I've gotten. Everyone is so welcoming and I wish to contribute more and get involved more in the future."

For Fei, having a space where he was able to create, learn and talk about art, was central to connecting with people in the art world; and more importantly, bringing his conceptual works into the world - sharing his experiences and connecting with us.

he said.

With exposure to more artistic mediums, and art as a form of social commentary, Fei began creating more conceptual works. He sees gaming as an intrinsic part of our generation's childhood and subverts the idea that it is an escape from reality, separate

Review: SUDS' Rice

Victoria Vu Tang reviews the first SUDS' show of 2021.

Sometimes, when I am looking particularly despondent, my mother likes to tell me about the first time my grandmother held me in her arms. She tells me that bà cradled me and rubbed my back and told my mother that I would grow up to be strong, a beautiful woman. It has been almost twenty years since that moment, now, and I don't know if I can check any of those boxes, but I still can't help but hope that one day I will fit into every little niche of expectation and make my grandmother proud, even if she's not there to see it.

It's these memories and feelings that came out when watching this production. An exploration of the intricacies of what it means to exist, be perceived, and experience loss as Asian and woman in the modern Australian context. *Rice*, written by playwright Michele Lee, is effectively realised in the depths of the Cellar Theatre; deceptively minimalist at the outlook, glorious attention to detail wraps itself around the production, a testament to the efforts of cast and crew.

The ease and efficacy that the two-woman cast of the show, Shalvi Singh and Jacinta Lin, weave themselves through stage and story should be commended. As Nisha Gupta, a beleaguered Executive Officer of Bengali heritage, the stunningly charismatic Singh emanates presence from every corner of the stage, fringed with tinges of desperate exhaustion

that only the hells of corporate overtime can manifest, exacerbated by the ghost of a cultural homeland that feels like it is slipping out from beneath one's skin. Tempering this anxious charm is Lin's performance as Yvette Tang, the Chinese cleaning lady that berates (cares for) Nisha in the way only an Asian aunty really can. In this role, Lin portrays the complexity of Asian-immigrant motherhood, and the expectations that such mothers hold for their children and themselves. Together, the two characters explore ambition and sacrifice as both limited and empowered by their respective identities' nuances.

Juggling a cast of characters between themselves, I was impressed at the skill and speed in which Singh and Lin were able to switch between roles. The first role-change was to me a blink-and-you'll-miss-it moment that I had to spend some time recalibrating my perspective for. Although it took a little while to orient myself to the conventions of the play, the conviction with which the actresses exuded distinct characters smoothed over much of the confusion in later scenes; Lin's mastery over tone and posture is a pleasure to witness, and the velocity at which she switches gears from aggressively passive-aggressive Chinese mother to the Platonic ideal of all the cisgender, heterosexual white men who have ever ni hao'd me in the street (the joke is I am Vietnamese-Cantonese) was

terrifying and intoxicating to behold. Likewise, Singh easily shifts across the spectrum of her roles, moving with grace from girlboss (Nisha) to gremlin (teenage boy who listens to Lady Gaga in his father's office in the dead of night).

The attention to detail of this production was marvellous; detailed, meticulous props—suspiciously realistic takeaway leftovers and a kathi roll, a Bachelor's certificate of Commerce in Nisha's name hanging atop the wall, binders with canon-compliant meeting agendas stuffed inside them despite being outside the line of sight of the audience, amongst other things—bring warmth and colour (this is where a "haha-colour-get-it-because-POC" joke gets made) to anotherwise minimal set, comprised of primarily a wooden desk and an office chair. It is not merely the changes of physical environment that aid and abet meaning within this production; simplistic costume changes (though I don't know if the use of a saree counts as simple; how did they pleat it so fast? What did they use? What are their secrets?) help to flesh out and distinguish character, as does subtle alteration to Nisha's makeup from a bold, Western eyeshadow in the first half of the play to a Bollywood-esque eyeliner in the second half, marking a transition from the Western hegemony to a consideration of the Indian context the characters are forced to confront.

The lighting states are immaculate, fully utilising the space of the Cellar Theatre with colour states and shadows and silhouettes. Sound, too, possesses incredible efficacy, from salsa music to muffled Just Dance undercutting tense conversation to the pings of text notifications.

There is so much more I could write about in this review, outside of the stories of Nisha and Yvette, outside of the little details interposed throughout it. I could write about how I loved the character of Sherry, Yvette's daughter, or about the fountain, or about the Russian lady in the basement who types with her index fingers. I think it is testament to the quality of the production, the thought and heart that was put into it, that the little details have built upon the foundations of this production, large enough to linger in my thoughts for so long that they have taken on a warmth that belongs to things that are living and real.

Ultimately, *Rice* is a production about women, and their legacy. A poignant tale of what it means to be caught between the rock and hard place of a homeland and the weight and complexity that term carries, and the desire for success as understood in the present and hope for a future better than life in the present allows. But it is also a labour of love, galvanised by a dedicated cast and crew of BIPOC women and their allies who should be celebrated as much as this story is.

REVIEWS

Review: The Golden Globes

Juliette Marchant watched the Golden Globes so that you don't have to.

Since 1953, the Academy Awards have been televised, offering the everyman an opportunity to become a voyeur in the lives of the rich and famous for one memorable evening. Almost 70 years later, with the catalogue of televised award spectacles having ballooned over the decades, about as much ink has been spilled critiquing the very concept of a televised award show as has been used to print the names of the winners on branded announcement cards.

The night appeared sour from the outset, built on a bed of criticisms directed at the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA). An eighty-seven person body, the HFPA is a group of journalists with not a single black member in its ranks, and a median age on par with your standard nursing home. Famed for accusations of sidling up to celebrities and allowing fame and favours to determine the night's winners, the perceived authority of the association

their minimally contentious humour with Zoom jokes, pretending to stroke each other through the split-screen as Fey presented in New York and Poehler in Los Angeles.

Further still, the tone-deafness of the HFPA was realised by a technical fault, that saw Daniel Kaluuya of *Judas and the Black Messiah* (2021) muted for his acceptance speech, chiding jokily, 'You did me dirty!' as the sound began to work.

For the rest of the nominees, the awkwardness of a Zoom tutorial breakout room was encountered time and time again, as celebrities were left on the screen, forced to feign smiles and enthusiastic claps for the competitor that had just beaten them as they delivered their acceptance speech. The atmosphere was perhaps best summed up by Don Cheadle hovering in a Zoom box, who in the midst of Jason Sudeikis's Tolstoy-laden laments, began signalling for the actor to wrap-it-up; taking on the role of the iconic, yet obstinate instrumental music that ordinarily did the job.

Nonetheless, there were some

genuinely memorable moments in a night otherwise characterised by drudgery. Anya Taylor-Joy's glittering, emerald green Dior dress will go down in history as a fashion triumph. On the other end of the scale, Jason Sudeikis's tie-dye hoodie and Chloe Zao's long-sleeved t-shirt and beanie combo epitomised the comfortable fashion that we all came to love in 2020. But in perhaps the most emotional moment of the night, Taylor Simone Ledward accepted a posthumous Globe for her husband, Chadwick Boseman; "He would say something beautiful, something inspiring, something that would amplify that little voice inside of all of us that tells you you can, that tells you to keep going, that calls you back to what you are meant to be doing at this moment in history." If only the rest of the show had this level of authenticity.

But perhaps the greatest irony of the Golden Globes is that an event that is supposed to celebrate the best that television and film have to offer is an exemplar of ludicrously bad television itself. Stick to your Netflix suggested, it probably has better opinions.

Review: AWF Slamdemic

Rohan Kalyan wrestles with a representation dilemma.

As a wide eyed ten-year-old, watching wrestling on TV captivated me. Upon seeing the likes of Jeff Hardy and Rey Mysterio performing diving somersaults and swinging around the ropes, I would be very quickly inspired to turn the lounge room into my own ring, leaping from the armrests and elbow-dropping the couch cushions. There was something with magical potential being created here.

Wrestling occupies a unique position between sport and pantomime. It builds up hype and anticipation with soap operatic drama, before exploding into high-octane stunt action. It disregards the gentility of theatre, drop-kicking the fourth wall and allowing for the crowd to yell support or hurl abuse at the characters, all the while ignoring the bureaucratic trivialities of "fairness." The fun and excitement of being embroiled in the action is what keeps fans like me mystified, and who can blame them? As an interactive form of competitive entertainment, nothing really comes close.

So, when the Australian Wrestling Federation (AWF) announced that their 'Slamdemic' event was taking place in

Marrickville, I was quick to snap up a ticket. On arrival to the oversold venue we were hurriedly seated off to the side of the ring, with the wall blocking a good part of our view. This didn't curb my enthusiasm in the slightest. The atmosphere reached boiling point almost immediately, as local favourite and tag-team champion Hell Yeah was taken down by the enigmatic and dishonourable Mad Maxx in a match featuring the works: jumping from the top rope, fighting outside the ring, interference from other wrestlers, and steel chair beat-downs.

As the night went on, I noticed that matches were falling into predictable tropes and patterns. The event organisers were obviously in a tough situation. They had to live up to the excitement of the WWE without the required resources. Their answer to this problem was to, very obviously, signal to the crowd who the heels (villains) were. One such example was to create a massive underdog out of the turtle-neck-clad Tobias Hemmingsworth Jr., tasked with facing up against the monstrous Mauler from "The Outer Realm," with Tobias predictably taking the win. This sort of signalling took a more oppressive turn



after it became clear that most of the heels were from Western Sydney, with the title holders all from Newtown. The reliance on ethnic and class coding was even more clear in the case of Jengis Kong, the 'barbaric' heel facing down the Champ.

Using oppressive hegemony in this way isn't new for wrestling. To take an example from the WWE, the Iron Sheik was built up as the major villain at the height of the Gulf War. Happily, for the AWF, there stands a way to address all of its problems with one simple change. Despite not

being able to recreate the wild stunt acrobatics or the gory violence of the WWE, investing more energy into the theatrical drama and character writing would build cathartic hype, as the crowd would be more invested in the action. Giving the crowd better reasons to support or hate characters would also eliminate the need to rely on tired tropes and oppressive coding. Fully embracing wrestling's inherent theatricality would have the capacity to wash away the bad taste from an otherwise enjoyable event.

Art by Kritika Rathore

President

Swapnik Sanagavarapu

Congratulations to all of you on finishing your first week of the semester! For those of you who are returning to campus, it must be a sight for sore eyes to see students out and about again, going about their business and hanging out. For any first years who are reading this, I hope your first week at uni lived up to your expectations or even exceeded them.

The SRC (and by extension myself) has been inordinately busy this week. We had an extremely successful presence at Welcome Fest, handing out our branded tote bags, branded masks, branded pens, stickers and wall planners. It was a rewarding sight to see so many students on campus walking around with their SRC bags, and we had many students actively seeking us out to get our wall planners and bags. If you missed out on a bag and would like one,

we have a limited number remaining, so please email me at president@src.usyd.edu.au and we can arrange pickup! Beyond our marketing efforts, it was refreshing to see how many students were interested in the advocacy of the SRC and its collectives and the services that we can provide to students. We had over 500 students sign-up to the SRC email list and join our Facebook group, both of which you can find via the QR code below. I'm sure you'll be seeing much more of the SRC across campus this year, so keep an eye out for us. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped us distribute the bags down at the SRC stall!

Alongside Welcome Week, I worked on other initiatives that occupied the rest of time. I continued sitting on a number of University governance committees including the University

Executive Education Committee and the Academic Board. I raised numerous issues in relation to the new Job Ready Graduates bill including the issue of higher fees for students who were transferring courses as well as proposing solutions to the Government's punitive policy of removing Commonwealth Support for students failing 50% of their subjects. The University has also proposed a permanent move to 12 week semesters from 2022 onwards. I have previously criticised the proposal and will continue to do so. Keep your eyes peeled for a student survey in relation to the proposal. Aside from committees, I chaired our second SRC council meeting for the year. I also signed an open letter from the NSW Tenants Union calling for an extension of the moratorium on evictions, and I'm also going to be working to help

students from Myanmar affected by the recent coup. As always, you can find us at srcusyd.net.au or on our Facebook page. Enjoy your week!



Welfare Officers

Lia Perkins, Katherine (Haimingyue) Xu, Shreyaa Sundararaghavan and Owen Marsden-Readford

Hello! Welcome week is over and I have much to tell you about! This year we have revived the Welfare Action Group, an old collective of the SRC, to organise around the appalling state of welfare and housing for young people. If you want to get involved look up the Facebook group!

rate and student and public housing. It's an open mic so feel free to speak about any welfare related issue, or just listen to others. When workers and unemployed people are under attack, so are students.

Wednesday 17 March at the Flodge with some great speakers to discuss the relationship between changes to public housing and student housing happening around the university. We stand in solidarity with the residents and believe that nobody should be evicted from their homes and that new developments should be built to house everybody on the waiting list.

street kitchens and mutual aid projects throughout Sydney that are easing the burden of the reduced welfare rate.

Welfare speak-out

On Wednesday 10 March we will be holding a speak-out outside Fisher. The focus is on recent appalling changes that return JobSeeker to an unlivable

Support residents of public housing

I've been in contact with community organisers who are trying to protect public housing in Glebe and South Everleigh that the NSW Government is going to scrap. The Welfare Action Group has organised a forum on

Mutual aid/street kitchens

Later in March we are going to assist

Future plans

Over the upcoming weeks we will seek to hold more learning and educational events such as reading groups or film screenings, in collaboration with other collectives. We are closely following and discussing new student housing developments and the consequences of the end of the eviction moratorium.

Sexual Harrassment Officers

Li (Kelsey) Jin, Courtney Daley and Hao (Raymond) Yan

In the last few weeks, we have witnessed a series of sexual harassment & assault related issues happened to students like us and even all the way to the parliament.

protect students in high schools, over 2500 survivors share their stories to support this petition, and the youngest one is only 13 years old. At the same time, the Attorney-General Mr. Porter was accused of raping 16 years old teenager decades ago, senior staff in the

government was accused of sexually assault 4 people...

Even though none of these cases has anything to do with our university, but it does not mean that we are doing perfect jobs. I personally had been through sexual harassment and

assault on the campus last semester, because of this experience, students with similar experience would share their stories together. There are rooms for improvements when it comes to our universities supporting our students.

Women's Officers

Amelia Mertha and Kimberley Dibben

The Women's Collective called our first rally of the year last week, kicking off our year-round campaign against sexual violence, which is most prominent during Welcome Week. 1 in 8 incidents of sexual violence occur during Welcome Week, for which the violent rape culture and hazing stemming from the residential colleges is to blame. The Broderick Review, the Red Zone, and numerous other investigations make it clear that there is no safe campus whilst the colleges stand. The colleges cannot be reformed. Students need safe, affordable housing,

not old ivory towers of misogyny. Now more than ever we ask: how many testimonies must there be before survivors are actually heard?

WoCo demands:
 END RAPE CULTURE - ON CAMPUS, IN SCHOOLS, AND AT WORK
 JUSTICE FOR SURVIVORS
 EARLIER, MORE HOLISTIC AND EFFECTIVE CONSENT EDUCATION
 DISMANTLE THE COLLEGES, BUILD AFFORDABLE STUDENT HOUSING
 REFORM REPORTING

PROCEDURES
 COPS OFF CAMPUS - COPS DON'T KEEP US SAFE, STRONG COMMUNITIES DO

While the safety and wellbeing of fellow USyd students is central to our demands, speakers and statements read at this rally emphasised the private school to college to workplace pipeline of rape culture, recently highlighted in events such as the online petition to demand better consent education in schools by Chanel Contos, and the emerging cases of sexual assault and

sexual harassment by Liberal party staff-members. Students and workers alike deserve a campus and workplace free from sexual violence.

To all survivors of sexual violence: we believe you, your assault was not your fault, and WoCo will fight with you for the justice you deserve.

If you want to join the fight, look out for our events on our Facebook page (University of Sydney Women's Collective) or become a member by joining our closed Facebook group (USYD WOCO 2021).

Education Officers

Thomas Williams and Madeleine Clark

The past fortnight has been a very busy and significant one. Library and learning centre staff are still facing austerity, and staff at Macquarie Uni are also facing cuts. As campus resumes we are seeing the extent of the new normal, recorded lectures, limited contact hour, barebones staffing and even more pressure applied to the foundations of the university, the staff and students. USyd is continuing its year-long train of

intensified exploitation under the guise of COVID, and we have been organising against it.

Welcome week was a success with signups and good uptake for the rally on the 24th. The tote bags and shirts were very well received, and all given away. Stickers arrived late however we plan to give these out on stalls and at future actions. We promoted our week 2 meeting/banner paint for

the 24th, however our speakout had to be postponed until week 3. We've also created a testimonial form for education-related issues that can be distributed out to staff and students, where anyone can flag localised cuts to courses or jobs that might fly under the radar.

The march on the 24th has two staff and two students planned to speak from 12:30 before we head towards

UTS. We'll be continuing our building efforts in the coming weeks, taking the momentum from welcome week forward. If you're reading this report, come along! Fisher library, March 24th.

Both officers were involved in the Mardi Gras protest on Saturday, and it was great to see a strong turnout of USyd activists to the march, especially regular faces to EAG meetings and the collectives. Happy Mardi everyone!

Time Management Tips for University Students



Time management allows you to achieve the most within the limited time you have available. At University that might mean balancing all of your readings and assessments, with work, a social life and home responsibilities. It's like a budget for your time.

The internet is awash of time management resources. A good place to start is with the Learning Centre's information on how to make a daily timetable, for all of your classes, private study time, and other responsibilities; as well as a semester planner to map out when each of your assignments are due, so that you allow enough time to complete each of them. Try each of these for a few weeks, and make whatever adjustments you need to have them suit you.

At University time management might mean balancing all of your readings and assessments, with work, a social life and home responsibilities. It's like a budget for your time.

Sometimes poor time management can be caused by other factors, such as perfectionism and procrastination. The Uni's Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) has some resources online, and you can also talk to a counselor to get some strategies. ADHD is also a major cause of time management difficulties. If you have a diagnosis, you can register with the Uni's Disability Services Unit to get adjustments, like extra

time for your assessments. There are lots of support groups that share information on techniques that help to start tasks, remain focused, and manage the anxiety around ADHD. There are plenty of resources that are quite expensive, and some that are free, so take your time to find whatever works best for you. It is also a good idea to talk to your lecturers and tutors to let them know what you find difficult, and what they might do to help you to succeed.

Sometimes you cannot get things done, because there are too many demands on you. If you need to work, or have other responsibilities, consider taking a reduced study load. Students on a Centrelink payment will need to talk to a caseworker, while students on a visa will need to consult the SRC's migration solicitor, before dropping a subject. Some students think that having a smaller study load will mean they will graduate later, but the reality is that you will progress more quickly, and at less cost, if you do three subjects and pass them all, than if you attempt four subjects and fail some.

When completing any assignment, take the time to check that you have correctly referenced, and be mindful to paraphrase as you go. No matter how busy you are it is not worth risking a fail grade, because you have plagiarised, either deliberately or accidentally. Buying an assignment from someone, or using a fake medical certificate is likely to be discovered by the Uni, and is likely to lead to a suspension from Uni. If you are not sure what you could do instead, please talk to an SRC Caseworker, who can offer a free, confidential, non-judgmental service, that is independent of the Uni.

Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A



TENANCY: Abe advises you to take photos when you move in.

Dear Abe,

I just read in your leaflet about accommodation, that I should have taken photos of my room before I moved in. Is there anything I can do about that now?

Already Moved

Dear Already Moved,

Ideally you would take photos of anything in your home that is broken, damaged, or dirty, when you moved

in, to show what it was like at the time that you moved it. You would then email it to the landlord or yourself, so that when it is time for you to move out, you are not charged with the cost of repairing something that you didn't break. If you did not do this when you moved in, it is still worth doing now. Take the photos and send them to yourself and the landlord and explain that you only just noticed the damage. Remember to have your conversations with your landlord in writing, so that you can prove what was said.

Abe.

KEY DATE! The last day to add a subject is Friday of week 2!

Grab a 2021 Student Year Planner today!



Don't miss the SRC's Essential Student Guide to Living on Little Money!

Available on the SRC website:

srcusyd.net.au/src-help/money/guide-to-living-on-little-money/



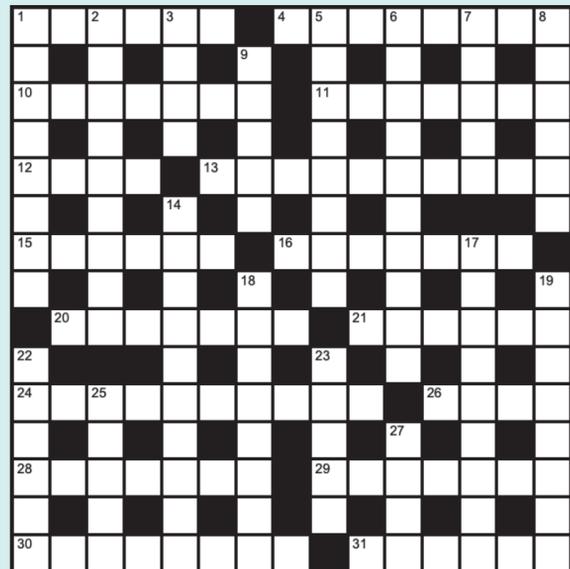
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Puzzles by Ms Eel Kink

Half and Half



Note: Each clue preceded by a "?" is Cryptic!

Across

- 1 Kowtow (6)
- 4 The counterpart of synthesis (8)
- 10 Flimsy (7)
- 11 Communication (7)
- 12 Present (4)
- 13 ? True blue, I'm a drunk if munted (4,6)
- 15 Whoosh (6)
- 16 Lining up (7)
- 20 Reduce (7)
- 21 Tired and overdone (6)
- 24 ? Where mercury might be found during strife? (10)
- 26 Edge (4)
- 28 ? The Aluminium state? (7)
- 29 ? Pirate port is free of final punishment (7)
- 30 Permitted (8)
- 31 Set aside (6)

Down

- 1 Classification (8)
- 2 ? A communist one could certainly infest Mao! (9)
- 3 ? English coward returns to Spanish province (4)
- 5 Plentiful (8)
- 6 Delectably (10)
- 7 Not pulling one's weight (5)
- 8 Raunchy (6)
- 9 English staple? (5)
- 14 Exuberant (10)
- 17 Not a morning person! (9)
- 18 ? What astronomers do to procrastinate? (8)
- 19 An elaborate orchestration (3,5)
- 22 ? Nation's sound conveyed by musical (6)
- 23 Maestro (5)
- 25 Quality (5)
- 27 Unit of measure (4)

THE BOOT

Scott Morrison's empathy consultant named USyd's next Vice-Chancellor

Grace Lagan reports.

A spokesperson for the University of Sydney has confirmed that Prime Minister Scott Morrison's former empathy consultant will be the next Vice-Chancellor.

"After a year of course cuts, fee hikes, and a raging pandemic, it was important to bring on someone with a human touch to student issues," a source close to the University's executive team said.

"The successful experience of the last clients was a major drawcard. Between treating

sexual assault survivors in government ranks as political footballs, sending unemployed people back to living like extras in The Hunger Games, and hitting the beach while the rest of the nation played WhoDunnit: Cabinet Edition™, we felt we had found our guy."

The university remains in talks over a position for Mr Morrison's wife, Jenny, given advice on key empathy issues has been outsourced to her in recent weeks.

SO BRAVE: I buy iced lattes on campus rather than Uber Eats-ing them to my own door

Victoria Vu Tang opens up.

Over the summer, I had missed the days and feelings of shame when the Courtyard baristas had actually learnt my name because I was going there three times a day.

The thing about the Uber Eats delivery people is that they're always different each time, and I feel so guilty making them bike up several hills to reach my two story brick house with its lush garden and the cute little dog in the back yard who gets

angry that my attention is being diverted from him for even one moment, in 30 degree weather.

No amount of tipping can absolve me of my sins. And they are only there for a moment, and then they pedal away, silhouettes dark against the midday skyline. The heat of the summer is blisteringly oppressive, but I have been so cold, and so lonely, for so long...

Lateral Thinking Puzzles

Niels Bohr had an honorary beer budget from Carlsberg brewery as a gift for his scientific research and for winning the Nobel prize. However, there's an urban legend that he was cut off the unlimited beer because it was interfering with his research. How did he get Carlsberg to reinstate it?

Answer: Every day on his way home, he walked across the Carlsberg premises carrying beer from their competitors until they relented.

A farmer decided he wanted to grow a particular crop. After buy the seeds and installing an irrigation system, he succeeded in growing the crop. Delighted, he harvested the crop, then threw the harvest away. Why?

Answer: The farmer wanted a lawn in his front yard. After growing the grass, he mowed it and threw the clippings away.

Quiz!

All answers begin with the letter C.

1. Which boardgame featured prominently in the recent Netflix series "The Queen's Gambit"?
2. "Combat Rock", "Sandinista!" and "London Calling" are all albums by which punk band?
3. Which USyd building houses the School of Mathematics?
4. With which Greek island is the legendary Minotaur associated?
5. Derived from Latin, what name is used to describe a crossword enthusiast?
6. Which movie won 6 Razzies at the 2020 Golden Raspberry Awards, including Worst Picture and Worst Director?

Sudoku

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

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JK Rowling accounced as next Mardi Gras headliner; 'big win' for TERF representation / p. 82

EXCLUSIVE! Miss Soit and Abe of "Ask Abe" fame: Secret love affair? / p. 112

Studies show only losers don't go to the Honi party / p. 666

Lime bikes to be replaced by human-sized hamster balls / p. 99

Sydney Conservative Club flogs 10-year-old Tory! / p. -10

Christian Porter carries crucifix up hotel stairs / p. π

USU staff member totally fine with getting fired after seeing wax Taylor Swift at Welcome Week

Matthew Forbes reports.

The University of Sydney Union (USU) brought joy and not a smidge of discomfort to many first years last week with their inclusion of a wax Taylor Swift figure at their Welcome Week stall.

But for ex-USU worker Grhant O'Phucklan, the figure was much more than an uncanny recreation of a pop star - it was a harbinger of peace.

"Losing my job last year was devastating," Grhant told Honi. "I didn't think there would be any way I could support my 3 children:

Taylor, Swift, and 2014 Radio Disney Music Award for Fiercest Fans."

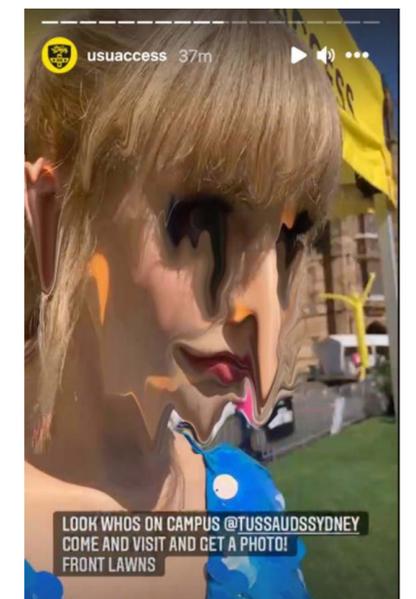
Grhant was one of the many staff members stood down by the USU in 2020 due to COVID-related closures and cuts. It was witnessing the sheer majesty of Fake-lor Swift that gave him the sense of clarity he had desperately sought since the termination of his employment.

"All this time I had been asking myself, 'Why can't they afford to keep me? Why did they never give me my JobKeeper Subsidy? Where's all

that money going?' But knowing that the USU had a bit of extra dosh up their sleeve to spend on hiring an inexplicably imperishable wax statue that people could take photos with and then never think about again... that was the most comfort I've felt in a year."

When asked why his voice had been so muffled for the entire conversation, Grhant revealed that he and his 3 children had been living in the suitcases hanging from the Manning Bar ceiling since their house was sold last year.

SHOCKER: Wax Taylor Swift has a meltdown!





**WE'RE HERE
WE'RE QUEER
WE'RE
FABULOUS
DON'T FUCK
WITH US**

MARDI GRAS ON OXFORD ST 2021

