

# Honi Soit.

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Est. 1929



## Interrogating International Education and questioning a Western ideology

By Khanh Tran

The global spread of Western higher education within the past few decades has been one of the English-speaking-world's greatest cultural successes. However, this success is founded upon cultivating generations of international students, whether taught overseas or back home, who contemplate a diet of primarily Anglo-American history, ideology and arguably,

experience. A critical interrogation of this phenomenon through the perspectives of its recipients is thus timely in order to examine its colonial underpinnings and envision a better model of international education.

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## And indeed, there will be time

It was a typical Sunday morning for the suburb of Mona Vale. Those near and far were congregating at the local cemetery, reciting prayers, laying down flowers, holding one another in warmth – but Cyrus wasn't here for the usual procedures. He was not privileged enough to be held in an embrace this weekend.

Danny Yazdani writes - p. 16

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# On the bigness of small things

Anna Hobson steps through puddles.

Few things are looked down on with as much collective disdain as small talk; that lubricant of politeness seen as inane, insignificant. To speak of the weather, the seemingly smallest form of small talk, is an admittance of having nothing interesting to say, or simply nothing in common with the person before you.

But to contemplate for a moment the space in our lives that the weather occupies is to realise it is anything but small. To forget that we live in constant relation to the weather is to neglect one's relationship to a dimension of the physical world entirely, to forgo an awareness of our surroundings that shapes so much more of ourselves than we care to admit. The beginning of rethinking one's relationship to the weather is to realise we

are living in constant relation to it.

When taken seriously, the weather is spoken of almost exclusively in big, existential and political ways. Yet it is also something intimate and personal, woven into the seams of the minute details of every day. It is present in the half thoughts, so familiar that they're rendered barely conscious, about what to wear, how much skin to show, the kind of coffee to buy, the plans to be made, the shape of our days.

Though it is embedded in our routines, it is also something that imposes itself on us, makes itself known with relentless force. *La Niña* giving her last hurrah as we go back to in person classes almost seems like a fitting level of chaos on which to end the past two years of online uni. Is it not strange to give a storm a name

and pronouns, to blame her for all this destructiveness, water damage on campus, flash flooding, for stealing this summer - yet still think of the weather only in relation to its degree of convenience, as peripheral and insignificant, as something separate from ourselves?

There is something grandiose about the unending downpour as it suddenly becomes so immediate in our lives, more present and physical. Not only as something happening around us, but something happening to us, in squelching socks on the walk to campus, in sitting through classes half soaked, still damp on the train home. Who are we to forget that we are also just objects being acted upon, that to the weather, it is us who are insignificant? It is hubristic to think that

it's the other way round.

Yet in spite of the many forms of chaos and discomfort caused by this incessant downpour, it is the rain that I have to thank for the small moments of generosity; in strangers walking down Abercrombie St who shared their umbrellas, and for the miniscule sweetness of getting to share my own. Few things are more comforting than trivial moments of goodness than making a momentary friend out of a stranger with whom you have no more in common with than time and place - and the singular shared experience of rain.

Just as the lilac sea of jacarandas on campus signals the nearness of summer and the end of semester, the weather is a reminder that less is in our control than we like to believe.

# Whither the pranks of yesteryear?

Felix Faber and Fabian Robertson consider campus tomfoolery.

Consider, if you will, the Platonic ideal of a recently-pranked Dean. He is red-faced and furious, his pants freshly yanked around his ankles, revealing his underwear. He stumbles and sputters, too angry to form a complete sentence, cursing the meddling students responsible for his predicament, the objects of his ire, his bêtes noire, his nemeses.

Today, however, you step onto Camperdown campus and the first thing you are struck by is just how sterile and insipid the place is. There is little to puncture the mundanity aside from the odd jaywalker on City Road; the occasional ibis terrorising someone's picnic.

**“High-octane heists involving books smuggled in jackets and thrown off roofs seem like a distant memory in our drab modern-day university,”**

A particularly nostalgic *Honi* article on Fisher Library's long-forgotten rooftop courtyard shed light on the stark decline of campus culture alongside the soul-destroying corporatisation of our university. What was once a hub of activity and leisure was suffocated in the inescapable grip of bureaucracy, no doubt victim to building regulations and liability concerns.

Regardless, the article did a wonderful job of bringing into view the decline of that most vital part of student life: zany schemes. High-octane heists involving books smuggled in jackets and thrown off roofs seem like a distant memory in our drab modern-day university, but one can imagine the buzzing atmosphere of 1960s USyd: cunning rascals outwitting red-faced deans by leading cows up the stairs, glueing the furniture of stuffy academics' offices to the ceiling, and, yes, perhaps stealing a book or two - a small price to pay for a radically enlivened campus culture, where wacky stunts such

as these are the norm.

It pains me to say it, but no campus stunt of this sort seems to loom in recent memory. Whither the pranksters of yesteryear? The food fights in Wentworth Food Court? The writing of one's name on the quad lawns by pouring big bags of salt? The egging, the TP-ing, anything to break us out of this stultifying routine?

A google search of 'pranks USyd' (this qualifies as investigative journalism now) paints a clear picture of just how far we, as a collective, have fallen in our prank game. Perhaps the peak of USyd's disruptive antics was more than 60 years ago at the 1956 Sydney Olympics. Nine students from St John's College protested the torch-carrying relay ceremony, partly because it was invented by the Nazis at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The group designed a fake torch out of a chair leg painted silver, with an empty plum pudding can on top, inside of which was a flaming kerosene-soaked pair of underpants. One of the nine, Barry Larkin, ran with the torch to Town Hall, protected from the completely-fooled crowd by a police escort. Larkin presented the torch to Lord Mayor of Sydney, Pat Hills, who began to make his speech before realising the torch was a fake. Larkin reportedly went on to have a successful career as a veterinary surgeon.

Pranks in recent years have yet to reach such heights. There are some notable examples, however, that stand out from the usual antics which have come to define campus pranks - that being writing your friend a USyd Love Letter or running a cringe joke stupol campaign.

In 2013 for instance, USyd students of GOVT2603: Media Politics were tasked with an assessment to prank

UNSW's student publication *Tharunka*, by designing a fake news story to be published in the paper. The assignment was later pulled for ethical reasons.

In 2015, some dickhead had a 'rave' in the Lawbry during exam season to post on his shitty YouTube channel. The prank consisted of enthusiastic hacking over blasted hardstyle music to an audience of perplexed students.

In 2016, this fabled campus paper dedicated an entire edition to replicating Australia's lead masthead, *The Australian*. *Honi's* version, *The Ausrtilian*, evaded copyright laws through strategic spelling mistakes and included a feature headlined 'Rupert Murdoch dead at 85'.

In 2019, a USyd psychology lecturer pranked his class by verbally abusing a student whose phone went off in front of a packed lecture theatre. It was later revealed that the student was a willing participant in a psychological demonstration of 'controlled behaviours' in response to 'abnormal actions'.

While admirable exploits in their own right, such antics pale in comparison to the legendary stories of a thriving campus of yesteryear. I'm not quite sure as to why this decline has occurred. Maybe VSU, maybe COVID, maybe stricter disciplinary processes. I have a suspicion that social media may have played a role - not in taking us away from the physical world, but in making goofs and japes just another tunnel in the content mine, a source of likes and clicks.

To be a prankster requires a certain generosity - the miniscule returns on often very elaborate planning sort of necessitates it. This generosity, this whimsy, is important in the modern university, where there's such a drive to classify and rationalise. Everything becomes part of a stultifying routine. *Make a discussion post. Go to a forty-person tute. Visit a university-run,*

*Raytheon-sponsored 'Therapaws Picnic' and wonder why you still feel like shit.*

Of course, there's resistance to this model of education, and worthwhile resistance, too. Indeed, some recent student protests - the 2020 occupation of F23, for instance - have the same disruptive irreverence as a prank. But a prank is, almost by definition, incongruent, and there is nothing incongruent about student resistance. These protests cannot fill the role of the prank; they are merely prank-like.

**“The great thing about pranks is that you don't really need a how-to guide. All you need is an eye for opportunities”**

So where to for pranks? I can't pretend to be a guide. I am, to be honest, a habitual rule-follower who does not enjoy inconveniencing others. But the great thing about pranks is that you don't really need a how-to guide. All you need is an eye for opportunities: a desk ripe to be filled with shaving cream, an open window to an office big enough to fit a chicken through, or a Dean with a loose-looking belt. If your tutor is being a bit of a dick, rock up to class early and super glue their stationary to the wall. Feeling artistic? Get creative with chalk on Eastern Avenue. Feeling agricultural? Plant a tree in the quadrangle.

There's a risk to all of this, of course, but it's worth it, I think, to step out of class and see a red-faced dean, pants around his ankles, bellowing in rage, and feel something new - something alert and vital - for no reason at all.

Now that the majority of us are back on campus, I don't think we should discount the importance of zany escapades in contributing to a real campus life. Let's get silly again.

ART BY LAUREN LANCASTER

# The only musical elevator on campus

Marlow Hurst conducts a campus-wide survey.

Traversing campus can be a tiring task. From pacing down hallways to jogging up steps, opening and closing those heavy classroom doors — it's enough to run down even the most athletic academics. It was this exhaustion that led me to the shiny, silver doors of the Old Teachers' College elevator.

At the western end of the building, these elevators go mostly unused, gathering dust and growing lonely. And that is a crying shame, for when I stepped through those doors and into the elevator carriage, an enchanting melody washed over me. The elevator was playing music. I rode it for a solid 25 minutes, going between floors just so I could hear another note of its score.

Halfway through, I invited a friend to join me. Not simply to enjoy the majesty of music with a companion, but to make sure it was real. And after countless trips, I had made multiple recordings, analysed each and every note, and, most importantly, verified that I wasn't experiencing a vivid auditory hallucination. I'd struck music!

But where there is one elevator with music, there are potentially many. So, with my mission established, I laced up my walking shoes, refilled my water bottle, and set out to survey every elevator on the Camperdown Campus.

USyd hosts elevators from five manufacturers: Schindler, Kone, Otis, Sjec, and ThyssenKrupp (TK Elevators). But the brand is not the true mark of an elevator. After riding elevators in three dozen buildings, what you get is genuinely up to chance.

# An ode to The King

Daany Saeed pays tribute to his hero.

Test cricket is the perfect metaphor for life. It's why so many of us love it. A game played not in minutes, or by score, but in days. When the ball's moving or a batter seems impossible to get out, other codes demand aggression, where cricket demands resilience. Cricket says: 'while it is not your time now, there are 5 days, and your time will come'.

It doesn't always come.

It is a long slog. Understandably, it is not an attractive spectator sport to the uninitiated. Shane Keith Warne's superpower was, with every single delivery he ever bowled, making us all believe our time was now and forever.

'Warnie', in a time of upheaval and pessimism for the Australian people, made the mundane magical. In his monstrous hands, he held the key to our time - his ability to deliver a cricket ball in ways that defied physics as we knew it.

To understand Warne as a cricketer, you need to understand the difficulty of the skill he specialised in. A cricket ball more or less is 'thrown' with a straight arm. Conventionally, in order to go forward, the ball exits the front of your hand. In order to bowl leg-spin, you need to deliver the ball backwards, out of the back of your hand. It is exceedingly counter-intuitive and exceedingly difficult to master with any sort of accuracy.

The first ball he ever bowled in an

The inside of the RC Mills elevator is clad with a sort of marbled vinyl wood, giving you the impression that you're anywhere but the RC Mills building. The Charles Perkins Centre goes in a completely different direction, hosting an elevator made almost entirely of glass. The complex mechanisms and processes are on full display, revealing the secret inner workings of this engineering marvel.

Not all the elevators are equally uplifting, though. The RMC Gunn building clearly states that its elevators should not be used after hours, as the emergency help button doesn't work. Sadly, my schedule had me riding this elevator after hours and I was, therefore, beyond assistance. It proved to be sound advice as the elevator stuttered and dragged between floors, ejecting me on Level Three with the frame out of alignment

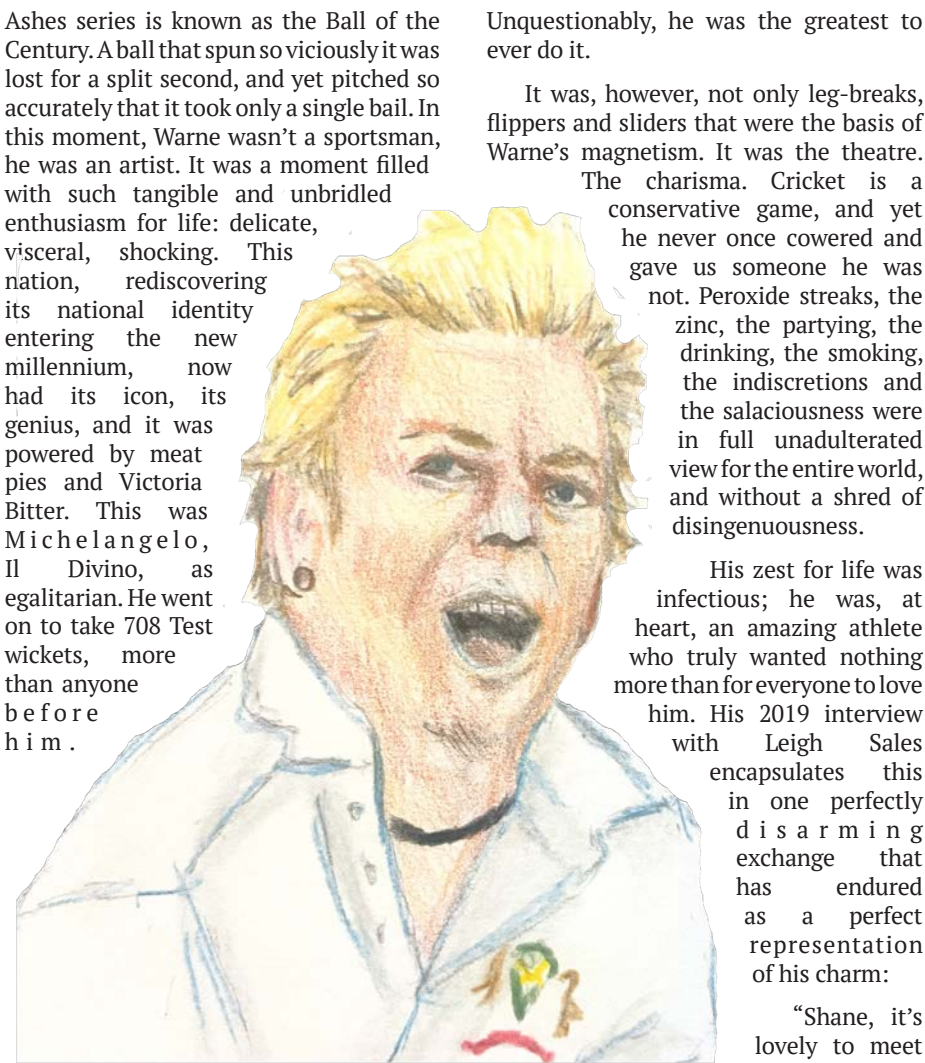
with the floor. Unsurprisingly, I took the stairs back down.

Astonishingly, after riding every accessible elevator on campus (I assume there's a secret one to the VC's bunker), not one other played music. This discovery made the music in the elevator of Old Teachers' College all the more captivating — and highly improbable that I even found it in the first place. Suddenly, questions inundated my mind: what was the name of the song? Why did it play the sound of chirping tropical birds in between the loop? And, above all, why did it play anything at all?

I brought a number of these questions to the elevator's manufacturer ThyssenKrupp. After waiting on hold for a bit, a company agent asked how they could help me. As soon as I mentioned music, they hung up. I tried a number of



ART BY SHANIA O'BRIEN



times, from different phones, delaying my mention of music for as long as possible, desperate for answers. They wouldn't budge. But what I first thought was stonewalling, a devious coverup of nefarious activity, turned out to be something very different: I had been calling the 24-hour emergency repair and fault hotline.

After going through more appropriate channels, ThyssenKrupp told me they could be no help — music was selected and installed by the operator, not the manufacturer. So I did what any student journalist worth their salt would do — I contacted the University. It's a shame they didn't have a clue either, but they did identify the song.

According to Andrew Lavery, Co-Director and Co-Chair of the Sydney College of the Arts (which calls the bottom floor of Old Teachers' home), the song is an instrumental version of The Carpenters' Yesterday Once More, a 1973 pop song that is the easiest listening you'll ever find. Of course, none of this explains the tropical bird soundscape that cleanses the audio palette in between repeat performances, as not a single version of the song includes that unique little morsel.

Sadly, the elevator is now out of order, with no explanation of the fault and an expected completion time of "TBA." Whether that's due to my repeated use or a Uni admin conspiracy, we'll never know. But for superfans of The Carpenters or just superfans of a good time, if and when Old Teachers' College opens its elevator doors once more, I hope you find the time for a ride — it's the best chirping gig in town.

you." "Yes, it's nice to be met."

'Transcendent' is an utterly inadequate word to describe his presence beyond the game. Warne embodied white Australian metanarratives: a blond, tanned, athletic larrikin. Yet he was more, embracing a celebrity that extended beyond race, class and nationality. Effortlessly, he embodied all of us. Eddie Perfect's *Shane Warne: The Musical* (and who else would have their own musical?) concludes with the chorus lyric 'everyone's a little bit like Shane'. Aren't we?

Warnie was somehow a larger-than-life hero and everyday comrade with every step he took, and he knew it. We were brought along for the ride, and we could relate to him. Our time was every single delivery, a certainty when Warnie was bowling. Indeed, it was the only certainty for a man who relished the titillation of a punt - Warnie would concede boundaries, take wickets and end careers at will; a master of pure spectacle for spectacle's sake. The world was at Warnie's will, and with us in his intergalactic orbit, it was at our will too.

Our transience is so omnipresent; very rarely do we appreciate just how much we are loved, but I'm quite certain Shane Warne did. We were all incredibly privileged to share that love.

Bowled, Shane.

ART BY ELLIE STEPHENSON



# Social dimensions of disaster in NSW

Ellie Stephenson analyses the geography of natural disasters.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) allow us to identify and represent geographical patterns about the world around us in data. In the maps presented here, I mapped out the number of disaster declarations and socio-economic deciles of each Local Government Area (LGA) in New South Wales.

A disaster declaration, published by the NSW Government, lists the LGAs which were affected by natural disasters like floods, fire and storms. I compiled the number of disaster declarations for each LGA between the beginning of 2019 and the present. As you can see, disasters were concentrated on the North and South Coasts of NSW, with both areas affected by a number of flooding and storm events and the Black Summer bushfires. The worst-affected LGA in NSW was Eurobodalla on the South Coast, closely followed by LGAs including Shoalhaven, Bellingen and Glen Innes.

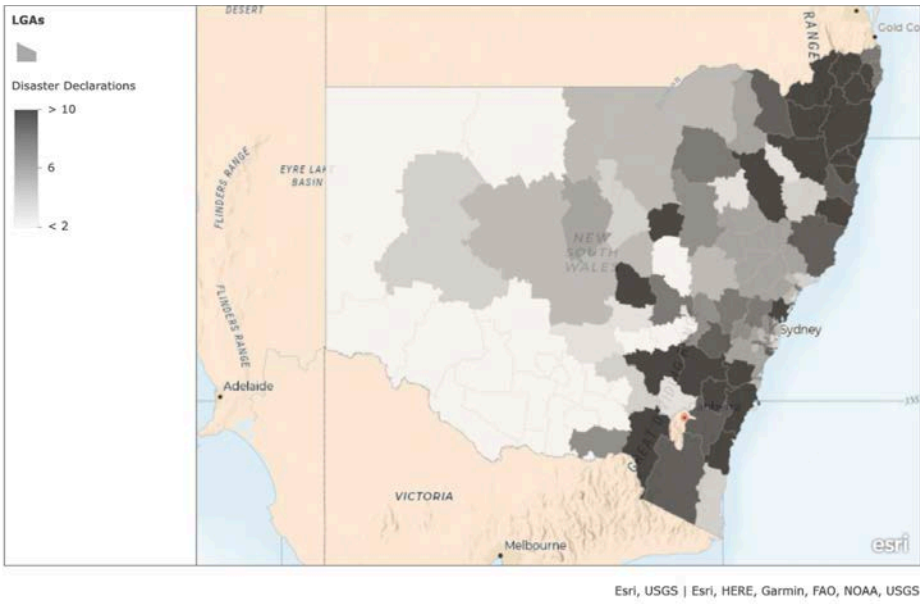


Figure 1: Number of disaster declarations for each LGA in NSW.

It is important to note that there are limitations to using disaster declarations to represent the effects of disasters on LGAs. The most obvious issue that I noticed was that disaster declarations do not distinguish the scale and severity of different disasters. The Black Summer bushfires only counted as one declaration: they are considered as a single event despite having, in some cases, raged for several months. This means that experiencing several destructive, but not catastrophic, storms would be disproportionately represented compared to an apocalyptic bushfire.

Additionally, the presence of disastrous conditions in an area does not necessarily tell us very much about how many people are severely affected. In densely populated areas, natural hazards can have vastly different effects to their impacts on rural areas. Perhaps one way to deal with these issues would be to model disaster impacts on insurance costs or residences destroyed, as these more closely represent the nature of the destruction caused.

After mapping out the differences in disaster declarations, I turned to representing the relative socio-economic status of each area. Here, I used the ABS' Index of Relative Socio-Economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) as per the 2011 census. Poorer areas are

represented as being lower on the decile scale.

I was interested to see if there was an interplay between wealth and experiences of disaster in NSW. The most obvious connection is that the North Coast LGAs which were hardest hit by disasters were also some of the poorer in NSW. Tenterfield, Kyogle, Richmond Valley and Nambucca all were in the lowest decile and each experienced ten or more disaster declarations over the time period. Glen Innes and Clarence Valley, along with Gilgandra and Parkes in the Central West, were in the second lowest decile, also experiencing ten or more declarations. Looking south, the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Snowy Valleys and Hilltops LGAs all received more than ten declarations and have below-median levels of advantage.

There were relatively few wealthier LGAs which experienced large numbers

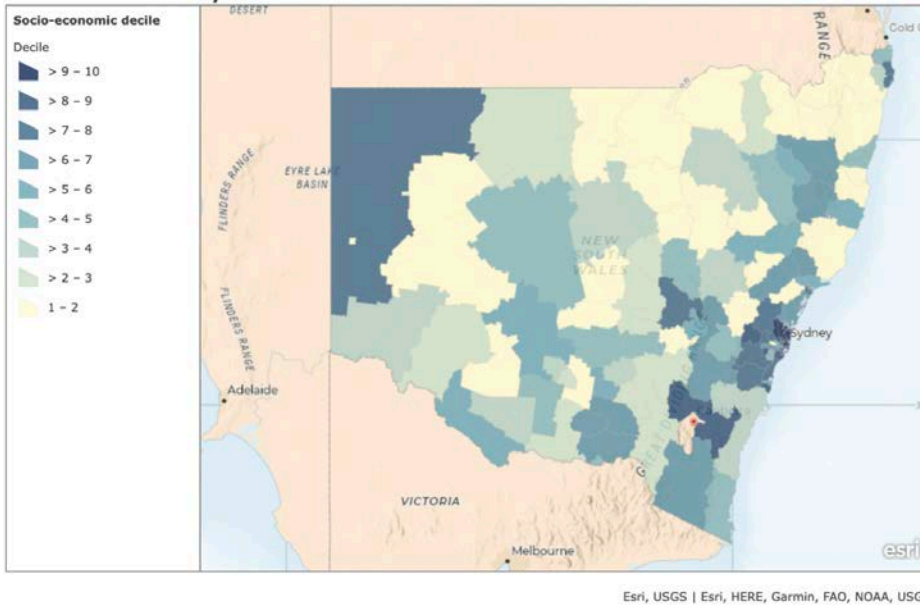


Figure 2: Socio-economic decile for each LGA in NSW.

during times of disaster.

Of course, there were a number of low-SES LGAs that did not experience many disasters in the time period, including Brewarrina, Walgett and Central Darling. This may be partly because the disaster declaration metric does not display the unique environmental challenges these areas have faced in recent years, like protracted drought and water shortages.

In any case, what we can draw from this data is that there are, unmistakably, several areas on the North and South Coast of NSW which have been battered by several years of successive disasters and where households are relatively disadvantaged. This illustrates the importance of climate policy which is sensitive to the uneven distribution of natural disasters.

Households facing issues like unemployment, overcrowding and debt are more likely to have trouble responding to and bouncing back from disasters. Concerningly, this is likely, because disaster-prone areas are often poorer. As natural hazards become more frequent and intense due to climate change, recovering from disasters will remain an issue of inequality.

Looking to the families on the Far South Coast still struggling with homelessness years out from Black Summer, it is obvious that disasters can be a deeply destabilising event in the

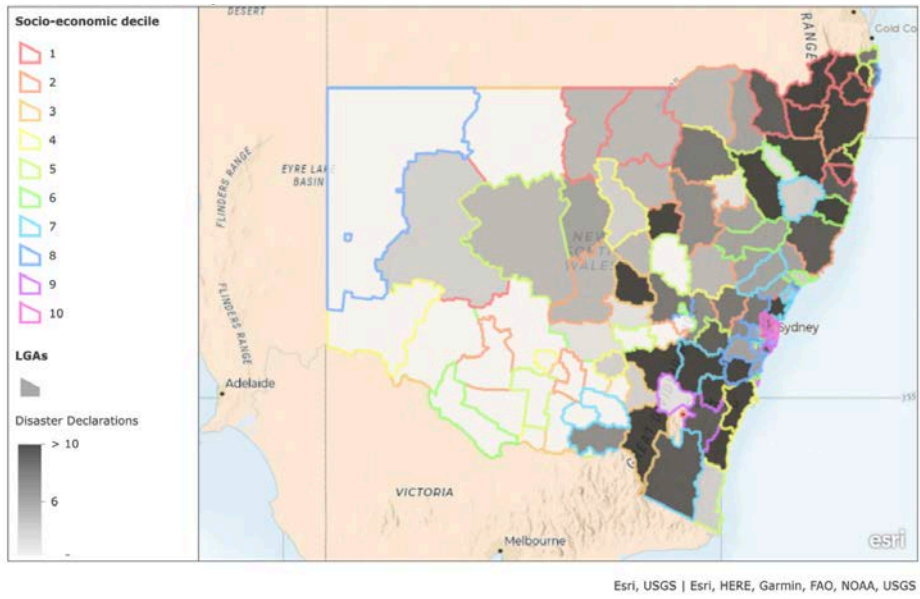


Figure 3: Socio-economic decile and disaster declarations for each NSW LGA.

# Every reason Sydney trains can be delayed, according to Sydney trains

Trackwork is just the beginning. All aboard with Samuel Garrett.

There are more than 170 reasons to justify why a Sydney train can be delayed. Documents released to Honi Soit under freedom of information laws revealed over 4000 pre-recorded words and phrases used by the Sydney Trains digital voice announcement system, including dozens of reasons a train service may be modified or delayed.

Station and train staff mix and match words and phrases stored in this Master Audio Dictionary to produce the recorded train announcements heard on platforms and trains across the city.

We have arbitrarily grouped the 173 reasons due to which services can be affected into six broad categories: crashes and catastrophes, villains and vandals, life and limb, staff and stuff, faults and failures, and schedules and slowdowns. There are 63 phrases related to faults and failures and 49 related to crashes and catastrophes.

Of course, the range of reasons does not speak to the frequency of their use, and “wet weather conditions” is much more likely to be used than “severe thunder storms and multiple lightning strikes damaging equipment”.

Some categories are inflated by bafflingly inefficient duplication (take your pick between “a staff member being ill”, “a staff member taken ill” or “an ill staff member”). Others provide needlessly exacting detail, and it is difficult to imagine Taylor Owynns, the voice of Sydney trains, announcing that your commute home will be delayed specifically by “the derailment of an empty train”. Nevertheless, the recordings wait patiently on the Sydney Trains computer system, in case the day ever comes.

According to the Master Audio Dictionary, changes can occur due to:

## Crashes and catastrophes

A train accident, the partial derailment of a train, the derailment of a train, the derailment of an empty train, train failing to stop at the station, an incident, an incident

involving a track maintenance vehicle, a hazardous spill, back burning, hazard reduction, hazard reduction activities, a grass fire, a bushfire, a bushfire causing hazardous conditions, fire near the track, fire near the track causing hazardous conditions, a fire on a train, a fire on a freight train, a fire alarm being activated, a fire safety alarm being activated, high temperatures, high temperatures affecting track infrastructure, high temperatures affecting overhead wiring and tracks, storms, severe electrical storms, lightning strikes damaging equipment, severe thunder storms and multiple lightning strikes damaging equipment, strong winds, strong winds blowing debris on the tracks, an object near the track, an object on the track, a tree blocking the track, a tree blocking the tracks, an object caught in the overhead wiring, a tree caught in the overhead wiring, heavy fog, heavy fog affecting visibility, heavy rain, heavy rainfall activating track safety monitors, heavy rainfall activating safety monitors and slip detectors, a landslip, a landslip caused by heavy rainfall, flooding on the tracks, heavy snow and ice on the tracks, severe weather conditions, severe weather damaging equipment, wet weather conditions, adverse weather conditions, various incidents caused by weather conditions.

## Villains and vandals

A police operation, a customer disturbance, a person causing a disturbance, anti-social behaviour, vandalism of a train, vandalism of equipment, vandalism on equipment, vandalism, an act of vandalism, a trespasser on the track.

## Life and limb

A fatality, an earlier fatality, station being evacuated, a medical emergency, an emergency, an emergency services response, an incident

emergency services, an incident involving emergency services, a person needing medical assistance, a person injured by a train, a report of a person injured by a train, a person threatening self-harm, a person on the tracks, a vehicle on the tracks, a vehicle on the track, an animal on the tracks, a person near the tracks, a vehicle near the track, animals in the rail corridor.

## Staff and stuff

Industrial action, a rostering issue, a staffing issue, an injured staff member, a staff member injury, a staff member being injured, an ill staff member, a staff member taken ill, a staff member being ill, staff unable to report to duty due to weather conditions, earlier incidents resulting in train crew being displaced.

## Faults and failures

Trackwork, short notice trackwork, ongoing trackwork, extended trackwork, extended overnight trackwork, planned track inspection underway, urgent track repairs, track repairs, urgent track equipment repairs, track equipment repairs, urgent track equipment repairs caused by weather conditions, track equipment repairs caused by weather conditions, urgent equipment repairs, equipment repairs, power supply issues, external power supply issues affecting rail infrastructure, urgent power supply repairs caused by weather conditions, power supply repairs caused by weather conditions, infrastructure repairs caused by weather conditions, urgent infrastructure repairs, infrastructure repairs, urgent level crossing repairs, level crossing repairs, urgent overhead wiring repairs caused by weather conditions, overhead wiring repairs caused by weather conditions,

overhead wiring repairs, overhead wiring repairs, urgent signal equipment repairs caused by weather conditions, signal equipment repairs caused by weather conditions, urgent signal equipment repairs, signal equipment repairs, urgent signal repairs, signal repairs, a mechanical fault, a mechanical problem, urgent mechanical repairs, a train with a mechanical issue, a freight train with mechanical problems, train requiring urgent mechanical repairs, a train requiring mechanical repairs, a freight train requiring mechanical repairs, a freight train requiring urgent mechanical repairs, essential train maintenance, urgent train repairs, an unplanned disruption, electrical problems, an issue involving track maintenance equipment, an operational problem, an operational issue, an issue with a freight train, an operational issue with a freight train, an external telecommunication fault affecting train operating systems, train communications issue, a train communication issue, a communication issue, a train requiring urgent cleaning, report of smoke on a train, smoke in the air conditioning of a train, an air conditioning fault, a broken window.

## Schedules and slowdowns

A boarding issue, a customer boarding issue, extended boarding times, wet weather conditions causing slower boarding times, a high volume of customers travelling, a large number of customers travelling, large crowds, large event crowd, large event crowds, slower boarding times due to large customer numbers, service disruptions, an earlier disruption, temporary speed restrictions, a slow moving freight train ahead, a train not at its scheduled location, a special event at Moore Park, a special event at Olympic Park, a special event at Randwick Racecourse, a special event at Rosehill Gardens Racecourse, a special event at the Sydney Cricket Ground, a special event at the Sydney Football Stadium.

ART BY FABIAN ROBERTSON





# Interrogating International Education and questioning a Western ideology

*The rise in exorbitant international schools and universities demands a closer examination at international education’s ideological underpinnings and envision a more equitable outlook.*

Khanh Tran writes on the struggles facing international students and entrenched inequality in the sector.

The global spread of Western higher education within the past few decades has been one of the English-speaking-world’s greatest cultural successes. However, this success is founded upon cultivating generations of international students, whether taught overseas or back home, who contemplate a diet of primarily Anglo-American history, ideology and arguably, experience. A critical interrogation of this phenomenon through the perspectives of its recipients is thus timely in order to examine its colonial underpinnings and envision a better model of international education.

**First impressions on the international student’s journey**

As we sat down for a conversation, SRC Ethnocultural Officer Anya Doan began to reflect on why she chose to travel south from Vietnam to Australia to pursue a degree.

“I like the way that degrees are structured here; it seemed very specialised. Under a Bachelor of Arts, there are a lot of options to choose from,” Doan said.

For her, the key appeal of an Australian education lies in its liberal structure; it allows for experimentation with niche topics otherwise considered redundant within the rigid syllabus inherited as a vestige of French colonialism back home.

“My family really wanted to move here to get permanent residency, so we all came here together. [My parents] were encouraging me to try something new.”

Having attended ABC International School (ABCIS) since she was eight, Anya’s experience is firmly embedded within the fabric of the multicultural environment in which she spent her formative years in. Such an education

does not come cheap, with ABCIS charging \$36,000 a year for senior students.

These sentiments were shared by Vanshika Singhgupta, who is pursuing a Bachelor of Science (Biological Design & Neuroscience). She attended a school providing the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program in India.

Unlike Doan, Singhgupta is contemplating a career back home in STEM and formed a favourable first impression of Sydney University from the institution’s high positions on global university rankings.

“I looked at the top few universities in the world to study Life Sciences and Sydney was at the top,” said Singhgupta as she reflects on her journey to Australia. “There’s a lot more variety in terms of subjects offered here because science back home is just divided into Engineering and Medicine.”

Discourse surrounding international education typically focuses on the English-speaking world’s dominance in the sector. Within the past few decades alone, international education has transformed and spread far beyond its past confines, with an exponential rise in the popularity of curricula such as the International Baccalaureate.

However, these conversations often fail to question why an English-medium education is so highly sought after. This dominance of the Anglo-American values in international curricula is attributed to the English language’s powerful status as the lingua franca of the modern world.

This logic applies for Doan and Singhgupta, who both saw the language as a ticket to a “better life abroad”. Singhgupta, however, went further and described the English language’s ability

to bridge differences between India’s social divisions.

“The North has traditionally been dominated by Hindi and the South has a different script. They’ve got a different script altogether,” Singhgupta explains

“There’s been this divide especially when it comes to Hindi because it’s seen as the language of the North so that’s why we’ve never been able to agree on a national language and English is kind of the bridge there.”

Similarly, UNSW SRC President and Oman international student Nayonika Bhattacharya ventures further to describe the English language – one of India’s official languages – as one that “opens doors to a lot of opportunities”, not only for herself but her family. Implicit within these discussions was a sense that English represented a “better life” that enabled a transition, temporary or otherwise, from the Global South to the North.

Familial expectations thus form a key motivator in these students’ pathway to Australia, with each student fully aware of the immense gravity of their parents’ financial investment. Doan’s aspires towards permanent residency, while Singhgupta and Bhattacharya wish to bring a return on her family’s investment.

“What that means to me is making sure that I give my parents a good life after this and that I give back to the community,” Bhattacharya told *Honi* knowing that upon graduation, she will have the ability and responsibility of giving opportunities to others.

Most international students’ optimistic first impressions and journey towards Australia, then, is a response to a confluence between an intensely pragmatic view of higher education, a belief that the English-speaking world brings superior opportunities and great familial expectations. These great expectations

Though Doan, Singhgupta and Bhattacharya each have a different story, each also acknowledges the relative privilege they hail from. As things stand, an Australian education does not come cheap, and that’s before one stops to consider the steep cost of living in major cities. These factors act as a major gatekeeper to large swathes of talented students.

**Social inclusion, adjusting to life overseas and grasping rights**

Other than being a gatekeeper, this also produces a paradox. Exorbitant fees prescribed by international schools across the Global South and Australian universities also feeds into the myth that all international students are wealthy. Media portrayals of international students that highlight the wealthy few are taken to represent the community, glissading over the sacrifices that families make to afford an overseas education for their children.

Meanwhile, workplace and other

rights remain a major concern for the international student community. In 2020, a report by the Migrant Justice Institute, *International Students and Wage Theft in Australia* found that some 65 per cent were remunerated below the minimum casual hourly wage, with a substantial minority of students being paid half that amount. Of these, Chinese students fared worst, with a staggering 83 per cent being paid below the statutory minimum wage.

Singhgupta thought that the international student community was “more aware of [our] rights”. Her estimate is borne out in the same report, with approximately 84% of students

**“What that means to me is making sure that I give my parents a good life after this and that I give back to the community.”**

aware of workplace award entitlements. However, where difficulties begin to manifest lies in students’ reluctance to disclose their precarious circumstances out of a fear for their visa status.

In our conversation, Bhattacharya explains that rights, in the international student context, are not perceived as an “absolute concept”. Rather, each right is contingent upon the enjoyment of another.

Comparing this matrix of rights to a distant friend that is never there, she said: “It’s a difficult concept because you are too busy worrying about so many things in life such as the education I receive, or whether I am making the most out of it.

“Everything that glitters is fool’s gold at the moment.”, treading cautiously against an overly optimistic first impression whilst being frank on the challenges facing international students.

For Bhattacharya and Singhgupta, the reason for this phenomenon rests on the independent nature of international education and the inability to access immediate family support networks available to their domestic peers.

“You don’t have the support network to have comfortable things because you don’t have your family around. You’re essentially doing life by yourself. We all are trying to create opportunities for [ourselves],” said Bhattacharya.

Singhgupta also highlighted safety issues from the relative isolation the community faces, citing an incident near the University of Sydney Quadrangle where an international student friend’s safety was nearly compromised by a stalker.

“I’ve been relatively safe in the confines of this College [Sancta Sophia

College] that I’m staying at but there have been quite a few racist encounters that I’ve had, and I think that the response has not been adequate,” she said.

“It’s one of those things that have been hushed under the carpet”

For Singhgupta, USyd’s abnormally large student population, highly bureaucratic crisis response, combined with difficulty accessing nearby relatives creates a perfect storm of conditions that hinders the academic experience of the international student community. Such issues are further compounded by language barriers, which means that she and her peers must invest extra effort to acclimatise to the university social scene.

**Critiquing the Anglocentric agenda of international education**

Across the Global South and particularly Southeast Asia, which largely escaped the Global Financial Crisis’ (GFC) relatively unscathed, international schools and universities are in high demand. The former are arguably as lucrative as their tertiary counterparts. As of 2018, China’s international schools averaged a staggering \$46,000 in tuition fees, whilst Singapore, Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia all registered above \$20,000 per annum.

In response to these revelations, Doan attributes the staggering inequalities to “a fetishisation of American culture and American exceptionalism [in Vietnam]”, borne out of post-Doi Moi confidence following economically liberal reforms implemented in 1986 in the country.

“In entertainment, tourism and things such as Disneyland are deemed shiny and American, which is considered good. Education is not the first avenue that we are following.”

One example that Doan cited was Vietnam’s new *VinUniversity*, an institution founded by VinGroup, a multi-billion dollar conglomerate in the

knowledge”.

One could argue that the rise of these institutions signifies an often less acknowledged, paradoxical phenomenon where Western ideology is actively celebrated and emulated in education. This is in contrast to postcolonial activist movements in wealthier countries.

Others venture further, arguing that Anglo-American colonialism is deeply entrenched within contemporary international education. For instance, the Organisation to Decolonise International Schools (ODIS) criticised IB Schools’ inadequate history curriculum where national histories are frequently ignored in favour of the organisation’s focus on the global scale. In a petition to IB Schools and the organisation’s Geneva headquarters, ODIS argued that international school curricula fail to “emphasize the inclusion of BIPOC histories and contributions to society nor the roots of racism and white supremacy in its [curricula]”.

On this point, Doan, Singhgupta and Bhattacharya, were unanimous in observing that international education, whether back home or in Australia, favoured a Western interpretation as opposed to a postcolonial vision of education.

Yet, the path to interrogate the influence of Western heritage faces significant ideological hurdles. Bhattacharya posited that the international student’s journey, by virtue of its deliberate nature and investment, often encourages students to adopt the logic of a liberal education.

Common amongst the three’s perspective is an unease about the vagueness in which the term “liberal education” is deployed as a key appeal. At the core of the Anglocentric model of modern international education lies a that exerts a powerful sway upon its recipients that disguises colonial presumptions under the guise of choice.

**“We should steer away from [a] Western model of education. Not just like America, not just like Singapore; we should stop thinking that Western is automatically better.”**

mould of state-sponsored South Korean chaebols like Samsung or Lotte. It’s an institution whose capitalist foundation and \$48,000 tuition fees makes it barely distinguishable from private American universities. The only difference is the lone Marxist-Leninist Youth Club aligned with the governing Vietnamese Communist Party established just last month.

She points to *VinUniversity*’s lavish furnishings as emblematic of a tectonic shift towards American wealth in her country. Its facade takes cues from Moscow State University’s iconic tower, whilst its entrance is lined with statues of white men. Meanwhile, the institution takes a statue of Apollo to symbolise “all

**Envisioning a more equitable international education**

Despite their differences, Singhgupta, Doan and Bhattacharya ground their vision for postcolonial and accessible international education in addressing economic disparities and critically examining international curriculums’ laissez-faire relationship with the national history of host countries and the Global South.

According to Bhattacharya, challenging the status quo demands collective recognition that international education as it stands replicates patterns of economic inequalities seen in the Australian system and beyond. Comparing the sector’s stratospheric fees to Sydney’s highly stratified system, Bhattacharya views expensive private institutions in the Global South as an affront to “public schools struggling without resources”.

As of 2022, a standard Arts degree at Sydney University runs for \$45,000 per year for international students, whilst the equivalent in Vietnam National University (Hanoi) fluctuates between \$660 to \$2,000, depending on the stream chosen.

“All of these schools run the risk of furthering economic disparities between young people,” Bhattacharya warns, highlighting enormous hurdles facing low socioeconomic-status students, the vast majority of whom cannot access an international education without financial sacrifice or a full scholarship.

Expensive international schools and elite universities are thus indispensable to an ecosystem of globalised, highly mobile white-collar professionals that perpetuates a vicious cycle of inequality in their host countries. As such, critics of transnational education like Professor Jeong-eun Ree characterise this phenomenon as a “new imperialism”.

United by a common lingua franca in English and being cross-or-Third Culture Kids, international student alumni tend towards forming a hierarchy split along socio-economic lines. Those on the wealthier end often go onto corporate careers in their home or host country, with those returning home sometimes taking over the family business. For others hailing from more humble beginnings, the individual must bear the financial struggles of an international education, which mirrors patterns of inequality seen in Australia.

As a solution, Singhgupta and Doan point out that a critical solution to these challenges lies in activist demands for affordable education and strong funding for tertiary institutions by the Federal Government.

“I think pay parity is a big thing,” Singhgupta said, when asked about the need to equalise fees between international and domestic students for a more accessible international education.

“We will be able to accommodate more students who come from different financial backgrounds. It is right in terms of not leaving people with a debilitating debt.”

For both Singhgupta and Doan, an

affordable international education will recalibrate expectations and the mission of international schools and universities away from viewing international students primarily as an income stream, and towards genuine inclusion.

Doan goes further, arguing that exorbitant fees have led to “misguided priorities” from both tertiary institutions and students by encouraging the proliferation of questionable reputation-based university rankings. This often happens concurrently with the undermining of the nuts and bolts of supporting teaching and student experience by universities.

Additionally, each agreed that cultural changes were also necessary to complement fee reductions. Such changes would empower their home countries’ educational capacity rather than increasing reliance on Anglocentric knowledge.

“We should steer away from [a] Western model of education. Not just like America, not just like Singapore; we should stop thinking that Western is automatically better,” Doan said, lamenting on the prevailing tide of opinion back home.

“I think the way a lot of Vietnamese people think about this is: ‘Oh it’s so great because it’s not Vietnamese. We should stop thinking like that.”

Speaking on such cultural reforms, Bhattacharya also insisted that those on the wealthier end must acknowledge the “traditional expression” of their home beyond festivities and the tokenistic to include others back home in lower socio-economic backgrounds.

In her view, the task involves a balancing act between one’s cultural upbringing and the ideological influence present in her studies. “It’s a fine line maintaining that duality. I’m Indian but I’m also getting an international education,” Bhattacharya said.

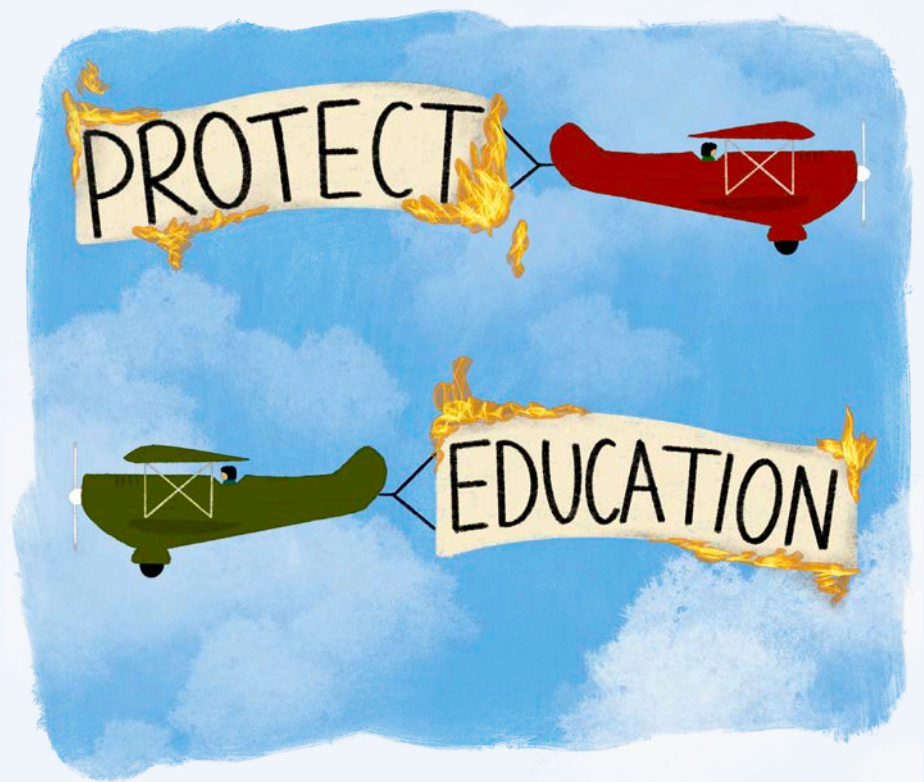
For the three, addressing these economic and cultural challenges would go a long way to address concerns about a talent brain drain in Global South countries. Instead of perpetuating an idealisation of Western institutions as the apex of knowledge, the goal should be encouraging a return of aspirations in such countries.

Encapsulating the time and monetary investments that she, Doan, Singhgupta, and all international students have contributed, Bhattacharya is optimistic about the prospect of change. She hopes that the community will continue to be bold in their advocacy.

“I think the future for international education is looking very purpose-driven. The person being educated is going to be more empowered, more aware and a lot more brazen,” she said.

“I am putting my blood, sweat and tears into receiving this so I think [universities] should be making an effort as well.”

*Disclaimer: Khanh Tran is an alumni of International School Ho Chi Minh City (ISHCMC).*



ART BY AMELIA KOEN



# Review: Emo Nite at Manning Bar

Amelia Koen reveals her alter-emo [sic].

Lacing up the vans; smudging the L'Oréal; donning the black dress. It can only mean one thing: it's Emo Nite — and Friday night's installment was at the University of Sydney's own Manning Bar.

For the uninitiated, this is a sacred and infamous night amongst emos of all varieties: scene, punk, pop-punk, metalcore, rock, and so on. Because, to quote Mean Girls' Cady Heron, "[Emo Nite] is the one time of year when an [emo] can dress like a total [emo] and no other [non-emo] can say anything about it."

Themed as a 'My Chemical Romance Ball', Manning Bar — perhaps for the first time in living memory — was offering what I'll generously call 'cocktails', including 'Planetary Punch', 'My Chemical Blue-mance', and 'Helena's Goodnight'. Out of these themed drinks masquerading as shoehorned-in lyrical puns, blue-mance was by far the best (and also, probably radioactive). After a few of these beverages, you're guaranteed to feel Weightless.

Upon our Fashionably Late arrival at approximately 8:30 pm, there was nobody on the dancefloor! In a likely desperate attempt to get the emo-crowd moving and shaking, the DJ played a series of Sleeping With Sirens' biggest hits, including 'Kick Me' and 'If You Can't Hang', and Pierce the Veil's 'King for a Day' ft. Sleeping With Sirens' Kellin Quinn, and reliably, the night was off.

Row, row, row, your boat gently ... to Paramore?

As I wrote in my notes app at the time: "a small part of myself has died — the mosh has truly started during Paramore." Now,

let's be clear, I take no issue with Paramore whatsoever. However, when the heavy-metal-esque moshing starts during the 2016 indie-pop sensation 'Still Into You', one has to be curious as to what on Earth is going on. F.M.L.

Aside from the curious song choice and, as my accomplice exclaimed "this is Manning Bar, not Unify", the 'rowboating' or 'boat rowing' chain that formed on the floor was quite impressive — though definitely not COVID-safe. Despite sounding highly questionable, rowboating in the mosh is quite literally just sitting down and pretending to row a boat...

Circles, walls, and mosh-pit falls

After a slightly-problematic sing-off between the worst of two evils — Falling in Reverse and Escape the Fate — my emo companions and I finally received a morsel of what we'd been manifesting: Bring Me the Horizon.

Harkening back to the heavy energy of their first album Count Your Blessings, the pit began to swirl with metallic anticipation as the opening notes of Sempiternal smash-hit 'Shadow Moses' kicked off (despite paradoxically going nowhere). In all honesty, my neck still hurts — which is embarrassing, but it's been at least two years of no concerts and no headbanging at full capacity. Besides, if your neck feels fine immediately after a show, you did it wrong.

It's time for a sighing, Open Letter on mosh etiquette: If your face is already bleeding, in several places, and nobody is in the circle-pit with you, perhaps, call it quits for a while unless you have a Deathwish. Solo dodging-into and roundhouse-kicking

people is literally just hitting them — plus, you look silly. Read the room, go wash your face, wait for a heavier song (yes, heavier than the bridge of 'If It Means A Lot To You'), and bring some other mosh-mates to jump with.

P.S. Being Aggressive and violently shaking the barrier of Manning is cringe and dangerous when people are leaning on it for stability. Just go to a heavy band's gig where this type of acting-up is normal and borderline encouraged; e.g. go see Windwaker — they're playing The Factory on April 1st.

'Cocktails' + confetti + wood floors = slippery!

Perhaps this doesn't come as a surprise, but after several blows of black and white confetti cannons were fired, and several stomach-churning drinks were split, a fantastically slippery surface formed on the floor. Confetti slid across the thin layer of questionable liquids which amalgamated on the now coated wooden floorboards — not even the (Made of Wax, Larry) grip of our Vans 'Old Skools' could have saved us from this deadly combination.

Many an emo took a spiralling tumble; it was truly The Downfall Of Us All. Though even worse confetti-crimes were committed shortly after, as wads of sticky confetti were picked up and re-launched into the air. Only to fall down again with a weighted splat as they hit the floor and unsuspecting individuals. I can only thank the emo-gods that I was saved from that Rock Bottom experience.

An emo kid's golden hour

As the clock struck midnight, silence

fell like A Match Into Water. Only the unmistakable, foreboding notes of 'Welcome to the Black Parade' were audible as it ushered in the night's 'MCR Hour'.

Perhaps I am old and boring at 21, but I wish they played this set at 11 pm instead because I was tired and the Blue Curacao was wearing off. Despite these Famous Last Words, after four hours of MCR-gifs and video clips up on the projected big-screen, I was glad to have seen the night through. The room was buzzing and not a single lyric was left unsung by the crowd.

Eternal hits such as 'I'm Not Okay (I Promise)', 'Teenagers', 'Na Na Na (Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na Na)', 'I Don't Love You', and 'Mama' were natural crowd-pleasers, uniting nearly all subjects of the emo cult of musical personality.

I can only imagine that the night from here on descended into more of the same: 20-year olds in Pikachu hats and skinny jeans singing like they were 14 again, and the resounding sounds of people singing themselves hoarse to their favourite angsty tunes echoing on.

Upon our leaving, catching glimpses of Gerard-Way-red-ties and black mesh in various forms, we felt satisfied with our night of emo reprise. Whether you're a new emo or a seasoned veteran just wanting to get Right Back at it Again, Emo Nite is the place for you.

So, my dear Manning, Thanks fr th Mmrs. You might be slippery and smelly, but it would be sacrilegious to speak a word against you after your evening of stellar emo-patronage. So Long, And Thanks For All The Booze.

Grace assures me that there are solutions though. Referencing Jenny Odell's *How to do Nothing* (2019), she highlighted the rise of sites such as Scuttlebutt — decentralised social media platforms where user data is not held by a single company or database, and thus isn't monitored like on Meta platforms. "Of course, the problem is that you'd have to migrate everyone onto these platforms," she sighed. "Beyond alternative social media, I honestly don't know what the answer is."

Neither do I, but our conversation left me with a sliver of optimism. Transitioning away from the status quo to a more suitable alternative wouldn't be easy, but it wouldn't be impossible either. The oligarchs who own these platforms prey on our insecurities, on our need for friendships and connection. If we were to transition away from them, all it would require is collective and organised action. We're not in too deep — we can still pull our heads out of our devices and send a message to Zuckerberg and his ilk that we are not as addicted to their software as they want us to be.

Hold that thought for just a moment. My phone is buzzing — everybody's liking my recent post on Instagram. The notifications are pouring in, and my pre-posting anxiety has been quashed. I feel good — happy even. I have value. The temptation to step back and postpone that transition is palpable. What if I were to stay here for just a moment, on my knees, with my head in the fleeting euphoria of the Metaverse? Let it control my mind — it's not like I'll need my body.

# rivus — peering into troubled waters: 23rd Biennale of Sydney

Amelia Koen and Thomas Sargeant review.

Rivus is a multi-gallery experience that interrogates what it means to coexist with waterways in the 21st century, engaging with anti-colonial environmentalism; ancestral technologies; art as activist science; and the thirst to possess.

Viewers encounter a collection of artworks that critically engage with the core problems of our time — and come away with answers. This is not a performative collection of work, but one that makes tangible steps towards achieving its ideological goals through cutting edge technologies.

Artistic Director of the 23rd Sydney Biennale, José Roca, told *Honi* his vision for this year's theme resembled "more the delta than the source" of the theme's titular waterway: a branching out into diverse ideas from a single common thread.

First Nations artists are at the forefront this year, and it is reassuring to see this curatorial focus continue after the 22nd Biennale 'NIRIN', which opened just days before Sydney was plunged into its first lockdown in 2020.

**“This is not a performative collection of work, but one that makes tangible steps towards achieving its ideological goals through cutting edge technologies.”**

In contrast to the 21st Biennale's theme of 'Superposition', rivus is remarkably focused in scope. Every work has a clear thematic basis, interrogating our relationships with water and ecology while arguing for potential futures.

*Honi* was invited to attend an advance preview of the 23rd Biennale's five key gallery locations and offered the chance to speak with participants, and engage with their works up close. The Curatorium, composed of José Roca, Paschal Daantos Berry, Anna Davis, Hannah Donnelly, and Talia Linz, accompanied the tour and discussed the surfeit of innovative works on display.

National Art School

The tempest which had been encircling Sydney for several days was upon us, blaring down on the roof of the National Art School in Darlinghurst (NAS), Biennale Creative Director José Roca remarked that "we are hearing the voice of nature right now". Situating the thematics of rivus, José explained that each gallery-space or location is centred around a different conceptual wetland; NAS engages with submerged histories in still, stagnant waters.

A vital work exhibited at NAS was the *Myall Creek Gathering Cloak*. The cloak, which is hung at the space's entrance, was made by the National Committee of the Friends of Myall Creek and Local First Nations Community. Crossing from one side of the work to the other, a coverage of possum furs on one side are uncovered to reveal an oft-buried colonial history.

Curatorium member Hannah Donnelly explained the work as relating to the role of water "in conflict as colonial penetration roots."

The theme of occupation and colonisation continued throughout the space. Notably, the works of Jumana Emil Abboud engage with the suppressed and forgotten traditions which surround the waterways of Occupied Palestinian Territories. Skillfully communicating a painful yearning for her homeland, Abboud's artworks blend washes of acrylic and gouache to create almost apparition-like figures; the stories of her culture recalled only in foggy memories.

Mourning the loss of the deep-rooted cultural stories and teachings once shared between generations along riverbeds, and searching for continuity, Abboud said, "I demand for us to revisit the landscape. I demand for folktales to be told again, or for the return of our oral history". Just as the occupation erases Palestinian sovereignty, women and children's oral traditions of the land are erased.

The opening themes of the exhibition are brought to fruition as they are introduced across the interwoven buildings of NAS — whetting audiences' appetites for what is to come.

Art Gallery of NSW

The Biennale continued at the Art Gallery of NSW (AGNSW), in which avant-garde works acted as an intervention against the traditional gallery space. Roca specifically noted that the goal of many of these works is to link "art as metaphor and art as direct action". Looming over the entryway of AGNSW, the grass-based portraits created by Heather Ackroyd and Dan Harvey command the attention of gallery-entrants. Ackroyd told *Honi* that their works, at over four metres tall, are "blowing up the intimacy of a portrait to an epic landscape".

Working from seed, the duo created their works in Marrickville's old reverse garbage building. Projecting the negative image of their subject in gradations of white light onto their effective 'garden bed', or canvas, the seeds grow into blades of grass in varying shades of green. Speaking to their process, Ackroyd told *Honi* that "chlorophyll is a quasi-magical molecule" where it imprints subjects and designs onto the grass to a molecular level, using targeted photosynthesis. They will eventually fade and wither — reminiscent of the slow disappearance of ecosystems and animals in the wake of climate catastrophe.

The full-body living portraits depict the youth climate activist Lillie Madden and her uncle and Gadigal elder, Uncle Charles Madden. These subjects reflect the consistent political undercurrent of Ackroyd and Harvey's artistic philosophy — one which is deeply environmentalist, radical and meaningful; strongly aligning with the thematics of the 23rd Biennale.

These dynamic, innovative works are an undeniable stand-out of the Biennale which must be seen in the grassy flesh to be wholly appreciated.

The arguable centerpiece of the Biennale at AGNSW is an installation of John Kelly and Rena Shein's *Nyanghan nyinda me you* — which showcases the first handmade tree canoe in decades. Situated in the recently renovated grand courts of the Gallery, which traditionally hold 15th-19th century European art, the positioning of this work signifies a cultural reclamation of the space. Utilising ancestral technologies

and traditional First Nations techniques to create the canoe, Kelly quoted his father, saying, "be your own mentor, not your own tormentor."



Museum of Contemporary Art

Deep time and psychological waters frame the works at The Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA), with the entire third floor of the venue taken over by the Biennale. Susanne Cotter, the newly appointed Director of the Museum, reflected on the Biennale's use of 'participants' rather than 'artists' to describe contributors to the exhibition, who may also be thinkers, scientists, or even inanimate objects.

The oldest participant of the Biennale is the 365 million year old Canoundra fish fossil — displayed in public for the first time. Dating back to the Denovian geologic period, also known as 'the age of the fishes,' the fossilised fish were likely amongst the first generation of land-exploring aquatic animals.

The fossil operates as an artwork of the world, a tangible record of where we've been; a species derived from water.

Arguably the most interesting work at the MCA is *A Connective Reveal* by Robert Andrew, displayed across an entire wall. MCA curator Anna Davis explained that Andrew's work sees two 'palimpsest machines' (modified 3D printers) slowly move across the walls in a carefully choreographed pre-programmed dance.

The machines are in a constant process of erasure and inscription, using high-pressure water jets to displace the work's chalk layer and allow the ochre beneath to bleed down the wall. The work will evolve over the course of months, eventually revealing words in Andrew's own Yawuru language written in the deep red ochre that has been mechanically excavated.

Walsh Bay Arts District

Suspended over the waters of Sydney Harbour, Pier 2/3 at the Walsh Bay Arts District feels fully integrated both into the theme of rivus as well as Sydney's art scene at large. This is no small feat for the newly-renovated district, with the Biennale being the first public event on the pier since a \$371 million investment from the NSW government.

The most striking work of the pier is situated at the far end, by Melissa Dubbin and Aaron Davison; the near-alchemical construction of the work reflects our origins as water-based beings in embryonic fluids. Entitled *Delay Lines*, the work is built from laboratory-like glassware and materials that remind viewers of a scientific space.

The "invisible energies of water" are observed in the work's closed-system environment: heated by the internal computer itself, the water twists and transforms through the rigged glass tubing. Glistening as it shifts into a condensed form, the water mirrors our own transformation as a species — snared in a constant process of adapting and shifting into new iterations of ourselves.

The space was also home to installation works from the Torres Strait 8 - a group of Zenadh Kes traditional owners who took the Australian Government to the UN for failing to adequately address climate change. True to their experience, NSW's recent record-breaking floods meant that one of their works, a number of totemic poles, failed to arrive at the Biennale in time for our viewing.

Yessie Mosby, a member of the 8, told us about his culture and his experience of the ocean: "We are saltwater people. We go to bed listening to sea waves, we wake up listening to sea waves". He elaborated that "[the ocean] is our maternity ward, our hospital, our library".

Barangaroo

The Cutaway at Barangaroo is a space that many students have likely not yet visited. The Barangaroo precinct is an often prohibitively-expensive area dominated by upscale restaurants, bars, and office buildings. The Biennale, however, is a free exhibition that makes a visit well worthwhile.

A highlight in this space was created by Jessie French, an algae-based artist who blends scientific and artistic knowledge to create new biodegradable 'leathers', materials, and plastics. Functioning as an installation work, French's laboratory in The Cutaway blurred the lines between art and science; green liquid algae bubbled away on her stovetop as she told *Honi*, stick-blender in hand, that her work encompasses a "new generation of plastic".

She explained to us that her bioplastics, made from algae found in waterways, are "thermo-resettable" — meaning they can be melted back into a liquid and reformed into a new solid, repeatedly. Using non-toxic pigments and polymers derived from red microalgae, French also creates large hanging sheets of semi-translucent plastic leathers in a variety of hues and shades, blooming with organic forms of colour.

Her work directly considers how scientific knowledge systems can be linked to artistic practices in environmentally meaningful ways: a concept central to the goals of rivus. Producing a viable alternative to petrochemical plastics, French also creates plates, cups and other daily objects out of her custom-brewed bioplastic.

Located two floors above the Cutaway on the Stargazer lawn, the Great Animal Orchestra is a must-see work of the Biennale. Developed by American soundscape ecologist Bernie Krause in collaboration with art collective United Visual Artists, the work is primarily audio based — Krause notes that sound is usually an afterthought in art and film, the last element to be added. The Great Animal Orchestra comprises audio recordings of nature taken from vulnerable habitats in Africa, North America, the Pacific Ocean and the Amazon River. Krause refers to the knowledge to be gleaned from these sounds as "a critical database" comparable to the Library of Alexandria, and hopes that when people hear this plea they will come away changed.

rivus is everything art lovers have been asking for — socially conscious and sustainable in theme and execution, it succeeds in operating on a grand scale without sacrificing the nuance of its concept.

*The 23rd Biennale of Sydney is open now until June 13 at the above locations as well as Arts and Cultural Exchange in Parramatta.*



# How far would you go? SUDS’s Medea

Josephine Lee attends a night of theatre.

What lengths would you go to to survive in a world stacked against you as a woman? That lets greedy men go about unchained?

Although *Medea*, Euripides’ brutal classical Greek play, is little-known among young people, it is one worth experiencing. By recontextualising the original in the 1950s (translated by Alastair Elliot), SUDS director Adele Beaumont and producer Jennifer Shin explore the narrative’s gender roles, xenophobia, venegeance and social isolation against the backdrop of a world recovering from World War II, wherein women were forced into submissive domestic roles.

As you walk into the Cellar Theatre space, you are presented with a picturesque 1950s Australian suburban front yard. There are white picket fences and radio static; Bobby Vinton’s *Blue Velvet* rings through the peaceful scene. That is, until we are introduced to Medea. The Nurse, smoothly played by Daisy Semmler, introduces us to the unstable world of Corinth, where Jason and Medea were exiled but later married and conceived two children (adorably played by Claire Hwang and Lily McGuinness). After reclaiming a level of respectability, Jason abandons Medea to remarry the daughter of King Creon in order to advance in society. What follows is the high-stakes tale of Medea, a formidable yet flawed woman, going to extremes to survive in the face of patriarchal social pressures.

Paris Bell and Thomas Hennessey’s set design meticulously recreates the 1950s Australian suburban backyard with the white picket fence, classic slated windows and a blue, Australian sky full of

angelic clouds. This is complemented by Nikki Eghlimi’s naturalistic summer night lighting design, Rose Fitz’s conservative yet classy 1950s costume design, and Harry Peters and George Campbell’s



Photography by Mariika Mehigan.

iconic cicada-filled soundscape. Interwoven are intoxicating, dream-like 1950s music and audio distortions, accentuating the nightmarish qualities of this seemingly blissful summer dream. Eghlimi’s mystical neon lighting design accentuates the chorus’s surreal physical theatre moments (solemnly played by

Emily Reynolds, Mary Franklin, Ruby Adler, and choreographed by Georgie Eggleton). The stark contrast between the story’s violence and the peaceful suburbia created by the production’s design poignantly highlights the insidious and brutally silent reality of domestic violence.

Though the beginning of the play lacks some energy and pace, it

including Joshua Mortimer’s rendition of the introspective yet naïve tutor, and Danny Yazdani’s humorous and lovable portrayal of Aegeus, complement the play’s dark mood.

Alexander Chu’s majestic voice and emotional dynamism as King Creon beautifully capture his character’s regal confidence and hidden cowardice. In all, the chorus solemnly convey the horror of Medea’s situation through their reactions, like voyeurs reflecting society’s superficial sympathy for women under the patriarchy. At the start, I found it alienating and discomforting to witness women be so superficially sympathetic towards other womens’ suffering. However, by the end, their anger elevates the play’s energy to a height that helps drive its message home.

Afterwards, as I ponder this play, I can somewhat understand why an individual, especially a woman, would go to such violent lengths, especially when they must struggle for basic human rights. However, the play problematises the struggle for vengeance, leaving it up to the viewer to come to their own conclusion. And you might be thinking, “What lengths?” Well that’s something you’ll have to discover by watching this show.

accelerates to a startling end. Madhullikaa Singh brilliantly captures the anger, frustration, determination, and emotional heartbreak of Medea, while Roman Koteczky eloquently plays the playboy father Jason, with a controlled comedic delivery of certain lines. The band of minor yet memorable characters,

*Medea runs until 26 March, 2022. Tickets are available online now.*

# Sèance Revue — get in losers, we’re going to the graveyard

Stuart Rich gets spooky at Usyd’s Science Revue.

A lurid cake enthusiast, the Lunatic denizens of the Mosman community Facebook group, and Tracy Grimshaw: these were just some of the blood-curdling spectacles on offer at Séance Revue, the latest and spookiest incarnation of the University of Sydney Science Revue. Performed at the Seymour Centre’s York Theatre on Saturday 12 March, the show was directed by Maxim Adams and Emilia McGrath, produced by Mendy Atencio and Gilbert East, and consisted of no fewer than 71 sketches, songs, and musical interludes. Taking more than two years of development, this was a technically and artistically impressive production which largely succeeded in maintaining its energy, and the audience’s enthusiastic interest, for the duration of its two-hour-plus runtime.

The show’s spine-chilling opening scene establishes its theme. Under the evil red glare of the moon, five friends assemble in a graveyard in order to hold a séance. In their hands is an eldritch grimoire, out of which they read the terrifying incantation Caecilius est in horto. Summoned by this unholy utterance, a troupe of devils and demons gleefully dances forth from the portals of hell (i.e. the left and right stage doors) and kidnaps one of their number, Steph. To ensure all is not lost, the five friends must reunite and reverse the ritual by the

break of day – but first, they must steel themselves for a journey through the surreal realm of student sketch comedy.

Many of the stand-out sketches involved singing and dancing. Their success with the audience was due, in no small part, to the virtuoso performance of the on-stage band, who were directed by Rafi Owen and Nick Cranch (and whose souls, if a certain audiovisual sketch is to be believed, are now the eternal property of Science Revue). One of the first musical numbers in the programme, ‘Diagnose my Friends’, features Skye McLeod and Marc Simonini playing psychology students who, as self-proclaimed ‘empaths’, are only too happy to grace those around them with their advanced insights: ‘So who needs therapy? / Just come on down to me! / Got it all covered in the first year of my psych degree.’ Another audience favourite was ‘Eat the Rich’, in which Harry Charlesworth and Taylor Fair, supported by a crowd of placard-wavers, offer a modest proposal for the equitable redistribution of societal calories: ‘Bring your forks and an axe, / Then we’ll see who pays their tax / When we’re cutting more than credit cards in half.’

The non-musical sketches were also largely well-received. James Willy was disturbingly convincing as a diner whose craving for ‘toilet lollies’ drives him into a state of unhinged desperation.

Pearl Cardis moved the audience to stitches as a grown adult who attempts to purchase tickets to an R-rated film while pretending to be two children in a trenchcoat. A ‘naughty sketch’ was cut short when a surly bouncer, played by Artie Gallagher, picked out a hapless audience member and subjected her to an increasingly ludicrous line of interrogation: ‘How many sketches have you watched tonight?’

**“A troupe of devils and demons gleefully danced forth from the portals of hell (i.e. the left and right stage doors)”**

Other sketches ranged from the long and elaborate to the short and quizzical. One sketch dramatised the childhood horror of reaching the front of the supermarket checkout line without one’s parents, while another lampooned the never-ending ‘closing down’ sales advertised by rug stores across Sydney. At other points, we saw a human theremin, an anthropomorphised bottle flip, and, in the immortal tradition of Shakespeare himself, a ‘live bear’ which was intermittently loosed upon

the stage to wreak havoc. Audiovisual sketches punctuated these on-stage performances, mostly consisting of a series of increasingly concerning ‘messages from our sponsors’. These soon entered predictable hostage-video territory, but drew laughs from the audience nevertheless.

If the show had a weakness, it lay in its shorter skits. Some, like the bottle flip sketch, were almost too short: by the time you had put together what was happening, the lights had blacked out and the set pieces for the next sketch were already moving onto the stage. Some of the more chaotic skits were affected by sound mixing issues, with the dialogue threatening at times to devolve into incoherent bellowing. (This was much less of an issue during the musical numbers, which had surtitles.) However, these hiccups did little to upset the show’s rhythm, which, from a technical standpoint, was adroitly managed throughout by the audiovisual operators, stage managers, and backstage crew.

Even if we hadn’t missed such performance experiences for much of the past two years, Séance Revue would have been impressive. That such a strong show was delivered under such trying circumstances is a testament to the skill and hard work of all involved, and bodes well for the future of the Science Revue.

# Alliance French Film Festival 2022

Harry Gay goes to the movies.

*CW: Discussions of abortion.*

The annual French Film Festival is back at Palace Cinemas with a wide selection of cinematic delights, from romance to sci-fi, to drama. This year, I caught a few films I had been eagerly anticipating and discovered a running thematic thread of womanhood and time. *Anais in Love*, *Happening* and *Full Time* all centre themselves around female protagonists and their bodies as sites of heightened temporality.

These films push towards a revolution in time as an act of resistance, guided and ushered in specifically by women. Rather than a strictly linear deterministic passing of time as envisioned in Christianity, these films posit a more free-flowing and embodied conception of time.

*Anais in Love* follows its titular protagonist as she fumbles through life, unlucky in love and trying to find her footing. She has an affair with an older married man, but upon discovering his wife Émilie’s writing, Anais falls for her. She then tracks Émilie down to a French villa during a book tour, where she begins to romance her. All the while, she juggles her finances, studies, various debts, and a crumbling apartment.

The heart of the film is its deep romance, with the framing constantly emphasising the proximity between Anais and Émilie in the frame. This is a film about yearning, lingering looks and heavy breathing in another person’s presence. The film constantly plays with time, with Anais under increasing constraints and deadlines. However, her romance with Émilie is purposely drawn

out and crawls along at a snail’s pace to emphasise their longing for one another.

The second film I saw was *Happening*, which sees Anne, a teenager in her final year of high school, fall pregnant. The film is set in the 1960s when performing abortions in France was illegal. Wanting to focus on her career rather than become a mother at her age, the film traces Anne’s various attempts to access an abortion.

*Happening* is a highly distressing film. While the 1960s costuming and vintage aesthetic fills the audience with nostalgic reverie, the subject matter is uncomfortable and anxiety-inducing. As the weeks tick by and her pregnancy moves along, her attempts to have an abortion become more desperate. The camerawork is claustrophobic, utilising a macro lens to get a shallow depth of field. Anne’s body is constantly shot in extreme close up, filling the frame, with everyone else slightly out of focus. The proximity to Anne allows us to ‘become Anne’ and inhabit her body, creating a greater sense of empathy and urgency for her struggles.

The final film, *Full Time*, is a pressure cooker drama about a mother attempting to raise her two children on her own. All the while she must race between her job as a maid in the morning and a series of job interviews on the other side of Paris, just as transit strikes make commuting impossible.

*Full Time* is an edge of your seat suspense flick, with the soundtrack a constantly thumping electronic score that captures the stress of running late and juggling multiple responsibilities.

The film is relentless in its energy, with quick cuts and shaky camera work that feels like a Jason Bourne thriller. For the protagonist Julie, time is a constant threat she repeatedly battles with.

All these films grapple with time and temporality in various ways. Anais struggles with her laundry list of overdue debts, while her romance with Émilie is described as belonging to “another time”, as if existing in an alternate temporality. Meanwhile, *Happening* sees Anne bound by the ticking clock of her pregnancy and her upcoming finals. And in *Full Time*, Julie battles with the buses and trains running late, her packed schedule of jobs and interviews, and the fear she is missing out on adequately providing for her children.

In the article ‘Time and History: Critique of the Instant and the Continuum,’ Giorgio Agamben suggests that various cultures throughout history have used images to help explain perceptions of time. We primarily conceive of a straight line in Western cultures, a very deterministic ordering of past, present and future. The women in these films are bound to a set track, hurtling towards futures they have no control over. They exist in a regimented temporality.

However, Agamben opens his essay by suggesting that “every culture is first and foremost a particular experience of time, and no new culture is possible without an alteration in this experience. The original task of a genuine revolution, therefore, is never merely to ‘change the world’, but also - and above all - to ‘change time.’”

The free-flowing nature of time is manifest by the various depictions of water throughout the films. *In Anais in Love*, emotional moments are punctuated by the protagonist swimming at the beach as a conduit to a cathartic release. First, when told her mother was diagnosed with cancer, and then later following the consummation of her relationship with Émilie.

*Full Time* provides levity and respite to Julie when she takes a bath. These are moments where she can finally be alone with the water - a panacea to her anxiety-riddled life. Her eyes close and the film sporadically cuts to images of water splashing on a beach. We are unsure if they are flashbacks or flash-forwards; they are brief blurry images devoid of context. These shots exist outside of her current temporality and are evocative of an effervescent pool of time.

While these films are unique in their stories, they are linked by a shared urge to break free from traditional dogmatic notions of time, recognising the daily struggles of women moving about the world. These films beckon us to imagine an alternative reality, one defined by feminine subjectivity and empathy for others, even if they centre on white cisgender characters and do not necessarily represent the experiences of all women.

*The French Film Festival runs from 1 March to 6 April at Palace Cinemas.*

# The silence between mothers and daughters

Zara Zadro reviews Jessica Au’s novel *Cold Enough for Snow* (2022), winner of the Inaugural Novel Prize.

In an early scene of Jessica Au’s novel *Cold Enough for Snow*, a bright garden unfurls below the tall, stone house of a university lecturer. Here, life is fixed in time as “a still in a film, or a photograph”. Olive trees surround a table laden with food and drink. Classmates clink glasses of wine and swap elegant words dressed in education. “I could not seem to believe that this world existed,” muses our narrator, an unnamed young woman, gazing back at the memory, “and that I had somehow got entrance to it.”

Reading the Inaugural Novel Prize-winning book is not unlike standing in that garden – so rich and clear that one wishes to stay there forever.

Its premise is deceptively simple: a young woman arranges a holiday to Japan with her mother. As they float through train stations, art galleries, and shrines, Au unspools the characters’ relationship over a shining surface of memory and scenic beauty. The story’s temporality is porous, with a cast of largely unnamed lovers, family, and friends straddling past and present. Their anonymity does not alienate the reader but rather the opposite, imbuing it with a fabulistic and timeless quality.

This timelessness is enhanced by Au’s clean and simple prose. To read *Cold Enough for Snow* is to sink through one glassy still-life to another, inferring colour and sensation in a few deft strokes. A piece of jade from Hong Kong is “a deep and creamy green”; the sea through a window is “pale like the edge of a blue cup”; glaze pooled within a bowl

looks “like liquid, like a blue pond, but if you tilted the bowl to the side, it never moved.”

But at the heart of *Cold Enough for Snow* lies all that remains unsaid between mother and daughter, both throughout the trip and over their lives.

**“Au unspools the characters’ relationship over a shining surface of memory and scenic beauty”**

In one interview, the Melbourne-based author stated that she wanted to explore how migration across generations “can sometimes be an ongoing process of fragmentation, forgetting, rediscovery and nostalgia, in which strong memories can exist alongside gaps of knowledge.”

The daughter wishes to further discuss Japan’s art, philosophy, and history with her mother, but cannot find the words to connect with her. The physical vulnerability and oneness of mother and child is obstructed by the mother’s clothed composure while travelling, with moments of private disarray shut behind hotel bedroom doors and polite formalities. Lamenting her poor Japanese language skills at the trip’s end, the daughter nods to the linguistic and emotional cleft between the pair: “my mother’s first language was Cantonese, and mine was English...we

only ever spoke together in one, not the other.”

But silence is also a quietly liberating force in *Cold Enough for Snow*, which Au has described as “really trying to say only one thing, but being unable to do so with words.”

“Rather, it [the novel] would simply need to carve the space, via digressions, memory and history, in which this ‘one thing’ could rest.”

Indeed, I felt that so much of my own life could rest on Au’s words. I thought often of my mother while reading; Japan is her favourite place, as a designer and one strongly attuned to aesthetic beauty. Before COVID, she booked a trip there each year, sometimes with me. But in the last few years as I’ve progressed through university life, I’ve had little interest in travelling with her anymore.

The opening scene of the novel wherein daughter and mother weave their way through the crowd before a Tokyo train station, is arguably one of the few where they are genuinely intimate. “All the while my mother stayed close to me,” writes Au, “as if she felt that the flow of the crowd was a current, and that if we were separated, we would not be able to make our way back to each other, but continue to drift further and further apart.”

The image of mother and daughter helplessly drifting further apart touched me with a deep and unexpected sadness. I considered how our busy adult lives have eroded the intimacy between my mother

**“The image of mother and daughter helplessly drifting further apart touched me with a deep and unexpected sadness”**

In the bright, full garden of her narrative, Au posits an argument for truth-seeking; that we gaze indirectly at what lies before us, searching for nothing in particular, in order to find everything we need.



# And indeed, there will be time

Danny Yazdani writes.

It was a typical Sunday morning for the suburb of Mona Vale. Those near and far were congregating at the local cemetery, reciting prayers, laying down flowers, holding one another in warmth – but Cyrus wasn’t here for the usual procedures. He was not privileged enough to be held in an embrace this weekend. His meagre version of love laid right before him, deep down in the Earth’s festering flesh and blood, one point eight metres below his small satchel, which was lost in the overgrown weeds beneath his feet.

The coolness of the stone felt invasive against his soft flesh. He hadn’t sat on a headstone before. He hadn’t worn a nice pair of dress shoes either.

The sombre humming of prayer could just be heard from where Cyrus was seated, his feet planted firmly below him. He would not budge. He would not move. He would not give in to the shrieks of the flat-cap wearing groundskeeper, Mr Macadean, no matter what forceful strategy he would use this time.

The young lad was, however, only eleven. Bus journeys, budgeting, and walking beyond a few hundred metres – all dilemmas of the adult world – were beyond his capabilities. Memories of homeliness were juiced from his heart on the day of the now long passed funeral. However, nothing stopped him from his weekly visits to the cemetery now, feeding off them like an addictive painkiller whose only purpose was to numb the gloomiest places of the subconscious.

“O my God! O Thou forgiver of sins, bestower of gifts, dispeller of afflictions-“

“Gifts,” chuckled Cyrus. No ‘gift’, no treasure, no value could be found in the pointless scriptures those pious strangers poured their tears into. Their chorus of prayer through song sounded more like wailing, sobs and shrieks wheezing through the words of the Holy Text.

Cyrus had been given a small gift a few months ago, seated on the edge of the veranda whilst cracking the knuckles of his small hands.

“Kourosh!” she would shout, her trembling voice sending her turkey-like neck quaking as she hobbled her way outside, her house slippers still on her feet. Bibi came and seated herself beside him. She had lived a long life, made healthy by the weekly chicken broth, herb assortments, and warm glasses of milk her own mother had blessed her with. The wooden deck creaked as Bibi sat beside her grandson, her ancient bones



begrudgingly landing with a thump. She swayed back and forth rhythmically, placing her hand on both of his. She was draped in vibrant silk, paisley-patterned and intricately woven, her body swaying back and forth like an antique pendulum moments before a mid-daily chime.

“Fidgeting again, are we?” she croaked. Knuckle cracking gave you arthritis and Bibi was strict enough to forbid it.

“No!” squeaked Cyrus, turning his head away from her, out towards the small patch of geraniums Bibi had planted in turquoise pots below, near the veranda’s stairs.

“I brought you something,” said Bibi cheerfully. “I know you like my gifts.” She opened a small, red velvet pouch, pulling out a long chain of rich turquoise beads bound together by golden string.



“It’s a *tasbi*,” she said. “They call it a rosary here, but it’s the same. Now you keep this in your pocket, Kourosh,” she said firmly, moving the rosary beads in front of his face. “Whenever you burden those spry knuckles of yours you take it out, and you count each and every one, ninety-nine times. You say, ‘Ya Baha Abha’ over and over until you feel calm. Say it after me, *Ya Baha Abha*.”

“*Ya Baha Abha*,” said Cyrus, perplexed by the peculiar gift his grandmother had given him and the language he was not accustomed to. It would take him extra effort, a willingness only found in detectives, to decipher the archaic thoughts and actions of a woman wearied by age and a life of religious persecution.

“*Verily, I beseech thee to forgive the sins of such as have abandoned-“*

The wind howled and pierced through the groups of people standing in Mona Vale’s cemetery – begging them, imploring them, *pleading* with them to return home. Mr Macadean’s deep grunts and booming voice could be heard faintly in the distance, drowned in the mighty wails of gusts of wind flipping Cyrus’ hair to one side. This wasn’t his first encounter with the winds, nor was it the first time Mr Macadean had scared him off.

In a sudden hurry, Cyrus’ snatched the satchel by his feet, jolting upright as the stiffness of his backside shot pain down his left calf. Pins and needles gnawed away at his body, right down to his frosty toes. His hand in the withered satchel, Cyrus reached for the turquoise *tasbi*, tugging and heaving the contents of the bag until –finally! – he had grasped it. The wind blew, an ancestor or



a prophesier of sorts, pushing Cyrus away from this place of death.

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The jingle of beads thrown against an icy grave; a sound drowned in the violent flurries of the Sunday morning draught. Cyrus had been lost in the memories of what now was lost, and had not seen Mr Macadean approach Bibi’s grave from the distance. To any onlooker, his presence seemed to calm the wind’s fury. After thirty or so odd years of service, he was accustomed to its magnitude. He had befriended it and its capricious ways. He held a large shovel in his rough palms this time made from stainless steel, with a handle coated grimly in black. A singular

“O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendors on the loftiest mount.”

ART BY  
YASODORA PUHULE



sound now filled the air: the distant thuds of oversized dress shoes sprinting into the unknown. A familiar sound to the old groundskeeper. An all too familiar sound. The chorus of mourners nearby resumed their devotion to the dead:

“... the physical garment and have ascended to the spiritual world...”

The collective voices engulfed the sounds of the final footsteps, Mr Macadean now kneeling by Bibi’s final resting place. With a thud, he rested his knee on the raw Earth, his hand reaching for his flat cap. The shovel stood motionless, leaning on an informational sign reading “Bahá’í Section A-M”. Mr Macadean lowered his cap, taking out of it a small black velvet pouch. Taking the fallen *tasbi* off of Bibi’s stone, the groundskeeper placed it inside the pouch and laid it underneath the words of the head stone. He read aloud, “I came forth from God and return unto him”.

Mr Macadean stood up straight and was quiet for a minute. When he finally returned to his duties, he imagined Cyrus’ return in a week’s time. “And indeed, there will be time,” he thought. Time for griever to grieve with every ounce of their bodies, and for those who have departed to truly ascend to a higher realm above. He had seen it time and time again and knew of the journeys awaiting them.

The people at the cemetery were always persistent in ensuring their loved ones’ departures were prim and proper. The bodies of the departed had undergone the separation of the worldly spirit and the immortal soul by now, reaching for the Kingdom of Abha as Bibi and countless others had, guided by the voices of their legacies and earthly remains towards a higher destination. It wasn’t Mr Macadean’s job to facilitate this journey between the two realms, but, at times, he felt as though he was responsible to assist in some way. He never overstepped, but in the case that he did, the Wind would hold him accountable, carrying the merged voices of the chorus to him on its breezes. The chorus, continued to sing their final verse:

“O my Lord! Purify them from trespasses, dispel their sorrows, and change their darkness into light. Cause them to enter the garden of happiness, cleanse them with the most pure water, and grant them to behold Thy splendors on the loftiest mount.”

# On ‘opa’: Greece’s defacto catchphrase

Luke Mesterovic speaks to a rich Mediterranean history of language.

Many millennia ago, in a land wedged between mountains and the Mediterranean, there was a people. They were not very numerous. They controlled no large empire. They commanded no sizable army. By many metrics, they would have been considered irrelevant. Yet these people envisioned a totally new conception of what human life was for and what the human mind could do. Those people were my people, the Greeks, and they can be summarised in one word: *opa*.

What is *opa*? With the possible exception of *malaka*, *opa* is likely the most recognised word in the Greek language. Although it has no direct English translation; it’s closest to an amalgamation of ‘oops,’ ‘hooray,’ and ‘wow.’ Love, fear, excitement, surprise – *opa* encapsulates the full spectrum of Greek emotions. Dropped your phone? *Opa!* Found a good Greek girl that your parents approve of? *Opa!* Got fined for hosing down your concrete driveway when there are water restrictions? *Opa!* It is unmatched in its versatility. With its roots in classical Greece, *opa* is believed to have derived from the expression ohp, first recorded in Aristophanes’ play, The Birds. It has since spread through to the Balkans, the Middle East, North Africa, and to the far-flung outposts of the Greek diaspora, becoming synonymous with the Greeks themselves.

“The magic of the Greek lifestyle – a lifestyle that is encapsulated by the word *opa*.”

It’s no secret that the Greeks have given the world a great many things. As a Greek, I am perhaps ethnically obligated to remind you that this includes, but is by no means limited to: democracy, medicine, politics, and theatre. Yet our greatest achievement is undoubtedly the magic of the Greek lifestyle

– a lifestyle that is encapsulated by the word *opa*. The Greek way of life is a commemoration of what it means to be alive; a kaleidoscopic combination of wine, dancing, and Socratic wisdom.

“Opa is amazing in that, unlike Greek last names, it’s only two syllables, so anyone can pronounce it.”

From democracy to authoritarianism, economic miracle to economic catastrophe, Greece’s history is rich and varied, yet its outlook has never changed.

*Opa* represents Greece in many ways – a small, yet expressive burst of passion in the face of both success and hardship. It remains symbolic of our uncanny ability to make the best of a bad situation, to keep the flame of Greek culture alive no matter how far away we are from our homeland.

Yet despite *opa*’s symbolism, its greatest strength is something far more innate – the fact that *opa* is simply a joy to say. You can draw the ‘o’ out and let the tension rise, before unleashing the ‘pa’ like a champagne cork. *Opa* is amazing in that, unlike Greek last names, it’s only two syllables, so anyone can pronounce it. Yell *opa* at a party and see the chain reaction unfold, as the dominos of people yelling it in succession fall down. Few words match its intrinsic excitement.

Greece today remains just as humble as it was all those millennia ago. Not humble in terms of ego, but humble in that our strength is not based on the size of our population, borders or military. Greece’s strength remains the same as it has always been – our ability to enjoy the nectar from the fruit of life, in spite of the circumstances. *Opa!*



PHOTOGRAPHY  
COURTESY OF  
ATHNIA BALIS

# Όπα: Η Ουσία της Ελλάδας

O Luke Mesterovic γιορτάζει μια πλούσια ιστορία της μεσογειακής γλώσσας.

Αν μπορείτε να διαβάσετε ελληνικά, Αεπιτρέψτε μου να ζητήσω συγγνώμη. Δεν μπορώ να γράφω πολύ καλά στα ελληνικά. Πριν από πολλές χιλιετίες, σε μια χώρα κολλημένη ανάμεσα στα βουνά και τη Μεσόγειο, υπήρχε ένας λαός. Δεν ήταν πολύ πολυδύναμοι. Δεν ήλεγχαν καμία μεγάλη αυτοκρατορία. Δεν διοικούσαν κανένα μεγάλο στρατό. Με πολλές μετρήσεις, θα είχαν θεωρηθεί άσχετες. Ωστόσο, αυτοί οι άνθρωποι οραματίστηκαν μια εντελώς νέα κατανόηση του τι ήταν η ανθρώπινη ζωή και τι μπορούσε να κάνει το ανθρώπινο μυαλό. Αυτοί οι άνθρωποι ήταν ο λαός μου, οι Έλληνες, και θα μπορούσαν να συνοψιστούν σε μια λέξη: όπα.

“Ωστόσο, το μεγαλύτερο επίτευγμά μας είναι αναμφίβολα η μαγεία του ελληνικού τρόπου ζωής – ενός τρόπου ζωής που συμβολίζεται με τη λέξη όπα.”

Τι σημαίνει η όπα; Με πιθανή εξαίρεση τη «μάλακα», η όπα είναι πιθανώς η πιο αναγνωρισμένη λέξη στην ελληνική γλώσσα. Αν και δεν έχει άμεση αγγλική μετάφραση, είναι πιο κοντά σε μια συγχώνευση των λέξεων «oops», «hooray» and «wow». Αγάπη, φόβος, ενθουσιασμός, έκπληξη - όπα περιλαμβάνει όλο το φάσμα των ελληνικών συναισθημάτων. Έριξες το τηλέφωνό σου στο έδαφος; Όπα! Βρήκες μια καλή Ελληνίδα για να την εγκρίνουν οι γονείς σου; Όπα! Σας επιβλήθηκε πρόστιμο για το πότισμα της τοιμεντένιας αυλής σας όταν υπήρχαν περιορισμοί νερού; Όπα. Η όπα είναι απaráμλλο στην ευελιξία του. Από τις ρίζες του στην κλασική Ελλάδα, έχει εξαπλωθεί στα Βαλκάνια, τη Μέση Ανατολή, τη Βόρεια Αφρική και τα μακρινά φυλάκια της ελληνικής διασποράς και έχει γίνει συνώνυμο με τους ίδιους τους Έλληνες.

Δεν είναι μυστικό ότι οι Έλληνες έχουν δώσει στον κόσμο πολλά πράγματα. Ως Έλληνας, είμαι εθνικά υποχρεωμένος να σας υπενθυμίσω ότι αυτό περιλαμβάνει, αλλά σε καμία περίπτωση δεν περιορίζεται σε: δημοκρατία, ιατρική, πολιτική και θέατρο. Ωστόσο, το μεγαλύτερο επίτευγμά μας είναι αναμφίβολα η μαγεία του ελληνικού τρόπου ζωής – ενός τρόπου ζωής που συμβολίζεται με τη λέξη όπα. O

ελληνικός τρόπος ζωής είναι μια γιορτή του τι σημαίνει να είσαι ζωντανός, ένας καλειδοσκοπικός συνδυασμός κρασιού, χορού και σωκρατικής σοφίας. Από τη δημοκρατία στον αυταρχισμό, από το οικονομικό θαύμα στην οικονομική καταστροφή, η ιστορία της Ελλάδας είναι πλούσια και ποικίλη, αλλά η προοπτική της δεν άλλαξε ποτέ. Η όπα εκπροσωπεί την Ελλάδα με πολλούς τρόπους - μια μικρή αλλά εκφραστική έκρηξη πάθους που χρησιμοποιείται τόσο στην επιτυχία όσο και στις αντιξοότητες. Παραμένει συμβολικό για την απίστευτη ικανότητά μας να αξιοποιούμε στο έπακρο μια κακή κατάσταση, να κρατάμε ζωντανή τη φλόγα του ελληνικού πολιτισμού όσο μακριά κι αν βρισκόμαστε από την πατρίδα μας.

Ωστόσο, παρά τον συμβολισμό του όπα, η μεγαλύτερη δύναμή του είναι κάτι πολύ πιο έμφυτο - το γεγονός ότι η όπα είναι πολύ διασκεδαστικό να το λες δυνατά. Μπορείτε να τραβήξετε “ο” και να αφήσετε την ένταση να ανέβει πριν φωνάξετε “πα”. Η όπα είναι εκπληκτικό στο ότι, σε αντίθεση με τα ελληνικά επώνυμα, είναι μόνο δύο συλλαβές, οπότε ο καθένας μπορεί να το προφέρει. Φωνάζτε όπα σε ένα πάρτι και δείτε την αλυσιδωτή αντίδραση να εκτυλίσσεται καθώς πέφτουν τα ντόμινο του κόσμου που φωνάζουν όπα. Λίγες λέξεις ταιριάζουν με τον εγγενή ενθουσιασμό του.

“Η όπα είναι εκπληκτικό στο ότι, σε αντίθεση με τα ελληνικά επώνυμα, είναι μόνο δύο συλλαβές, οπότε ο καθένας μπορεί να το προφέρει.”

Η Ελλάδα σήμερα παραμένει τόσο ταπεινή όσο ήταν όλες εκείνες τις χιλιετίες πριν. Η δύναμή μας δεν βασίζεται στο μέγεθος του πληθυσμού μας, στα σύνορά μας ή στο στρατό μας. Η δύναμη της Ελλάδας παραμένει η ίδια όπως ήταν πάντα - η ικανότητά μας να απολαμβάνουμε νέκταρ από τον καρπό της ζωής, παρά τις συνθήκες. Όπα!

Translation by Luke Mesterovic.



# Microbes, faeces, and you

Katarina Butler gives a shit.

Microbes, generally defined as microorganisms, are ubiquitous - wherever life goes, they follow. Some cause disease while others are essential for digesting certain foods. For example, cellulose (found in plants) is indigestible for humans without the help of specialised microbes which degrade and transform it into digestible molecules.

There are many sites within the body that develop into microbiomes by cultivating specific types of microorganisms. Fun fact: the human body contains more microbial cells than human cells, most notably in the gut, the throat, and on the skin. When bacteria are in the right place and at the right concentration, the body seamlessly continues its daily functions. However, when microbiomes have too many bacterium - or when foreign bacterium triggers an immune response - the body suffers.

A person's microbiome plays an essential role in the development of their immune system. For instance, a child who is exposed to many germs and food types from a young age is able to acclimate to a normal level of microbes as an adult. Additionally, the immune system learns and recognises when to step in and kill excess bacteria.

A 2010 study revealed that diseases related to abnormal immune system function are becoming increasingly common in the Western world. The common thread is that our food is increasingly processed and devoid of difficult-to-digest nutrients (such as fibres and cellulose).

In contrast, communities that consume traditional plant-based diets (like those in rural Burkina Faso), a child's microbiota is completely different. Ultimately, this leads to lower incidences of chronic disease.

Our immune systems have been further weakened by antibiotic overprescription. This can weaken the body's natural response to other dangerous pathogens over time and lead to internal organ inflammation, lesions, and even death from severe infections. Clearly, there is a need for an alternative mode of treatment.

This is where the discussion of microbiomes comes in. Individuals with *clostridium difficile* bacterial infection - a disease causing inflammation of the colon and intense gastrointestinal symptoms - can be treated and managed by manipulating the preexisting microbiome of a patient. By taking a piece of someone else's healthy gut microbiome and transplanting it into a patient infected with *clostridium difficile*, doctors can *strengthen* a patient's immune response and simultaneously cure their illness.

But how do you go about transplanting a complex system of thousands of microbes? Well, through the natural product of the gastrointestinal system - faeces.

Given the strong link between the immune system and one's microbiome, doctors have begun investigating how manipulating the level of microbes in the gut may influence the body's response to other treatments, including immunotherapy.

Immunotherapy is a growing field of research in which doctors manipulate the actions of the body's own cells to fight

cancer. The insidious nature of cancer is two-pronged. It causes tumour growth and simultaneously inhibits the body's ability to fight them by hijacking the body's natural response mechanisms. Cancer patients are thus more susceptible to other diseases too. Regaining control of the immune system through immunotherapy is hence a promising avenue for fighting cancer and its ancillary health complications. However, very few patients respond to treatment.

Fortunately, faecal microbiota transplants (FMT) may also be able to increase immunotherapy response rates. A recent trial in melanoma patients involved FMT from people who previously responded strongly to a specific type of immunotherapy to people who weren't showing a strong improvement. The patients' own immune systems were depleted using antibiotics, followed by a colonoscopy and the administration of an oral stool capsule. Three of nine patients saw a response to the treatment, with one experiencing a 100% shrinkage in their tumours.

When the gut microbiota of these patients was examined, they all showed an increased expression of genes related to the immune system, leaving them better able to combat the tumours. One patient even finished the 90-day trial with no remaining tumours. An interesting result of this pre-clinical (and therefore small-scale) trial was that the three patients who saw a decrease in cancer tumour mass received faecal transplants from the same donor. This suggests there may be some specific part of one's microbiota that determines whether or not their faeces will be an effective

treatment for enhancing responses to immunotherapy.

While researchers work to isolate the exact microbes, genes, and proteins that stimulate the immune system to fight cancer, Australian company BiomeBank has been collecting stool since 2013. Their samples are screened and preserved in-house before being sent off to gastroenterologists to treat tough cases of *clostridium difficile*.

Microbiologists work to culture-specific strains of microbes associated with positive outcomes, collaborating with engineers and business people to develop stool-handling procedures and market the product to doctors. In its early days of development, a faecal transplant was particularly low-tech, with donations only going through rudimentary screening processes before transplant. However, as it evolves into a complete treatment, it is hoped that scientists will be able to culture single microbes to be made into an oral medicine.

Microbes are ubiquitous, and their role within the body - whether it be innate, pathogenic or therapeutic - is essential. The field of cancer research is ever-growing, and any avenue that promises better outcomes for patients is worthwhile. The extreme nuance in every single case is a challenge that researchers can only surmount with increasingly personalised medicine. In pursuing this path, researchers should ensure they are investigating the diverse array of microbiomes present in people beyond Western and industrialised countries. The more alternatives offered to the greatest group of people, the better.

administrator Edward John Eyre. Eyre, in the late 1830s, travelled as far west as Ceduna in a series of expeditions through the interior of South Australia - the name is probably familiar to most Australians as the moniker given to our most famous Salt Lake: Lake Eyre.

What most Australians don't know is that Eyre was infamous, even in his time, as the brutal Governor of Jamaica. Eyre insisted on interacting only with the white land-owning class, and consistently pursued racialised draconian policies towards his subjects. In 1865 he violently suppressed the Morant Bay rebellion, murdering at least 439 black peasants alongside 600 floggings and the burning of over a thousand properties. Eyre also used the rebellion as an excuse to execute his political critic George William Gordon, a mixed-race member of the Jamaican assembly who was not involved whatsoever in the revolt. The events of 1865 led to widespread debate (and from some quarters condemnation) in contemporary British society. Unfortunately, this history is largely unknown in Australia.

From Ceduna to Port Lincoln, the Peninsula represents some of the most beautiful, fascinating and underappreciated scenery in the country. Unfortunately, it's also a place associated with horror, violence, and oppression. It is important to confront this past when travelling along the Peninsula's remarkable coastline; to face the incongruity between the region's natural beauty and tragic history. Perhaps one day, the region will stop celebrating this past by changing its name.

Indeed, the entire Eyre Peninsula is a stark reminder of an unsavoury past - the region, home to the Barmala people, is named after explorer and colonial

# Climate strike politics for 25 March

Tiger Perkins lays out the demands.

School Strike 4 Climate, in collaboration with unions and university students, have organised strike action for 25 March, in a few days time. Many people - from the media, to older people, and school principals - have asked why students must strike for climate action.

All around the world, workers and their unions have won better living and working conditions throughout history by withdrawing their labour and threatening employers' profits. In recent months, NSW has seen strikes from the NSW Nurses and Midwives' Association (NMA) and the Rail, Tram & Bus Union (RTBU). In the coming months, we will likely see the same from the USyd branch of the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU). Strike action has long been central to making change.

## “A just transition can safeguard First Nations rights and jobs on Country, challenging the commodification of the natural world.”

As students, the limitations of our power to make individual change are frustratingly tangible. We can be empowered, however, by collective action: standing side by side to disrupt the status quo.

Student strikes draw from the lessons of labour strikes. In a refusal to attend school or university, we do not shy away from being disruptive. Since Greta Thunberg's Fridays for Future campaign, school strikers have insisted that education cannot proceed as normal when our very future is imperilled by climate change. Choosing not to disrupt the system equates to politely asking in the hope that politicians answer our prayers, when the urgency of the situation necessitates demanding immediate change.

Additionally, school strikes have provided an opportunity to build relationships with the labour movement. A number of unions have supported and attended climate strikes, and students have incorporated workers' rights into our demands.



The strikers' first demand is for 100% publicly-owned renewable energy by 2030.

International climate agreements over the decades have often agreed on market-based solutions to climate change, when they have agreed on anything at all. Around the world, most climate mitigation measures have involved the introduction of various carbon trading schemes, small-scale funding for renewables that does nothing to disincentivise fossil fuel investments, and non-binding emissions reduction targets. The fate of our planet is overwhelmingly in the hands of compromised companies with financial interests in extractive and destructive industries. As such, we have seen an increase in carbon emissions, rather than the drastic reduction required.

The concept of publicly-owned renewables challenges the status quo by allowing governments to direct the transition to renewables, rather than leaving it to the anarchy of the market, where profit imperatives and conflicts of interest reign free. How can we expect private corporations with massive sunk costs in still-profitable fossil fuel investments to fairly oversee such a transition? Further, why should we allow an elite few to profit from this transition, rather than directing any profits to the public and socially productive investments?

The second demand notes that the switch to renewables must incorporate a just transition, meaning that fossil fuel workers and others displaced by the transition will be guaranteed green jobs alongside land rights and jobs on Country for Indigenous people. A transition left in the hands of private capital will, at best, amount to green capitalism and allow for the continued exploitation of people and land. We need to deal with the root issue of rampant extractive capitalism.

Without a just transition, high initial investment costs of renewables would be passed onto consumers. Fossil fuel workers in communities dependent upon the industry would be left behind, rather than guaranteed high-quality climate jobs. Consequently, any move to renewables that doesn't incorporate a just transition is fundamentally classist. We need a plan to avoid impoverishing displaced workers in fossil fuel dependent communities.

A just transition means that workers' rights would no longer be pitted against climate action. Moreover, a just transition can safeguard First Nations rights and jobs on Country, challenging the commodification of the natural world

and destruction of culture and land.

Finally, strikers are demanding that the government commit to no new coal and gas projects.

The transition cannot wait until 2030 or 2050. The Kurri Kurri gas plant in the Hunter Valley cannot go ahead. Santos must not be allowed to extinguish the Native Title rights of the Gomeri people to build 850 new gas wells on Gomeri land in the Pilliga.

The urgency of real, substantive climate policy should seem self-evident. Unfortunately, this urgency is not adequately reflected in the policy agenda of Australia's major parties.

The Liberals' environmental policy is rife with spin and excuses: with weak emissions reduction targets of 26-28% by 2030, the Party relies on cherry-picked comparisons with other big polluters like Canada and the USA. Their policy platform emphasises the need to use technology to reduce emissions, demonstrating a reliance on markets to deliver climate mitigation solutions, and an unwillingness to intervene to regulate emissions.

Labor's commitments are somewhat more ambitious, with a target of 46% emissions reduction by 2030. They have promised to invest in job creation in renewable energy, with funded places for apprentices. All the same, both the Liberal Party and the Australian Labor Party have committed to supporting the Kurri Kurri gas plant. The Labor Party has been resistant to firmly provide an end to the use of fossil fuels, with leader Anthony Albanese recently defending the continued presence of coal mining in Australia.

## “A just transition means that workers’ rights would no longer be pitted against climate action.”

Despite the best efforts of capitalists and their political allies to ignore climate change, we have a chance to force climate onto the election agenda. Climate action must be a requirement for voters. Big strikes will force climate change further into the view of the public.

Our demands, however, are also a call-to-arms for students, unions, and workers to take direct action outside of parliamentary channels - to win a just transition on every campus and in every workplace. By centering ordinary people in our strike, we are drawing attention to the desire of students, workers, and unions for real climate action. Where governments fail, real change can be won through collective action and disruption.

Join thousands on 25 March as we strike for the climate. Join our USYD friends at 10:15am outside Fisher Library.

ART BY SAM RANDLE

# Field Notes

Carmeli Argana goes for a walk.

Although I am not a fitness junkie in the slightest, I've recently developed a taste for walking - the steadiness of my feet against the earth, the constant rhythm of my breaths, the comfortable ache in my legs. There is something ritualistic about walking with no sense of destination, no urgency to arrive.



When I think about the first time I discovered this sense of ritual, all thoughts invariably point towards the Bellbird Walking Track.

Stretching for 1.6km, the Bellbird Track twists and turns across Leacocks Regional Park in Darug Country - and is the only way to get from Casula station to my high school. The park's website advertises facilities common to any ordinary park; picnic tables, birdwatching spots and pet-friendly areas. But throughout the final years of my schooling, the Bellbird track was more than just another greenspace for locals. It was a valuable, fifteen minute reprieve from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

On summer days, the bush welcomes you with the smell of eucalyptus leaves and the sharp ping of Bell Miners (the birds which the track was named after). The sunlight streams through the blue box eucalyptus trees and dances along the russet earth in dappled clusters. You'd have to watch your footing - much of the path consisted of steep, haphazard steps, and the loose gravel was ill-suited for the shiny, leather shoes of our uniform. Yet I looked forward to the journey; the keen focus required to navigate the uneven terrain, the stretch of my muscles as I descended into the bush, the moment my feet found their rhythm on the steps.

But the track becomes a thing of danger in a downpour. The rain bears down on you in sharp pellets under the leaf canopy, and the gravel melts into a slippery sludge. There's no railing to catch yourself on in case you lose your balance. I distinctly remember once mildly spraining my ankle in a moment of carelessness, a moment I lost sight of where I was, of what I was dealing with. At the end of the track is Glenfield Creek, an offshoot of the Georges River. For the low-lying parts of Leacocks Regional Park, there is real peril when the creek breaks its banks.

These days, the Bellbird Track is only a memory. I think of it fondly; the afternoons I trekked solo to the station instead of catching the bus to Liverpool, the mornings I gossiped with my friends about which of our classmates were dating. But I've never forgotten its sheer power; its allure. It offered me a reprieve. It demanded my respect.



## President Lauren Lancaster.

It feels shocking that we are in week 5 of semester already, and I am so pleased with the work of the SRC over the full-on start to the year.

This week, I actioned some of my key presidential promises: I met with student union web-suite designers to gather quotes on our impending website update. The proposal goes way beyond just improving what is currently a pretty clunky digital situation - there will be functionality for autonomous digital organising spaces, an ideas hub for direct student engagement and democratic discussion fora, electoral capabilities (far more intuitive than previously maligned election platforms) and more. Pending the SRC Executive's discussions, I believe this new website will allow the SRC to do everything we do better, and centralise organising so that Officebearers can run

## Vice-Presidents Mikaela Pappou and Emily Storey.

It's week five, the weather is slowly drying and cooling, and semester is well and truly underway. The last two weeks have been an interesting time for your Vice Presidents, mostly in the way of being afflicted by illness and plague (thanks, covid). With cases on the rise we definitely recommend being cautious of the loud coughing noises you'll undoubtedly be hearing on the train, in

## General Secretaries Alana Ramshaw and Grace Lagan.

Good evening comrades, What a whirlwind two weeks we've had since we last spoke to you. Our Welcome to Uni party on Friday Week 5 was a big success despite the rain, and we'd like to thank all of the collective convenors for coming along to speak about their work. Also a call-out to the people who confused the onion rings we served for calamari: we're certifiably horrified.

Thankfully, things have only gotten more exciting in the weeks since, with our

## Welfare

Eamonn Murphy, Jason Zhang, Yasmine Johnson and Grace Wallman.

As the semester has rolled along, the Welfare Officers have begun to get involved in a year of activism. We joined the Mardi Gras rally on March 5 to protest religious discrimination, and we have supported the action at the United States Studies Centre to fight against Australian expansion of defence. We also stand in

## Refugee Rights

Danielle Tweedale, Ki Joo (Andy) Park, Lydia Elias and Annabel Pettit.

Together with other refugee rights OBs I organised a student contingent to the Justice for Refugees rally this Sunday and was proud to speak alongside the Tamil refugee contingent beforehand too. I've been involved in Tamil refugee council (trc) meetings in the lead up to this rally and it's been great to work with such a

the most effective, diverse and well-resourced campaigns and collectives. I can't wait to share more after consulting this week.

The constitutional committee did a workshop day this week - we are now about halfway through the new draft. It is already much more readable, and will strengthen the accessibility and democratic nature of our union. Some of the General Executives and a number of SRC Officebearers dropped in to share their thoughts and contribute to the redrafting, and we are keeping this space open and transparent. Thanks to all who have contributed thus far - we are hoping to finish the redraft by the end of the month and touch up language/ expression in early April.

On the Safer Communities Committee this week, I pushed for a far more

your tutes, and walking down Eastern Ave. A reminder to diligently wear your masks, as is our wont, and it is.

As we've previously mentioned in these fortnightly reports, we are (and we mean it) trying our very best to get FoodHub up and running for 2022. Unfortunately we've still yet to receive adequate response from our partners,

spare waking moments and a significant proportion of nightmares consumed by a close reading of the SRC constitution and regulations (if you haven't had the privilege of reading it yet, we'd recommend shredding a phonebook, and attempting to read the scraps in a mirror as a primer). This has been in preparation of a full-scale rewrite of the constitution, in conjunction with the President, Chair of the Standing Legal Committee, and various other OBs. We look forward to sharing it with you soon.

proactive approach within the residential colleges when training student leaders on sexual assault disclosure. Currently, there appears to be no formalised, ongoing outreach between college/university administration and the students to whom younger college residents often disclose. This will cause vicarious trauma and perpetuate cycles of inaction, silence and apathy within colleges. So, I asked that the University and college staff do active, fortnightly (or greater) outreach to students they have trained this year. It is our responsibility to care not only for survivors, but also those who support them. The NSSS results report will be released on Wednesday 23rd March. I do not look forward to the results, but I welcome the renewed opportunity for robust discussion about what we must do to finally end rape, sexual violence and discrimination on campus.

the USU, whose cooperation is necessary in the SRC being able to provide the student body this essential service. A quick reminder for the USU that you can contact the Vice Presidents at vice.president@src.usyd.edu.au.

We'd also like to put out a reminder that the Global Climate Strike will be happening this Friday the 25th, be there

We've also been keeping up with activism on campus, attending collective meetings and rallies where we can. There are a couple of big things coming up: firstly, the release of both national and campus-specific National Student Safety Survey (NSSS) results this Wednesday will confirm the magnitude of the SASH crisis at USyd. Following the release of the report we will be working closely with the Women's Officers in their response campaign.

As reflected by our comments in Honi, we also stand with transport workers and unions in light of the NSW government's anti-union rhetoric, failure to negotiate in good faith and its decision to unnecessarily shut down the train network. Worker's rights are human rights, and we will continue to stand

with Unions and prioritise workers in our activism. Welfare Action Group meetings will be resuming soon, please see our Facebook page and group for updates.

happen in the weeks leading up to Tamil massacre day with an idea of drawing more students into refugee activism.

Regards,  
Toothache

# CENSUS DATE - New Rules Apply This Year!

MARCH

31

If you DISCONTINUE or WITHDRAW a subject before the HECS census date (March 31) you avoid a FAIL on your academic transcript & HECS\*

*\*For Summer or Winter Intensives, check your subject outline. International students will need special permission from their faculty.*

For more information ask the SRC!

SRC CASEWORKER PHONE OR ZOOM APPOINTMENTS ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Academic advisor: [sydney.edu.au/students/course-planning/academic-advice.html](https://sydney.edu.au/students/course-planning/academic-advice.html)  
Counsellor: [sydney.edu.au/students/counselling-and-mental-health-support.html](https://sydney.edu.au/students/counselling-and-mental-health-support.html)  
Learning Hub: [sydney.edu.au/students/learning-hub-academic-language.html](https://sydney.edu.au/students/learning-hub-academic-language.html)  
International student permission to reduce study load: [sydney.edu.au/students/reduced-study-load.html](https://sydney.edu.au/students/reduced-study-load.html)  
Late discontinue under special circumstances: [srcusyd.net.au/src-help/academic-issues/discontinue-not-fail-dc/](https://srcusyd.net.au/src-help/academic-issues/discontinue-not-fail-dc/)



## Ask Abe

SRC caseworker help Q&A

### Low Income Health Care Card



Hi Abe,

I have a few health things going on, and the cost of doctors and medications is really hard to manage. Also, I haven't been to the dentist since I started uni, and my parents can't help with any of these expenses. Do students get any help with this kind of thing or am I on my own?

Regards,  
Toothache

Dear Toothache,

I'm sorry to hear about this situation, but there might be something that can help. You may be eligible for a Low Income Healthcare Card. If your income

averages under \$636.00 per week as a single person with no children, over an eight week period, you can apply for the card. The benefits include cheaper prescription medication, bulk-billed medical and dental care (subject to the practitioner's discretion), ambulance cover, and in some cases, discounted power bills.

If you meet the income test, you don't need to already be receiving a Centrelink payment to be eligible. Lots of students are eligible for this card and they may not even know it - and it could help you access the care you need while saving you lots of money.

Regards,  
Abe

The census date for standard semesters is 31<sup>st</sup> March in first semester and 31<sup>st</sup> August in second semester. If your semester is a little different, e.g., summer or winter intensives, check your subject outline. This is the last date for you to withdraw from a subject without academic penalty (it does not appear on your transcript) and without financial penalty. That means if you are not going to be able to pass that subject you have a chance to withdraw without failing.

#### Why is this important?

Before the introduction of the Job Ready Graduates Package ([srcusyd.net.au/what-is-the-job-ready-graduates-package/](https://srcusyd.net.au/what-is-the-job-ready-graduates-package/)) the Uni had a DC deadline (week 7) where you could drop a subject without academic penalty. Now this is only possible if you have evidence of illness, injury, or misadventure that was unexpected and outside of your control, that will stop you from being able to successfully complete that subject. Failing subjects may place you on the academic progression register that in turn may lead to being excluded from your course for a minimum of 2 years. Domestic students also risk being removed from their Commonwealth Support (HECS) place and made to pay full fees (about \$25,000 per semester).

#### What should you do?

Complete a daily timetable of

your classes and private study, and a semester planner noting your assignments. Make an honest assessment of whether you have the capacity right now to complete each of your subjects successfully. If you are unsure talk to an **academic advisor**\*, a **counsellor**\*, or a tutor from the Learning Hub\*. If you are an international student, you will need to get permission to **reduce your study load**\* by showing compassionate or compelling reasons. The SRC has a visa solicitor that can offer free advice on how to notify the government of any changes to your study load. Call 9660 5222 to book your appointment.

#### What happens if you miss the deadline?

You will still be able to apply for a **late discontinue under special circumstances**\* if you have experienced illness, injury, or misadventure. You need to show that you were actively participating in the subject until something unexpected and outside of your control happened, sometime after the census date, that has now made it impossible for you to pass that subject.

If you have any questions about your enrolment, progression, or any other problem with your degree, please talk to an SRC Caseworker by emailing [help@src.usyd.edu.au](mailto:help@src.usyd.edu.au).



For more information on the Health Care Card: [srcusyd.net.au/src-help/money/health-care-card](https://srcusyd.net.au/src-help/money/health-care-card)





Cryptic by Tournesol feat. A Stan. Quiz by Ms Eel Kink, other puzzles by Tournesol.

## Target

6 words: Turnip  
12 words: Parsnip  
18 words: Carrot  
24 words: Marrow

I	V	E
T	A	C
U	L	T

## Quiz

- Which 1977 album remains the highest-selling in Australian history?
- In 1969, Oliver! became the first G-rated movie to win the Best Picture Oscar. In 1970, which film became the first and only X-rated film to achieve that same honour?
- Home computers exploded in popularity with the so-called “1977 trinity”, three devices designed by Commodore, Tandy and which other technology company?
- “The Day that Disco Died” refers to a 1979 riot attended by 50,000 people burning records - in which city was it held?
- Which American statesman was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1973?
- The refusal of the International Olympic Committee to ban athletes from which nation led to 29 countries boycotting the 1976 Olympics?

## Quick Crossword

### Across

- Train or bus? (5)
- Townfolk (9)
- Centre of an atom (7)
- Holy day (7)
- Stress, chaos (5)
- Zip (3)
- Poorly (3)
- Fire residue (3)
- Jesus Christ! (2,2,3)
- Ovum (3)
- Doze (3)
- Consume (3)
- Horizontal plane (1-4)
- Oklahoma! or Oliver!, say (7)
- Prospero's daughter (7)
- Occasionally (9)
- Radio star killer (5)

## Cryptic Crossword

### Across

- Violently execute Coles shopper (5)
- Cat and head lion tumble in a Spanish region (9)
- Leaves sweets without sugary topping (7)
- Gradual conversion to Cosmo's Islamic sect (7)
- The French leaves chilled spy, potentially (5)
- Everyone's talking about line of pool equipment (3)
- Stand (3)
- Channel showing big black cock (3)
- Endlessly allege Rambo extremely gay (7)
- Kelly returns to hideaway (3)
- Thus you start becoming a beta (3)
- Loudly kiss me (3)
- Knead ingredients like 22 Down, say (5)
- Rolled dice then ate fermented refreshment (4,3)
- Know about desire to be where you might find 9, 13, 33 Across, 3, 5, 8, 15, 22 Down (7)
- Widespread topless sext leads to sensitive STI eradication (9)

### Down

- Depiction of a saint (4)
- Bird of prey (6)
- Piece of footwear (4)
- Movies (4)
- Torch (10)
- Young farm animal (4)
- French President (2,6)
- Respiratory condition (6)
- Vegetable (3)
- Respiratory infection (5)
- Pseudonym (3,2,5)
- Pointer (5)
- Attractive (8)
- A state of matter (3)
- Nearly (6)
- Where Kubla Khan did his stately pleasure dome decree (6)
- Blanchett (4)
- Soybean paste (4)
- Dance wildly (4)
- Upon (4)

### Down

- You Spanish can't keep trading head second-hand (4)
- Snob goes up to robot tree (6)
- Queen reveres Captain Cook (4)
- One's wins (4)
- Ethnologist pointlessly pulled apart simple man (10)
- Ape leaves apple with hesitation for other fruit (4)
- Biased, so denied remodelling (3-5)
- Oral traditions regarding goddess of the home (6)
- Scoot by every second piece of corn (3)
- History of milk products gone off (5)
- Judge balsamic dressing to be infused with French gold (10)
- Lost English letter found on ancient horns (5)
- Cassandra loudly ate tape (8)
- Bradman reversed gesture of approval (3)
- Jam (i.e. fruit primarily recontextualised) (6)
- Gun backfires, head honcho eyes model at testing site (6)
- Fuck NATO, cut back military infrastructure (4)

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

1		2		3		4		5		6		7		8
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27				28				29		30				31
32										33				

- Keen to smash joint (4)
- Kid thanks discontent Kanye (4)
- Endless night is on the horizon (4)
- Wok-fried glass noodles initially inverted by dinner lady (5)

## Answers



Answers available at [honisoit.com/puzzle-answers](https://honisoit.com/puzzle-answers)

## FREE: PULLING-OUT

*Incoherent.  
Always.*

# The End Times



Wed Mar 23 Vol. 420 + 5 Cheaper and more available than toilet paper! The only newspaper. Proudly Murdoch. Pro-News. Anti-Truth. People's Republic of USyd. \$4.20

## PM APOLOGISES FOR PENIS-SHAPED WOMEN’S NETWORK LOGO IN A PASSIONATE, INTIMATE SPEECH

Last Monday, the Prime Minister exposed himself to a crowd of journalists with a speech that roused the crowd to a burning sweat. Laying bare the extent of his mistake, Scott “The Man” Morrison, displayed his deep manhood in the name of honesty by whipping out his palm cards with a shuddering sigh.

Morrison came on hard and fast with an apology, cocking his head to the side as he spoke:

“Frankly, this was a limp effort by the marketing team and I am going to discipline them severely. I will make sure to personally restrain them, as they failed to fill me in on the erection of such a design. Marketing, by its nature is about penetrating the human consciousness, adhering rigidly to one’s values, to be a stiff stalwart of what one believes in; that was not finished to completion in this instance.”

“This is a huge, massive, throbbing mistake on the part of my government and I am absolutely dripping with regret. In future, the marketing department needs to lubricate its processes, avoiding unnecessary frictions with a community that has rightfully been left so frustrated and unsatisfied.

“I have operated on a platform of give and take, but I understand now that I have been doing too much receiving and not enough giving. That is why from right now, I’m introducing a ‘DIL-DO’ policy. That means we ‘DO’ our due ‘DIL-igence’ on anything that comes in or out of this government - including me.”

Morrison continued, expanding on this policy and filling out its holes.

“I’ve run this through Jenny, and while she initially felt it had miniscule impact and was essentially unnoticeable, we’ve since reached a

happy place where both our appetites have been satiated.”

Despite the initially rough handling of this issue, Morrison said that he “hopes to increase the member-ship of DIL-DO by 69% by the climactic end of the campaign.”

“I hope, as an advocate, I can move beyond being just a small-time player in the womens’ rights arena, and get on top of this rough social issue that touches us all in one way or another.”

We’ve touched tips with strong partners in the community, strengthening robust relationships to ensure that this policy is solidly inserted into the community.

Morrison built up to finish his speech with an emotional climax, but was unable to find his closing statement - leaving the crowd of expectant journalists high and very dry.

Doomed	Destined
Running	Skiping
Cult of personality	Reflection
Western Australia	Duty of Care
Pauline Mulletts	Rude Girls
“I won’t cop that ...”	USyd Rants
Equestrian schools	Clown colleges
Vagueness	Specificity
SA Liberals	Slouching

### IN THIS ISSUE:

**Why did the USU let a gay Liberal speak at Glitter Gala?**  
- Greg Dogwin

**Questions for the VC: What’s that yellow ball in the sky?**  
- Emily Rachel Louise McApple-O’White IV

**Why solidarity fists are actually capitalist propaganda.**  
- William Wyatt II

**RAT nasal swabs - the new rolled up \$50**  
- Linus N. Baggins

**PRESENT THIS COUPON TO YOUR HEADKICKER FOR A GET-OUT-OF-PROTEST FREE CARD**

## MULLETS OFFICIALLY ADDED TO ST PAULS COLLEGE FORMAL EVENT DRESS CODE

## WHY ARE ALL OF MY FRIENDS GETTING MARRIED?

I am literally so alone.

## SYDNEY UNI CLUBS FIGHT OVER LOGO “THEFT”

Two Sydney University clubs, the Sydney Association of Designers (SAD) and the Local Organisation for Super Eccentric Recreation (LOSER), are due to appear in a civil case at the district court after a dispute over their logos.

SAD President Elle Ilist complained that LOSER had “stolen” her Publicity Officer Sue Peeria’s elliptical logo design: “the sans serif font in a sleek oval is not to be underestimated.

Slyly self-referential and in tune with a burgeoning Y2K paradigm, we feel that our logo is startlingly fresh and original.”

LOSER GenSec Indi Filme told The End Time: “we reject SAD’s claims in their entirety. We would have thought so-called designers could tell that the dimensions of our oval are subtly, but symbolically different in a way which really sets us apart!”

Sue Peeria could not be reached for comment, but

tweeted on her private account “nawt these ““designer”” girlies STEALING intellectual property. guess its easy to know who your real friends are, even if they suck at illustrator [eyeroll emoji] [wilted rose emoji]”

The LOSER and SAD AGMs will be held on opposite ends of Holme Building this Thursday.

*More to come.*

## YEARS OF ZOOM TUTES LULL FLATULENT STUDENTS INTO FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY

*Reporting by James Frederiksen.*

Third year Arts student Anton Martinson suffered a rude awakening today when his habitual mid-lecture fart was met with audible gasps from his fellow students. Having commenced his studies in 2020, Anton had become accustomed to certain creature comforts, and in the midst of a particularly uninspiring discussion of the merits of the American political system, expelled a fiercer puff of excrement than any polite member of society would deem appropriate.

Speaking after the incident, Anton lamented his rash decision to play the sphincter saxophone in the presence of so many observers.

“I can’t even explain it, it just snuck up on me and muscle memory took over,” he said.

“Normally when I feel the urge to purge, I just subtly flick the camera off for a second so no one notices the tightening of my eyebrows. There’s nothing subtle about a wet fart in a packed lecture theatre.”

## UPRIGHT-WING CAMPUS FACTION ‘POSTURE POLICE’ FOLDS, LEADER SHOWS LACK OF BACKBONE

Naive activists covered under the pressure of widespread criticism that crippled the fledgling group’s fleeting yet weak resolve to critique the posture of innocent campus-goers. The group, which was active for a record 3 hours, slouched

and crawled to a premature demise.

Injured and embarrassed activists were rushed to hospital for urgent X-rays, which were conclusive in finding no evidence of a spine.



# MARCH 25: GLOBAL CLIMATE STRIKE



SCAN ME



Join the USyd contingent  
10:15AM outside Fisher Library

## WE DEMAND:

- 100% public renewable energy by 2030
- A just transition, including guaranteed climate jobs for fossil fuel workers, and land rights and jobs on country for Indigenous workers
- No new coal and gas projects, including the Kurri Kurri gas plant and Narrabri gas project

